



**PLANNING COMMITTEE:** 24<sup>th</sup> March 2015  
**DIRECTORATE:** Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning  
**DIRECTOR:** Steven Boyes

**N/2015/0182:** Proposed Residential Development of 231 Dwellings (Phase 2) at land to the east of Wootton Fields, Newport Pagnell Road (South Northamptonshire Council Consultation)

**WARD:** N/A

**APPLICANT:** Morris Homes Ltd  
**AGENT:** N/A

**REFERRED BY:** Director of Regeneration, Enterprise & Planning  
**REASON:** Major Fringe Application

**DEPARTURE:** No

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**CONSULTATION BY SOUTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL:**

**1. RECOMMENDATION**

That Northampton Borough Council has **NO OBJECTIONS** to the development as proposed subject to the issues outlined below being addressed by South Northamptonshire Council:

- There is insufficient detail with regard to S106 developer contribution requirements relating to this development. The level of affordable housing and developer contributions towards infrastructure provision particularly education, healthcare and off-site sports provision will have a direct impact on this Authority. As such the appropriate officers of this Authority should be involved in the negotiation of any S106 agreement in relation to these matters and Northampton Borough Council should be a financial beneficiary of any such agreement. It is recommended that delegated authority be given to the Director of Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning to further liaise with South Northamptonshire Council on the matter.
- With regard to the proposed affordable housing, the proposed provision of rent to intermediate is consistent with Northampton Borough Council's approach although there is a higher provision of 3-bedroom properties than the Council might currently ask for. Providing South Northamptonshire Council are satisfied that there are sufficient tenants in the short/medium term to ensure that the

properties do not remain void and therefore deter Registered Providers from the site the provision is supported. As the development is so closely related to Northampton it is requested that more emphasis is placed on meeting Northampton's housing needs in the nomination process.

- The overall design, layout and range of house types and materials is considered acceptable however consideration should be given towards the following urban design issues:
  - i) The two proposed streets backing onto the gardens of existing development to the west of the site would benefit from a variation in design in terms of built form/orientation of dwellings, height, roof-scape and public realm treatment to breakdown the extremely long, monotonous street frontage. It is suggested there is an obvious/incidental break in the street scene at 60/80m intervals.
  - ii) The incorporation of the existing field boundaries into the layout is positive and appropriate for the setting however the scheme would have benefited from the incorporation of the central field boundary as a feature within public open space but has been removed from the current revision.
  - iii) The design of the primary/main street does not appear to differ in character to that of other streets throughout the development in terms of hierarchy.
  - iv) There is an absence of on-street parking with the majority of parking provided on-plot. An opportunity for incorporating on-street parking should be explored and incorporated if possible to balance parking types and add more visual interest to the street.
  - v) Aside from the large, dedicated areas of open space the scheme is lacking landscape and incidental open space features within the street scene which were reflected to a greater extent in the original layout.
- Appropriate measures should be put in place to ensure sufficient on-going management and maintenance of SUDS.
- An appropriate Construction Management Plan should be approved to ensure there is no adverse impact on the amenity of surrounding properties within the vicinity of the site.

## **2. THE PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 A full application has been submitted to South Northamptonshire Council for a residential development of 231 dwellings forming Phase 2 of the development of the site at Wootton Fields on the eastern edge of the Northampton Borough boundary. The application is a revised scheme to that previously approved by reserved matters in 2011 and has arisen as a result of a more detailed assessment of true site constraints. Phase 1 of the scheme comprising of 38 dwellings on the northern section of the overall site is currently under construction.
- 2.2 The application proposes a mix of 1-bedroom to 5-bedroom properties comprising of a range of bungalows, apartments and semi and detached dwellings with building heights ranging from single to 3-storey.

- 2.3 The proposal would incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage throughout the site in the form of swales and attenuation ponds with open space provision incorporating a kickabout area and 'super leap' located at the southern edge of the site and a further two Local Areas of Plays (LAPs) provided within the site.
- 2.4 Vehicular access would be from the existing access into Phase 1 from Newport Pagnell Road. Two pedestrian links are proposed through to the existing residential estate to the west into Thrupp Bridge and The Choakles.
- 2.5 The application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement, Affordable Housing Statement, Flood Risk Assessment, Travel Assessment, Tree Report and Biodiversity Report.

### **3. SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 3.1 The application site is a greenfield site comprising an area of 9.06 hectares within South Northamptonshire located along the eastern boundary of the Northampton Borough District and to the south of Newport Pagnell Road.
- 3.2 The site forms part of a larger site of some 11 hectares that wraps around the eastern boundary of existing residential development at Wootton Fields adjoining the Poppy Ridge estate. The land to the immediate north which forms part of the larger site is subject to an existing consent for residential development with access from Newport Pagnell Road and is currently under construction. Open countryside is located beyond Newport Pagnell Road to the north, part of which forms land allocated under Policy N6 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) for land to the South of Brackmills SUE with South Northamptonshire's boundary. Fields are located to the east with Caroline Chisholm School located beyond the fields to the south.
- 3.3 The application site slopes upwards from west to east. The eastern and western boundaries are enclosed by mature hedges with an existing mature hedge running northwest to southeast across the site.
- 3.4 A high pressure gas pipeline is located across the southern section of the site running west to east.

### **PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 Outline consent for the residential development of the whole site for up to 300 dwellings was approved in 2007 with reserved matters subsequently approved in 2011. This permission was implemented by the construction of a short section of the access road.
- 4.2 Since 2011, a full application was subsequently submitted and approved for 38 dwellings (Phase 1) on the northern section of the site in June 2014, Morris Homes having taken the site over in 2014. This phase is being implemented.

### **PLANNING POLICY**

#### **5.1 Development Plan**

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a planning application to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. The Development

Plan for the purposes of this application comprises the adopted West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2014) and the Northampton Local Plan (1997) saved policies.

## 5.2 National Policies

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the current aims and objectives for the planning system and how these should be applied. In delivering sustainable development, decisions should have regard to the mutually dependent social, economic and environmental roles of the planning system. The NPPF should be read as one complete document. However, the following sections are of particular relevance to this application:

Paragraph 17 in part seeks to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants.

Paragraph 34 requires that developments that are likely to generate significant movement are located where the need to travel is minimised and sustainable transport modes can be maximised.

Paragraph 35 requires that developments are designed to create safe and secure layouts which minimise conflicts between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians.

Paragraph 49 advises that housing applications should be considered in the context of a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Where a five-year supply of deliverable sites cannot be demonstrated the relevant housing supplies policies should not be considered up-to-date.

Paragraph 50 seeks to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes with local planning authorities identifying the size, type, tenure and range of housing required to reflect local demand.

Paragraph 56 promotes the importance of good design in sustainable development.

Paragraph 103 seeks to ensure that development does not increase flood risk elsewhere and at paragraph 100 that inappropriate development is avoided in areas at risk of flooding.

Paragraph 117 requires that biodiversity is conserved or enhanced when considering development proposals.

## 5.3 West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2014)

The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) provides an up to date evidence base and considers the current Government requirements for plan making as it has been prepared in full conformity with the NPPF. Policies of particular relevance are:

Policy S1 seeks to concentrate development in and adjoining the principal urban area.

Policy S4 'Northampton Related Development Area' advises that provision will be made for about 28,470 net additional dwellings with the Northampton Related Development Area in the period 2011-2029.

Policy S10 'Sustainable Development Principles' seeks to ensure development achieves the highest standards of sustainable design; protects, conserves and enhances the natural and built environment; promotes the creation of green infrastructure networks and enhances biodiversity; and minimises pollution from noise, air and run off.

Policy C2 'New Developments' aims for new development to achieve modal shift targets by maximising travel choice from non-car modes and mitigate impacts on the highway network.

Policy C5 'Enhancing Local and Neighbourhood Connections' aims for connections between neighbourhoods and town and district centres to be strengthened by improving public transport, cycling and walking networks.

Policy RC2 'Community Needs' requires new development to make provision for community facilities and public open space.

Policy H1 'Housing Density and Mix and Type of Dwelling' requires that new housing development provides for a mix of house types, sizes and tenures to cater for different accommodation needs having regard to the location and setting of the site; existing character and density; proximity to public transport routes; living conditions for future residents; and impact on amenity of neighbouring properties.

Policy H2 'Affordable Housing' should be provided at 35% as an integral part of the development.

Policy H4 'Sustainable Housing' requires that residential development is designed to meet Lifetime Homes Standards subject to viability.

Policy BN2 'Biodiversity' seeks to ensure that development enhances or maintains existing designations and assets or delivers a net gain in biodiversity.

BN7 'Flood Risk' requires that all new development will demonstrate that there is no risk of flooding to existing properties and proposed development is safe and shall seek to improve existing flood risk management.

Policy BN9 'Planning for Pollution Control', development which is likely to cause or result in exposure to pollution or risks to safety will need to demonstrate provision of opportunities to minimise and reduce pollution issues.

Policy INF1 'Approach to infrastructure Delivery' requires that new development is supported by and provides good access to infrastructure including physical, green and social elements and integrates with adjoining communities.

#### **5.4 Northampton Local Plan 1997 (Saved Policies)**

Due to the age of the plan, the amount of weight that can be attributed to the aims and objectives of this document are diminished, however, the following policies are material to this application:

Policy E20 requires that new development adequately reflects the character of its surroundings and is designed and located to ensure adequate standards of privacy, daylight and sunlight.

Policy H14 requires that amenity open space is provided in association with new residential development incorporating children's play facilities.

## **5.5 Supplementary Planning Documents**

Planning Obligations SPD  
Affordable Housing Interim Statement

## **6. CONSULTATIONS/ REPRESENTATIONS**

6.1 Not applicable.

## **7. APPRAISAL**

### **Principle of Development**

- 7.1 The NPPF requires that applications are determined in accordance with the development plan and advises that housing applications should be considered in the context of a presumption in favour of sustainable development which is reflected in Policy SA of the JCS.
- 7.2 The site is located within the Northampton Related Development Area and identified in the JCS as an unbuilt development site with planning approval in principle/planning permission.
- 7.3 The principle of residential development of the site and land to the north comprising Phase 1 has previously been established through outline approval for up to 300 dwellings in 2007 and the subsequent reserved matters approval granted in 2011. Phase 1 was subject to a further full approval in 2014.
- 7.4 Whilst the proposal results in an overall reduction in dwellings throughout both Phases 1 & 2 of 31 dwellings from the originally approved 300 it is understood that the amended layout has arisen due to on-site constraints. The development as proposed would still contribute towards Northampton Borough's 5-year housing land supply and remains in accordance with policy requirements in terms of the principle of residential development of the site.

### **Urban Design**

- 7.5 The NPPF requires the provision of a range of housing in terms of size, type and tenure to reflect local needs. This is reflected in Policy H1 of the JCS which requires development to provide for such a mix having regard to the location and setting of the site, existing character and density; proximity to public transport routes; living conditions for future residents; and impact on amenity of neighbouring properties. Policy 4 of the JCS requires that residential development is designed to Lifetime Homes Standards subject to viability. Both the NPPF and Policy S10 of the JCS seek to ensure high quality design in new development.
- 7.6 The site incorporates a number of character areas including a main street, mews development, estate quarter and rural fringe which responds to the surrounding rural context with a looser layout. The location, density and scale of the character areas has been developed by referring to the principles of the Design Guide approved under the previous scheme for the site.

- 7.7 A range of house types have been adapted to respond to local character and typology and to emphasise the character areas. Materials would comprise of brick, brick and render and stone on properties that have the proportion of either an individual house or cottage.
- 7.8 In contrast to the previously approved scheme the application incorporates properties that back onto the rear gardens of existing properties along the western boundary of the site. Whilst there is a slight rise in land levels to the east along the boundary of the site the rear elevations of the proposed properties would be in excess of 21m from existing rear elevation with the majority of properties 27-30m away in compliance with the Council's requirements.
- 7.9 Open space provision would be incorporated around the proposed SUD area in the form of a 'super leap' incorporating play equipment and a kick about area. Two further LAPs are proposed in the south eastern section of the site with a further smaller LAP approved in the northern part of the site.
- 7.10 The overall layout, mix and design of house types is considered appropriate and reflects the character of the surrounding area however it is suggested that further consideration is given to breaking up the extremely long, monotonous street frontage of the two proposed streets backing onto gardens of existing development and that street hierarchy and incorporation of open space and existing landscaping features.

### **Highways**

- 7.11 Vehicular access to the site would be via an existing access into Phase 1 with pedestrian/cycle links through to the adjacent existing residential development to the east onto The Choakles and Thrupp Bridge respectively. Parking provision throughout the development is on-site comprising a mixture of private drives, garages and rear parking courts.
- 7.12 The site is located within walking distance of local facilities and existing public transport. The submitted Transport Assessment advises that it is proposed to ensure all dwellings are located within 400m walking distance or less of a bus stop and an appropriate financial contribution towards the enhancement of public transport services will be agreed with the Highway Authority. In addition the TA proposes the extension of the existing 40mph speed limit along the front of the site on Newport Pagnell Road.
- 7.13 The development would result in an overall reduction in the number of dwellings proposed to that previously approved and subject to their being no objection from the Highway Authority and appropriate S106 contributions and obligations to mitigate any adverse highway impacts and enhance public transport provision as appropriate it is not considered the proposal would lead to any adverse highway impacts.

### **Flood Risk**

- 7.14 The site lies within Flood Zone 1. The NPPF seeks to ensure flood risk is not increased by inappropriate development. These aims are reflected in Policy BN7 of the JCS which requires new development to demonstrate that there is no risk of flooding to existing and proposed properties and that flood risk management is improved where possible.

- 7.15 The proposal includes the provision of SUDS throughout the site incorporating swales along the western boundary of the site and two dry off-line attenuation basins, one located close to the proposed outfall into the tributary of Wootton Brook on the western boundary of the site and a further basin located towards the southern boundary of the site in an area of open space incorporating a 'super leap' and kick about area. Flood water would be routed along the public highway and boundary ditches to the attenuation basins and on-site sewers would be designed to accommodate the critical 100 year event with minor flooding.
- 7.16 The EA has advised South Northamptonshire Council that there is no objection subject to the development being carried out in accordance with the submitted Flood Risk Assessment and associated mitigation measures and appropriate measures for the adoption and maintenance of the surface water scheme and provision of appropriate foul sewage infrastructure. In view of this, it is not considered that the proposal would lead to any adverse impacts in relation to drainage and flooding.

### **Ecology**

- 7.17 The NPPF seeks to ensure that biodiversity is conserved or enhanced when considering development proposals. Policy BN2 of the JCS seeks to ensure that development enhances or maintains existing designations and assets or delivers a net gain in biodiversity.
- 7.18 The application is supported by a Biodiversity Report which reports that there are a number of water bodies within the vicinity of the site. Whilst no newts were reported within the immediate vicinity of the site the advice in 2007 was that an exclusion fence should be erected to prevent newts moving onto the site when grazing ceased. Newt fencing has been in place around the perimeter of the site since 2007 with repair of some damaged areas recommended in the 2014 update survey.
- 7.19 Natural England has advised SNC that there is no objection to the proposal if undertaken in strict accordance with the submitted details and that the proposed development, is not likely to have a significant effect on the interest features for which Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar Site has been classified nor will it damage or destroy the interest features for which the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SSSI has been notified.

### **Affordable Housing**

- 7.20 Affordable Housing is proposed at 35% throughout the site including Phase 1 and would comprise of 68 rented units and 26 intermediate pepper-potted throughout the site. The accommodation provided would comprise of a mix of apartments, bungalows and houses and are proposed to be tenure blind in terms of design, quality and location.
- 7.21 The proposed provision of rent to intermediate is consistent with Northampton Borough Council's approach although there is a higher provision of 3-bedroom properties than the Council might currently ask for. Providing South Northamptonshire Council are satisfied that there are sufficient tenants in the short/medium term to ensure that the properties do not remain void and therefore deter Registered Providers from the site the provision is supported.



- 7.22 South Northamptonshire Council have yet to sign the Northampton Related Development Area allocations protocol however it is recommended that more emphasis is placed on meeting Northampton's needs in the nomination process.

### **Section 106 Developer Contributions**

- 7.23 At the time of writing this report no details of a draft S106 are available. It is recommended that further information is provided in this regard to ensure that appropriate mitigation is sought to ensure that the impacts of the proposed development on surrounding services and infrastructure are appropriately mitigated in consultation with Northampton Borough Council. It is recommended that delegated authority be given to the Director of Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning to further liaise with South Northamptonshire Council on the matter.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 The site is identified in the JCS as a site for development and it is considered that the proposed scheme would not lead to any significant increased impact to that previously approved.
- 8.2 The overall design, layout, appearance and mix of house types and tenure is considered acceptable subject to the recommendations above.
- 8.3 Issues of ecology and flood risk appear to have been satisfactorily addressed and subject to their being no objection from the Highway Authority and appropriate S106 mitigation towards highway impacts and enhancements to public transport the proposal is considered acceptable in this regard.
- 8.4 Further information is required in respect of S106 developer contributions.

## **9. CONDITIONS**

- 9.1 Not applicable

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 10.1 N/2015/0182

## **11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 None.

## **12. SUMMARY AND LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN**

- 12.1 In reaching the attached recommendations regard has been given to securing the objectives, visions and priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan together with those of associated Frameworks and Strategies.



Name: **Site Location Plan**  
Date: **12th March 2015**  
Scale: **1:3000**  
Dept: **Planning**  
Project: **Planning Committee**

Title **Land to the east of Wootton Fields, Newport Pagnell Road**

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