

Fowlmere Parish Council response on S/2757/17/FL

“Land to the West of Chrishall Road, Fowlmere”

Local plan and NPPF

We recognise that the site in question is outside of the designated village envelope within the emerging local plan. We also understand that South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City Council recognise there is a Duty to Cooperate and have proposed that the housing trajectories for the two areas should be considered together for the purposes of phasing housing delivery, and for calculating five year housing land supply for plan-making and decision-taking. Under this methodology the Greater Cambridge area is able to demonstrate that as of the start of the present financial year there was sufficient five year housing supply for the local plan to hold.

However, we also understand that South Cambridgeshire are taking a cautious approach and are not utilising the joint supply calculations in determining planning applications until the Local Plans have been determined by the inspector to be sound. We therefore request that should this occur and the Local Plans are adopted prior to a decision being taken on this application, that the application is rejected on the basis of being outside of the plan and that sufficient housing supply for the Greater Cambridge area can be demonstrated.

We recognise, however, that in the intervening period the South Cambridgeshire 5 year housing supply calculations are being used in planning decisions, and that these do not demonstrate sufficient 5 year supply. Under such circumstances the NPPF guidance needs to take precedence and permission should be granted unless (i) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole; or (ii) specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted. We therefore recognise that if a determination is required prior to the adoption of the Local Plan, and the associated joint supply calculations, there will be pressure to accept the proposed scheme. We therefore put forward a range of conditions that we would like to be included under such circumstance.

We request that the application is taken to planning committee for determination and that the issues raised below are taken into consideration, alongside the Parish Council’s preference to reject, and that this application is not decided under delegated powers.

Scale, and impact on neighbours

Whilst we welcome the changes that have been proposed in the layout of the site to reduce the impact on the neighbouring properties on Appleacre Park, if minded to approve we would suggest some changes to the elevations of the properties closest to the boundary.

We believe that the impact on the neighbouring properties, which are single storey park homes, would be minimised if property 12 were to be substituted for a 3 bed property of the design of property 11. We would also welcome the height of properties 3 and 4, also adjoining the boundary,

being reduced through redesign to incorporate the first floor within the roof space through the use of dormers.

Housing mix

At present the applicant is suggesting including 40% affordable housing, comprising of six units, two 1 bed and four 2 bed. The applicant is suggesting 70% social rented and 30% intermediate but has indicated a willingness to consider other tenures if required by the council.

We therefore request that if minded to approve, a condition is included within the S106 obligations to specify the number and mix of affordable housing units and a requirement that 100% of the designated affordable housing will be social rented. We also request that conditions are written into the S106 agreement to give preference to applicants with a verifiable village connection.

We also acknowledge that there is currently a shortage of affordable homes for young families in the village, and the school has stated that they would benefit from additional children in catchment to assist in meeting their Pupil Admission Numbers. At present there are 96 enrolled pupils against a PAN capacity of 119 pupils and this shortfall will at some point have an impact on the financial sustainability of the school, and as such creates a demonstrable need for housing that brings more young families into the village. We would therefore request that at least two of the 3 bed units be included within the affordable housing allocation on the same basis as the other affordable housing to increase the number of young families within the village and to improve the sustainability of the school. We believe that this outcome is more likely to be achieved through the designation of some of the 3 bed units as affordable homes as a social landlord will prioritise family occupancy in a way that open market mechanisms may not.

Provisions for outdoor sport, children's play space and informal open space

SF/10 (quoted) places requirement on outdoor play spaces, and SF/11 (omitted) sets out minimum standards for outdoor sport, children's play space and informal open space.

We welcome the provision of a designated open space and play area within the site, and acknowledge that the area allocated to this will meet the on-site area standards for these two site requirements set out in the guidance.

However, if minded to approve we would request conditions to require that, in line with the guidance provided in the Supplementary Planning Document "Open Space in New Developments" adopted in January 2009, the designated play area is equipped with:

- Robust and low maintenance benches with arm and back rests to aid older or less mobile carers;
- Metal rubbish bins with lid/partial cover to reduce wasp hazards in the summer months;
- "No dog" and age appropriate signage;
- Safe points of entry/exit – we note that the currently proposed low level boundary rail will require some openings to provide access to the area for those with lower mobility or with pushchairs; and
- as an LAP, designed to provide a mix of soft and hard landscaping features and design to help stimulate imaginative play.

We would also request that the provision of these space and the design requirements are formally acknowledged in the S106 agreement. We would also welcome the opportunity to comment on the landscaping scheme design once this has been submitted.

In addition, we would wish to clarify the intent regarding ownership of the designated open space and play area. It is our anticipation that the freehold ownership of this would be transferred to the Parish Council to ensure that the open space and facilities are available to the community in perpetuity. Should this be the case, we would ask that the transfer of ownership is made clear in the S106 agreement and conditions added to (i) ensure that the space is constructed and planted to the required standard so that the Parish Council can be assured that the space being transferred is fit for purpose and (ii) to stipulate the figure to be allocated for the ten year commuted maintenance sum.

We note that the application does not currently meet its obligations to make a contribution for off-site provision of formal outdoor sport space. If minded to approve, we would request a condition in the S106 obligations for the appropriate capital payment to the parish council to use towards the improvement or upgrading of land including sports pitches, facilities and / or equipment for play or sport and informal open space. The Parish Council have a range of schemes that could be supported through S106 funds, and is actively consulting on some of these at present, but would request that the clause is constructed in a broad manner as detailed above to allow some discretion on how the funds are used, and potentially combined with other S106 funding held, to support improvements that are meaningful and of value to the community.

Renewable Energy Technologies in New Development

The application notes the requirements of Policy NE/3, but provides no details on how these obligations would be met.

If minded to approve, we would request a condition to stipulate that provision must be made to include technology for renewable energy to provide at least 10% of the predicted energy requirements. We would ask that any negotiation in this area seeks to exceed this minimum requirement, and suggest this could be achieved through the provision of either photo-voltaic cells or ground source heat pumps across all properties in the development.

Public Art

The application makes no reference to SF/6 which encourages the provision of publicly accessible art, craft and design works in residential developments comprising 10 or more dwellings.

In recognition that, if granted, the development would occur outside of the designated village envelope, we would see a strong argument for encouraging the developer to make a contribution in the form of a site-appropriate sculpture located within the designated open space to help provide a focal point and enhance the identity of that area.

If minded to approve, we would request that the conditions around the provision of a site-specific sculpture be included in the S106 agreement, in line with the guidance provided in the Supplementary Planning Document "Public Art" adopted in January 2009.

Contractor's parking, deliveries and materials storage

In the interests of both highway safety and the avoidance of disruption and inconvenience to neighbours, we would request that, if minded to approve, conditions are placed to restrict contractor parking, deliveries and material storage to the area of the development site. We appreciate that this would be standard practice, but feel that this is worth reiterating in this case given the specific site constraints being on one of the main access roads to the village and close to the point that the local bus service performs a reversing manoeuvre as part of its scheduled operations.

Site working hours

In line with Policy NE/15, it would be important to minimise noise disturbance for adjoining residents.

If minded to approve, we would request a condition to place restrictions on site working hours. Specifically we would request that during the period of demolition and construction, no power operated machinery shall be operated on the site before 0800 hours and after 1800 hours on weekdays and 1300 hours on Saturdays, nor at any time on Sundays and Bank Holidays. Again, we appreciate that this would be standard practice, but feel that it is worth reiterating given the concerns that have been raised from neighbouring properties regarding the potential impact of the development.