

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

4 April 2012

AUTHOR/S: Corporate Manager (Planning and New Communities)

S/2317/11 - COTTENHAM

Erection of 47 dwellings, garages, public open space, landscaping, vehicular access and associated infrastructure, Land at the junction of Beach Road and Long Drove for Barrett Eastern Counties and Cedric John Abbs

Recommendation: Refusal

Date for Determination: 16 February 2012

This application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because it is major development that raises issues of broad relevance to planning policy.

Members will visit this site on Tuesday 3 April 2012

Major Development

Departure Application

Site and Proposal

1. The site is located on land adjoining the south eastern periphery of the village, with frontages onto Beach Road and Long Drove. The site has an area of 1.63ha, and is in agricultural use as pastureland. The site is flat. The boundaries of the site are marked with mature hedgerow and trees, and the site is fully screened from views along Beach Road.
2. The site is adjacent to residential dwellings in Beach Road, Coolidge Close, Coolidge Gardens, and Calvin Close along its north western boundary. For the most part these are semi-detached two storey properties, with a smaller number of bungalows. Calvin Close is an estate of 12 affordable houses granted planning permission as an exception site. To the south east and south west the site is bounded by roads; Long Drove and Beach Road respectively, beyond which the land is in agricultural use. The boundary with Beach Road includes a pedestrian footway which terminates at the junction with Long Drove. A detached farmhouse is located to the south west opposite the proposed entrance to the site, No.60 Beach Road. To the north east the site adjoins a horticultural nursery and dwelling, known as Arkley Nursery.
3. The full planning application, dated 16 November 2012, and amended by documents and drawings received 1 February and 8 March 2012, proposes the erection of 47 dwellings laid out as a cul-de-sac served by a vehicular access to be provided centrally within the Beach Road frontage.
4. The proposal is for two-storey development incorporating a central area of open space and a smaller subsidiary area of open space. The design has paid regard to principles

for the historic development of the village as indicated in the Cottenham Village Design Statement, incorporating near uniform depths to most plots, and with larger dwellings framing the entrance to the site, following the examples of the farmhouses and villas in the village. The layout includes gaps between dwellings to allow views of the mature hedgerows and trees on the borders of the site. The design of dwellings includes a variety of gables and widths of plot, and a mixture of detached, semi-detached and terraced dwellings, to provide variety to the built form. The north-western end of the site is designed as a mews, including two flats over garages and a parking court behind dwellings.

5. External materials have been reduced in range during the application period to more closely reflect principles in the Cottenham Village Design Statement. The main dwellings are to be completed in buff brick with slate roofs. Garages are in some cases to be clad in timber.
6. The scheme is to provide 61 parking and car port spaces, and 22 garage spaces, a total of 83 spaces, equivalent to 1.7 spaces per dwelling.
7. The density of the scheme is 29 dwellings per hectare. The layout shows an informal play space area of 1420 square metres with an additional 419 square metres of landscaped open space provided to the east of the site.
8. The proposal includes 19 affordable dwellings, representing 40% of the scheme housing. All affordable dwellings will be designed to lifetime homes standard. Of the market housing 21% will have two bedrooms, 50% will have three bedrooms and 29% will have four bedrooms. Overall, the housing mix will be 36% with two bedrooms, 40% with three bedrooms and 23% with four bedrooms.
9. The proposal includes landscaping of the site. This seeks to ensure that the existing hedgerow along Long Drove forms a permanent southern boundary to the village. The site lies within the Fen Edge landscape character area, and is typical of this character area. Existing hedgerow within the site adjacent to Calvin Close and along the eastern boundary of the site is to be retained. The majority of the mature hedgerow along the western boundary is to be removed. A replacement yew hedge up to 1.2m in height is proposed to either side of the access to be formed. The design includes significant tree planting in the open space areas, together with small fruit trees to a number of rear gardens.
10. The agent has conducted a traffic survey on Beach Road adjacent to the site. The submitted Transport Statement Report concludes that the development would have very low impact (less than 6%) on peak time traffic flows. However the agent has commenced discussions with the Local Highway Authority to fund moving of the 30mph zone further south east (out of the village) and to erect stationary gate features near the approach to Cottenham. Additionally, the applicant is willing to fund improvements to pedestrian crossing over Beach Road at the junction with Brenda Gautrey Way, and at the High Street mini-roundabout. These works would require a Traffic Regulation Order procedure outside the planning application, and would involve consultation.
11. The applicant has expressed willingness to enter into agreement with the Council for the payment of reasonable and proportionate sums in respect of education, rights of way, public art, open space (including an off-site equipped play area), community facilities, waste receptacles, waste recycling, and monitoring of obligations. These sums would total approximately £394,000 (comprising SDCD and Parish Council £187,000, and County Council £207,000). Highway works would be additional, estimated by the applicant to be in the order of £70,000. The applicant has estimated that the

development would generate a payment under the New Homes Bonus of approximately £450,000, which would fall 80% to the District Council and 20% to the County Council, an allocation then being made to the Parish Council.

12. The application is supported by a Planning Statement, Overview Statement, Design and Access Statement, Statement of Community Involvement, Flood Risk Assessment, Tree Survey and Report, Ecology Survey and Report, Landscape Appraisal, Archaeology Report, Sustainability Statement, Health Impact Assessment and an Outline Public Art Delivery Plan.

Planning History

13. S/1346/79/O	RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT 2.562 ACRES	Refused	07-09-1979
S/1954/79/O	ERECTION OF 4 HOUSES	Refused	19-12-1979
S/0389/81/O	RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT	Refused	24-04-1981
S/1799/81/O	ONE DWELLING	Appeal Dismissed	11-08-1982

'To build an isolated dwelling on the appeal site, no matter how good the external appearance and landscaping, in my opinion would form a visual intrusion in the predominantly open area to the south-east of Cottenham and would detract from its rural appearance and character.' (extract from Inspector's letter dated 11-08-1982)

S/1473/82/F	ERECTION OF 6 CHICKEN HOUSES	Refused	15-11-1982
S/0364/83/F	AGRICULTURAL STORAGE BUILDING	Refused	25-04-1983
Adjacent land	(Calvin Close)		
S/0052/97/F	12 DWELLINGS (Granta Housing Society)	Approved	04-03-1997

Planning Policy

Planning Policy Statements:

13. **PPS 1-** Delivering Sustainable Development
PPS 3 - 'Housing' (2006) (paragraphs 68 to 72)
'Determining planning applications'

68. Local Planning Authorities should take into consideration the policies set out in Regional Spatial Strategies and Development Plan Documents, as the Development Plan, as well as other material considerations. When making planning decisions for housing developments after 1st April 2007, Local Planning Authorities should have regard to the policies in this statement as material considerations which may supersede the policies in existing Development Plans.

69. In general, in deciding planning applications, Local Planning Authorities should have regard to:

- Achieving high quality housing.*
- Ensuring developments achieve a good mix of housing reflecting the accommodation requirements of specific groups, in particular, families and older people.*
- The suitability of a site for housing, including its environmental sustainability.*
- Using land effectively and efficiently.*
- Ensuring the proposed development is in line with planning for housing objectives, reflecting the need and demand for housing in, and the spatial vision for, the area and does not undermine wider policy objectives eg addressing housing market renewal issues.*

70. Where Local Planning Authorities have an up-to-date five year supply of deliverable sites and applications come forward for sites that are allocated in the overall land supply, but which are not yet in the up-to-date five year supply, Local Planning Authorities will need to consider whether granting permission would undermine achievement of their policy objectives.

71. Where Local Planning Authorities cannot demonstrate an up-to-date five year supply of deliverable sites, for example, where Local Development Documents have not been reviewed to take into account policies in this PPS or there is less than five years supply of deliverable sites, they should consider favourably planning applications for housing, having regard to the policies in this PPS including the considerations in paragraph 69.

72. Local Planning Authorities should not refuse applications solely on the grounds of prematurity.'

PPS 7 - Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

Draft National Planning Policy Framework (July 2011) This sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The draft guidance encourages Councils to prepare a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment to establish realistic assumptions about the availability, suitability and the likely economic viability of land to meet the identified requirement for housing over the plan period (15 years).

The finalised **National Planning Policy Framework** will be issued by the Minister prior to the consideration of this item at Planning Committee.

South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy (2007)

14. **ST/e** (Strategic Vision and Objectives) - seeks to ensure that the scale and location of development in each village is in keeping with its size, character and function and that the buildings and open spaces which create their character are maintained and wherever possible enhanced.

ST/j (Strategic Vision and Objectives) To ensure that the district's built and natural heritage is protected and that new development protects and enhances cherished townscape assets of local design, cultural, and conservation importance, and character of the landscape.

ST/k (Strategic Vision and Objectives) To locate development where it will ensure maximum use of previously developed land and minimise loss of countryside and the best and most versatile agricultural land.

ST/1 (Green Belt) A Green Belt will be maintained around Cambridge which will define the extent of the urban area.

ST/2 (Housing Provision) Between 1999 and 2016 the District Council will make provision for 20,000 new homes. The supporting text states that 10,050 dwellings are likely to come from Rural Centres and other villages.

ST/3 (Re-Using Previously Developed Land and Buildings) – Between 1999 and 2016 at least 37% of new dwellings will either be located on previously developed land or utilise existing buildings.

ST/5 (Minor Rural Centres)

Residential development and redevelopment up to an indicative maximum scheme size of 30 dwellings will be permitted within the village frameworks of Minor Rural Centres, as defined on the Proposals Map.

Where development of a larger scale (9 to 30 dwellings) would place a material burden on the existing village services and facilities the District Council will use its powers under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to secure financial contributions at an appropriate level towards their development or improvement.

South Cambridgeshire Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (2007)

- 15. **DP/1** (Sustainable Development)
- DP/2** (Design of New Development)
- DP/3** (Development Criteria)
- DP/4** (Infrastructure and New Developments)
- DP/6** (Construction Methods)
- DP/7** (Development Frameworks)
- GB/3** (Mitigating the Impact of Development Adjoining the Green Belt)
- HG/1** (Housing Density)
- HG/2** (Housing Mix)
- HG/3** (Affordable Housing)
- SF/6** (Public Art and New Development)
- SF/10** (Outdoor Playspace, Informal Open Space, and New Developments)
- SF/11** (Open Space Standards)
- NE/1** (Energy Efficiency)
- NE/3** (Renewable Energy Technologies in New Development)
- NE/4** (Landscape Character Areas)
- NE/6** (Biodiversity)
- NE/8** (Groundwater)
- NE/9** (Water and Drainage Infrastructure)
- NE/11** (Flood Risk)
- NE/12** (Water Conservation)
- NE/17** (Protecting High Quality Agricultural Land)
- TR/1** (Planning for More Sustainable Travel)
- TR/2** (Car and Cycle Parking Standards)
- TR/3** (Mitigating Travel Impact)

Supplementary Planning Documents

Cottenham Village Design Statement (2007)
Open Space in New Developments SPD (2009)
Public Art SPD (2009)
Trees & Development Sites SPD (2009)
Biodiversity SPD (2009)
District Design Guide SPD (2010)
Affordable Housing SPD (2010)
Landscape in New Developments SPD (2010)
Health Impact Assessment SPD (2011)

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

16. The site has been included in the Call For Sites – List of Registered Sites, which has been compiled as part of the process towards formulating the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment ('SHLAA'). Public consultation on potential site allocations will form part of the Issues & Options consultation, which is anticipated to take place in summer 2012. The SHLAA report will be published at the same time, as one of a number of supporting studies. Only following that consultation will the Council decide the sites it intends to allocate for housing development. The South Cambridgeshire Development Plan will go through a further stage of public consultation and examination by an independent Planning Inspector before it is finalised and adopted.
17. The Northstowe and New Communities Portfolio Holder agreed, at his meeting of 24 November 2011, that the appropriate method of calculating 5-year housing land supply pending the completion of the Local Development Framework review is against the draft East of England Plan up to 2031 (the review of the East of England Plan 2008 to 2031) housing target (Option 1), without making up any residual shortfall against the Core Strategy target for the period to 2016, and that this be a material consideration for planning decisions pending the completion of the Local Plan review.
18. **Circular 05/2005 – Planning Obligations:** States that planning obligations must be relevant to planning, necessary, directly related to the proposed development, fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development, and reasonable in all other respects.

Consultations

19. **Cottenham Parish Council.** The comments of the Parish Council on the amendments received 8 March are awaited. In response to the application as originally submitted and as first submitted the Parish recommended refusal.
20. **Council's Landscape Design Officer** – Generally satisfied with the proposals following negotiations with the developer. Comments on the details received 8 March are awaited.
21. **Council's Trees and Landscape Officer** – No objection, subject to a robust landscaping scheme being put in place. The TLO notes that the site has an established boundary hedge, but accepts that if development is granted sections of the hedge will be lost. Proposals for the future management of the hedge are acceptable.
22. **Council's Ecology Officer** – The Ecology Officer, while not objecting in principle, would like to see full protection given to the hedge along Long Drove as it is a locally important feature. It is noted that the site has been thoroughly cleared of vegetation other than boundary features. A condition should be used to secure a scheme of nest box provision.
23. **Council's Joint Urban Design Team** - The design of the scheme has been altered to take account of many of the concerns of the JUDT, but its comments on the amendments received 8 March are awaited.
24. **Council's Affordable Homes Manager** – The proposed site sits outside the development envelope and should therefore be considered as an exception site for the provision of affordable housing only. The Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document states that rural exception sites should be of a small scale, and typically range from 6-20 dwellings. With 47 dwellings proposed, this scheme is too large for a

rural exception site. If the site was to be brought forward as rural exception site, and subject to planning permission being granted here, the AHO has confirmed that there is sufficient demand to meet a larger rural site of up to 20 units, as there are currently 143 households on the housing register with a local connection to Cottenham.

25. Should this application be determined not as an exception site, then the Council will seek to secure 40% or more affordable housing on developments of two or more dwellings. This application, following amendment, proposes 19 of the 47 dwellings to be affordable. This would meet the 40% planning policy requirement as contained within HG/3 of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document.
26. Following amendment, the proposed dwelling sizes and tenures remain in line with district requirements. The clustering of the affordable units into two smaller groups is more acceptable than all the affordable housing being situated in one area, as was originally proposed.
27. The units should meet the Homes and Communities Agency, Design and Quality Standards. There would be no requirement for this site to be made available for people with a local connection to Cottenham. The dwellings would be open to all applicants who are registered on the Councils Home Link system. South Cambridgeshire District Council has a legal obligation to give reasonable preference to all applicants assessed and placed in the highest housing need.
28. **Council's Arts and Culture Development Officer** – The ACDO has been in discussion with the consultant company which has prepared the submitted Outline Public Art Delivery Plan to ensure that construction timetable for any permanent artwork would be integrated into the phasing of the development.
29. **Council's Section 106 Officer** – The applicant has agreed in principle to financial contributions in respect of offsite and onsite public open space and maintenance, indoor community facilities, public art, section 106 monitoring, household waste receptacles. These financial contributions are compliant with the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) regulations to make the net impact of the development on these facilities, which have identifiable needs, acceptable in planning terms.
30. **Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services)** – No objection in principle. Recommended conditions to address issues of noise disturbance to future residents from the adjacent commercial use and to limit noise disturbance during the construction period.
31. **Council's Scientific Officer (Contaminated Land)** – No further investigation of the site for contaminated land is necessary.
32. **Cottenham Village Design Group** – The CVDG has met with the developer and has confirmed that a great number of initial concerns with the proposals have been addressed. These concerns related to the mix of external materials, roof pitches, bay windows, appropriate local detailing, and the location of affordable housing. The CVDG expressed concern about the amendments received 1 February 2012. There is a concern in principle about the development of a green field site, which represents a loss of green space and wildlife habitat, although it recognises that the site is 'obvious' for infill development and the inclusion of affordable housing is a considerable advantage for the village. The CVDG recommends the incorporation of low walls or railings to front gardens facing the street, as a local tradition, and shallower roof pitches, which would help to reduce the visual impact of the development on views into the village. The CVDG would prefer more use of native species and orchard style planting in the landscaping

scheme. The comments of the CVDG on the amendments submitted 8 March 2012 are awaited.

33. **Cambridgeshire Constabulary Crime Prevention Design Team** – Noted that the site is in an area of low crime risk. The layout is acceptable from a crime reduction and community safety perspective.
34. **County Council Archaeology Unit** – No objection.
35. **County Council Growth and Economy Team** – The CC Growth and Economy Team has put forward a request for financial contributions for educational provision for pre-school and primary school facilities, and for improvements to the local rights of way network, and household waste disposal and recycling. The Growth and Economy Team has requested a longer period of ten years to hold any financial contribution towards primary education to take into account strategic factors of provision. The Team has commented:
36. 'Although the County Council is not submitting a formal objection to the development proposals, officers feel it is important to highlight significant reservations about the timing of the planning application. These include:
 - a) The existing pressure for primary school places within Cottenham;
 - b) The need to conclude discussions and deliver additional primary school places in the village;
 - c) The fact that the application site is outside the existing planning policy framework and has been submitted ahead of the refresh of the SCDC Local Plan. This creates uncertainty over the overall number of new homes to be planned for in Cottenham; and
 - d) The contribution from the application site developers would likely be required, in the short-term, to pay for primary school provision at schools outside Cottenham. This could leave the County Council short of funding with which to secure additional school provision in Cottenham in the longer-term. '
37. **Local Highway Authority** – No objection in principle, subject to conditions to be attached to any consent issued. The Highway Authority would seek to adopt those areas that serve a highway function. The design of highway features has been amended by the applicant following discussions with the Highway Authority. The comments of the Highway Authority on the amended drawings received 8 March 2012 are awaited.
38. **Environment Agency** – No objection in principle. Conditions to any approval to be issued are recommended.
39. **Anglian Water** – No objection. There is capacity at Cambridge sewage treatment works to accept foul drainage from the development.
40. **Campaign to Protect Rural England (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough)** – Objection. The application is premature pending the review of housing allocation through the SHLAA procedure. This scale of site should be reviewed as part of the Local Plan, where alternatives could be fully tested, or through a neighbourhood plan under the Localism Act. As the site is not within the Green Belt, countryside policies which disallow this type of development should apply.
41. **Executive Headteacher of Cottenham Academy** – Very pleased to hear about the proposals for safer routes to schools, for community art and for pre- and primary education in Cottenham, as part of the proposals.

Representations

42. Letters of objection have been received from nos 49 and 60 Beach Road, 2 Brenda Gautrey Way, 2 Coolidge Close, Arkley Nursery Ltd, Long Drove, and one letter with no address stated. The grounds for objection are:
- a) Too many houses for the site: 25 to 30 would be appropriate
 - b) The development does not comply with ST/5 as it exceeds the maximum development size of 30 dwellings
 - c) The development is not well served by public transport and so does not meet policy ST/6
 - d) The primary school is too far away to walk to.
 - e) Affordable houses should be laid out closer to the entrance, to be nearer village facilities.
 - f) Concern about surface water if the ditches are not properly maintained.
 - g) Potential noise disturbance from the adjacent nursery
 - h) Good security fencing is needed to prevent access to the nursery.
 - i) Existing hedges should be properly maintained to retain their density
 - j) Access from the site will be unsafe due the close proximity of Long Drove, and three accesses to land opposite, despite moving the speed limit position.
 - k) Long Drove would be used as an access route to the north (Wilburton etc). The access onto Long Drove is already dangerous.
 - l) The corner of Beach Road/ Demark Road is already dangerous at peak hours
 - m) Beach Road is congested during rush hours.
 - n) On Beach Road there should be speed humps and a giveway to oncoming traffic, as well as relocating the 30mph signage.
 - o) There should be an emergency exit for traffic from the site.
 - p) Loss of countryside and harm to the amenity of users of Long Drove for recreation. This would be an eyesore on this very attractive and natural area.
 - q) The primary school already has temporary accommodation. Health Service and sewers in Cottenham are near breaking point.

Agent's comments

43. In addition to responding to detailed issues of layout and design, the agent has provided comment on the principle of development. In the submitted Planning Statement, at Section 3, the agent has set out a case for exceeding the indicative maximum scheme size of 30 dwellings contained in Policy ST/5. The site would be inefficiently developed at this density and would not relate well to the pattern of this part of Cottenham. Significant sums of money will be made available towards school improvements, community facilities and recreation, play and sports provision.
44. There has been a limited supply of housing within South Cambridgeshire within recent years and over the next five years the supply is limited compared to the housing needs of the District. The Council's Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) identifies a significant shortfall against the Five Year Supply requirement, and when the delivery prospects of the large strategic sites in the AMR are considered there remains a significant shortfall in housing delivery.
45. The government has stated in PPS3, at paragraph 71, that where a local planning authority cannot demonstrate a Five Year Supply then those authorities are to look favourably on applications for residential development, in accordance with criteria set out at paragraph 69 of the PPS. The current proposal is worthy of planning permission in this approach, even if it does not comply fully with local policies such as ST/5. The

development satisfies the criteria in paragraph 69 because it offers good quality housing, with a good housing mix to cater for a wide selection of the community, particularly family housing. The site relates extremely well to the settlement form and does not suffer from any environmental constraints. The density is considered to be an efficient and effective use of land in this location. As a Minor Rural Centre, residential development at Cottenham is supported by the Core Strategy, and forms part of the Council's spatial vision for South Cambridgeshire.

46. This consideration outweighs the position of the site outside (but directly abutting) the village framework, and is a significant material consideration that weighs heavily in favour of the application, in the agent's opinion. The agent has stated:

"The point raised of paragraph 69 and the criteria regarding being 'in accordance with the spatial vision', I strongly believe that the application is in line with the spatial vision. It is important to note that the criteria are not to be in line with 'the proposals map'. I, properly, take the spatial vision to be at a more strategic level than the details of the proposals map. The development is therefore located at a Minor Rural Centre, which is recognised for its services, facilities and connectivity. The application attracts no objections in reference to the impact on local services. The site is very well related to the settlement form and edge of the village. Residential development within the settlement boundary of Cottenham would have policy support, in principle. The proposal is in accordance with the spatial vision of providing new development, of appropriate scale, at sustainable settlements, which is the case for the proposal.

"In addition the application has support from the Village College and the Parish Council (I attended the Parish Council meeting of 15th March and I can inform you that the Members voted in favour of the application for the benefits that it will bring to the village). We have addressed, we believe, the comments of the Cottenham Village Design Group. We have met with the headmaster of the village Primary School and no objection is raised to the proposal. I trust these are material considerations that further weigh in favour of the proposal."

47. The agent has provided legal opinion which draws further attention to the need to bring forward housing where possible in the context of a housing land shortage and that delivery against the housing targets in the Core Strategy 'has fallen short by a very significant margin' to 2016, which 'should be met in the short term and can only be met by deliverable sites being released in the short term'. In the interests of offering deliverable development the agent has indicated that a condition requiring development to commence within 18 months, rather than three years, would be acceptable. A copy of the supplied legal opinion is attached at [Appendix 1](#).
48. The agent states that the proposal will not harm the openness or rural character of the Green Belt to the south west by retaining trees and hedges (wherever possible) to the southern and western boundary along with additional tree and hedge planting. The houses are set back from the site frontages, so that planting, rather than the houses, is the prominent feature when viewing the site from the Green Belt.

Planning Comments

Five-Year Housing Supply

49. The agent has put forward a case for the consideration of this application site as an exception to the presumption against development of this scale and kind outside the village framework which is contained in the Local Development Framework, notably at Policies ST/5 and HG/7. This basis of this case has been elaborated in the submitted

legal opinion at Appendix 1. The main ground of the case is that the Council cannot demonstrate a supply of housing land to match its Core Strategy target up to 2016, and that as a result the Council should heed the guidance in PPS3 and should apply the criteria given at paragraph 69, which may supersede the policies in the existing Development Plan. The agent has provided a case that, when such criteria are applied, the submitted proposal satisfies them fully and so should be granted planning permission. A shorter than normal period for commencement of development would be accepted in order to provide more certainty about the need for further housing allocations in the District.

50. At his meeting of 24 November 2011, the Northstowe and New Communities Portfolio Holder considered the issue of housing land supply in South Cambridgeshire. He noted that, while there remains a commitment to the strategy in adopted development plans, it is recognised that, with factors such as a fragile economic growth and changing demographic pressures, there is a need to keep the strategy under review. This work is in hand, with an Issues and Options Report for the new draft Local Plan consultation planned for the summer 2012. The new plan is anticipated to be adopted by mid-2015 and the democratic plan-making process provides the appropriate means of reviewing the development strategy, appropriate housing target and the sites to provide that housing.
51. In the interim period, the Council has a currently assessed available, suitable and achievable housing supply of 2.9 years for the period 2012-2017, measured against Core Strategy targets. Accordingly, the tests of PPS3 apply, together with those in the development plan. The SHLAA procedure has brought forward a total of 14 sites in and around Cottenham which have been registered for assessment, including the current site, and it remains to be determined whether the current site is favourable when compared to others in terms with conformity with the Development Plan.

PPS3 and Spatial Vision

52. One key concern is that the site does not meet with the Council's spatial vision for South Cambridgeshire in that Policy ST/5 defines Cottenham as a Minor Rural Centre and limits residential development and redevelopment to an indicative maximum scheme size of 30 dwellings. At paragraph 2.19 it is recognised that at Minor Rural Centres there is scope in principle for larger scale windfall development as this would allow larger villages with a reasonable level of services to provide services and facilities for surrounding smaller villages, to achieve more development. However, the overall scale of development should be restricted in recognition of their more limited services. "A maximum scheme size of 30 dwellings is used as a guideline figure to indicate the upper limit of housing development likely to be suitable". As such the proposal is at odds with the Council's spatial strategy.
53. Planning Policy Statement 3, at paragraph 70 states: Where Local Planning Authorities cannot demonstrate an up-to-date five year supply of deliverable sites, for example, where Local Development Documents have not been reviewed to take into account policies in this PPS or there is less than five years supply of deliverable sites, they should consider favourably planning applications for housing, having regard to the policies in this PPS including the considerations in paragraph 69.
54. At PPS3 paragraph 69 it states: "In general, in deciding planning applications, Local Planning Authorities should have regard to:
 - Achieving high quality housing.

- Ensuring developments achieve a good mix of housing reflecting the accommodation requirements of specific groups, in particular, families and older people.
- The suitability of a site for housing, including its environmental sustainability.
- Using land effectively and efficiently.
- Ensuring the proposed development is in line with planning for housing objectives, reflecting the need and demand for housing in, and the spatial vision for, the area and does not undermine wider policy objectives eg addressing housing market renewal issues.

55. The proposal fails key considerations of paragraph 69 of PPS3 in particular the need to ensure that development is in line with housing objectives and the spatial vision for the area.
56. The site has been recognised by an Inspector at appeal as forming an important rural setting for this part of the village, and this is reflected in the location of the framework boundary. The majority of the frontage hedgerow, which screens the site, would be lost. The development on the site would be opened to view through the proposed access and three two-storey dwellings would be located on this frontage. The site lies adjacent to the Green Belt and forms part of its setting in a conspicuous location at the approach to the village. The proposal does not conform to policies which seek to protect the countryside and setting of the Green Belt, notably DP/2, DP/3, DP/7, GB/3 and NE/4.
57. It is acknowledged that the development will bring forward infrastructure improvements to meet its impact on the village. The concerns of Cambridgeshire County Council in relation to primary school provision, however, has not been expressed as an objection and could be addressed in the appropriate terms of the necessary accompanying legal agreement.

Other issues

58. The remaining issues raised by consultees and third parties have been assessed carefully but are not considered to amount to reasonable grounds for refusal of planning permission. The applicant has provided evidence that the site is within walking distance of the main facilities and services in the village and is conveniently close to bus routes, and so is in a sustainable location. The concerns about highway impact on the road network have not been supported by the Local Highway Authority in regard of the relevant evidence supplied by the applicant. Other issues raised could be addressed by appropriate conditions to be attached to any planning permission granted.
59. The mix of market housing does not achieve the proportion of smaller units envisaged in Policy HG/2, but in the case of larger sites the policy does not set fixed requirements for housing mix. The agent has emphasised that the site is aimed at a family sector, and that the housing mix has more medium-sized dwellings and fewer larger dwellings to meet current market demands. Officers consider that the circumstances of this fringe-of-settlement site are such as to warrant acceptance of the submitted mix.
60. The density of dwellings is below the requirements of HG/1, however the scheme demonstrates that even with a lower density that attempts to take account of the fringe-of-settlement location, the impact on the countryside setting of the village is very significant.

Recommendation

61. Refusal for the following reason:

1. The development proposal, by virtue of its scale is incompatible with the spatial vision for the area in that it exceeds the indicative maximum of 30 dwellings in a village of good but limited services. It's siting in the countryside and adjacent to the Cambridge Green Belt outside the Cottenham village development framework boundary, would result in the encroachment of the built environment into the countryside and setting of Cambridge Green Belt, resulting in an adverse detrimental impact upon the visual quality of the countryside and Green Belt. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy ST/5 of the South Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2007 and Policies DP/2, DP/3, DP/7, GB/3 and NE/4 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework 2007, which are intended to define the spatial strategy for development and safeguard the countryside and Green Belt setting from development which does not need to be located in the countryside.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

Circular 05/2005

Government Policy referred to in Paragraph 14

South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy, adopted January 2007

South Cambridgeshire Development Control Policies Development Plan Document 2007
SPD

Planning File ref S/2317/11

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