

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee

6 February 2013

**AUTHOR/S:** Planning and New Communities Director

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### **S/2420/12/FL - LINTON**

**Erection of 18 affordable dwellings following demolition of 4no. existing dwellings, former Police Station and outbuildings; formation of replacement vehicular access at 9 to 15 Cambridge Road, for Hundred Houses Society**

**Recommendation: Delegated Approval**

**Date for Determination: 20 February 2013**

**This application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because it is major development that is a departure from the development plan and the officer recommendation does not accord with the recommendation of Linton Parish Council.**

**Members will visit the site on 5 February 2013.**

#### **Major Development**

#### **Departure Application**

**To be presented by Ray McMurray.**

#### **Site and Proposal**

1. The site is located on land to the south west of the A1307 Cambridge Road. The land slopes upwards to the south west away from the road, and contains 4 houses in a terrace together with the former village police station. There is a vehicular access at the north eastern side of the frontage. A public right of way footpath runs along the north western boundary of the site. There a number of mature trees on the site and an open landscaped frontage towards Cambridge Road. The site area is 0.495 hectare.
2. Adjacent development to the south west and south east is residential single storey with the exception of No. 5 Cambridge Road and is two-storey in height. To the north east there is warehousing and a listed house at No 29 Cambridge Road further along. On the opposite side of Cambridge Road nos. 1 to 10 Flint Court is a two-and-a-half-storey terrace of modern townhouses. There is a bus layby and bus shelter forward of the site on Cambridge Road, and a Pelican crossing (pedestrian-activated) approximately 30 metres to the east of the site that links to High Street. The boundary to Linton Conservation Area is located immediately to the east of the application site, but excludes No.5 Cambridge Road.
3. The full planning application, dated 19 November 2011, proposes the demolition of all buildings on the site and the erection of 18 affordable dwellings formed around a central parking court and open space. The existing vehicular access is to be redeveloped as a pedestrian ramped access and a new vehicular access is to be provided at the north

western end of the frontage. As part of the proposal, the bus layby is to be moved further to the south east and a relocated bus shelter to be provided within the site frontage.

4. The frontage dwellings are shown as a terrace of five town houses and four apartments with three storeys set in a staggered row set back between 2.5 metres and 5.5 metres from the back of pavement. Amended plans were received 21 January to show the apartment block set down 900mm to provide a break in the ridge line. The ridge heights are shown to be 10.2 metres and 11.1 metres respectively on the front elevation facing Cambridge Road. The design of the frontage units incorporates individual gables to each town house and a pair of broader gables spanning the apartment block. The external materials are to be buff facing brick with softwood window frames, some of which are shown to incorporate stained weather-boarded panels. The roofing is to be smooth concrete tiles. The site frontage is to have low walling with railing topping, which in front of the apartments is to form a retaining wall with landscaping.
5. The remaining dwellings are located at the rear of the site as three pairs of semi-detached houses and one terrace of three houses, all two-storey height. Parking for 28 cars is shown, including 2 disabled bays arranged both as parking in curtilage and a parking court, average 1.5 spaces per dwelling. The public right of way is to be retained and improved. Retained trees include a group of three Silver Birch adjacent to the south eastern boundary and memorial tree to be relocated within the pedestrian ramped access area. A Local Area for Play is to be provided within a 200 square metre area of landscaped open space adjacent to the landscaped ramped entrance, forming a green wedge along the south eastern boundary.
6. The density of development is 36.3 dwellings per hectare.
7. The agent has conducted an automated traffic count at a point just west of the existing site access over a 7-day period outside school holidays and Bank Holidays, with a calculated addition of traffic arising from the 4 residential dwellings and Police Station had they been occupied/ operational. The submitted Transport Statement Report concludes that the development would have an insignificant impact (less than 1%) on base traffic flows, and is likely to be accommodated without any noticeable impact on the performance of Cambridge Road or nearby junctions.
8. The site will be provided with 1.8m footways on both sides of the new access junction. A separate ramped access is to be provided in the north-eastern corner of the site to enable access for all pedestrians and people with disabilities. The development would have two separate means of pedestrian access to the bus stop on the site frontage and the signal controlled crossing at the junction with High Street. Cycle parking is to be provided within purpose-built shelters within each plot for the houses and a series of shared stores for the flats.
9. The application is supported by a Planning Statement, Design and Access Statement, Heritage Statement, Transport and Access Statement, Environmental Noise Assessment, Amenity Space Noise Assessment, Flood Risk Assessment, Initial Bat Survey, Sustainable Homes Ecological Assessment, Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey, Foul and Storm Water Drainage Strategy, Geotechnical and Contamination Site Investigation, and Sustainability Statement.

### **Planning History**

10. There are no relevant planning applications on the site. On adjacent land, the following are relevant:  
*17 Cambridge Road*

S/2230/04/O Erection of one bungalow Refused  
APP/W/0530/A//05/1174838 Dismissed 22-7-2005  
The Inspector dismissed the proposal as not complying with the then Policy Linton 1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004, and for a highway safety reason.

*Land to the south of Cambridge Road and to the east of Station Road*  
S/2005/89/O 29 houses Refused 4-12-1989  
Refused as contrary to the then Policy Linton 2 (equivalent to current Policy CH/10) and an employment allocation of the Deposit South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 1989, and for highway safety reasons.

### **Planning Policy**

11. **National Planning Policy Framework** (March 2012) This sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development (NPPF para.14).
12. The Framework states that Local Planning Authorities should identify a supply of deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of housing against their housing requirements with an additional buffer of 5% or 20% depending upon the specific record of housing delivery. The purpose of this assessment is to provide a realistic prospect of achieving the planned supply and to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. Identification of the broad locations of sites sufficient for housing supply for up to 15 years is also required (NPPF para.47). Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a 5-year supply of deliverable housing sites (NPPF para.49). Local planning authorities should in particular consider whether allowing some market housing in rural areas would facilitate the provision of significant additional affordable housing to meet local needs (NPPF para.54) To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities (NPPF para.55) For twelve months from the date of publication of the NPPF (i.e. up to 27 March 2013) decision-takers may continue to give full weight to relevant policies adopted since 2004 even if there is a limited degree of conflict with the Framework (NPPF para.214).

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

**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.

## South Cambridgeshire Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (2007)

13. **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)  
**SF/1** (Protection of Village Services and Facilities)  
**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/6** (Biodiversity)  
**NE/11** (Flood Risk)  
**NE/12** (Water Conservation)  
**TR/1** (Planning for More Sustainable Travel)  
**TR/2** (Car and Cycle Parking Standards)  
**TR/3** (Mitigating Travel Impact)  
**CH/10** (Linton Special Policy Area) states:  
'South of the A1307 bypass at Linton, in the area defined on the Proposals Map, further residential development will not be permitted other than improvements to existing properties.'

### *Policy CH/10 supporting text*

'8.26 The southern part of the village, severed by the A1307 bypass, is characterised by three distinct uses; employment, a sensitive residential area much of which lies within the Conservation Area, and the site of Linton Zoo. It is also isolated from the main village, and further residential development would not be sustainable with its poor access to the village facilities and services.'

### **Supplementary Planning Documents**

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)

### **Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and Issues and Local Plan Options 1 Consultation Summer 2012**

14. As part of the review of the Local Plan, the Council has produced a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) to identify site options for consideration for allocation in the new Local Plan. The industrial land to the west site fronting Cambridge

Road was appraised as part of this review- Site 152. Having consulted the Local Highway Authority this site was assessed as having limited development potential. The site is potentially capable of providing residential development taking account of site factors and constraints.

15. Two sites to the east of the application site on Cambridge Road, but outside the development framework boundary and Linton Special Policy Area, have been assessed as having no development potential (Sites 200 and 201).
16. Site 152 has been brought forward to the Local Plan Issues and Options 1 Consultation 2012 as Site Option 29.
17. **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**

18. **Linton Parish Council.** Recommendation of refusal to the scheme as originally submitted. The comments of the Parish Council on the amended scheme are awaited. In summary the concerns raised are as follows. The full text of the Council's response is attached at **Appendix 1**.
  - a. This proposal does not comply with Policy CH/10. The reasons for the policy remain- the area is still isolated and the barrier created by the A1307 is more severe. The increased use of the pelican crossing by additional pedestrians would interrupt traffic flow on the A1307. The benefit from the provision of the pelican crossing is offset by an increase in traffic using this road. The facility was intended to assist existing residents rather than to be a solution to this part of the village being detached from the main village. The Inspector at appeal in 2005 found that the A1307 remained a significant barrier to pedestrian safety.
  - b. Cambridge Road is already over capacity at peak times. The extra traffic flow from the development has the potential for a large impact. The development has no provision for a right-hand turn into the site, which will create highway dangers and slow down traffic in the direction of Haverhill. The Parish Council has requested a speed limit of 30mph for this area.
  - c. Visitors to the site may park at the top of Linton High Street, but these spaces are intended for shoppers.
  - d. The development should include a cycle and ride facility for Linton residents.
  - e. The design is rather mundane. The suitability of the design should be confirmed by the Conservation Officer.
  - f. Noise from industrial premises and the road could be channelled into the village, resulting in noise nuisance.
  - g. Inappropriate lighting could be distracting to motorists on the A1307. No lighting details have been provided.
  - h. Details of sustainable infrastructure should be provided.

- i. Surface water from the site may run down into the road, pavement and footway.
  - j. The memorial tree must be retained. Planting of Black Poplar would be welcome as well as further landscaping on the frontage.
  - k. If approved, conditions should be attached for the naming of the site, tenancies to be limited to those with Linton connections, and developer funding for a speed limit reduction.
19. **Council's Planning Policy Manager:** The Planning Policy Manager has considered whether a policy restricting residential development south of the A1307 is likely to be carried forward into the Local Plan.

*Background*

- 20. Local policy restricting residential development since south of the A1307 has been in place since at least 1993.
- 21. The 1993 Local Plan Inspectors Report notes at paragraph 57.28 that "additional housing development south of the bypass away from the main part of the village and its amenities would be especially unwarranted". The policy wording from this plan was used in the 2004 Local Plan.
- 22. The 2004 Local Plan at paragraph 59.16 included policy guidance in part 2 under planning constraints "Land south of the A1307 is isolated, and residential development would not be appropriate". The Inspectors report did not relate to this policy guidance.
- 23. The 2007 Development Control Policies DPD introduced policy CH/10. The Inspectors Report only gives it a passing mention to the effect that it was sound.

*Issues and Options 1 Consultation Summer 2012*

- 24. Planning Policy consulted last summer on whether the Local Plan should continue to restrict residential development south of the A1307 at Linton (question 115). 15 representations were received, as follows:
  - 9 in support of this policy approach including comments from Suffolk County Council, St Edmundsbury District Council and Little Abington Parish Council. The reasons given include congestion on the A1307, forecast traffic growth on that road and planned housing growth in Haverhill, road safety and that better alternative site options exist;
  - 3 comments; and
  - 3 comments objecting to the retention of such a policy approach for reasons including that people will not walk to use the facilities on the other side of the A1307.
- 25. No specific response to question 115 was received from Linton Parish Council although their objection to the current application states at paragraph 1.6 that "The Parish Council believe that the policy CH/10 should remain in place, with no exception to this policy". In their questionnaire response to the Issues and Options 1 consultation leaflet the Parish Council identified growing levels of traffic on the A1307 as an issue.
- 26. As part of the SHLAA Planning Policy also consulted on a residential development site option 29 south of the A1307, which adjoins the application site. This reuses previously developed land but would involve a loss of employment land and was acknowledged to be south of the A1307. Ten representations were received, 4 in support, 4 comments and 2 objections. The summary of representations is as follows:

*In support of Site Option 29*

- Previously developed site;
- No overriding planning constraints;
- Safe highway access can be delivered;
- No material impact on employment provision;
- Environment Agency - No objection to the allocation of these sites on the basis that the floodplain would be kept free from inappropriate development.
- Oakington and Westwick Parish Council – Not green belt, heritage buildings must not be compromised, use brownfield land first.

*Objections to Site Option 29*

- Loss of employment land;
- Poor access to Linton, acknowledged by Special Policy Area restricting residential development.

*Comments on Site Option 29*

- If at all possible site should be maintained for industrial use;
- Site is cut off from village facilities by the A1307;
- Not opposed if social housing;
- Anglian Water - Infrastructure and/or treatment upgrades required to serve proposed growth may be required;
- Comberton Parish Council – Local residents should determine;

27. Linton Parish Council did refer to this site in their questionnaire response to the Issues and Options 1 consultation stating:

“Linton- In principle LPC is not opposed to the development of SHLAA site 152 (site option 29) for social housing reserved for local residents provided access issues to the A1307 can be resolved and the concerns of local residents can be met”.

28. Although Planning Policy is currently consulting on further Issues and Options until the 18<sup>th</sup> February, none of these concerns the Linton Special Policy Area.

*Draft Local Plan Summer 2013*

29. Responses from the public to both Issues and Options consultations will be considered together after the 18<sup>th</sup> February 2013 to help the Council formulate a Draft Local Plan. A series of reports will be submitted to the Portfolio holder to agree responses to the representations received and to agree the content of the plan, and a number of Member workshops will also be held. Until these processes are complete it is not possible to provide definitive guidance on the likely continuation of the Linton Special Policy Area approach. If Site Option 29 were to be included in the Draft Local Plan as an allocation for housing development, this would not be consistent with maintaining Policy CH/10 which restricts residential development south of the A1307.
30. The case for retaining the policy seems to be technically weaker than the case for not taking it forward into the Local Plan. That said, under the spirit of localism Members may give more weight to local views and wish to keep it. However, existing Policy CH/10 must remain the starting point for consideration of the current application.
31. **Council’s Conservation Officer:** The site forms part of the setting to Linton Conservation Area. The design and scale of the frontage dwellings and pedestrian access has been the subject of discussions with the applicant, resulting in several important improvements. The amended scheme would be further improved by linking the dormers on Plots 1 and 2, and separating the dormers on Plots 4 and 5, to provide a

clearer treatment to the group, but the amended scheme is satisfactory in preserving the setting of the conservation area.

32. **Council's Landscape Design Officer**\_– No objection. Recommended conditions. Development rights should be removed so that the planting areas cannot be converted into parking spaces in the future.
33. **Council's Trees and Landscape Officer** – No objection.
34. **Council's Ecology Officer** – No objection. The site has been assessed by an ecologist with no significant constraints to development presented. The site has had an initial assessment undertaken for bats with the majority of the buildings identified as no to low potential bat roosts. The terraced houses were highlighted as having features that could provide bat roosts but were unable to be inspected at the time of the survey. These buildings should be re-assessed prior to their removal. Recommended conditions.
35. **Council's Joint Urban Design Team**\_ - The design of the scheme has been altered to take account of the concerns of the JUDT. The further comments on the amended scheme are awaited.
36. **Council's Affordable Homes Manager** – There are approximately 3,350 applicants on the housing register in South Cambs.
37. This proposal is for 18 affordable dwellings, of which 14 rented and 4 shared ownership. We can confirm that the mix proposed sits well within the current demand for affordable housing within the district, with higher need always being for rented accommodation. There is an adapted property being provided on this site for a family who are in housing need and are in a property on the current site.
38. The number of units provided was revised and dropped, due to viability issues and, concerns over density on the site. The Housing Development Officer has been involved in the discussions between the Registered Provider and Planning Services over viability issues, and is aware that this proposal is the best that can be achieved on this site. The AHM is fully in support of this application which will provide much needed homes in an area where this is extremely high demand.
39. **Council's Section 106 Officer** – The applicant has agreed in principle to financial contributions in respect of offsite public open space and maintenance, indoor community facilities, public art, section 106 monitoring, and 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.
40. The adopted policy requires the provision of 247 square metres of onsite open space (comprising 150 square metres of children's play space and 97 square metres of informal open space). The application is providing a total of 200 square metres onsite in the form of a LAP which will provide a useful amenity area for the children living on the development. The S106 Officer has recognised that this represents a shortfall of provision but is also aware that the applicant considers the scheme unviable if a further affordable unit is lost to public open space. As such the Section 106 Officer considers that the level of open space provided onsite is sufficient although careful attention will be required to the landscaping of this space to maximise its use and protect the users from the car parking area.



41. If the Parish Council is asked to adopt the LAP a further contribution of £11,902.70 would be payable for its long term maintenance.
42. **Council's Development Officer (Sport and Leisure)**: Concern at the under provision of children's play space in the scheme, and the limited overlooking of the open space from proposed dwellings.
43. **Council Environmental Health Officer** – Comments awaited.
44. **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.
45. The Highway Authority requests that a review of the proposed locations of the cycle parking is carried out so that the cycle parking is as accessible if not more so than the proposed car parking.
46. The Highway Authority would welcome a reduction of the front gardens of plots 3, 4 and 5 to 4m or less to prevent any future off street car parking to the front of the properties and as per Manual for Streets provide a sense of enclosure more in keeping with the village through which the A1307 transverses as this has the potential to reduce vehicle speeds.
47. The parking for unit 1 and unit 5 could lead to unnecessary manoeuvring within the public adoptable highway due to the proposed layout.
48. The Highway Authority will seek the provision of the following:
49. Due to the possible incremental development in this vicinity a contribution towards a ghosted right hand turn facility may be requested as a part of any submitted application
50. The Highway Authority would request that the applicant implement Bus Stop Clearways in the bus lay-bys on either side of Cambridge Road. As the proposed residential development is likely to generate greater demand for parking and therefore the use of the bus lay-bys.
51. As the development has the potential to change the nature of the streetscape it therefore fits more within a 30mph than 40mph, thus the Highway Authority would request the costs of a consultation process under a Section 106 as a contribution from the developer.
52. The Highway Authority has responded to concerns raised by Linton Parish Council (summarised at paragraph 17 above):
  - a. It is difficult to argue that such a low level of pedestrian/cycle use of the existing crossing will significantly impact upon the motor vehicle flows along the A1307. Since the Inspector's decision in 2005 the Pelican crossing has been installed (September 2006).
  - b. The ghosted right turn will not be sought due to the inadequate width of Cambridge Road at this point. Funding for a survey to provide a 30mph speed limit will be sought from the developer.
  - c. There is adequate provision for car parking within the site. The LHA does not accept that additional parking will take place on High Street due to the development

- d. Any cycle-and-ride facility is not a requirement of the LHA and would be provided at the discretion of the developer.
- g. The LHA is not requiring any street lighting.
- i. Surface water run-off onto the highway can be controlled by planning condition and through road adoption procedures.

### **Representations**

- 53. Letters of objection have been received from County Councillor John Batchelor and residents of 26 and 29 Cambridge Road.
- 54. Councillor Batchelor fully supports the addition of affordable housing and the benefits it will bring to the community, but has raised the following concerns :
  - a) Design: the block of flats have too much mass and will dominate the street scene. The village is largely rural. Even along the A1307 in the area of the development the main build form is bungalows/houses with substantial hedging. The design should be lighter and less urban. The height could be lowered by digging into the existing slope. With a more sensitive design an acceptable development could sit comfortably on this site.
  - b) The development goes against the policy of no development on the south side of the A1307.
  - c) Highway safety: Turning right off the A1307 could cause significant tailbacks and safety issues for the vehicle waiting on this busy road. Visibility could be another issue with buses stationary at the bus stop blocking the line of sight for vehicles exiting the site.
- 55. The issues raised by local residents are:
  - d) Concern about extra traffic. If the development is given the go ahead the Councils should seriously reconsider the speed limit through Linton. Even if each proposed dwelling had one car this would cause serious problems, especially when they have to stop in the middle of the road to turn right into the site. There are already too many junctions, traffic lights and crossings in that particular area: to have any further obstructions could cause a serious issue.
  - e) A recently made pre-planning request for an additional dwelling within the boundaries of 29 Cambridge Road was rejected because of the special area policy CH/10. Should this major application be approved the residents would expect their pre-application request to be reconsidered on the same terms.
  - f) An exchange of four houses on this plot to a 'max packed' 18 dwellings on the same plot does not comply with this special area policy and the residents would seek some consistency on this matter.
  - g) The hammerhead formed between the access to Flint Court and the new development seems a dangerous traffic arrangement and could potentially be more acceptable with a traffic speed limit reduction to 30mph (or better still 20 mph) or relocating the traffic lights or providing additional traffic lights?
  - h) The access to immediately neighbouring properties does not seem to have been considered in any way and was a main concern during the initial village hall

consultation. No improvement or amendments have been made to remove this issue.

i) The plans show three storey townhouses close to the main road with a verge and small garden area. This will create a tunnelling effect through the village and again feel a speed reduction would make these plans more supportable with a reduced quantity of houses but not whilst a 40mph limit is provided. Additionally the privacy of the people in these houses should be a consideration with double decker buses frequently stopping outside.

### **Agent's comments**

56. The agent has submitted further comments in response to concerns raised by Linton Parish Council and the Local Highway Authority:

- a. The appeal decision of 2005 should not be taken as a binding precedent for the determination of the planning proposals.
- b. Cycle parking: this meets the requirements of the Code for Sustainable Homes.
- c. External lighting will comply with the requirements of Policy NE/14.
- d. The development will include environmental measures to achieve Code 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes e.g. aerator taps and dual flush WC's, water butts.
- e. Renewable energy proposals to at least 10% of predicted energy requirements will be employed, details to be agreed.
- f. Surface water drainage of the adopted access road will be developed to comply with Highways Standards.
- g. Occupancy policy for the units could prioritise those with a local connection if agreed by the Council.
- h. The applicants would be willing to contribute to the advertising costs of a scheme to reduce the speed limit to 30mph.
- i. A ghosted right hand turn is not feasible due to the already existing accesses opposite.
- j. Bus stop clearways can be secured as part of the post-planning highways works.
- k. The manoeuvring of vehicles in/out of the parking spaces for Units 1 and 5 will not give rise to highway dangers.
- l. Any recent accidents on the A1307 would have been taken into account by the Highway Authority in coming to its recommendation.
- m. A minor change to the application site area has been made to ensure that all land at the site entrance is within the applicant's ownership.

### **Planning Comments**

*Principle of development*

57. The submitted proposal does not comply with Policy CH/10 Linton Special Policy Area. In assessing the application Members will wish to consider whether there are grounds to consider the principle of provision of affordable housing on the site as being acceptable as a departure to Policy CH/10.
58. The NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-taking this means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan, and where relevant policies in the development plan are out-of-date, to grant planning permission unless 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 (NPPF para. 14). The Planning Policy Manager has indicated that Policy CH/10 remains extant and applicable to applications for residential development in the Special Policy Area, but that consultations are taking place as part of the emerging Local Plan as to whether the policy should be retained or amended. The policy approach was upheld by Planning Inspectors on planning appeal in 2005 and in the adoption of the Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD in May 2007. The Pelican crossing in Cambridge Road was installed in September 2006, and it is not clear whether the Inspector took this change in circumstance into account in reaffirming the policy approach.
59. The majority of local services are within 1km walking distance of the site, with Linton Heights Junior school being 1.2km away, still within the distance of 2km with the potential to replace short car trips according to guidance provided by Department for Transport in 'Manual for Streets' (2007). With the provision of the Pelican crossing to/from High Street providing protected access the case for maintaining that there is 'poor access to the village facilities and services' (Policy CH/10) from the application site is technically weak.
60. Policies for the delivery of housing in the LDF are out-of-date when assessed against NPPF advice as there is less than 3 years supply of housing land with planning permission in the District. The Council's Affordable Homes Manager has advised of a housing waiting list of over 3,000 persons in the District and that the proposal fits well with local affordable housing need requirements. The development represents a significant public benefit by the provision of affordable housing.

*Amount, Scale and Design*

61. The density of development (36.3 dwellings per hectare) is less than required under Policy HG/1 for a sustainable location (40 dwellings per hectare) but when account is taken of the need to preserve the setting of the conservation area, and that the scheme has been drawn up to meet a particular local housing need in terms of dwelling size, the shortfall in density is considered to be justified.
62. The agent has indicated that the current proposal represents the minimum number of dwellings to provide a viable scheme. Prior to submission the applicant had proposed two additional units, and these were deleted to increase the amount of public space on the site and to retain existing mature Silver Birch.
63. The siting of three-storey dwellings on the frontage of the site represents a significant change to the appearance of the street-scene to the south of Cambridge Road. A similar terrace of building is located on the north side of Cambridge Road at Flint Court. These flats are of two-storey height (8 metres) compared with the proposed application site frontage block of 11.1 metres to gable, dropping to 10.2 metres height at the apartments on Plots 6 to 9. The adjoining two-storey dwelling to the east, No.5 Cambridge Road, has a ridge height of 8.5 metres. The proposed dwellings on the

frontage will be the tallest of the collection of buildings in this part of Cambridge Road, but it is considered that the sense of enclosure that would arise from the proposed development would be successful in providing a stronger visual definition to the street scene and, with suitable selection of external materials, would provide a visual grouping with the existing units at Flint Court. The gap of 16 metres between the proposed frontage development and the eastern gable end of No.5 Cambridge Road would prevent the taller buildings from dominating the more domestic scale of dwellings to the east.

64. The design of the amended proposal has introduced more variety and interest by breaking the ridge line and eaves level of the town houses and apartments. The staggered arrangement of the three main blocks of the frontage terrace has enabled the scale of the building to be broken into smaller elements, and the provision of timber panels and tiled timber door canopies has improved the visual appearance of the design.

#### *Highway safety*

65. The Local Highway Authority has supported the proposal on highway safety grounds, and was involved in discussions about the design of the accesses and layout prior to the application being submitted. The concerns of Linton Parish Council, County Councillor Mr. Batchelor and local residents are noted, but have not been upheld by the Local Planning Authority as a ground for objection to the proposal. The submitted Transport and Access Statement states that the net traffic increase generated by the proposal would be insignificant at less than 1%. The report acknowledges that the pedestrian crossing impacts upon the through flow of traffic on Cambridge Road, and assesses the increase in red phase time as a result of pedestrian generation from the development to be 2 minutes per peak hour, or 3%. This is assessed as an imperceptible change for traffic on Cambridge Road. The Local Highway Authority has not required the provision of a ghosted right turn in Cambridge Road.

#### *Other matters*

66. The concerns of local residents are noted and have been considered in the planning comments. The concern about bus movements and visibility at the new access will be brought to the attention of the Local Highway Authority.
67. The application is supported by a Sustainability Statement and details of measures to ensure energy efficiency and renewables can be required by condition to any planning permission granted.
68. The comments of the Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services) on noise and other environmental issues are awaited and will be reported in the written update to Members.

#### *Conclusion*

69. The current application falls to be considered in the context of the local development plan and the more recent NPPF. Policy CH/10 is applicable. The concerns raised, including the degree of separation of the site from the facilities of the village, have been considered. Objectively, these facilities are within a reasonable walking distance of the site. The evidence put forward by the applicant, and supported by the Local Highway Authority, is that no undue dangers to pedestrians or disruption to traffic flows on Cambridge Road will arise from pedestrian and vehicular traffic generated by

the development. The public benefit from the scheme is in the provision of much needed affordable housing, and any off-site highway works agreed by the developer.

70. Taking into account the emphasis on the presumption in favour of sustainable development in the NPPF, on balance officers consider that the proposed development can be justified as a departure to Policy CH/10. Such a decision would not necessarily provide a precedent for other residential development in the Linton Special Policy Area, as each case would continue to be assessed on its merits, nor would it pre-empt the review of Policy CH/10 as part of the emerging Local Plan because of the specific details of this proposal. Should members be minded to approve the application reference to the Secretary of State would not be required in this case.
71. If approved, details of a Section 106 agreement are required to be progressed with the applicant and the County Council before a determination could be issued.

### **Recommendation**

72. Approval subject to the resolution of the S106 Agreement and the following conditions:
1. Time limit 3 years
  2. Approved plans
  3. Details of external materials
  4. Details of landscaping
  5. Tree protection during construction period
  6. Landscape and biodiversity implementation.
  7. Details of ramps and groundworks.
  8. Retention of obscure glazing to upper storey side windows in Units 8/9
  9. Provision and retention of car parking and cycle parking
  10. Details of access road drainage
  11. Details of management of construction traffic
  12. Details of a demolition method statement
  13. Details of external lighting
  14. Details of energy efficiency and renewable energy provision.
  15. Permitted hours of operation of power-operated machinery during construction period.
  16. As required by the Environmental Health Officer
  17. Remove permitted development rights

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

National Planning Policy Framework 2012  
South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy, 2007  
South Cambridgeshire Development Control Policies Development Plan Document, 2007  
SPD  
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, 2012  
Village Classification Report, 2012  
Planning File ref S/2509/12/FL

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