

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee

4 February 2015

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

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<b>Application Number:</b>	S/2658/14/FL
<b>Parish:</b>	Foxton
<b>Proposal:</b>	Proposed development of 15 affordable houses, with associated external works and planting
<b>Site address:</b>	Land adjacent to Hill Farm, Fowlmere Road, Foxton
<b>Applicant:</b>	South Cambridgeshire District Council
<b>Recommendation:</b>	Delegated Approval
<b>Key material considerations:</b>	Principle and criteria of Policy HG/5, residential amenity, and highway safety
<b>Committee Site Visit:</b>	Yes
<b>Departure Application:</b>	No
<b>Presenting Officer:</b>	Paul Sexton
<b>Application brought to Committee because:</b>	The applicant is the District Council and the officer recommendation of delegated approval is contrary to the current recommendation of refusal from Foxton Parish Council
<b>Date by which decision due:</b>	20 February 2015

### Site and Proposal

1. This full application, as amended by drawings received on 16 January 2015, proposes the erection of 15 affordable dwellings for rent on a 0.45ha rectangular area of agricultural land to the west of Fowlmere Road, which currently comprises part of a larger area of land owned by Hill Farm.
2. The development will comprise 4 one-bedroom, 6 two-bedroom, and 5 three-bedroom units. All houses will be served from the new shared surface roadway from Fowlmere Road, to the south of the existing entrance to Hill farm, which will be closed. The new roadway will be used to access Hill Farm, and includes a section of private driveway at its southern end from which Plots 4-9 are accessed

3. The scheme comprises semi-detached units either side of the shared surface roadway, with a detached unit at the entrance to Fowlmere Road. Plots 4-9, at the southern end of the site, are sited at right angles to the road. Plots 6-9 are designed as a barn type structure, with an asymmetrical roof. The maximum ridge height is 7.8m. Materials proposed are a mix of buff facing brickwork, through colour render and/or stained feather edge boarding, with plain tile or artificial slate roofs. Windows will be painted timber sash and casements.
4. New planting is proposed along the south, east and west boundaries, along with 1.8m high close boarded fencing with trellis above. An area of open space is provided.
5. Two car parking spaces are provided for each of the two and three-bedroom dwellings, with one space for each one-bedroom unit, along with a visitors space.
6. Buildings will be constructed to achieve a Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3, and is aiming to achieve Level 4 for the Water Section within Codes for Sustainable Homes standards, by the use of rainwater butts and tap flow restrictors.
7. To the north the site adjoins land and buildings associated with Hill Farm, with an existing bungalow set 100m from Fowlmere Road, served off the existing entrance. To the south and west is agricultural land, the boundaries to which are currently open. On the opposite side of Fowlmere Road is agricultural land.
8. The density is 33 dwellings per hectare.
9. The site is outside the village framework. The land on the opposite side of Fowlmere Road is within the Green Belt
10. The application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement, Energy and Water Conservation Strategy, Waste Management Design Guide Toolkit, and Section 106 Draft Heads of Terms.

### **Planning History**

11. There is no relevant planning history on the application site.
12. S/1422/96/F granted permission for use of land to the north of the site, within the same ownership as the application site, for the parking of up to 4 lorries and associated trailers, including the routine maintenance of vehicles

### **Policy**

13. **National Planning Policy Framework**
14. **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy**  
ST/6 – Group Villages
15. **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies**  
DP/1 – Sustainable Development  
DP/2 – Design of New Development  
DP/3 – Development Criteria  
DP/4 – Infrastructure and New Developments  
DP/7 – Development Frameworks  
GB/3 – Mitigating the Impact of Development

HG/1 – Housing Density  
HG/3 – Affordable Housing  
HG/5 – Exception Site for Affordable Housing  
SF/10 – Outdoor Playspace, Informal Open Space, and New Developments  
SF/11 – Open Space Standards  
NE/1 – Energy Efficiency  
NE/3 – Renewable Energy Technology in New Development  
NE/4 – Landscape Character Areas  
NE/6 – Biodiversity  
NE/15 – Noise Pollution  
CH/2 – Archaeological Sites  
TR/2 – Car and Cycle Parking Standards.

16. **South Cambridgeshire LDF Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)**

Open Space in New Developments - adopted January 2009  
Affordable Housing – March 2010  
District Design Guide - adopted March 2010

17. **Draft Local Plan**

S/3 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development  
S/7 – Development Frameworks  
S/10 – Group Villages  
CC/3 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy in New Developments  
CC/8 – Sustainable Drainage System  
NH/8 – Mitigating the Impact of Development in and adjoining the Green Belt.  
HQ/1 – Design Principles  
NH/4 – Biodiversity  
H/7 – Housing Density  
H/9 – Affordable Housing  
H/10 – Rural Exception Site Affordable Housing  
SC/7 – Outdoor Play Space, Informal Open Space and New Developments  
SC/8 – Open Space Standards  
TI/3 – Parking Provision

**Consultation by South Cambridgeshire District Council as Local Planning Authority**

18. **Foxton Parish Council** – recommends refusal of the application as originally submitted.
19. “The Parish Council finds the scheme and house design very satisfactory as a whole. They feel that the development has been sympathetically designed and will be an asset to the village. However there are some issues with the scheme from highways, road safety and practicality aspects that need addressing.
20. It is imperative that a footpath is provided from the development, along Fowlmere Road into the village down to Hillfield. This will be a route to school for several children on the development, and it is unsafe to expect them to walk along the edge of the road at the entrance to the village.
21. The roadway should be built to an adoptable standard throughout the development. Currently, the application proposes a private driveway section for Plots 4-9, but is impractical to expect residents of affordable housing to contribute towards repair costs of such a road. An adoptable road would also ensure that adequate street lighting would be provided throughout the development.

22. In addition, if the road was left as a private road, the owners of that part of the road could potentially open it up to developers as an access route for further development in the field behind the application area.
23. The window frames, soffits and fascias of all dwellings should be UPVC rather than painted timber, for ease of future maintenance.
24. The hedge across the back (south west) of Plot 10 should extend to cross the end of the road, to ensure that the road ends before the edge of the development. This will ensure that it cannot be used as an access for further development.
25. The parking space for Plot 9 is not a very usable space as it stands, as there is very little room to manoeuvre a vehicle in and out of the space. The Parish Council feel that it would be more practical to move the parking spaces towards Fowlmere Road. (The end of these spaces, next to the parking spaces for Plot 10, is currently marked as a bin collection point for plots 4-9, but this will no longer be necessary if the road is built to an adoptable standard, so that spaces could be used for parking).
26. The plans for this development were originally discussed at a full Parish Council meeting in February, with Schuyler Newstead and Tony Welland in attendance, and some of these items were discussed and agreed on at that time. Unfortunately, since they have not been taken into account in the final application, the Parish Council is left with no option but to recommend refusal until these issues are resolved.
27. The Parish Council would like an assurance that there should be no “Right to buy” option on any of these houses, or we will soon end up with a situation where the houses are sold on the open market, and the Parish Council would be left looking for more land for affordable housing.”
28. **Local Highway Authority** – has no objection subject to conditions. A footpath, at least 1.8m in width, should be provided from the northern side of the proposed access road along the western side of Fowlmere Road, to the southern side of the junction to Hillfield, to provide convenient connectivity from the development to the village.
29. Other conditions relate to details of the roadway construction, a Traffic Management Plan, and surface water drainage.
30. Comments of the revised scheme will be reported at the meeting.
31. **Housing Development Officer** – states that the development is being undertaken as part of the Council’s new build pipeline program. The mix is in accordance with the 2009 housing needs survey for the village and current Housing Register for Foxton indicated a need for 18 units. Properties will be allocated to applicants who have a local connection to Foxton and will meet the identified housing need for the village.
32. **Environmental Health** – comments that as the site is adjacent to a working farm, and shares access with it, a noise assessment is required, to ensure that noise sensitive dwellings are not adversely affected, and any required mitigation works are carried out.
33. **Environment Agency** – No objection subject to condition and informatives.

34. **Anglian Water** – comments that foul drainage is in the catchment of Foxton Water Recycling Centre, which currently does not have capacity to treat the flows from the development site. It states that it is obligated to accept the foul flows from development with the benefit of planning consent, and would therefore take the necessary steps to ensure that there is sufficient treatment capacity, should consent be granted.
35. The sewerage system at present has capacity for these flows. An informative should be included in any consent concerning Anglian Water assets close to or crossing the site
36. **Cambridgeshire Archaeology** – comments that the site lies in an area of high archaeological potential and that a geophysical survey, carried out prior to determination of the application, will allow fuller consideration of the presence/absence and extent of archaeological remains. An informed judgement can then be made as to whether any planning consent will need to include provisions for archaeological works, and what this should be.
37. **Architectural Liaison Officer (Cambridgeshire Constabulary)** – generally supports the layout. Countryside and roadside boundaries should be formed by 1.8m high close boarded fencing topped with trellis.
38. **Landscapes Officer** - The site lies in the East Anglian Chalk Landscape Area at the southern edge of Foxton, running north-south to the west of Fowlmere Road. The local landscape is a good example of Chalkland Landscape - fairly open and featuring rolling hills, shallow stream valleys and typical small hilltop woodlands.
39. The site is exposed on all sides, and rises gently away from the road, and continues to rise, but more steeply beyond the site towards Chalk Hill, 250m to the west.
40. The orientation, layout and elevation of the site mean that it will be a highly prominent feature at the edge of Foxton Village. It will form a new village edge when approaching Foxton from the south, or when viewed from public footpaths to the west, and new skyline when viewed from the south and east.
41. If the scheme is to integrate successfully with the landscape, and form a positive entrance to the village, then a well-designed and robust landscape scheme will be required. Site boundaries must be soft, with sufficient space allowed to accommodate the scale and character of planting expected in such a location.
42. All boundary planting should be outside garden fence lines, and a 2.0m wide bed of planting is required. Points within the site are identified where key tree planting will help mitigate the impact of the development. A number of revisions to the layout are suggested to accommodate the additional planting.
43. Comments on the revised layout will be reported at the meeting.

### **Representations**

44. None received. Any comments on the revised scheme will be reported at the meeting.

### **Planning Considerations**

*Principle of development and Policy HG/5*

45. Policy HG/5 accepts that, as an exception to the normal operation of the policies of the Development Plan, schemes of 100% affordable housing which are designed to meet identified local housing needs on small sites within or adjoining villages, can be granted so long as five criteria are met.
46. The Housing Development Manager has confirmed that the application meets the identified need in 2009 for rental units in Foxton in terms of numbers and mix. The 2015 Housing Register for Foxton confirms a need for 18 affordable units. It is essential that the number, mix and tenure of the units proposed accords with the housing needs identified for Foxton in order to comply with the first two criteria of Policy HG/5.
47. The third of the criteria (Policy HG/5) requires the site to be well located to the built-up area of the village, and the scale of the scheme to be appropriate to the size and character of the village. Foxton is classified as a group village, however schemes for 100% affordable housing of this scale (and up to 20 dwellings) have been consented in such villages and officers are therefore of the view that the scale of the scheme is appropriate in this respect.
48. The site does not adjoin the village framework, as the land immediately to the north, which contains a yards and buildings used in association with Hill Farm, is also outside the village framework. The village framework runs along the south boundary of No.62a Fowlmere Road. However, officers are of the view that the site is well related to the built-up area of the village.
49. The fourth of the criteria requires the site to be well related to facilities and services within the village. The village shop, primary school, church, and recreation ground are located within 1km of the site, and are therefore considered to be within reasonable walking distance. The nearest bus stop is approximately 950m from the site, which is beyond the desirable distance. However, this needs to be balanced against the benefits of bringing forward 15 affordable dwellings for local need.
50. The fifth of the criteria requires that the development does not damage the character of the village or the rural landscape. The Landscape Officer's comments highlight that this is an open site on the edge of the village, and that careful landscaping will be required to mitigate the impact of the development. The revised scheme includes additional planting, and any further revision in light of the Landscapes Officers comments will be reported at the meeting.
51. Although the erection of 15 dwellings on this open site at the edge of the village will cause some harm to the current landscape character of the area, officers are of the view that given the design of the layout and housing types, which have been the subject of pre-application discussions with officer, and with careful landscaping, this impact can be mitigated. Officers are of the view that the benefit of providing a scheme of 100% affordable housing to meet an identified local need outweighs any landscape harm.
52. Officers are also of the view that the landscaping proposed will mitigate the impact of the development on the adjoining Green belt land to the east.

#### *Residential amenity*

53. There are no existing dwellings immediately adjoining the proposed site, with the closest property being the existing bungalow at Hill Farm. As amended the scheme includes a new footpath from the site access to adjoin the end of Hillfield, which

passes in front of 4 existing houses in Fowlmere Road. Officers are of the view that this will not prejudice the residential amenity of the occupiers of those properties and will improve connectivity of these properties to the existing footpath in Fowlmere Road.

54. The information on existing uses at Hill Farm, required by the Environmental Health Officer to ensure that residents of the proposed properties will not be subject to undue disturbance, is being provided and the further comments of Environmental Health will be reported at the meeting.
55. Officers have been advised that the 1996 consent for the lorry business on the land to the north is no longer in operation.

#### *Highway safety and parking*

56. The Local Highway Authority has not objected in principle to the application, which demonstrates that safe access can be provided to the site. The revised scheme includes the footpath link requested by both Highways and Foxton Parish Council.
57. Officer note the comments of Foxton Parish Council regarding the use of a section of private driveway to serve plots 4-9, however this arrangement is acceptable to the Local Highway Authority. That section of the roadway will not be adopted but the applicant is happy with this arrangement, and will be responsible for the future maintenance of that section of roadway. The parking arrangements for Plot 9 have been adjusted in the revised scheme to make access and egress easier.
58. Parking provision meets the adopted car parking standards.

#### *Other matters*

59. Foxton Parish Council has suggested that the windows should be UPVC rather than stained timber due to maintenance issues. In this case the use of timber windows is accepted by the applicant and will result in a higher visual quality for the development.
60. The applicant is undertaking the survey work requested by Cambridgeshire Archaeology, and officers will give an update on this at the meeting.
61. Schemes for foul and surface water drainage can be secured by condition. Anglian Water has accepted that it will be required to provide the additional capacity required for foul drainage.
62. The applicant has submitted a draft Heads of Terms recognising the need for contributions under Policies DP/4 and SF/10 in respect of community facilities, public open space and the need to secure the affordable housing in perpetuity.
63. The applicant has recognised the need to comply with Policy NE/3 in respect of renewable energy technology, and this can be secured by condition.

#### **Conclusion**

64. The development of this site for housing will result in some harm the current open character of the landscape, however officers are of the view that this harm is outweighed by the benefits of bringing forward a scheme for 100% affordable dwellings for Foxton, and the relatively small scale of the development.

65. In all other respects officers are of the view that the scheme complies with Policy HG/5 and other material planning considerations, for the scale of the development proposed.
66. Members are aware of the current position in respect of the five-year housing land supply, and that the Local Plan policies in respect of housing supply, such as village frameworks and scale of development have been considered to be out of date. As this application is being considered as an exception to the normal policies of the Local Plan as a scheme for 100% affordable housing under HG/5, officers are of the view that the application still falls to be considered against that policy.
67. The consultation responses to the revised scheme will be reported at the meeting.

### **Recommendation**

68. Subject to the further comments of Environmental Health, Cambridgeshire Archaeology and the provision of additional landscaping delegated powers are sought to approve the application are sought, subject to the signing of a Section 106 Agreement and conditions

### **Conditions**

To include:

Time limit – 3 years

Materials

Landscaping (including boundary treatment)

Drainage

Highway conditions, including footpath provision

Car Parking

Restriction of PD rights and further openings

Archaeology

### **Background Papers**

Where the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 require documents to be open to inspection by members of the public, they must be available for inspection: -

- (a) at all reasonable hours at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council;
- (b) on the Council's website; and
- (c) in the case of documents to be available for inspection pursuant to regulation 15, on payment of a reasonable fee required by the Council by the person seeking to inspect the documents at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council.

The following list contains links to the documents on the Council's website and / or an indication as to where hard copies can be inspected.

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD 2007
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Proposed Submission July 2013
- South Cambridgeshire Supplementary Planning Documents
- National Planning Policy Framework 2012
- Planning File References: S/2658/14/FL and S/1422/96/F

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