

**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee

3<sup>rd</sup> December 2008

**AUTHOR/S:** Executive Director / Corporate Manager - Planning and Sustainable Communities

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**S/1840/08/F - COTTENHAM  
Erection of Twelve Dwellings at Land North of Orchard Close  
For Hundred Houses Society**

**Recommendation: Delegated Approval**

**Date for Determination: 19<sup>th</sup> January 2009 (Major Application)**

**Notes:**

**This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because it is for affordable housing on an exception site outside the village framework.**

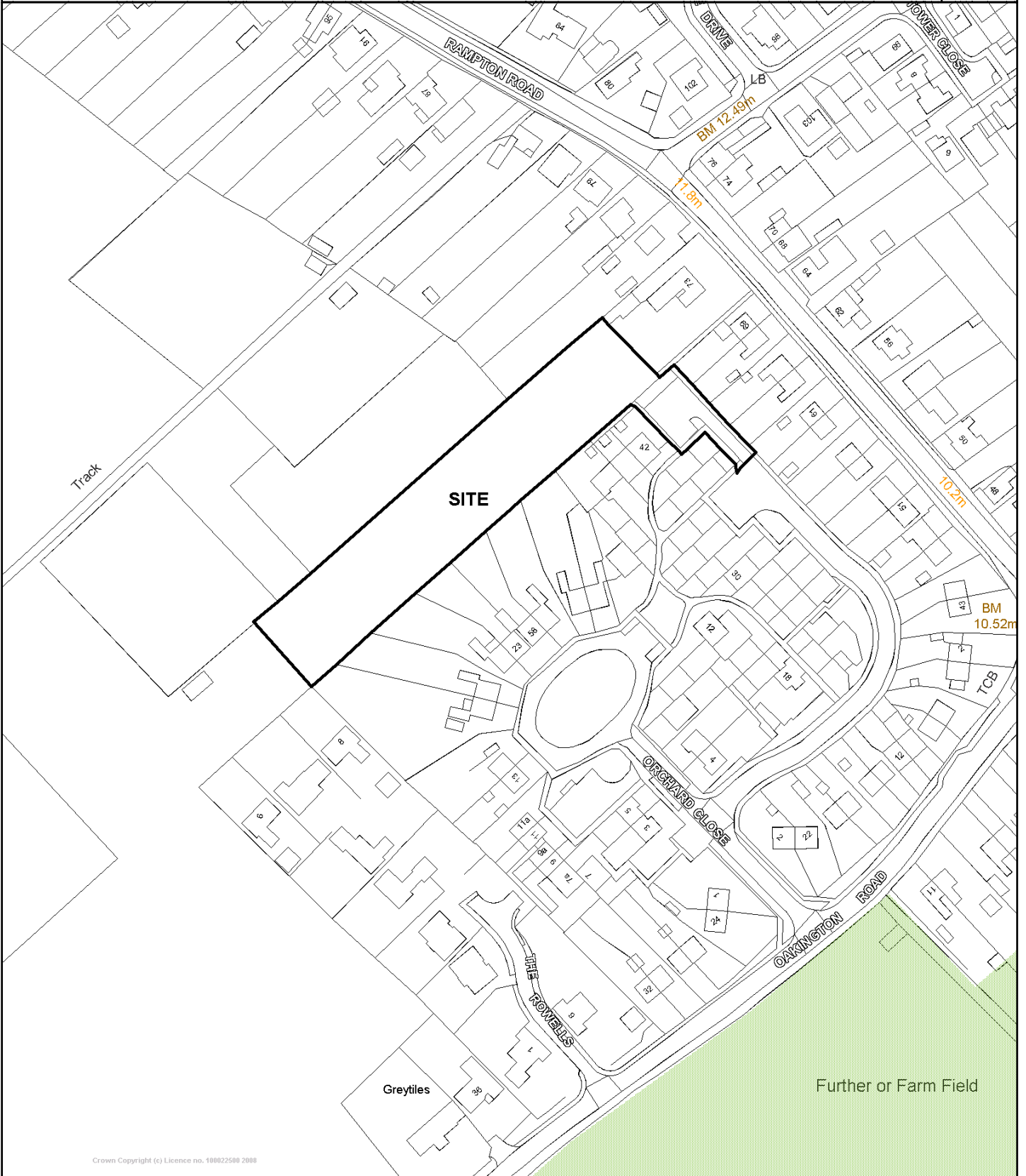
**Site and Proposal**

1. The application site, measuring 0.46 hectares, is a field to the north of Orchard Close on the western side of the village. It comprises an existing roadway serving a small car parking area and an arable field. There are gardens adjoining to the southeast, northeast and the northwestern end of the site. Orchards and fields beyond the site to the northwest and southwest bound the remainder of the site. The site is accessed via the car parking court off Orchard Close. A small number of trees mark the car park edge and a field hedge to the northwestern boundary. A post and rail fence marks the southwestern boundary.
2. This full planning application received on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2008, proposes the erection of twelve affordable homes at a gross density of 26.09 dwellings per hectare (dph). The net density is approximately 33.3 dph. The mix proposed comprises:

6 no. 2-bedroomed bungalow/houses;  
4 no. 2-bedroomed flats;  
1 no. 3-bedroomed house and;  
1 no. 4-bedroomed house.

The application is accompanied by a Design Statement, Disabled Access Statement, Water Conservation Strategy Statement, Sustainability Appraisal, Renewable Energy Statement, Health Impact Statement, Affordable Housing Statement, Sewage and Utilities Assessment and Tree Report.

3. Access will be via the existing point off Orchard Close and will require the alteration of the existing access point and re-provision of 7 resident parking spaces. 23 car parking spaces to serve the development are proposed,



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excluding the 7 that are to replace some of the 10 spaces lost from the existing parking court, resulting in an overall total of 30.

4. The application is due to be discussed at an affordable housing panel. The outcome of the meeting will be reported by way of an addendum to this report.

### **Planning History**

5. The existing residential development at Orchard Close extended a post-war scheme of housing, approved in the 1970s under planning permission ref. **S/0846/74/O**.
6. Planning application ref. **S/0686/08/F** sought full permission for the erection of thirteen affordable homes. It was considered at the Planning Committee meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2008. Members determined to refuse the application on grounds including: the adverse impact on existing properties and residents, lack of amenity / play areas, and the proposed Plot 2 being out of character with the area. If supported by independent consultation, additional reasons for refusal were to be drainage concerns and highway safety (including the loss of car parking). The Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service were to be asked for their views about access for emergency vehicles and their response might have formed the basis of another reason for refusal. This application was however, withdrawn following meetings with officers, the Parish Council and local residents before a decision notice was issued.

### **Planning Policy**

#### **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework 2007**

7. **Policy ST/5 – Minor Rural Centres** identifies Cottenham and states development and re-development of up to thirty dwellings will be permitted within village frameworks. For larger schemes of over 9 houses section 106 agreement may be used to secure contributions towards appropriate village services.
8. **Policy DP/1 - Sustainable Development** states development will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that it is consistent with the principles of sustainable development, as appropriate to its location, scale and form.
9. **DP/2 Design of New Development** requires all new development to be of a high quality design and indicates the specific elements to be achieved where appropriate. It also sets out the requirements for Design and Access Statements.
10. **DP/3 Development Criteria** sets out what all new development should provide, as appropriate to its nature, scale and economic viability and clearly sets out circumstances where development will not be granted on grounds of an unacceptable adverse impact e.g. residential amenity and traffic generation.
11. **DP/4 Infrastructure and New Developments** requires that development proposals should include suitable arrangements for the improvement or provision of infrastructure necessary to make the scheme acceptable in planning terms. It identifies circumstances where contributions may be required e.g. affordable housing and education.
12. **Policy DP/6 - Construction Methods** states where practicable, development, which by its nature or extent is likely to have some adverse impact upon the local

environment and amenity during construction and/or is likely to generate construction waste should, inter alia:

- (a) Recycle construction waste.
- (b) Prepare a “Resource Re-use and Recycling Scheme” to cover all waste arising during the construction.
- (c) Be bound by a “Considerate Contractors Scheme” or similar arrangement, including restrictions on hours of noisy operations.

13. **Policy DP/7 - Development Frameworks** states redevelopment of unallocated land and buildings within development frameworks will be permitted, provided that:

- (a) Retention of the site in its present state does not form an essential part of the local character.
- (b) Development would be sensitive to the character of the location, local features of landscape, ecological or historic importance, and the amenities of neighbours.
- (c) There is the necessary infrastructure capacity to support the development.

14. **Policy HG/1 - Housing Density** is set at a minimum of 30 dph unless there are exceptional local circumstances that require a different treatment in order to make best use of land. Higher densities of 40 dph will be sought in the most sustainable locations.

15. **Policy HG/3 - Affordable Housing** occupation will be limited to people in housing need and must be available over the long-term. The appropriate mix in terms of housing tenures and house sizes of affordable housing will be determined by local circumstances at the time of planning permission, including housing need and the achievement of mixed and balanced communities. In order to ensure sustainable communities, affordable housing will be distributed through the development in small groups or clusters.

16. **Policy HG/5 - Exceptions Sites for Affordable Housing states:**

- 1. As an exception to the normal operation of the policies of this plan, planning permission may be granted for schemes of 100% affordable housing designed to meet identified local housing needs on small sites within or adjoining villages. The following criteria will all have to be met:
  - (a) The development proposal includes secure arrangements for ensuring that all the dwellings within the scheme provide affordable housing in perpetuity for those in housing need;
  - (b) The number, size, design, mix and tenure of the dwellings are all confined to, and appropriate to, the strict extent of the identified local need;
  - (c) The site of the proposal is well related to the built-up area of the settlement and the scale of the scheme is appropriate to the size and character of the village;
  - (d) The site is well related to facilities and services within the village;
  - (e) The development does not damage the character of the village or the rural landscape.

17. **Policy SF/6 - Public Art and New Development** states in determining planning applications the District Council will encourage the provision or commissioning of

publicly accessible art, craft and design works. The Policy will apply to residential developments comprising 10 or more dwellings.

18. **Policy SF/10 - Outdoor Play Space, Informal Open Space and New Developments** states all residential developments will be required to contribute towards Outdoor Playing Space (including children's play space and formal outdoor sports facilities) and Informal Open Space to meet the additional need generated by the development in accordance with the standards in **Policy SF/11**.
19. **Policy SF/11 - Open Space Standards** states the minimum standard for outdoor play space and informal open space is 2.8ha per 1000 people, comprising:
  - (a) Outdoor sport 1.6ha per 1000 people.
  - (b) Children's Playspace - 0.8ha per 1000 people.
  - (c) Informal Open Space - 0.4ha per 1000 people.
20. **Policy NE/1 - Energy Efficiency** states development will be required to demonstrate that it would achieve a high degree of measures to increase the energy efficiency of new buildings, for example through location, layout, orientation, aspect and external design.
21. **Policy NE/3 - Renewable Energy Technologies in New Development** states all development proposals greater than 10 dwellings will include technology for renewable energy to provide at least 10% of their predicted energy requirement.
22. **Policy NE/6 - Biodiversity** requires new developments to aim to maintain, enhance, restore or add to biodiversity. The District Council will refuse development that would have an adverse significant impact on the population or conservation status of protected species, priority species or habitat, unless the impact can be adequately mitigated by measures secured by planning conditions. Previously developed land will not be considered to be devoid of biodiversity. The re-use of such sites must be undertaken carefully with regard to existing features of biodiversity interest. Development proposals will be expected to include measures that maintain and enhance important features whilst incorporating them within any development of the site.
23. **Policy NE/9 - Water and Drainage Infrastructure** indicates that planning permission will not be granted where there are inadequate water supply, sewerage or land drainage systems to meet the demands of the development unless there is an agreed phasing agreement between the developer and the relevant service provider to ensure the provision of necessary infrastructure.
24. **Policy NE/12 - Water Conservation** states that for development of more than 1000m<sup>2</sup> or more than 10 houses all practicable water conservation measures will be required to be submitted in a water conservation strategy.
25. **Policy TR/1 - Planning for More Sustainable Travel** states planning permission will not be granted for developments likely to give rise to a material increase in travel demands unless the site has a sufficient standard of accessibility to offer an appropriate choice of travel by public transport or other non-car travel modes. The amount of car parking provision in new developments should be minimised, compatible with their location. Developments should be designed from the outset with permeable layouts to facilitate and encourage short distance trips by cycle and walking. Safe and secure cycle parking shall be provided.

26. **Policy TR/2 - Car and Cycle Parking Standards** states car parking should be provided in accordance with the Council's maximum standards, to reduce over reliance on the car and to promote more sustainable forms of transport.
27. **Policy TR/3 - Mitigating Travel Impact** requires applications for major residential development to be accompanied by a Transport Assessment.
28. **Policy TR/4 - Non-motorised Modes** states the District Council will use its planning powers by ensuring that all new developments are designed at the outset to facilitate and encourage short distance trips between home, work, schools and for leisure.

### **Consultations**

29. The consultation period is due to expire on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2008. Therefore a number of responses are awaited and will be reported by way of an addendum to this report.
30. **Cottenham Parish Council** – comments awaited.
31. **Drainage Manager** – comments awaited.
32. **Local Highway Authority** – comments awaited.
33. **Manager (Health and Environmental Services)** – comments awaited.
34. **Landscape Design Officer** – comments: 'This is a much improved layout, reducing the impact of the development on its neighbours. I should like to see a landscape plan in due course. Around the houses I should like to see some herbaceous planting as well as shrubs to give a low maintenance but garden feel to the development. The curved wall at the entrance could be clothed in Boston ivy (*Parthenocissus tricuspidata*) to soften its appearance during the summer'.
35. **Community Safety Department** – comments awaited.
36. **Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue** – Adequate provision must be made for fire hydrants. This can be secured by of a condition. Access and facilities should be in accordance with the Building Regulations Approved Document B5, Section 16.
37. **Cambridgeshire County Council** – comments awaited. (No education contributions are sought if all houses are affordable).
38. **Housing Development and Enabling Manager** – comments awaited.
39. **Arts Development Officer** – comments awaited.
40. **Ecology Officer** – comments awaited.
41. **Building Control** – comments awaited.

## **Representations**

42. Cottenham Village Design Group – comments:
- 'This is a village edge development where it will be important to protect and enhance the external view of the village. We support the intention to include a native hedgerow/buffer on boundaries exposed to open farmland although find the application lacking details of this planting and note that no drawing showing this external elevation has been provided.
43. We find the proposed buildings to be acceptable in this location although feel that more could be done to acknowledge their Cottenham context. A development of this size will have some impact on the local community; consideration should be given to providing some contribution to local infrastructure costs.
44. *'L/3: New developments on the village edge should give high priority to landscape design and management of light pollution, to protect and enhance the external view of the village. Do not form a stark edge to the village, or spoil the outside view by neglecting the backs of gardens or buildings. Shelter and contain the edge using appropriate native broadleaf species. Achieve well-designed compositions using hedge and woodland screens. Maintain dark skies in the countryside at night by minimising light spillage from new development.'* (Cottenham Village Design Statement p.6)
45. *'L/1: Landscape design criteria should form a key aspect in the layout, form and urban design qualities of new developments.'* (Design Statement p.6)
46. *'6/6: New developments should acknowledge their Cottenham context and avoid pattern-book designs. Respect local characteristics and context of the particular site. Use good quality materials - whether modern or traditional - which are appropriate to Cottenham.'* (Design Statement p.19)
47. *'C/2: Developers, planners and public authorities should take relevant local advice concerning facilities (including education, sport, culture and entertainment) to be provided as a result of new development.'* (Design Statement p.2)
48. The consultation period does not expire until 8th December 2008, additional responses will be included in an addendum or reported verbally.

## **Planning Comments – Key Issues**

49. The key issues in assessing this application are affordable housing, design, layout, public open space, drainage, access, car parking, cycle parking, biodiversity, landscaping, public art, energy efficiency and renewable energy provision and infrastructure.

### ***Affordable housing***

50. The tenure mix will be secured through a condition requiring a scheme to be submitted (usually a section 106 agreement). The applicant has indicated that it is willing to enter into an agreement. As an exception site the dwellings will be occupied by families with a tie to Cottenham and not to meet the wider, district, need.

51. It is officers' view that the site is well related to the village framework, being adjacent to it and within easy reach of its services with a short walk to these. The development of this land will not seriously harm the character of the village or rural landscape, being away from public view points and due to its lack of significant contribution to the landscape currently. The proposal appears to accord with Policy HG/5 in those regards.

### ***Design and layout***

52. The scheme has been designed to address as much as possible concerns raised in relation to the previous application. Plots 1 and 2 are away from the existing rear garden of no. 73 Rampton Road and are bungalows. An area is also being set aside for a garden extension to no. 73 for garden land. This was intended to be occupied by a two bedroom bungalow in the earlier scheme.
53. The scheme no longer contains chalet bungalows, minimising the visual impact upon both Rampton Road and Orchard Close residents.
54. The dwellings are sited to avoid overlooking and have reasonable distances between dwellings. Distances from the back of 2 storey houses at The Rowells and Orchard Close are between 30 – 50 metres, while back-to-front distances between bungalows (plots 1 and 2) and Orchard Close are 21 metres on back-to-side or front.
55. The density is acceptable for an edge of village location and meets minimum requirements.
56. The designs are modern in style and subject to appropriate materials will not be out of keeping with the area.

### ***Public open space***

57. No provision has been made for a play area on site. This is due to the very linear nature of the site, which makes it difficult to accommodate on site. No direct reference has been made to off-site provision, although the supporting documents refer to the applicant's willingness to enter into a section 106 to secure any necessary infrastructure improvements. It does however note that these have not been worked in the costings and therefore confirmation is being sought as the precise details of this commitment in order to ensure that adequate infrastructure is provided to meet the needs of the development. Policies SF/10 and SF/11 do not make exemptions for affordable schemes.

### ***Drainage***

58. Members were concerned, in considering the previous scheme that reports of poor drainage infrastructure had been received. This matter has been investigated further and the supporting documents with the application set out the proposals.
59. Foul drainage is to connect to the existing system at the point it cuts across the Orchard Close estate road, and therefore will not add to the sewage flow running through the back gardens of nos. 22-46 (evens) Orchard Close. The existing sewer is 150mm in diameter. While the comments of Anglian Water and the Council's Drainage Manager are awaited it is considered likely that this will overcome the concerns previously about drains backing up.



60. A water conservation strategy accompanies the application. It proposes that surface water drainage will be dealt with by way of locally sited soakaways for roof and surface water. Parking and paved areas around dwellings will drain directly onto gardens and planted areas. Each dwelling is also to be provided with a water butt that has capacity to store 180 litres of rainwater. Dwellings are to be fitted with water meters, toilet cisterns shall be dual-flush types, showers shall have flow restrictors to below 9 litres /min and all basin taps will be the type with restricted spray fittings.

### ***Access and car parking***

61. It is understood that the access has been revised to address highway concerns in relation to the earlier scheme. An update on this will be reported by way of an addendum.
62. In relation to car parking levels within the proposed scheme, a maximum of 21 spaces are required to serve the development. 10 spaces are being lost to accommodate the access road. The proposals provide 7 spaces for existing residents, a loss of 3 spaces overall. The provision to serve the development itself is 23 spaces. This is an over provision of 2 spaces. Balancing the two totals is not particularly helpful but does suggest that overall the equivalent of one space is lost. On balance the level of provision is considered acceptable, given local concerns in relation to the earlier scheme and loss of car parking.
63. Cycle parking is to be accommodated, in accordance with policy, in sheds within gardens or purpose built store for flats.

### ***Public art***

64. No reference is made within the application to the provision of public art. Policy SF/6 only encourages the provision or commissioning of publicly accessible art, craft and design works on residential developments comprising 10 or more dwellings. As the applicant has not costed for such provision, it is unlikely to be offered. An addendum to the report will address this, as the applicant's response is required.

### ***Biodiversity and Landscaping***

65. Comments are awaited in relation to biodiversity, however on the earlier application nothing arose that could not be overcome with planning conditions.
66. There was some concern relating to loss of trees and impact on the boundary hedge. This application is accompanied by a tree report. One acer tree is to be removed, as it is not possible to accommodate the road and retain it and the replacement parking. All other existing planting is accommodated within the scheme. As per the Landscape Design Officer's request landscaping conditions can be applied.

### ***Energy efficiency and renewable energy production***

67. Building Control's comments are awaited, however the application is accompanied by a sustainability appraisal and a renewable energy statement. These indicate that the dwellings will be built to at least level 3 of the code for sustainable homes and is likely to meet level 4.

68. The requirement under policy NE/2 for 10% of the energy requirement to be met through renewable energy sources is to be met through the installation of roof mounted, flat plate, solar collectors for heating water. Of some concern is that the commitment to this is weak. The statement suggests that this will only be incorporated if funding from the Housing Corporation for the scheme is available. The agent has been informed that this is a requirement of all developments and that it would be a condition of planning permission. A scheme will therefore be required to be submitted.

### **Recommendation**

69. Subject to the nature of outstanding representations; appropriate safeguarding conditions; and a Section 106 to secure the affordable housing provision and public open space contributions, Delegated Approval is sought.

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

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2007
- South Cambridgeshire Development Control Policies DPD 2008
- Planning File Refs: S/1840/08/F, S/0686/08/F and S/0846/74/O
- Documents referred to in the report including appendices on the website only and reports to previous meetings.

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