

CHARNWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL PLANNING SERVICES

FROM: Robert Paddison
Principal Planning Officer

TO: Development Management
BY: 29th September 2010

CONSULTATION ON PLANNING APPLICATION NUMBER:

10/1518/2

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT/ADDRESS	REF	DATE	
		IN	OUT
Site for residential development with associated access, Land at Melton Road, Barrow Upon Soar, Loughborough, LE12 8NX	RP	8/9	30/9

RECOMMENDATION (INITIAL BOX)	
1. Refuse	
2. No Objection subject to the negotiation of the amendments set out below	
3. Permit	RP

NB: *Where the Development Control Case Officer is minded to set aside the recommendation the issue is to be discussed between the officers concerned, or referred to the Division Heads if an agreement cannot be reached, before the final Committee Item is approved for circulation.*

RELEVANT POLICY REFERENCES:

National Planning Policy

Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development

Paragraph 5 sets out some general principles:-

'5: Planning should facilitate and promote sustainable and inclusive patterns of urban and rural development by:

- making suitable land available for development in line with economic, social and environmental objectives to improve people's quality of life;
- contributing to sustainable economic development;
- protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, the quality and character of the countryside, and existing communities;
- ensuring high quality development through good and inclusive design, and the efficient use of resources; and,
- ensuring that development supports existing communities and contributes to the creation of safe, sustainable, liveable and mixed communities with good access to jobs and key services for all members of the community.'

The general approach is set out in paragraph 27 particularly sub paragraphs (v) and (vii):-

‘(v) Provide improved access for all to jobs, health, education, shops, leisure and community facilities, open space, sport and recreation, by ensuring that new development is located where everyone can access services or facilities on foot, bicycle or public transport rather than having to rely on access by car, while recognising that this may be more difficult in rural areas.’

‘(vii) Reduce the need to travel and encourage accessible public transport provision to secure more sustainable patterns of transport development. Planning should actively manage patterns of urban growth to make the fullest use of public transport and focus development in existing centres and near to major public transport interchanges.’

Paragraph 35 sets out some of the approaches to design:

‘35. High quality and inclusive design should be the aim of all those involved in the development process. High quality and inclusive design should create well-mixed and integrated developments which avoid segregation and have well-planned public spaces that bring people together and provide opportunities for physical activity and recreation. It means ensuring a place will function well and add to the overall character and quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development. This requires carefully planned, high quality buildings and spaces that support the efficient use of resources. Although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are clearly factors in achieving these objectives, securing high quality and inclusive design goes far beyond aesthetic considerations. Good design should:

- address the connections between people and places by considering the needs of people to access jobs and key services;
- be integrated into the existing urban form and the natural and built environments;
- be an integral part of the processes for ensuring successful, safe and inclusive villages, towns and cities;
- create an environment where everyone can access and benefit from the full range of opportunities available to members of society; and,
- consider the direct and indirect impacts on the natural environment.’

Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing

Paragraph 71 states that 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 PPS3 including the considerations in paragraph 69.

Paragraph 69 states that 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.

Paragraph 72 states that Local Planning Authorities should not refuse applications solely on the grounds of prematurity.

Paragraph 54 states that to be considered deliverable, sites should, at the point of adoption of the relevant Local Development Document:

- **Be Available** – the site is available now.
- **Be Suitable** – the site offers a suitable location for development now and would contribute to the creation of sustainable, mixed communities.
- **Be Achievable** – there is a reasonable prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years.

Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth

Policy EC6.2 (b) states that in rural areas, local planning authorities should identify local service centres (which might be a country town, a single large village or a group of villages) and locate most new development in or on the edge of existing settlements where employment, housing (including affordable housing), services and other facilities can be provided close together.

Planning Policy Guidance 13: Transport

'Planning Policy Guidance 13's (PPG 13) objectives are to integrate planning and transport at the national, regional, strategic and local level and to promote more sustainable transport choices both for carrying people and for moving freight.'

Paragraph 4 sets out the general objectives:

'4. The objectives of this guidance are to integrate planning and transport at the national, regional, strategic and local level to:

1. promote more sustainable transport choices for both people and for moving freight;
2. promote accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling, and
3. reduce the need to travel, especially by car.'

Paragraph 6 sets out further detail:

'6. In order to deliver the objectives of this guidance, when preparing development plans and considering planning applications, local authorities should:

1. actively manage the pattern of urban growth to make the fullest use of public transport, and focus major generators of travel demand in city, town and district centres and near to major public transport interchanges;
2. locate day to day facilities which need to be near their clients in local centres so that they are accessible by walking and cycling;
3. accommodate housing principally within existing urban areas, planning for increased intensity of development for both housing and other uses at locations which are highly accessible by public transport, walking and cycling;
4. ensure that development comprising jobs, shopping, leisure and services offers a realistic choice of access by public transport, walking, and cycling, recognising that this may be less achievable in some rural areas;.....
8. give priority to people over ease of traffic movement and plan to provide more road space to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport in town centres, local neighbourhoods and other areas with a mixture of land uses;

Saved Policies from the Borough of Charnwood Local Plan 1991 – 2006

Many of the national policies are reflected in detail Local Plan policies some of the main ones are (among others): ENV/1 Design, ENV/1 Safety in New Development, the provision of affordable housing policies H/4 and H/5 as well as H/16 Design and Layout of New Housing Developments. There are also several transport policies TR/5, TR/6, TR/7 and TR/13 which relate to new developments and access for cyclists and pedestrians.

Local Development Framework

Settlement Hierarchy

Charnwood Borough Council is in the process of preparing a Core Strategy for the Borough. In October 2008 the Council published the Core Strategy Further Consultation document and this set out a proposed approach to development in rural areas. This consultation document identified Barrow Upon Soar as a Service Centre.

Whilst it is important to emphasise that the Core Strategy has limited weight at this stage in its preparation, the evidence base used to inform the preparation of the consultation document is a material consideration.

Five Year Supply

This assessment has been updated in August 2010 and presents the situation as of March 31st 2010. There is still a shortfall of land readily deliverable to meet the 5 year supply requirements.

COMMENTS:

This is a resubmission of a previous application the principle of which in policy terms was acceptable but was refused for a number of technical reasons (application P10/1518/2 refers). This latest application is considered in the light of the revocation of the RSS and the interim guidance produced by the government's Chief Planning Officer.

Five Year Supply

As this site is located in the countryside and outside the limits to development of Barrow Upon Soar as defined in the adopted Local Plan housing development should be restricted. However, PPS3 states that where Local Planning Authorities cannot demonstrate an up-to-date five year supply of deliverable sites, they should consider favourably planning applications for housing, having regard to the policies in PPS3.

The council is unable to demonstrate a five year housing supply there being only 2.7 year's supply when measured against the housing target informed by the RSS evidence base, as illustrated in the latest five year land supply assessment (published in August 2010).

Whilst it is preferable for the allocation of sites to be addressed through the Council's Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Allocations Development Plan Document this will not address the issue of supply in the short term. It is therefore appropriate that this proposal for dwellings in the countryside is considered against the current development plan and other material considerations including PPS3, particularly paragraph 69, to assess whether this site should be allowed for housing as an exception to contribute to the shortfall in the provision of housing land in the short term, whilst Local Development Documents are prepared to overcome this shortfall in the long term.

Assessing Deliverability

It is important to assess the proposal against the criteria set out in PPS3 for identifying deliverable sites in order to establish whether the site can contribute to the overall supply of deliverable sites. To be considered deliverable, sites should be available, suitable and achievable (PPS3, paragraph 54). The Council's Assessment of Five Year Supply expands on these three criteria.

Suitability

A key piece of evidence base in assessing the site's suitability against PPS3 (and in fulfilling the general principles in para 5 of PPS 1) is the 'Settlement Hierarchy Review' published in September 2008 to inform the Core Strategy. This assessment considered the availability and accessibility of services and facilities, settlement size and function and the geographical distribution. This assessment found that Barrow Upon Soar has 13 different services and facilities, 26 in total including a secondary school and primary school, doctors surgery, main convenience shop, post office, library, recreation and community facilities. Barrow Upon Soar also has good public transport accessibility with a half

hourly daytime bus service and hourly train service Monday to Saturday and two hourly bus service at other times.

This assessment shows that Barrow Upon Soar has good access to a full range of services and facilities and good access by bus and is therefore a sustainable location for new development. This is reflected in the advice published on our website that explains the Council's approach in determining planning applications for housing development in rural communities in Charnwood based on national guidance, recent appeal decisions and the evidence base study referred to above:

(<http://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/newdwellingsincharnwoodsralcommunities#key>)

On the basis of this evidence the Core Strategy Further Consultation document identifies Barrow Upon Soar as a Service Centre, where a smaller scale development to that proposed in the Main Urban Centres will be appropriate in locations within or adjoining the settlement limits. However it is important to emphasise that the Core Strategy has limited weight at this stage of its preparation.

The site itself adjoins the settlement boundary and is well related to the village's services and facilities, the train station and the half hourly Monday to Saturday daytime service, the number 2 service between Loughborough and Leicester, which travels along Melton Road. If there are no irresolvable physical/environmental constraints and suitable access can be achieved, the evidence suggests that this site is suitable for housing.

The evidence base work to date for the Core Strategy does not assess the capacity of services and facilities to support significant scales of development or identify the local issues that development could help to address. This work is underway to inform the Core Strategy and Allocations Development Plan Document but will not be available in time for this application. The issue of capacity of services and facilities is a particularly important consideration for Barrow Upon Soar where there has been significant development in recent years with a Local Plan housing allocation still being built out. This will need to be considered and addressed through planning obligations.

Availability

The site can also be identified as available as the site is owned and being promoted by the developer Jelson Homes Ltd.

Achievability

The developer has provided evidence that there are no cost factors, market factors or deliverability issues that would prevent the development from coming forward within five years. The Planning Statement outlines the developer's commitment and confidence in delivering the site within the next five years, demonstrating a reasonable prospect of being delivered by March 2015 and therefore contributing to the Council's five year supply.

Priority for Brownfield Land

This proposal is a significant greenfield development which does not make best use of previously developed land available in sustainable locations. Within Barrow Upon Soar there are four developable brownfield sites identified in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (March 2009) providing potential opportunity for approximately 135 dwellings. Across the Borough there are further previously developed sites available within urban areas and other sustainable settlements. These brownfield sites should be prioritised ahead of greenfield developments. However these brownfield sites are not being promoted for planning permission and there is a significant shortfall in housing land in the Borough which needs to be addressed in accordance with PPS3. Given that this site is well located to facilities, services and public transport and the shortfall in five year supply of sites it would be unreasonable to hold this site back in the hope a brownfield site will come forward.

Access

Access forms part of this outline application and is not reserved and so relevant policies have been considered in relation to the scheme. The initial appearance of the application is that it is car dominated with no detail shown on the application plans for other forms of more sustainable transport including walking and cycling.

The travel plan sets out a series of good intentions but these are not detailed in any way in the application, although access is part of the application to be determined. The impacts further afield within the village have not been considered in detail and there are no proposals for improved cycle and pedestrian access off site if they are needed. There is no detailed survey, analysis or suggested improvements of the access routes to services and facilities within the village which may be needed to ensure that walking and cycling is a safe and attractive alternative to using the car. National policies and guidance are reflected in Local Plan policies; TR/5, TR/6, TR/7 and TR/13.

Conclusions

Access to the development forms part of this outline application and it is vital that it complies with national and Local Plan policies, at the moment the basic application plan only shows the main road and roundabout lay out, there are no details for the pedestrian and cycle access routes to the village. There may be a need to improve access arrangements elsewhere within the village to ensure residents of the new housing could find it safe and attractive to walk or cycle to key services, facilities and employment within the village. There already exist a series of traffic management solutions within the village which attempt to manage the use and parking of cars and other motor vehicles, new housing will put additional pressure on these.

Overall, whilst there are some concerns about releasing a site of this scale in Barrow Upon Soar ahead of completing the evidence base and comparative assessment of potential sites for the Core Strategy and Site Allocations Development Plan Document, PPS3 is clear that prematurity is not a sufficient reason to refuse this proposal. In light of this, based on the assessment provided above the site should be considered favourably in principle. However as an exception to normal policy, solely to maintain a supply of sites,

it is imperative to ensure that in this edge of settlement location within the countryside the criteria set out in paragraph 69 of PPS3 are met and national and Local Plan policies on transport and access are complied with. As with the last application a refusal should be considered if a satisfactory and enforceable solution cannot be found to the access issues outlined above.