



Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment

Call for Sites and Broad Locations

Response March 2019

Planning Policy Overview and Analysis

Site: **Land North of Elbourn Way and The Limes, Bassingbourn**

Site size: **2.82 hectares**

Potential development: **30-40 dwellings and public open space**

Having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance the following information has been presented in order to assist the Council in considering the suitability, availability and achievability of residential development taking place at this site. This confirms that Bassingbourn is, on the Council's previous assessment as part of the 2018 Local Plan, a sustainable location to accommodate new housing.

Suitability

Within the Adopted Local Plan (2018) Bassingbourn is classified as a Minor Rural Centre (via Policy S/9). This represents the second tier of the settlement hierarchy. Policy S/9 confirms that developments of up to 30 dwellings will be permitted within the settlement boundary of such a Minor Rural Centre.

The 2012 estimated that the population of Bassingbourn was 2,130. The dwelling stock was estimated to be 850 in mid-2012¹.

The proposed site is considered suitable for all types of residential development (market housing; private rented; affordable housing; self and custom build; and housing for older people). The site could also accommodate an element of public open space which could include a new circular walk within the land and areas where biodiversity could flourish. The masterplan includes 1.5 hectares of public open space which is over and above that required to serve the development.

The principal use for the site is therefore residential (c. 30-40 dwellings) and at present it is suggested that the site would be most suitable for the development of a conventional market housing lead development with a planning policy compliant level of affordable housing. Either the

¹ Cambridgeshire County Council source – taken from South Cambridgeshire District Council's Services and Facilities Study (March 2014)

market or policy compliant affordable housing would be capable of accommodating an element of private rented; self or custom build; or housing for older people.

The District Council previously assessed the proposed site within the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2013) and considered that whilst the site merited further consideration it was, at that time, not taken forward for allocation within the Local Plan due to the anticipated harm in relation to Heritage assets.

In addition to the Heritage impacts we also consider the position in respect of Landscape impacts and Flood Risk.

Heritage: the land is situated to the north of existing housing development.

The land itself presently accommodates a balancing pond which was constructed to serve the Elbourn Way housing development to the south. Subject to future detailed discussions with Anglian Water, and as confirmed by the Amazi *Technical Note on Flood Risk* the balancing pond appears overly large to serve the housing estate. We consider that the pond could be removed and an updated drainage scheme (involving less land due to sustainable drainage techniques) would be developed which is capable of either being proposed off-site or within the proposed site itself. As set out above we expect such a feature to be accommodated on less land which would enable further opportunities to mitigate any impacts upon heritage assets.

As shown on the draft masterplan attached the development does not propose any significant development within the western field and as such the setting of the Listed Buildings and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area would not therefore be unduly harmed. By proposing such a scheme, which would include public open space which is over and above planning policy requirements this would enhance the ability to view and appreciate the heritage assets whilst also ensuring that special regard is demonstrated in relation to the setting of the Listed Buildings and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area can be, as a minimum, preserved.

Flood Risk: according to the Environment Agency flood maps the land is within Flood Zones 1, 2 and 3. At present our draft masterplan proposes new housing only within Flood Zone 1 with the land within Flood Zones 2 and 3 being provided as public open space: the amount of which would be over and above that required to serve the development.

Landscape and Visual Impacts: the impacts in this regard are assessed within the RPS *Landscape and Visual Statement*. The report concludes that whilst there would be some localised impacts these would reduce in time though the introduction of a robust landscaping scheme.

In relation to other indicators of suitability the Council's previous assessment of the site and the village more generally have confirmed that the village is a sustainable location for further housing growth and that the land previously scored positively in relation to factors such as: access to services and facilities within the village; educational facilities and proximity to a larger centre (Royston).

We note further that the District Council previously recognised the following deficiencies within the village in terms of community facilities:

- 1) Sport Space shortfall (-1.63 ha)²
- 2) Play Space shortfall (-1.25 ha)²
- 3) Informal Open Space shortfall (-0.56 ha)²
- 4) Allotment land shortfall (-0.68 ha)²
- 5) Part time doctors' surgery and library; limited range of shops and services³
- 6) No community facilities⁴

The proposal is capable of providing facilities in order to seek to address or at least improve existing deficiencies subject to further discussions with the District and Parish Council's. For example additional informal open space could be provided to facilitate a walking route around the site and/or an area could be developed to enable biodiversity to flourish – such as a community orchard and wildflower meadow.

Availability

The site is available and Abbey Properties Cambridgeshire Limited are promoting the land's redevelopment.

The Council's previous assessment noted the access requirements from Elbourn Way. The promoters have agreed terms for accessing the site over the ransom strip and confirmation of this can be provided in due course if required by the Council.

The land is evidently available and subject to gaining Planning Permission the land would be sold to a developer. The promoter is aware of interest within the site from house builders.

Achievability

The development of between 30 and 40 dwellings at the site together with community facilities is considered to be fully achievable at this site. The promoter has experience of delivering such sites.

Both the landowners and the promoters are confident that the value from a site sale, taking account of the requirements for affordable housing, access (the ransom strip) and infrastructure (including reconfiguring the drainage pond within the site), would not make the development unviable.

Conclusion

We consider that the site's redevelopment for a housing led development is a suitable, available and achievable opportunity to deliver additional housing stock within a sustainable location.

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² South Cambridgeshire District Council Recreation and Open Space Study 2013

³ South Cambridgeshire District Council Village Classification Report 2012

⁴ Scott Wilson (for South Cambridgeshire District Council) Community Facilities Assessment 2009