

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE – 20th SEPTEMBER 2010

REPORT OF DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

(Author: Nick Moys, Principal Planning Officer (Major Projects))

NORTH PICKENHAM: PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT, LAND AT BRECKLANDS GREEN

Applicant: Mr T Gray

Reference: 3PL/2010/0742/F

DEFERRED ITEM REPORT

1. This report concerns a planning application for the erection of 7 dwellings on land at Breckland Green, North Pickenham. The proposal was considered by Committee on 1st September 2010, when it was resolved to defer the application to allow further clarification to be provided about the management of the proposed affordable housing.
2. Discussions are on-going between the applicant and the Council's Housing Team in relation to this matter. Advice has also been sought from the Council's solicitor about the draft section 106 agreement.
3. **RECOMMENDATION** A verbal update will be provided on the issues raised in relation to affordable housing.

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE – 1ST SEPTEMBER 2010

REPORT OF DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

(Author: Nick Moys, Principal Planning Officer (Major Projects))

NORTH PICKENHAM: PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT, LAND AT BRECKLANDS GREEN

Applicant: Mr T Gray

Reference: 3PL/2010/0742/F

Summary – This report concerns a planning application for residential development on the outskirts of North Pickenham. It is recommended that the application is refused on policy grounds.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report concerns a planning application for the erection of 7 dwellings on land at Breckland Green, North Pickenham. The proposed development would comprise 3 x 2 bedroom houses and 4 x 3 bedroom houses in the form of short terrace and two pairs of linked semi-detached dwellings. Three of the dwellings would be provided as affordable housing for rent. Access would be provided by extending an existing private roadway. The application is supported by a Design & Access Statement, Arboricultural Implications and Contaminated Land Desk Study. A Section 106 Agreement relating to affordable housing provision and recreation contributions is being drafted.

The application site is located on the south-western outskirts of the village of North Pickenham. The site comprises an open grassed area extending to 0.9 hectare, and is adjoined by existing housing. This housing, together with the application site, originally formed part of a Christian fellowship centre and retreat. This use ceased a number of years ago, and the complex has subsequently been used purely for residential purposes.

2. KEY DECISION

This is not a key decision.

3. COUNCIL PRIORITIES

The following Council priorities are relevant to this report:

- A safe and healthy environment
- A well planned place to live and work

4. SITE HISTORY

Outline planning permission was refused in January 2010 for the development of 9 dwellings on grounds of conflict with planning policy relating to development outside settlement boundaries, provision of affordable housing and loss of open space.

5. CONSULTATIONS

North Pickenham Parish Council - comments awaited.

The Highway Authority has objected to the application on the grounds that it would be likely to result in increased traffic movements at nearby substandard junction to the detriment of highway safety.

The Environment Agency has made reference to standing advice on surface water run-off in areas of low flood risk. In such areas, new development should not increase the risk of flooding on-site or elsewhere, and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) should be used where possible.

Norfolk Police have made comments on the proposal in relation to designing out crime, notably with reference to surveillance of parking areas, landscaping and lighting.

The Planning Policy Officer – comments waited.

The Tree & Countryside Officer – comments waited.

The Council's Housing Enabling Officer - comments awaited.

The Council's Contaminated Land Officer has raised no objection to the application subject to conditions relating to site investigation.

6. POLICY

At a national level, policies set out in PPS 3 'Housing', PPS 7 'Sustainable Development in Rural Areas' and PPG 13 'Transport' are relevant to this application.

The application site falls outside the Settlement Boundary for North Pickenham, as defined in the Council's Core Strategy DPD, and is identified as an area of amenity open space. Relevant Core Strategy policies include Policies CP6 (Green Infrastructure), CP14 (Sustainable Rural Communities), DC1 (Protection of Amenity), DC2 (Housing), DC4 (Affordable Housing), DC11 (Open Space), DC13 (Trees) and DC14 (Energy Efficiency).

7. ASSESSMENT

The principal issues raised by the application concern: i) planning policy matters, ii) the impact of the development on the character of the area, and iii) highway safety.

Planning policy

The application site lies outside the Settlement Boundary for North Pickenham. The proposal is therefore contrary to national planning policy, as set out in PPS 7, which seeks to prevent unnecessary residential development in the countryside and outside defined settlements. Core Strategy Policy CP14 identifies a number of situations where development may be permitted outside village boundaries, none of which relate to this application.

Notwithstanding this conflict with countryside protection policy, the proposed development must also be assessed against national planning policy for housing.

PPS 3 states that where a 5-year supply of deliverable housing land cannot be demonstrated, favourable consideration should be given to housing proposals if they address satisfactorily the criteria set out in PPS 3, particularly those contained in paragraph 69. These criteria relate to matters such as design quality, housing mix, environmental sustainability, the suitability of the site for housing and the effective use of land efficiently. Proposals are also required not to undermine wider policy objectives.

The proposal would address satisfactorily a number of the criteria set out in PPS 3 paragraph 69. The scale and design of the development would be in keeping with adjacent development, and the scheme would not intrude into open countryside. Affordable housing would be provided in line with current policies, and would be well integrated with the layout and design of the remainder of development. It is intended that the development would be constructed to meet Code Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes, exceeding the requirements of Policy DC14. A recreation contribution would be secured to meet the recreational needs of new residents in line with Policy DC11. In terms of delivery, it is understood that the applicant would intend to develop the site himself as soon as possible if permission were granted.

To set against these positive factors, it should be noted that the proposal would not be consistent with the Council's overall spatial strategy. North Pickenham is not identified in the Core Strategy as a local service centre village. The spatial strategy indicates that for non-service centre villages, only nominal housing and employment growth is envisaged. Non-service centre villages are not considered to represent a sustainable option for significant expansion as they are heavily reliant on higher order settlements for services and facilities. North Pickenham facilities include a primary school and public house, but there is no shop/post office and public transport facilities are limited.

In addition, although the site is adjacent to existing housing and the local primary school, it is divorced physically from the main village and does not adjoin the defined settlement boundary. The Council's Site Specifics DPD Consultation proposes only minor changes to the existing settlement boundary, although only limited weight can be given to this policy document at present.

The proposed development would also result in a loss of land identified as amenity green space. The application site is identified in the Council's Open Space Audit as amenity green space. Core Strategy Policy DC11 states that development of amenity open space will only be permitted where replacement facilities to be provided would be of greater benefit to the local community. No new facilities are proposed to compensate for the loss of green space that would result from the development, although the applicant has offered a financial contribution to compensate.

Impact on local character

The application site occupies a relatively prominent position on the edge of the village of North Pickenham. However, the site does enjoy a degree of screening from trees and hedging, and from some viewpoints the proposed housing would be seen against the background of existing development. The development would be confined within the established limits of the Brecklands Green development and would not break into open countryside. Whilst the proposed development would inevitably give the site a more built up appearance, the intended layout with houses set back against the south-western site boundary would ensure that much of the open aspect of the existing development would be retained. The current proposals

are a significant improvement on the previous scheme in this respect. Subject to the use of appropriate external materials and finishes, it is considered that the design of the houses would be in keeping with the adjacent development. It is not considered that the development layout would have any significant impact on the residential amenities of local residents due to overlooking or disturbance.

Highway safety

The Highway Authority has objected to the proposed development on the grounds that it would increase traffic movements at a nearby substandard junction. The junction of South Pickenham Road and The Street is located to the north of the site and provides access from the site to the village and onwards to Swaffham and the A47. Visibility for vehicles emerging from this junction is severely limited in a westerly direction. Whilst it is reasonable to assume that this junction is already well used, and that therefore the relative impact of the proposed seven dwellings would be less than might otherwise be the case, the anticipated increase in traffic would nevertheless result in some additional risks to other road users. Whilst it is not considered that refusal of permission would be justified on highway grounds alone, the inadequacies of the local road network reinforce the overall conclusion that the application site is not well suited to further residential development.

8. RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission is refused on policy grounds due to its location outside the settlement boundary, conflict with the spatial strategy for the area and highway safety.