

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE – 5TH JANUARY 2011

REPORT OF DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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

HARLING: PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF 17 NO. HOUSES INCLUDING A MIX OF 2, 3 AND 4 BEDROOM HOUSES, CLOVERFIELDS, LOPHAM ROAD

Applicant: Mr Burton

Reference: 3PL/2010/1079/F

Summary – This report concerns a planning application for residential development on the edge of Harling. The proposal raises issues relating to planning policy and impact on the character of the surrounding area. It is recommended that permission is refused.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report concerns an application for full planning permission for residential development on land at Cloverfields, Lopham Road, Harling. The proposed development would comprise the erection of 17 dwellings, a new access road and incidental open space. A range of house sizes is proposed, including 9 x 2 bed dwellings, 3 x 3 bed dwellings and 5 x 4 bed dwellings. Six dwellings would be provided as affordable housing. Vehicular access is proposed off a recently constructed estate road on adjacent land.

The application site is located close to the south-eastern edge of the village of Harling and extends to 0.89 hectare in total. The site includes a substantial bungalow, Cloverfields, its large garden and part of adjacent open field. A number of outbuildings are located within the site which, it is understood, were formerly used for poultry rearing and farm machinery storage. The site includes a belt of pine trees. The site is adjoined to the west by existing housing development and to the east by a small group of commercial units. Planning permission has also been given for the development of land to the east for 25 dwellings.

The application is supported by a Design & Access Statement, Arboricultural Implications Assessment and Contamination Scoping Study. A Section 106 Agreement is being drafted which would provide for affordable housing and contributions towards recreation, education and library services.

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. CONSULTATIONS

Harling Parish Council has objected to the application on the grounds that the proposal would extend development outside the settlement boundary and would exceed still further the housing allocation of 50 dwellings set out in the LDF.

The Highway Authority has raised no objection to the application, but has requested a number of detailed amendments to the proposed layout of roads and parking.

The Environment Agency has raised no objection to the application subject to conditions relating to surface water drainage and land contamination.

Norfolk Police have raised no objection to the application. Improvements are recommended to the definition of public/private space.

The Council's Housing Enabling & Projects Officer has raised no objection subject to the provision of affordable housing in line with Core Strategy Policy DC4.

The Council's Environmental Health Officer has raised no objection to the application.

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

The Senior Planning Policy Officer has raised concerns about the application on the grounds that the development, in combination with other recently approved developments, would result in a scale of development that would exceed significantly the level of growth allocated to Harling in the adopted Core Strategy. The proposal would conflict with the spatial vision for the area contrary to PPS3 and Core Strategy Policies CP1 and DC2.

The Tree & Countryside Officer has raised no objections to the application.

Representations have been received from an adjacent landowner concerning property rights. At the time of writing no objections had been received from local residents.

5. POLICY

At a national level, policies set out in PPS 3 *Housing* and PPS 7 *Sustainable Development in Rural Areas* are particularly relevant. Part of the application site falls inside and part outside the defined Settlement Boundary for Harling, as set out on the adopted Proposals Maps accompanying the adopted Core Strategy (rolled forward from the outgoing Local Plan). The Core Strategy identifies Harling as Local Service Centre village, and proposes an allocation of 50 dwellings for the period up to 2026. The application site is shown as part of a 'reasonable alternative site' for residential development in the Site Specifics Preferred Options consultation. The following policies contained in the Core Strategy & Development Control Policies DPD are relevant: Policy CP1 (Housing), Policy CP10 (Natural Environment), Policy CP11 (Landscape Protection), Policy CP14 (Sustainable Rural Communities), Policy DC2 (Housing), Policy DC4 (Affordable Housing), Policy DC11 (Open Space), Policy DC12 (Trees), Policy DC14 (Energy Generation and Efficiency) and Policy DC16 (Design).

6. ASSESSMENT

The principal issues raised by the application concern: i) planning policy matters, ii) layout and design, and iii) residential amenity.

Policy

The application site lies partly outside the Settlement Boundary for Harling. Of the 17 dwellings proposed, 11 units would be located outside the Settlement Boundary.

This element of the proposal would conflict with Core Strategy Policies DC2 and CP14, and countryside protection policies set out in PPS 7. Whilst the application site has been identified in the Site Specifics Preferred Options consultation as part of a 'reasonable alternative' site for development, given the stage that this proposal has reached in the LDF process, and bearing in mind the mixed local response to its proposed allocation, it is considered that only limited weight can be given to this factor.

Notwithstanding the conflict with current local 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 (there is currently a 1.7 year supply in Breckland), 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 and be in line with the overall spatial vision for the area.

Favourable consideration of schemes on unallocated sites under PPS3 is conditional on the policy tests set out in paragraph 69 being satisfied. However, it is not considered that the current proposal would meet all of the paragraph 69 tests. The principal concern that arises relates to the overall scale of development and its compatibility with overall spatial vision for the area. Permission has already been granted for 65 dwellings outside the Harling Settlement Boundary on two sites at Kenninghall Road and Lopham Road. In combination with these approvals, the current application would exceed the proposed 50 dwelling allocation by some margin. It is considered that the proposal conflicts with the spatial vision for the area and should, therefore, not qualify for favourable consideration under PPS3.

The requirements of Policy DC11 would be met by the provision of a financial contribution towards local recreation facilities. Some areas of incidental amenity green space are proposed as part of the development but these would be maintained privately.

It is proposed to construct the proposed dwellings to meet Code 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. This would exceed the requirements of Core Strategy Policy DC14 to provide for at least 10% of energy needs to be met from renewable sources.

Local character

Careful consideration has been given to the likely impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area. Notwithstanding its location on the edge of Harling, it is considered that the proposed development would have only a limited impact on the rural setting of the village. The southern half of the site is occupied by various buildings and has a built up appearance. The northern half is generally open and is slightly elevated, but development would be sandwiched between established housing to the west and proposed housing to the east. No significant intrusion into open countryside would result.

The layout and design of the proposed development is considered to be generally acceptable. The proposed development layout would be informal in character and has been designed to complement the approved development of 25 houses immediately to the east. Frontage development is proposed facing Lopham Road to reflect the established linear pattern of development there. The relatively low overall density (19 DPH) would be compatible with the character of the area. Areas of

amenity green space have been included to give the scheme a relatively spacious feel. A belt of pine trees within the site would be retained. A range of house types are proposed, all of which would be of simple traditional design. Good quality materials are proposed including red brick, flint work, clay pantiles and timber windows.

Residential amenity

It is not considered that the proposed development would have a significant impact on the amenities of nearby residents. Proposed dwellings have been arranged and designed to minimise their impact on neighbours. Single and one-and-a-half storey dwellings are proposed in a number of key locations. Traffic generated by the proposed development would pass through the approved new housing scheme to the east. Whilst this could result in some loss of amenity due to disturbance, it is not considered that this effect would be significant.

Conclusion

The proposal has a number of merits. The scheme would contribute to the supply of housing, provide a good mix of house types, achieve a higher than average standard of sustainable construction and would be compatible with the character and appearance of the area. However, it is considered that the scale of the development is such that the proposal would conflict directly with adopted local planning policy. Taking into account existing housing commitments elsewhere in the village, the proposal would significantly exceed the planned level of growth for Harling and would thus conflict with the spatial vision for the area, contrary to PPS3.

7. RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission should be refused on the grounds that:

- i. the development would conflict with policies designed to limit new housing development outside defined settlement boundaries,
- ii. the proposals fail to satisfy the requirements of PPS3, notably paragraphs 69 and 71.