

**BRECKLAND COUNCIL**

**DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE – 19<sup>th</sup> MAY 2008**

**REPORT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES MANAGER**

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

**WATTON: RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT, BRANDON ROAD**

**Applicant: Abbey Engineering**

**Reference: 3PL/2008/00155/O**

**Summary** – This report concerns a planning application for the residential development on land at Brandon Road, Watton. Subject to the resolution of outstanding issues relating to noise and contamination, it is recommended that the application is approved.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

This report concerns an application for outline planning permission for residential development on land off Brandon Road, Watton. The application is supported by indicative layout plans, a Design & Access Statement and a Noise Assessment. These documents outline proposals for up to 24 dwellings, a landscaped buffer and a new access onto Brandon Road.

The application site is located within a predominantly residential area approximately 1km to the west of Watton town centre. The site extends to 0.83 hectare and includes a former engineering workshop and four bungalows. The site is adjoined to the east and north by residential properties and to the south and west by a large abattoir.

A draft section 106 agreement has been prepared to support the application which provides for the provision of affordable housing (30%) and for the payment of financial contributions to schools (£6,436/dwelling), library services (£60/dwelling) and transport improvements (£3,000 + £270/dwelling).

**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**

Watton Town Council has raised no objection provided that the development does not encroach onto an adjacent public bridleway.

The Highway Authority has raised no objection subject to conditions and financial contributions to improved walking/cycling/public transport facilities.

Norfolk County Council has raised no objection provided that financial contributions are made to local schools and library services.

The Environment Agency has objected to the application on the grounds that insufficient information has been provided to enable the risks associated with possible contamination to be assessed properly.

The Council's Assistant Tree and Countryside Officer has raised no objection to the application subject to conditions relating to landscaping.

The Council's Environmental Health Officer has raised concerns about the impact of noise from the adjacent abattoir on the amenities of future residents.

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

Letters of objection have been received from two local residents, raising concerns principally about the scale of the development, its environmental impact, drainage problems and possible contamination. Concerns have also been raised by the adjacent abattoir business about the impact of noise on residents, though the principle of development is accepted.

## **5. SITE HISTORY**

An application for outline planning permission for the redevelopment of the site for housing was submitted in February 2007. The application was subsequently withdrawn.

## **6. POLICY**

The application site falls within the Settlement Boundary for Watton, as defined in the Breckland District Local Plan. Relevant 'saved' Local Plan policies include Policy HOU.2. At a national level, policies set out in PPS 3 *Housing*, PPG 24 *Planning and Noise* and PPS 23 *Planning and Pollution Control* are particular relevant.

## **7. ASSESSMENT**

The principal issues raised by the application concern: i) the extent to which the proposals would accord with local and national planning policy relating to housing development, ii) the likely impact of noise from adjacent commercial activities on the development and iii) contamination issues.

### **Policy**

It is considered that the redevelopment of the site for housing would accord in general terms with national and local planning policy, as set out in PPS 3 and saved Local Plan Policy HOU.2. The proposal would provide for the redevelopment of presently relatively under-used brownfield land, located in an existing built up area and situated within easy reach of local facilities. Residential development of the scale envisaged would be consistent with the general character of the surrounding area. The density of the development

would not be excessive (approx. 28 DPH). The existing buildings on the land do not contribute greatly to the character and appearance of the area; a well-designed new development offers an opportunity to enhance the character of the area.

### **Noise**

Due to the location of the site immediately adjacent to a large abattoir, there is a potential for the living conditions of future residents to be adversely affected by noise. A Noise Assessment submitted in support of the application concludes that in order to ensure appropriate noise standards a 4 metre high solid screen is required adjacent to the site boundary with the abattoir, together with enhanced glazing to windows. Whilst a landscaped buffer zone has been shown on the indicative layout plans submitted, further information has been requested to demonstrate how the required acoustic screen could be integrated successfully into the proposed development. Additional noise information has also been sought, particularly for night time hours, in the light of concerns raised by the Council's Environmental Health Officer.

### **Contamination**

The site overlies a major aquifer and is situated within the Environment Agency's Source Protection Zone 1. Given the previous commercial use of part of the site, some form of ground contamination is likely, and accordingly information is needed to demonstrate that the potential risks of pollution of ground water have been properly assessed and are understood. Further information in the form of a desk study and preliminary risk assessment are awaited.

## **7. RECOMMENDATION**

The principle of residential development is considered to be acceptable. Provided that outstanding issues relating to noise and contamination can be addressed satisfactorily, it is recommended that outline permission be granted subject to conditions and a section 106 agreement.