

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE -

AGENDA ITEM NO	
APPLICATION NO	2379/14
PROPOSAL	The demolition of sixteen dwellings and the erection of twenty-four dwellings with associated external works and parking.
SITE LOCATION	Land at Bixby Avenue, Haughley
SITE AREA (Ha)	0.65
APPLICANT	Orbit Homes Ltd
RECEIVED	July 24, 2014
EXPIRY DATE	November 4, 2014

REASONS FOR REFERENCE TO COMMITTEE

The application is referred to committee for the following reason :

- (1) it is a "Major" application for:-
 - residential development of over 15 dwellings.
- (2) Mid Suffolk District Council has an interest in the land.

Members should note that this application is part of a wider scheme for 'Tranche 2' of Unity homes redevelopment.

PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

1. The applicant received detailed pre-application advice prior to the submission of this application. This application has been brought to Committee in line with an agreed timetable in order to safeguard the potential delivery of this redevelopment in a timely manner. The application is subject to a Planning Performance Agreement which has enable consensual project management and cost recovery.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

2. The application site consists of an 0.65ha site which consist of sixteen existing properties known as 3 to 9 Windgap Lane and 5 to 16 Bixby Avenue in Haughely.

The properties to be demolished on Windgap Lane comprise two pairs of semi-detached bungalows, sited either side of the junction between Bixby Avenue and Windgap Lane. While the properties on Bixby Avenue are six pairs of two storey semi-detached dwellings. The majority of the dwellings are of the

Unity style which was a type of low cost dwelling built of concrete pillars with walls made of stacked concrete panels between them. These properties date from the post war period.

Bixby Avenue is a cul-de-sac of 25 dwellings. It is dwellings on the first half of the road that are to be demolished and redeveloped, the second half of the road to remain as now.

HISTORY

3. The planning history relevant to the application site is:

2805/13 land at Denny Avenue, Haughley. The demolition of 8 garages and the construction of 8 affordable dwellings. **Tranche 1 application.**

PROPOSAL

4. The proposal involves the demolition of 16 existing dwellings and their replacement with 24 dwellings. Along Windgap Lane the existing bungalows will be replaced by a terrace of three 1 and 2 bedroom bungalows to the north of Bixby Avenue and a pair of semi-detached 2 bedroom bungalows to the south. The road alignment on Bixby Avenue will remain as existing; with the dwellings to the north of the road being replaced with 3 pairs of 2, 3 and 4 bed semi-detached dwellings and a terrace of 4 one bedroom dwellings. To the south of the road it is proposed to replace the existing dwellings with three pairs of 2 and 3 bedroom semi-detached dwellings. At the eastern end of the development a turning head should be included on Bixby Avenue. All the dwellings would have private rear gardens and small front gardens. The majority of the gardens are of a large size with three houses (including the 2 four bed houses) having very generous gardens. Dwellings would be separated by a mixture of 1.2 metre close boarded fencing with trellis topping and 1.8 metre closely boarded fencing. The breakdown is housing types and sizes are as follows:

2 x 1 bedroom 2 person bungalow
 2 x 3 bedroom 4 person bungalow
 4 x 1 bedroom 2 person house
 9 x 2 bedroom 4 person house
 4 x 3 bedroom 5 person house
 2 x 4 bedroom 6 person house

47 car parking spaces would be provided. Off street parking on driveways would be provided to the majority of the bungalows facing Windgap Lane, while the dwellings to the north of the road would have a parking court and the dwellings to the south of the road have off street parking

The 1 bedroom dwellings would have 1 parking spaces, the 2 and 3 bedroom dwellings 2 parking spaces and the 4 bedroom dwellings, 3 parking spaces.

POLICY

5. **Planning Policy Guidance**

See Appendix below.

CONSULTATIONS

6. **Haughley Parish Council**
Supports the application

SCC Highways

This site is located off Windgap Lane which is a substandard road with narrow sections where two vehicles cannot pass and sections with no footways. We would not support any significant increase of traffic using this road unless some of these issues can be addressed. The proposal will provide some additional footways on Windgap Lane which will improve highway safety.

The existing width of Bixby Avenue is substandard and makes it difficult for two vehicles to pass. The proposal is for an additional eight properties, although the size of property will generally be smaller reducing the intensification of use.

The proposal includes a new turning head which would partly mitigate the problems caused by additional traffic. The parking allocation shown on the site plan is generally satisfactory

Generally satisfied that the combination of improved footway provision on Windgap Lane and a turning facility on Bixby Avenue can mitigate some of the effects of additional traffic from this development. However, I remain concerned that Bixby Avenue is too narrow for an increase in traffic, particularly anything larger than a car, without provision of a passing facility.

MSDC - Strategic Housing

The Parish of Haughley demonstrates a significant housing need. The affordable housing proposed is a redevelopment of the existing sub-standard Unity homes and the erection of new homes built to code 3+. The proposed mix has been reached following a detailed analysis of the needs of the existing tenants and owner occupiers on the site and the spread of applicants on the Council's Housing register awaiting rehousing. The type of property in highest need on the housing register is one and two bed roomed units. The types of unit most in need for existing tenants is for 2,3 and 4 bed units, a balance has been struck between the two needs groups.

Parking has been a problem in this part of Haughley with the majority of parking on the road lay by, the application proposes off street parking which will provide a tangible visual improvement. Granting of planning permission will end the uncertainty experienced by the existing residents during the past 3-4 years.

SCC – Development Contributions

As the scheme is for a net increase of 8 dwellings we will not be making an assessment of educational needs. However this scheme is part of the Unity Project tranche 2 which includes similar re-provision of schemes in Woolpit and Stowmarket. It has been agreed that whilst the infrastructure requirements will be separately assessed against each individual scheme there may be an

element of cross-subsidy in terms of development contributions.

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service

No objections. No additional water supply for fire fighting purposes is required for this development.

MSDC Environmental Protection – Land Contamination

No objections.

MSDC Communities

This application is proposing the demolition of 16 dwellings (4x2 bed and 10x3 bed dwellings – total 60 persons) and the erection of 24 dwellings (6x1 bed, 12x2 bed, 2x3 bed, 2x4 bed and 2x unknown – total 66 persons). Taking into account the existing dwellings to be demolished the contribution for this application is based on the 6 additional persons in accordance with the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Document for Social Infrastructure including Open Space, Sport and Recreation is £11,010.00.

The Open Space, Sport and Recreation Strategy recognises the need to improve existing village hall facilities in the ward of Haughley. There is a current project to raise funds for enhancements to Haughley Village Hall, which will provide improved facilities for youth activities as well as improving the overall layout of the hall to make it more useable by a larger number of groups. The heating system is also in need of replacement for which funding is being sought.

LOCAL AND THIRD PARTY REPRESENTATIONS

7. This is a summary of the representations received.

None received

ASSESSMENT

8. The following matters are considered to be appropriate in the consideration of this application:

Principle of development
 Impact upon the character and appearance of the area
 Impact upon residential amenity
 Highways and Parking
 Biodiversity
 S106 Obligation Requirements

Principle of development

Haughley is defined as a Key Service Centre in Policy CS1 of the Mid Suffolk District Core Strategy 2008 and as such is a focus for development outside of

the towns of Stowmarket, Needham Market and Eye. The NPPF sets out a clear presumption in favour of sustainable development referring (at paragraph 14) to this being a 'golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking'. It notes that, for decision takers, this means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay. Section 6 of the NPPF for housing specifically states in para 49 that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Policies FC1 and FC1.1 of the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy Focused Review 2012 reconfirms the guidance as contained in the NPPF on sustainable development. The proposal involves the redevelopment of an existing area of housing and is therefore brownfield land within the settlement boundary. The principle of development is therefore acceptable.

Impact upon the character and appearance of the area

Policy CS5 of the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy 2008 states that development will be of a high quality design that respects local distinctiveness and the built heritage of Mid Suffolk, enhancing the character and appearance of the district. Policy SB2 of the Mid Suffolk District Local Plan 1998 states that within settlement limits proposals will be supported where they do not have a negative impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding locality. Policy GP1 states to be supported all proposals should maintain or enhance the character of the surrounding area and should respect the scale and density of surrounding development.

Windgap Lane and Bixby Avenue are characterised by a mix of both two storey houses and single storey bungalows. Those on Bixby Avenue being two storey semi-detached, local authority post war dwellings. Windgap Lane is more mixed with both detached and semi-detached bungalows both local authority and privately built. The proposed development will have little impact on Windgap Lane; the existing two pairs of semi-detached bungalows will be replaced by another pair of semi-detached bungalows and a terrace of three bungalows. These will fit comfortably within the mixture of house types of Windgap Lane. The development of Bixby Avenue will have much more impact on the character of the area; with the first half of the road being redeveloped while the second half will retain its existing character. While the development will be at a higher density, it will be an improvement on the existing unity style housing and will add positively to the appearance of the area. The character of the development will also be in keeping with the Tranche 1 development, which is located on a parallel road, Denny Avenue, providing some cohesiveness of development within the wider area.

Impact upon residential amenity

Policies SB2, H13 and H16 of the Mid Suffolk District Local Plan aim to protect the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers. These policies are considered to have significant weight in the determination of this application as they do not conflict with the main thrust of the NPPF as stated in paragraph 215 of the NPPF.

The area surrounding the site is low density and the development would replace existing housing, meaning adequate distances from neighbouring dwellings can be retained. The bungalows facing onto Windgap Lane would be of similar heights to surrounding dwellings and although they would be located slightly

closer to neighbouring dwellings than the existing bungalows, given the low heights of the buildings, this would not have a detrimental impact. The development of Bixby Avenue would be in similar positions to the existing dwellings. The houses to the rear of Bixby Avenue, on Denny Avenue and Station Road, have generous gardens so would not experience any loss of privacy. The new dwellings would be located further from the adjacent dwellings on Bixby Avenue which are to be retained (nos 14 and 17) than the current dwellings. Windows on the side elevations of the dwellings would be obscurely glazed ensuring no loss of privacy to neighbours.

Highways and Parking

Policies SB2, H13 and T10 of the Mid Suffolk District Local Plan states that development will be supported where it does not have a negative impact on highway safety. Policies GP1 and T9 also provide criteria in relation to the provision of car parking in relation to development. The policies referred to above are in line with the requirement of paragraph 39 of the NPPF to provide safe and suitable access for all and carries significant weight in the determination of this application.

The development does not propose any significant alterations to Bixby Avenue, which is a single width road. However new footpaths would be provided on Windgap Lane, which would connect to the existing footpath. The introduction of footpaths will significantly increase pedestrian safety by preventing the need to walk along the narrow road. The development would also provide a turning head of Bixby Avenue, where there are currently no turning facilities.

The Local Highway Authority considers that the introduction of footpaths and the turning head would provide mitigation for the intensification of traffic which will result from the development. Concern has been raised by the Highway Authority that the only area of Bixby Avenue where cars can pass safely would be used for on street parking. Part of this area would be used for the turning circle and dropped kerbs for off street parking. The developer is also proposing providing dropped kerbs for the neighbouring properties nos 17 and 14 in order to prevent parking on the widened area.

Currently few houses on Bixby Avenue have off street parking and the widened area is currently used for parking. As the new development will have off street parking it is not considered that the development will have a significant effect on street parking. The parking spaces provided are in line with the draft parking standards and include three spaces for the four bedroom dwellings and two spaces for the two and three bedroom dwellings.

Biodiversity

Regulation 9(5) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (Implemented 1st April 2010) provides that all "competent authorities" (public bodies) to "have regard to the Habitats Directive in the exercise of its functions." Policy CS5 of the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy also applies which states that development will maintain and enhance biodiversity.

The properties on site are all in a reasonable weathertight condition, are mainly occupied and do not appear to be an obvious place to provide habitat for protected species. The applicant has carried out a protected species report

which has identified that there are no protected species either within the dwellings or within the gardens.

Having regards to the recommendations of the protected species report, it is considered that the proposal complies with the Wildlife and Countryside Act, the requirements of policy CL8 of the Mid Suffolk District Local Plan, policy CS5 of the Mid Suffolk District Core Strategy and the advice as contained in paragraph 118 of the NPPF. In summary it is concluded that there would be no risk of committing an offence to protected species.

S.106 Obligation Requirements

The proposal as submitted due to its size triggers the Council's requirement for contributions towards the provision of Open Space and Social Infrastructure (OSSI) and affordable housing as required by policy CS6 of the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy. The contributions requested are as follows:

OSSI - £11,010 towards enhancing existing and providing new facilities in the Haughley area which is as a consequence of the needs of the residents of the proposed development.

Affordable Housing – Policy H4 of the Mid Suffolk District Local Plan (as amended) requires that for schemes of 5 or more dwellings in Haughley, developers are required to provide 35%. In this scheme, the applicant is proposing that the scheme would be predominantly affordable housing, with only two of the 24 dwellings as market houses to replace existing privately owned dwellings.

The proposal is one of three concurrent Unity housing schemes which have current planning applications, the other two being at Stowmarket and Woolpit. Your officers have agreed that the s.106 contributions can be considered together for the three schemes and a viability appraisal has been undertaken. The viability appraisal has shown a surplus of £60,000 over the three schemes. Given the high proportion of affordable houses and the requirement to provide an education contribution for the Stowmarket proposal, it has been shown that it would not be viable to provide the full OSSI contributions for Haughley. However the developer has agreed to provide and install a new heating system for Haughley village hall as an in kind contribution. On this basis and having regards to the need to deliver affordable units it is appropriate to waive the OSSI obligation in this case. It is considered that, having regard to the wider Unity programme, it is appropriate to treat the Section 106 aspects in a conjoined manner.

Conclusion

The development is considered to be in accordance with the Development Plan and the NPPF. The proposal would provide new affordable dwellings which would in part replace existing substandard houses. The development would not be detrimental to neighbour amenity and would improve the character of the immediate area. It is considered that the improvements to the highway and introduction of footpaths would mitigate against the intensification of the use of Bixby Avenue. The lack of contribution to public open space would be outweighed by the high proportion of affordable housing.

RECOMMENDATION

That authority be delegated to the Corporate Manager (Development Management) to GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the applicant first entering into a Section 106 Planning Obligation to his satisfaction to secure:

- [a] To secure the provision of the 22 of the 24 dwellings as affordable;
- [b] Construction of those dwellings to Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes;
- [c] Compliance monitoring costs;
- [d] Replacement of the heating system at Haughley Village Hall to a value of £4,000
- [e] in the event that application no. 2742/14 is refused then secure appropriate contributions to Open Space and Social Infrastructure

and that the planning permission be subject to conditions covering the following matters:

- Time limit for commencement
- As recommended by SCC Highways
- Compliance with the ecological survey
- Development to be carried out in accordance with approved plans and documents

Philip Isbell
Corporate Manager - Development Management

Elizabeth Truscott
Senior Planning Officer

APPENDIX A - PLANNING POLICIES

1. Mid Suffolk Local Plan

HB1 - PROTECTION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS
GP1 - DESIGN AND LAYOUT OF DEVELOPMENT

2. Planning Policy Statements, Circulars & Other policy

C01/03 - Safeguarding aerodromes, technical sites and military explosives
NPPF - National Planning Policy Framework

APPENDIX B - NEIGHBOUR REPRESENTATIONS

Letter(s) of representation(s) have been received from a total of 0 interested party(ies).

The following people **objected** to the application

The following people **supported** the application:

The following people **commented** on the application: