

PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE ERECTION OF FOURTEEN DWELLINGS AND ASSOCIATED WORKS

ASSESSMENT OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES

TOP O' TH' TRENT PUBLIC HOUSE SITE, WOODLAND STREET, BIDDULPH, STOKE-ON-TRENT

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PLANNING | **DESIGN** | **ENVIRONMENT** | **ECONOMICS**

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Statement is provided in support of a planning application to redevelop the Top O' Th' Trent Public House site. The public house is currently vacant. Over previous years the public house has struggled to be financially viable and this has resulted in a number of changes in management. Currently the site owner is unable to provide a Pub Manager despite incentivised rent levels. As the public house appears to be unviable and has been for a considerable period, an alternative development is being pursued for the site which can have wider public benefits.
- 1.2 In order to address Core Strategy Policy C1, which seeks to resist the loss of community facilities, this Statement has been prepared to undertake an analysis of existing facilities in the immediate vicinity but also in the wider area of Biddulph. It also considers the key policy areas identified in the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy as well as key aspects of the NPPF.
- 1.3 This Statement is provided in support of a planning application to redevelop the Top O' Th' Trent site for fourteen dwellings and accompanies a separate Planning, Design and Access Statement.

2. POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 The Development Plan in force in the area comprises of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy (adopted March 2014). Policy C1 deals with both the development of new community facilities but also contains an objective to resist the loss of existing community facilities. Sub paragraph 3 of Policy C1 states:

"The Council will resist proposals involving the loss of community facilities unless:

- i) An alternative facility of the same type is available or can be provided in an accessible location in the same locality; or*
- ii) A viability appraisal including a marketing exercise by a qualified professional demonstrates that there are no options for continued use as a community facility which are financially viable and it can be demonstrated that the loss of the facility would not disadvantage local residents"*

2.2 The policy goes on to indicate that new development will only be permitted where the utility, transport and community infrastructure necessary to serve it is either available or will be made available by the time it is needed. All development proposals must therefore either incorporate the infrastructure required as a result of the scheme, or make provision for financial contributions and/or land to secure such infrastructure or service provision at the time it is needed, by means of conditions or a planning obligation in line with the Council's Developer Contributions SPG or any subsequently adopted Community Infrastructure Levy.

2.3 Other key policies within the adopted Core Strategy include Policy SS1. This sets out that the Council expect the development and use of land to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvements of Staffordshire Moorlands. This includes delivering a mix of types and tenures of homes to meet the needs and aspirations of existing and future communities. Quality local services should be provided including provision for education, health care, leisure, community, cultural and tourist facilities. The policy also requires a healthy, safe, attractive and well maintained environment.

2.4 Policy H2 sets out future provision of development and identifies 6,000 additional dwellings to be completed in the District during the period 2006-2026. The policy acknowledges that delivery of housing in the early part of the plan period was poor and consequently rates later in the plan period will need to increase significantly.

- 2.5 Policy SS3 provides a distribution of development across the main settlements and rural areas. Biddulph is identified as providing 20% of the overall housing requirement.
- 2.6 Policy SS4 refers to the release of land for housing across the District and states that it will be managed in order to deliver the level and distribution of development set out in Policies SS2 and SS3. The policy sets out there will be a preference for previously developed sites and sites within the urban areas before greenfield and edge of urban areas.
- 2.7 Policy SS5(b) sets out the strategy for Biddulph. Amongst other things it seeks to improve the local housing market and range of community facilities by:
- Increasing the range of available and affordable house types especially for first time buyers, families and older people.
 - Allocating a range of deliverable housing sites both within the urban area and adjacent to the urban area. Sites within the urban area shall be in locations across the town which have good accessibility to services with encouragement given to previously developed sites.
- 2.8 Policy H1 states that new housing developments should provide for a mix of housing sizes, types and tenure. All development will be assessed according to the extent to which it provides for high quality, sustainable housing and to which it meets identified local housing market needs. Housing proposals of 10 or more dwellings will be required to provide a mix of housing in terms of size, type and tenure and will be informed by such factors as the Strategic Housing Market Assessment. The policy goes on to state that residential development and redevelopment on windfall sites will be permitted up to an indicative maximum scheme size of 9 dwellings within the development boundaries of the towns. Exceptionally larger windfall schemes may be permitted where it will provide overriding affordable housing, regeneration, conservation or infrastructure benefits and it would not undermine delivery of the spatial strategy.
- 2.9 Policy DC1 sets out design considerations. It indicates all development should be well designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the special character of the area. New development should be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of

place and identity through its scale, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.10 Paragraph 70 of the NPPF refers to facilities and services which the community needs. Paragraph 2 states that decisions should;

Guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs.

- 2.11 The NPPF is clear that community facilities may be redeveloped for alternative uses where there is appropriate alternative provision within the area to enable the community to meet its day-to-day needs.

3. PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The proposal consists of a full planning application to redevelop the Top O' Th' Trent site for residential purposes. The planning application envisages demolition of all buildings at the site and the erection of fourteen new dwellings.
- 3.2 The dwellings are proposed to be twelve 3-bedroom semi-detached dwellings and the remaining two will be 4-bedroom detached properties. A minimum of two spaces per dwelling will be provided. All parking will be provided within the residential curtilage of the property.
- 3.3 As part of the redevelopment of the site a new access road is proposed located opposite Warwick Street. The road is proposed to bisect the site and terminate at the site's eastern boundary.
- 3.4 The separate Planning, Design and Access Statement submitted in support of this application provides further detail on the application proposals.

4. COMMUNITY PROVISION

- 4.1 In order to address the requirements of Policy C1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy it is necessary to undertake an assessment of existing facilities in the vicinity of the site. The policy indicates that a key consideration will be whether there is an alternative facility of the same type in the same locality. In this case the Barley Mow Public House, Church Road, Biddulph is located directly to the east of the application site. This provides a purpose built public house facility of a very similar complexion to the application site. This is located within 150 metres of the site across the adjacent open space. This clearly provides an alternative facility in close proximity to the application site which can meet the needs of local residents which otherwise could have been met at the Top O' Th' Trent Public House. In view of this existing facility the first criterion of Policy C1 is complied with.
- 4.2 However, in addition to the existing Barley Mow Public House there are other similar facility available within the town. In particular within the town centre, which is located 650 metres as the crow flies, there are a wide range of public houses available. These include the Crown and Cushion, Bradley Green, Biddulph Conservative Club, The Swan and The Royal Oak. Other pubs such as the Roaring Meg are located in other areas of the town.
- 4.3 The nearest bus stop to the site is located on St John's Road, adjacent Castle View which is 200m from the site. The number 7 bus stops three times an hour and the 9 bus comes twice an hour. Both buses go to Biddulph town centre providing residents with good access to the town centre facilities.
- 4.4 Furthermore, there are also a wide range of other community facilities in close proximity to the application site. Two existing religious buildings (The Catholic Church of the English Martyrs and Kingdom Hall) are located on Church Road to the east of the application site. Immediately to the north of the site is the Our Lady of Grace Catholic Academy School.
- 4.5 To the north of the application site, within 150 metres walk, are a parade of shops located on St John's Road/Douglas Street. This contains a number of retail facilities including Premier Store and hairdressers. In addition it also contains the Biddulph Resource and Information Centre and Community Café.
- 4.6 To the east of the application site on Church Road, immediately adjacent to the Barley Mow Public House, is the Biddulph Youth Centre. This provides a wide

range of facilities not only for youths but for the whole community. These include a range of sporting and recreation activities including rooms for hire, film club, youth club and bingo events. This facility clearly provides a significant range of facilities for the local community.

- 4.7 In view of the above it is clear that the area in the vicinity of the application site is very well catered for by a range of facilities but particularly those aimed at supporting the local community and providing such facilities as meeting rooms, recreational activities and clubs. The loss of the public house at the application site will therefore have little impact on the general provision of such facilities. As a consequence Policy C1 of the Core Strategy is complied with.

5. PLANNING ANALYSIS

- 5.1 The previous section of the report has addressed Policy C1 of the Core Strategy and confirmed that the loss of the Top O' Th' Trent Public House will not result in any material reduction in the availability of community facilities in the vicinity of the site. In particular the Barley Mow Public House, located within 150 metres of the application site, provides an alternative facility very similar in scale and type to that which would be lost as a consequence of the proposed development. Furthermore there are a wide range of other alternative facilities including community centres and meeting rooms which can all help accommodate any displaced need resulting from the demolition of the Top O' Th' Trent Public House.
- 5.2 The application site constitutes an area of previously developed land adjacent to the Top O' Th' Trent Public House in the town of Biddulph. The Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy gives clear preference to the use of previously developed land for new development both in general (Policies SS1, SS4 and SD1) and in Biddulph specifically (Policy SS5b).
- 5.3 The site is not formally identified as a potential housing allocation site but it is not designated for any other use.
- 5.4 The Core Strategy also makes clear the anticipated contribution of unidentified (windfall) sites to annual development rates in urban areas (Policy SS4). This scheme is proposed on an unidentified site and would contribute towards the development rates from windfall schemes. The Core Strategy also clarifies that development on such sites will be permitted up to an indicative maximum of 9 dwellings within towns and larger villages (Policy H1). The policy clarifies that larger windfall schemes may be permitted where it would provide overriding affordable housing, regeneration, conservation or infrastructure benefits and would not undermine delivery of the spatial strategy. This application proposes 14 dwellings on an unidentified site in Biddulph so is above the indicative maximum but would regenerate a vacant public house site. Furthermore, the site is within an urban area and is previously developed land so is in accordance with the spatial strategy for the District which favours housing development in these areas.
- 5.5 The site is in a sustainable location within an existing residential neighbourhood with good access to Biddulph town centre via public transport with a more limited range of local facilities available in the vicinity of the site. Furthermore, the

proposed site offers the opportunity to deliver housing on previously developed land in an area low on such land and surrounded by the green belt.

- 5.6 The site is surrounded by open space, specifically the playing fields at Woodland Street, which are unaffected by the proposals. The site itself is not designated as open space and is currently the Top O' Th' Trent Public House with associated car parking area and a small beer garden. The proposal would not result in the loss of any designated open space.
- 5.7 With regards to the NPPF, **paragraphs 14** and **49** are particularly relevant to this application. As set out above, Staffordshire Moorlands is unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply so policies that seek to restrict housing development must be considered to be out-of-date. Therefore, the tests set out in paragraph 14 are relevant to the determination of this application. There will be no significant adverse impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of this development which will provide housing in an existing residential area and on previously developed land.

Planning Obligations

- 5.8 In terms of affordable housing, Core Strategy Policy H2 states that affordable housing in towns is required on residential developments of 15 or more dwellings or 0.5 hectares. This proposal is for 14 dwellings within Biddulph so is not subject to the affordable housing requirement.
- 5.9 Other potential planning obligations relate to contributions towards education provisions. There are number of local schools within close proximity to the application site including at primary, middle and secondary level. Information is awaited from the County Council's education department to establish whether there is a need to expand capacity at any of these schools as a consequence of the proposed development. Should there be a clear and justified need for additional school placed to be created, then this may constitute a legitimate planning obligation to fall on the proposed residential development.

Transportation Matters

- 5.10 The Planning Practice Guidance sets out the approach to take when determining whether a Transport Statement will be needed for a proposed development. Criteria to be taken into account include:

- Relevant policies in the Local Plan
- The scale of the proposed development and its potential for additional trip generation
- Existing intensity of transport use and the availability of public transport
- Proximity to nearby environmental designations or sensitive areas
- Impact on other priorities/strategies
- Cumulative impact of multiple developments within the particular area
- Whether are particular types of impacts around which to focus the Transport Statement

5.11 In considering the above criteria it is clear that the proposal will involve the removal of an established commercial site which in its own right will generate transport movements. These will be offset against new travel movements associated with the proposed development. Whilst there may be a slight increase in travel movements as a consequence of the proposed development and they make a slightly different form, there will not be a significant or material difference sufficient to merit a Transport Statement being produced for the proposed development. It is clear that the site is accessible to public transport, there are few if any multiple developments within the surrounding area and there are no environmental designations or sensitive areas in the vicinity. On this basis it is not considered necessary for a formal Transport Statement to be produced in association with the proposed development.

5.12 In terms of access arrangements the main site access is located to align with the existing junction of Woodland Street and Warwick Street. Due to the limited amount of traffic movement that will be associated with the 14 dwellings on the application site, the fact that Woodland Street to the north is one way only and the lightly trafficked road network immediately adjacent to the site, it is not considered that the proposal will have any material impact on the safe operation of the existing junction. As a consequence the proposal is considered to provide a suitable form of access to serve the proposed development.

All of the proposed dwellings within the site are provided with a minimum of two parking spaces located off street. This provides an adequate level of parking provision consistent with established standards.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The proposal for residential development on the application site necessitates the demolition of all existing structures on the site, including the existing Top O' Th' Trent public house.
- 6.2 Policy C1 of the adopted Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy resists the loss of existing community facilities, including public houses. However, there are exceptions to this policy including when;
- An alternative facility of the same type is available or can be provided in an accessible location in the same locality; **OR**
 - A viability appraisal including a marketing exercise by a qualified professional demonstrates that there are no options for continued use as a community facility which are financially viable and it can be demonstrated that the loss of the facility would not disadvantage local residents.
- 6.3 This Statement has demonstrated that there are alternative facilities in accessible locations in both the immediate vicinity of the proposed site, notably the Barley Mow public house on Church Road, and in the wider area of Biddulph, notably the town centre.
- 6.4 In addition to the Barley Mow public house, the immediate surrounding area benefits from a number of community facilities which are discussed in more detail in previous sections of this Statement. This means that the loss of the Top O' Th' Trent public house would not disadvantage local residents as there are a number of alternative options suitable for a variety of community uses in the area.
- 6.5 Under Policy C1 only one condition of paragraph 3 needs to be satisfied. This Statement has clearly demonstrated that this proposal accords with the first condition of paragraph 3.
- 6.6 In addition to this, the Top O' Th' Trent public house is currently vacant. The owner is unable to find a manager despite incentivised rent levels and the public house has struggled to be financially viable for a number of years. Currently the site is not providing any community benefit and it is considered that its redevelopment for residential use would enhance the site's contribution to the local community.

- 6.7 Overall this Statement has demonstrated that the loss of the community facility is acceptable in the context of Policy C1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy.