Rob Duncan
Planning
Consultancy

PLANNING STATEMENT

LAND OFF MAIN ROAD
HOLLINGTON

AUGUST 2019

Site Address:
Land off Main Road, Hollington, Staffordshire, ST10 4HS

Applicant:
Mr. D. Allen

Proposal:
Erection of 3no. Affordable Dwellings

Planning Statement:
Date Issued: 6th August 2019
Job Reference: RDP/2019/054

Report Prepared By:
Rob Duncan BSc(Hons) MA MRTPI
Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd

Contact Details:
Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd.
70 Ferndale Road, Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS13 7DL
Email: rob78duncan@gmail.com
Tel. 07779 783521

1 Introduction

1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd. has been instructed by Mr. D. Allen to seek outline planning permission for the erection of 3no. affordable dwellings on land to the south of Main Road, Hollington. The application is submitted in outline and seeks approval of means of access only. Matters of layout, appearance, scale and landscaping are reserved for subsequent approval.

1.2 The application represents a re-submission following the refusal of application SMD/2018/0312 which itself had followed on from a dismissed appeal under application SMD/2016/0355. Application SMD/2018/0312 had sought outline consent for the erection of three dwellings on the site, but with occupancy restricted to the over 55s. The application was nevertheless refused by the Local Authority for the following reason:

1. *The application site is located at Common End and is some 1.3km distance from the small village of Hollington. It has a limited range of facilities/services, currently consisting of a church, public house, community hall and limited public transport provision. The site is some 4.0km from the 'larger village' of Upper Tean, which has a wider range of facilities/services including a dentist, doctors, small supermarket and primary schools. The Core Strategy categorises Upper Tean as a larger village which, together with the towns within the district area, are identified as being the rural centres for services, facilities and jobs, acting to sustain the rural areas and are expected to accommodate the bulk of the District's housing and employment development needs. The site's location, however, would clearly discourage walking to the nearest services/facilities in Upper Tean owing to a limited bus service and a longer cycle journey. In these respects, this site is within an unacceptably remote location, with future occupiers having unreasonable access to*

shops and services. As a consequence, there is a fundamental conflict with Policy T1 of the Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document and the NPPF more generally which seeks, among other things, to reduce reliance on the private car for travel journeys and reduce the need to travel generally.

1.3 The indicative layout plan accompanying the application is not dissimilar to the one considered under the previous application, and shows the provision of two detached, two-storey dwellings, along with a single detached bungalow. The site is to be accessed direct off Main Road via an existing vehicular access point. The layout plan demonstrates that the site is capable of accommodating the proposed quantum of development, with each plot having its own parking and manouvering area, along with an area of private amenity space to meet the needs of future occupants.

1.4 The principal difference between this revised submission and the previously refused schemes is that the proposed dwellings are to be brought forward as 'Discounted Market Sales Housing' and thus sold at a discount of 20% below local market value, with the aim of helping low and middle earners from the local area get onto the property ladder. A S106 Obligation will be entered into to secure such arrangements in perpetuity and to prioritise persons from within the parish of Checkley and surrounding parishes.

2 Site & Surroundings

2.1 The application site lies within the rural area towards the western end of Hollington village. The site is enclosed by two-storey residential development to its east and west, with Main Road enclosing the northern boundary of the site. The southern boundary is enclosed by mature hedgerows / hedgerow trees, beyond which lies open agricultural land.

3 Planning Policy

3.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires proposals to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan taking into consideration any material considerations relevant to the determination of the application. The Development Plan for this area comprises the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy (2014) of which the following policies are considered to be of relevance:

3.2 **Policy SS1a** of the Core Strategy states that when considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work pro-actively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. Planning applications that accord with the policies in the Core Strategy will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:

- *Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole;*

- *or specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.*

3.3 **Policy SS2** of the Core Strategy relates to the 'Future Provision of Development' and states that provision will be made for 6000 additional dwellings (net of demolitions) to be completed in Staffordshire Moorlands (excluding the Peak District National Park) during the period 2006 to 2026.

3.4 **Policy SS3** of the Core Strategy relates to the 'Distribution of Development' and states that housing will be located in accordance with the Spatial Strategy and will be distributed between the towns and rural areas. It identifies that some 28% of new housing over the plan period will be delivered within the rural areas.

3.5 **Policy SS6b** of the Core Strategy relates to the 'Smaller Villages Area Strategy' and states that these villages, of which Hollington is identified as one, will provide only for appropriate development which enhances community vitality or meets a local social and economic need of the settlement and its hinterland. It goes on to confirm that local community, social and economic needs will be met by (amongst others):

- *Enabling new housing development which meets a local need, including affordable housing*

3.6 **Policy SS6c** of the Core Strategy relates to the 'Other Rural Areas Area Strategy' and states that these areas will provide only for development which meets an essential local need, supports the rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas, promotes sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside. The policy goes on to state that the Council will meet essential local needs by (amongst others):

- *restricting new build housing development in the countryside to that which is essential to local needs.*

- *Allowing rural exceptions housing (in accordance with policies H2 and R2)*

3.7 **Policy H2** of the Core Strategy relates to 'Affordable and Local Needs Housing' and states that in or on the edge of villages, small schemes for 100% affordable housing will be allocated in the Site Allocations DPD or will be permitted on suitable rural exceptions sites which are well related to services and facilities and where a demonstrable need exists within the local area which cannot otherwise be met by means of provision in the plan.

3.8 **Policy R2** of the Core Strategy relates to 'Rural Housing' and states that only the following forms of housing development will be permitted in the rural areas outside the settlement and infill boundaries of the towns and villages:

- *Affordable Housing;*

- *A new dwelling that meets an essential local need, such as accommodation for an agricultural, forestry or other rural enterprise worker, where the need for such accommodation has been satisfactorily demonstrated and that need cannot be met elsewhere;*

- *Proposals for replacement dwellings, provided they do not have a significantly greater detrimental impact on the existing character of the rural area than the original dwelling or result in the loss of a building which is intrinsic to the character of the area;*

- *Extensions to existing dwellings provided they are appropriate in scale and design and do not have a detrimental impact on the existing dwelling and the character of the rural area;*

- *The conversion of non-residential rural buildings where the building is suitable and worthy in physical, architectural and character terms for conversion and it can be demonstrated that agricultural or commercial use is not viable or suitable.*

3.9 **Policy DC1** of the Core Strategy relates to 'Design Considerations' and states that all development should be well designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the special character and heritage of the area in line with the Council's Design SPD. It goes on to state that new development should (amongst others):

- *be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area;*

- *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;*

- *protect the amenity of the area, including residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping;*

- *provide for safe and satisfactory access and make a contribution to meeting the parking requirement arising from necessary car use; ensure that existing drainage, waste water and sewerage infrastructure capacity is available.*

3.10 **Policy DC3** of the Core Strategy relates to 'Landscape and Settlement Setting' and states that the Council will protect and, where possible, enhance local

landscape and the setting of settlements in the Staffordshire Moorlands by (amongst others):

- *Resisting development which would harm or be detrimental to the character of the local and wider landscape or the setting of a settlement and important views into and out of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment;*

- *Supporting development which respects and enhances local landscape character and which reinforces and enhances the setting of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment;*

- *Supporting opportunities to positively manage the landscape and use sustainable building techniques and materials which are sympathetic to the landscape;*

4 Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework introduces a presumption in favour of sustainable development sets out guidance, *inter-alia*, in respect of significantly boosting the supply of housing, securing high quality design, and the delivery of rural housing. The content of the NPPF has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this Planning Statement and is discussed in more detail within the Planning Assessment below.

Emerging Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan

4.2 The new Local Plan has been subject to its examination in public and is due to be adopted in early 2020. A number of its policies can be afforded

meaningful weight having found to be acceptable by the Planning Inspector conducting the examination. These include:

- **Policy SS2** of the emerging Local Plan states that the Rural Area Smaller Villages generally have a poor range of services and facilities and it is often necessary for local residents to travel outside the village for most of their daily needs. Development on a large scale would be unsustainable in these villages, as it is will generate a disproportionate number of additional journeys outside the village and may undermine the spatial strategy. However, it is recognised that these settlements have a limited role in meeting the development requirements for the District which may assist in maintaining the vitality of the smaller villages. These settlements are not defined by a Development Boundary and only limited development of an appropriate nature will be allowed. Where relevant, green belt policy will also apply.

- **Policy SS9** of the emerging Local Plan states that the smaller villages shall provide only for appropriate development which enhances community vitality or meets a social or economic need of the settlement and its hinterland. It goes on to state that meet community, social and economic needs will be achieved by enabling limited new housing development, including small infill schemes in accordance with Policy H1 and allowing for rural exceptions housing in appropriate locations in accordance with Policy H1.

- **Policy H1** of the emerging Local Plan states that in the other rural areas, affordable housing which cannot be met elsewhere will be permitted in accordance with policy H3. In addition, outside of the development boundaries, limited infill residential development of an appropriate scale and character for the Spatial Strategy will be supported, provided that:

- The development will adjoin the boundary of a larger village and be well related to the existing pattern of development and surrounding land uses, or:
- The development is well related to the existing pattern of development of a smaller village and will not create or extend ribbon development or lead to sporadic pattern of development; and; In all cases the development will not lead to a prominent intrusion into the countryside or have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the countryside.

- **Policy H3** of the emerging Local Plan states that in or on the edge of villages, small schemes for 100% affordable housing will be permitted on suitable rural exceptions sites which are well related to services and facilities and where a demonstrable need exists within the local area which cannot otherwise be met by means of provision in the plan.

Staffordshire Moorlands Housing Land Supply Statement (2018)

4.3 This document sets out the Local Authority's performance in respect of housing land supply and housing delivery. It confirms that the Local Authority has a deliverable supply of housing land equivalent to 1.8 years supply. As a consequence the so-called tilted balance in favour of approval is engaged by this proposal.

Staffordshire Moorlands Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2017)

4.4 This document identifies a net annual need of between 224 and 432 affordable dwellings *per annum* in order to meet future housing needs within the District, noting that the quantitative need for affordable housing is considerable. The content of the SHMA is discussed in more detail within the Planning Assessment below.

5 Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

5.1 The application site lies within the rural area, and the submitted proposal seeks consent for the erection of 3no. affordable dwellings (discounted market sales housing). Policy SS6b of the Core Strategy confirms that the smaller villages, of which Hollington is one, will provide only for appropriate development which enhances community vitality or which meets a local social and economic need of the settlement and its hinterland. It goes on to confirm that local needs will be met by enabling new housing development that meets a local need, including affordable housing. These provisions are reflected within policies SS6c and R2 of the Core Strategy which similarly make provision for affordable housing.

5.2 The relevant policy within the adopted Development Plan relating to the provision of affordable housing is Policy H2, which states that small schemes for 100% affordable housing will be allowed in or on the edge of villages, where allocated in the Site Allocations DPD, or where a site is a suitable rural exception site which is well related to services and facilities and where a demonstrable need exists within the local area which cannot otherwise be met by means of provision in the plan.

5.3 The Staffordshire Moorlands Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) confirms that there is a very significant demand for the provision of affordable housing throughout the District, with a requirement to provide between 224 and 432 affordable dwellings ***per annum*** identified. The SHMA goes on to recognise that the quantitative need for affordable housing within the District is *"considerable".* There is accordingly a very clear and demonstrable need for the provision of affordable housing within the District as a whole.

5.4 To put that figure in context, the number of completions (open market & affordable housing combined) within the District has averaged just 178 per annum over the last three years. The delivery of a minimum of 224 affordable dwellings is therefore highly unlikely to be achieved, let alone the higher figure of 432. Any proposals that make a positive contribution towards the delivery of affordable housing in the District should therefore be treated favourably.

5.5 At a more local level, the Checkley Parish Housing Needs Survey (2012) provides additional background information in respect of housing needs within the local community. 66% of respondents to the survey identified that they would be in favour of a small development of affordable homes for local people within the Parish. The tenure preference expressed by respondents was largely distributed between subsidised affordable ownership and housing associated rented. The submitted proposal comprises three units of the former, and meets the definition of affordable housing set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

5.6 The predominant accommodation requirement identified within the Housing Needs Survey was for two-bedroomed houses, and 2 bedroom bungalows. The main reason why existing housing is unsuitable was noted to be because of difficulties affording existing accommodation and the need to live independently. The survey also identified that nearly half of first time buyers (45.11%) were priced out of buying entry level houses, indicating a need for either shared ownership or rented accommodation to increase the availability of affordable properties in the area. Checkley is also noted to have a below average proportion of affordable housing.

5.7 The Housing Needs Survey, coupled with the wider Strategic Housing Market Assessment, demonstrates that there is a significant need for affordable

housing within the area. The proposed dwellings are to be provided as Discount Market Sales Housing – meaning that the dwellings will be sold at a discount of 20% below local market value, with eligibility determined by income in relation to open market values to ensure that the properties are only made available to those who cannot afford to purchase the property at open market value. The dwellings will also be restricted to residents within Checkley Parish and thereafter cascading down to surrounding Parishes. A S106 Obligation is to be entered into in order to secure these discount arrangements in perpetuity. In doing so the proposal will accord with the provisions of policies SS6b, SS6c, H2 and R2 of the Core Strategy, and consequently the principle of development is considered to be acceptable.

Sustainability of Location

5.8 Paragraph 79 of the NPPF confirms that planning decisions should avoid the creation of new isolated homes in the countryside. Case law has confirmed that this should be interpreted in the geographical sense, and in this context it is noted that the site will relate well to surrounding residential development, with residential properties located to the immediate west and east of the site. The proposed development is therefore in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 79 of the NPPF.

5.9 In determining the previous appeal on this site the Planning Inspector concluded that the proposal would not provide a suitable site for housing having regard to whether future occupiers would have reasonable access to shops, facilities and services, and that consequently development in this location would lead to reliance on private transport contrary to the aims of the NPPF. This was on account of the site lying some 1.3km distant of he centre of Hollington, and 4km from the nearest larger village (Upper Tean).

5.10 The site is nevertheless not without merit in terms of sustainability of location. Broadband connectivity offers opportunities for online shopping including food delivery services, and the nearby Raddle Inn provides general grocery items for sale to local residents. It is also understood that Hollington has a local milk delivery service. Couple this with the fact that the nearest larger settlements (Cheadle and Upper Tean) lie within a ten minute drive of the site, it is submitted that any journeys required to be taken by car would not be long in duration. Notwithstanding these factors, it is acknowledged that the conclusions of the previous Planning Inspector will likely weigh against this proposal.

Design & Landscape Impact

5.11 The application is submitted in outline and seeks approval of means of access only. Matters of layout, appearance, scale and landscaping are reserved for subsequent approval. The indicative plan accompanying the application nevertheless demonstrates that the site is readily capable of accommodating the proposed quantum of development in a manner that will assimilate well with the character and appearance of the surrounding area, and which will not materially detract from the amenity of neighbouring residential occupiers. The dwellings identified on the plan are also compliant with the DCLG Technical Housing Standards. The proposed development is therefore considered to accord with the provisions of policies DC1 and DC3 of the Core Strategy in this regard.

Highway Safety

5.12 The proposed means of access is to the site connects direct onto Main Road, and is the same access arrangement as that considered under the previous applications on the site, and which has been found on both occasions to be acceptable from a highway safety perspective. In this context the Planning Inspector who determined the previous appeal on the site concluded that

visibility from the proposed access was adequate. The proposed development is therefore considered to be acceptable from a highway safety perspective and accords with the provisions of paragraphs 108 and 109 of the NPPF.

Planning Balance

5.13 The Local Authority remains unable to demonstrate a five-year deliverable supply of housing (1.8 years supply) and consequently the presumption in favour of sustainable development – the so-called titled balance – is engaged by this proposal. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF dictates that in such circumstances planning permission should be granted unless:

> *"any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole".*

5.14 In determining the previous appeal on the site the Planning Inspector weighed up the various benefits of the proposal, noting that the provision of new housing would provide moderate social benefits in terms of the increase in the overall supply of housing and the modest expansion of the local community. Economic benefits were also identified, both through the provision of jobs during the construction phase, and owing to increased expenditure within the local economy to support local services and facilities. This is estimated at £9,388 per dwelling per annum based on figures published by the Local Authority's Regeneration Service. When looking at the planning balance overall the Planning Inspector nevertheless concluded that the environmental harm arising from the poor access to services and facilities was sufficient to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal.

5.15 I submit that the planning balance in respect of this revised submission tips in favour of approval. The Local Authority's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), and the Checkley Housing Needs Survey both identify a considerable demand for the delivery of affordable housing. Indeed, the required levels of affordable housing identified within the SHMA are unlikely to ever be achieved as they exceed the annualised level of completions that have taken place in the District. As a consequence, any proposals which make a positive contribution towards the delivery of affordable housing within the District should be afforded substantial weight.

5.16 The proposed affordable housing will offer an opportunity for low and middle earners from within the local area to get onto the housing ladder, and the discount is to be secured by way of a S106 Obligation to ensure that it remains in perpetuity. Given the very substantial identified need for affordable housing it is considered that the social benefits of delivery new affordable housing should carry substantial weight in favour of the development. The concerns about the general location of the site in relation to local services and facilities are acknowledged to weigh against the proposal, but it is considered that the material benefits associated with the delivery of much needed affordable housing, of a type that is noted to be required and desired within the Parish, is considered to tip the planning balance in favour of approval.

6 Conclusion

6.1 It is submitted that the proposed development represents a sustainable form of development, in that it will deliver much needed affordable housing, of a type and tenure recognised to be required within the area, and will make a valuable contribution towards the Local Authority's considerable need for affordable housing. The proposal is also considered to be acceptable in

terms of its design, layout and impact on highway safety, and as such accords with the provisions of policies SS2, SS3, SS6b, SS6c, H2, R2, DC1 and DC3 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy.

6.2 The benefits of the development, in particular the delivery of affordable housing, along with the other economic benefits of the proposal, are furthermore considered to outweigh the environmental concerns about sustainability of location raised in previous applications. The Local Authority is therefore respectfully requested to grant outline planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development.