JMIPlanning
Town Planning Consultants
+44 (0) 1889 566107
enquiries@jmiplanning.com
jmiplanning.com

Planning Statement – Outline application for residential development to include car parking for Checkley Cricket Club

Land opposite Checkley Cricket Club, Checkley

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Project	Land opposite Checkley Cricket Club, Checkley
Client	Mr Glyn Skyrme
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Project Team	Jim Malkin
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Reviewed by:	Jon Imber

Document Produced by:

JMI Planning Limited
62 Carter Street
Uttoxeter
Staffs
ST14 8EU

Phone: 01889 566107
Email: enquiries@jmiplanning.com

www.jmiplanning.com

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1 Introduction

1.1 JMI Planning is a Midlands based town planning consultancy. Its directors are chartered town planners with over 30 years' combined experience in both the public and private sector.

1.2 The author of this statement, Jim Malkin has worked as a principal planning officer in local government, and more recently as a Planning Consultant in the private sector. He has extensive knowledge of the planning system and experience of the appeals process. He is a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute.

1.3 This statement accompanies an outline planning application for the erection of up-to 8 dwellings which includes the provision of a car park for Checkley Cricket Club.

2 Site and Planning History

2.1 The application comprises of an infill plot between Fourtrees and The Oaklands and associated paddock land to the rear. The site is provided with access directly from Uttoxeter Road and the site rises gently northwards from Uttoxeter Road.

2.2 Checkley is defined as a smaller village within the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy, it is however provided with a range of facilities including a school, two public houses, a thriving cricket club and a regular bus service that links the village to local shopping facilities in Tean and also larger conurbations including Uttoxeter and Stoke on Trent.

2.3 The site is adjoined by residential properties to the east and west, the cricket club to the south on the opposite side of Uttoxeter Road and by open fields to the north.

2.4 The field is currently linked to Fourtrees and an access is shared with the domestic

property. The land is currently used for incidental grazing on an informal rental basis. The site is bounded by an existing hedgerow interspersed with mature trees to all boundaries.

2.5 There is no recent planning history in relation to this area of land. However, the land has been subject to significant consideration as part of the site selection process for the emerging Checkley Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan. This allocation was on the basis that the land could provide much needed car parking for the cricket club, alongside a small housing development to meet the needs of the village.

2.6 The site and its surroundings are shown on the following aerial photograph.



3 The Proposed Development

3.1 The application is submitted in outline for the erection of up-to 8 dwellings and the associated car park to serve Checkley Cricket Club.

3.2 This submission is supported by an indicative layout which shows how 8 units can be accommodated on the site utilising a single access point. To the rear of the site the footprints shown are those of bungalows that will reduce the impact of the development from wider views. To the front of the site semi-detached properties will be provided across two storeys.

3.3 It is anticipated that the properties to the rear will be detached, with the smaller units to the front arranged as either a terrace or as semi-detached properties. Each dwelling will be provided with on-plot car parking and attractive landscaping. Whilst design and scale are reserved for later approval it is anticipated that properties at the front of the site will be a maximum of 2 storeys with those too the rear being bungalows / dormer bungalows. It is anticipated that any future development would exhibit a traditional design response and use of materials.

3.4 Domestic curtilages will be provided to the rear of the properties and will provide a soft edge to the adjoining agricultural fields. The proposals will have no impact on any trees to the periphery of the site.

4 Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework

4.1 Paragraph 2 of the NPPF states that “applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise”.

4.2 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. It explains that in the context of decision taking, this means approving proposals that accord with the development plan without delay. Where there are no

relevant development plan policies or those most relevant to the determination of the application are out of date, permission should be granted unless:

- the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
- any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

4.3 Staffordshire Moorlands District Council cannot currently demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. As such, in accordance with the footnotes to Paragraph 11 of the NPPF, its local plan is out of date. The presumption in favour of sustainable development is therefore triggered in this instance.

4.4 Paragraph 59 of the NPPF expresses a commitment to delivering housing growth. It states "To support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed".

4.5 Paragraph 124 of the Framework relates to design quality. It states "The creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities".

Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy (2014)

4.6 Checkley and Lower Tean (which the site sits between) are defined as Smaller Villages within the Core Strategy. The following policies of this strategy are considered the most relevant in relation to this scheme.

4.7 ***SS1a - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development***

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 this Core Strategy (and, where relevant, with polices in neighbourhood plans) 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.*

4.8 ***SS6 - Rural Areas***

The rural areas comprise of the following development categories:

- *Larger villages*
- *Smaller villages*
- *Other rural areas*

In total these will provide for around 1680 new dwellings and 7.2 hectares of employment land between 2006 and 2026 in accordance with the Area Strategies set out in policies SS6a – SS6c below. The Site Allocations DPD will define the urban areas of larger villages by a Development Boundary and will allocate sites for development sufficient to ensure that the requirements set out above can be met. In the smaller villages an Infill Boundary will be defined within which limited infill development will be permitted

4.9 ***SS6b – Smaller Villages Area Strategy***

These settlements shall provide only for appropriate development which enhances community vitality or meets a local social or economic need of the settlement and its hinterland. The Council and its partners will achieve this through the following actions:

1. *Enhance community vitality by:*
    - *protecting and enabling services and facilities which are essential to sustain rural living;*
    - *improving connections by public transport and other transport measures to neighbouring larger villages and market towns;*
    - *supporting the provision of local, mobile and electronic services which increases the range and quality of services.*

2. *Meet local community, social or economic need by:*
    - *Enabling new housing development which meets a local need, including affordable housing (in accordance with policy H2);*
    - *Allowing for rural exceptions housing in appropriate locations on the edge of settlements (in accordance with policy H2). This will be additional to the housing provision for the rural areas.*

- *Enabling small-scale new employment development including 'live-work' developments which are for a rural enterprise or an existing authorised business use;*
- *Supporting the diversification of existing farm enterprises (in accordance with policy R1);*
- *Supporting the development of appropriate ICT and new means of communications to enable homeworking and small businesses reliant on e-technology.*

4.10 ***H1 New Housing Development***

New housing development should provide for a mix of housing sizes, types and tenure including a proportion of affordable housing as set out in policy H2, and where appropriate housing for special groups, to meet the needs and aspirations of the current and future population having regard to the Area Strategies in SS5 and SS6.

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 and the strategy for the area having regard to the location of the development, the characteristics of the site and the economics of provision.

In addition:

- *Housing for special groups, particularly for older people, should meet a genuine and proven local need and demand and be of a scale and in a location which is appropriate to its needs.*
- *Housing proposals of 10 dwellings or more will be required to provide a mix of housing in terms of size, type and tenure on the site. The final mix will be negotiated with the developer based on local housing needs as informed by*

the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and other relevant factors such as available supply and market demand.

- *All housing development should be at the most appropriate density compatible with the site and its location, and with the character of the surrounding area. This will generally be within the range of 40 dwellings per hectare or more in or on the edge of town centres , 30 – 40 dwellings per hectare in other urban areas and villages and 20 – 30 dwellings per hectare in remoter rural areas.*
- *Residential development and redevelopment on unidentified (windfall) sites will be permitted up to an indicative maximum scheme size of 9 dwellings within the Development Boundaries of the towns and larger villages, and up to an indicative maximum scheme size of 5 dwellings within the Infill Development Boundaries of the smaller villages. Exceptionally, larger windfall schemes may be permitted where it would provide over-riding affordable housing, regeneration, conservation or infrastructure benefits and it would not undermine delivery of the spatial strategy.*
- *All new dwellings should aim to be built to "Lifetime Homes" standard in accordance with the current national advice and targets.*
- *All new dwellings must be of sufficient size to provide satisfactory levels of amenity for future occupiers whilst respecting the privacy and amenity of existing occupiers.*
- *All new dwellings must meet the sustainable design and construction requirements set out in policy SD1.*

4.11 ***DC1 – Design Considerations***

All development shall 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. In particular, new development should:

- *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;*
- *create, where appropriate, attractive, functional, accessible and safe public and private environments which incorporate public spaces, green infrastructure including making provision for networks of multi-functional new and existing green space (both public and private) in accordance with policy C3, landscaping, public art, 'designing out crime' initiatives and the principles of active design;*
- *incorporate sustainable construction techniques and design concepts for buildings and their layouts to reduce the local and global impact of the development, and to adapt to climate change, in accordance with policy SD1;*
- *protect the amenity of the area, including residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping;*
- *promote the maintenance, enhancement, restoration and re-creation of biodiversity and geological heritage, where appropriate, in accordance with policy NE1;*
- *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, and where necessary enhanced, to enable the development to proceed;*
- *ensure, where appropriate, equality of access and use for all sections of the community.*

4.12 ***DC3 – Landscape and Settlement Setting***

The Council will protect and, where possible, enhance local landscape and the setting of settlements in the Staffordshire Moorlands by:

1. *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;*
2. *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;*
3. *Supporting opportunities to positively manage the landscape and use sustainable building techniques and materials which are sympathetic to the landscape;*
4. *Identifying through the Site Allocations DPD and protecting from inappropriate development, areas of visual open space where the intention will be to retain the land's open and undeveloped appearance. Where appropriate the Council will seek public access agreements with the land owners and seek proposals for the enhancement or improvement of these areas as part of the green infrastructure network in accordance with policy C3. In exceptional cases, limited development of areas of visual open space may be acceptable where this will bring about overriding improvements to the open space itself;*
5. *Recognising and conserving the special quality of the landscape in the Peak District National Park, and ensuring that development does not adversely affect the wider setting of the National Park.*

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (Submission Version)

4.13 The emerging Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan is at examination stage with the latest discussions regarding the Main Modifications to the plan. On the basis of this position the emerging Local Plan is considered to carry a reasonable level of weight in the determination of applications within the plan area.

4.14 Policy SS2 refers to the settlement hierarchy which is broadly similar to the requirements of SS6 of the adopted plan in relation to development in rural areas.

4.15 Policy SS9 refers to smaller villages including Checkley and advises the following:

These settlements shall provide only for appropriate development which enhances community vitality or meets a social or economic need of the settlement and its hinterland. The Council and its partners will achieve this through the following actions:

1. Enhance community vitality by:

- *Protecting and enabling services and facilities which are essential to sustain rural living;*
- *Improving connections by public transport and other transport measures to neighbouring larger villages and market towns;*
- *Supporting the provision of local, mobile and electronic services which increases the range and quality of services;*
- *Supporting the implementation of the Green Infrastructure Strategy and Local Green Spaces*

2. Meet community, social or economic need by:

- *Enabling limited new housing development, including small infill schemes in accordance with Policy H1*
- *Allowing for rural exceptions housing in appropriate locations (in accordance with Policy H1). This will be additional to the housing provision for the rural areas.*

- *Enabling small-scale new employment development including 'live-work' developments which are for a rural enterprise or an existing authorised business use;*
- *Supporting the diversification of existing farm enterprises*
- *Supporting the development of appropriate ICT and new means of communications to enable homeworking and small businesses reliant on e-technology.*

Ensure that new development reflects and enhances each village's special character and heritage by protecting and enhancing the setting and historic character of the village, including heritage assets.

Any development proposal that might have the potential to affect a European or Ramsar Site must itself be subject to appropriate assessment

4.16 Policy H1 refers to new housing development and specifically to infill plots stating the following:

4) Housing development on sites not allocated for such purposes in Policy H2 will be supported as follows:

a) Within the development boundaries of the towns and larger villages, residential development and development on unidentified (windfall) sites will be permitted, subject to compliance with the Spatial Strategy and wider Local Plan policies

b) 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

c) In all cases the development will not lead to a prominent intrusion into the countryside or have an adverse impact of significance to the character of the countryside

Checkley Neighbourhood Development Plan

4.17 The Checkley Neighbourhood Development Plan is currently emerging guidance which is seeking to allocate small areas for development within the Checkley Parish. As part of this process the application site has been considered and we are aware that the steering group are positive regarding the development of the site, especially its potential to provide much needed overspill car parking for the Cricket Club.

5 Five Year Land Supply

5.1 Staffordshire Moorlands District Council are currently unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing as required by the NPPF. The last published figure (December 2019) advised that the Borough can show a 1.8 supply of deliverable housing sites.

5.2 Therefore, in line with paragraph 11 (and associated footnotes) of the NPPF policies that restrict the supply of housing are out of date.

6 Planning Considerations

Principle of Development

6.1 The proposals involve the completion of small-scale residential development within a larger rural settlement. In normal circumstances the development of this site would be strictly controlled by Policy R2. and strategic policies SS6 and SS6c set out the types of housing development which will be supported in the rural areas, outside of the development boundary. These policies do not make provision for new housing

development unless it meets an essential local need, such as accommodation for agriculture of forestry. However, at this point Staffordshire Moorlands District Council cannot exhibit a 5-year supply of deliverable housing land, at the time of the submission of this application the latest published position showed the Authority had housing supply of 1.8 years.

6.2 The land supply position in Staffordshire Moorlands shows a continued and chronic shortfall in housing land supply. The only way the Council can seek to overcome this issue is by supporting all types of residential development, from large strategic sites, down to smaller windfall developments such as this scheme.

6.3 Therefore in accordance with Footnote 7 of the National Planning Policy Framework, relevant policies for the supply of housing, which comprises strategic policies SS6 and SS6c and specific housing policies H1 and R2, are out of date and cannot be given any weight in the determination of this application. Paragraph 11 prescribes that in these circumstances, planning applications fall to be considered against policies in the NPPF in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraphs 7 and 8 of the NPPF identify three components to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. Achieving sustainable development requires economic, social and environmental gains to be sought simultaneously.

Economic

6.4 One of the core principles of the NPPF is that planning should proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes that the country needs. Paragraph 19 of the NPPF prescribes significant weight to the economic benefits of proposals in the overall planning balance.

6.5 The proposals would deliver both short term and longer-term economic benefits. In the short term the proposal would bring about the economic benefits associated

with new development including supporting the construction industry both directly through construction jobs on site and indirectly through the supply chain. The local planning authority would also benefit through the New Homes Bonus.

6.6 In the medium to long term, future occupants of properties on the site will support local services and facilities, helping to safeguard their retention and potentially encourage new services in the village. The proposals would also boost the local labour supply, broadening the choice of suitable candidates for local employers.

Social

6.7 The proposals will make a modest but important contribution towards the Council's housing requirement, providing quality homes to meet the significant need within the Borough.

6.8 The site is well related to the existing settlement, which encourages community cohesion and will ensure that new residents do not feel isolated. The proposals would therefore contribute positively towards the vitality of the local community, increasing its population with new residents that can support and enhance local services and partake in social and community activities.

6.9 Whilst the Checkley Neighbourhood Development Plan is currently emerging guidance, it is clear that the development of the site has local support, especially with regards to the significant benefits associated with the provision of additional car parking for the cricket club. In this instance the site has local support, and this weighs heavily in favour of the development of the site.

Environmental

6.10 Checkley and Lower Tean contain a number of services which support the general day to day needs of future occupiers. These include a Primary School and 3 public

houses, all of which are within 750m of the application site. In addition, bus stops linking the site to Cheadle, Uttoxeter and Hanley are available within 120m and 280m of the application site which give excellent opportunities to access larger conurbations via sustainable means. The timetable relating to this bus service is available at Appendix A.

6.11 Manual for Streets highlights the importance of encouraging a wide range of sustainable transport uses and avoid reliance on the private car. Development which is located up to 2km from day-to-day services and facilities are defined as walkable neighbourhoods and can be considered to be within a sustainable location. General guidelines and Manual for Streets suggests a reasonable walking distance of 800m to amenities, all the facilities outlined above are well within these guidelines.

6.12 Paragraph 78 of the NPPF states that to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities.

6.13 This application is in outline and therefore no final details of the properties are submitted. However, the site is not covered by any specific landscape or heritage designations and therefore final designs of properties should not be too contentious. The existing field is used for informal grazing and is heavily managed for this purpose, therefore whilst it is green in nature the field is of no particular wider landscape importance. The field is framed either side by residential development and appears as a classic infill plot where the completion of a low level residential development would not harm the wider landscape.

6.14 The most important feature of the field is the existing hedgerow which provides enclosure to the adjoining highway, this is to be retained where possible and replaced where areas of removal are required to facilitate appropriate visibility. In addition, larger trees set within the field boundaries to the rear will be retained as part of the development helping it to assimilate into the wider landscape.

6.15 In terms of wider impacts of the proposal the field is not of any particular merit in the landscape. It is viewed against the backdrop of rising land to the north. From longer views residential development will be read alongside the existing dispersed built form that predominates this part of Checkley.

6.16 It is anticipated that the site will be developed by way of a high quality, low density scheme. Owing to the site topography it is anticipated that frontage development will be of two storeys to match that of the adjoining properties, with lower level single / one and a half storey properties to the rear. In terms of the car parking of the site this is to be located to the rear of the existing hedgerow and will be screened to passing traffic.

6.17 In determining applications the NPPF requires local planning authorities to aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying various principles. The site is heavily managed grassland, which is mown regularly, this ensures that there will be no impact on the habitats of any protected species.

6.18 The development of the site will however provide opportunities for biodiversity enhancement in terms of the provision of bat access tiles and bird boxes on/within the buildings.

Sustainability Conclusions

6.19 Due to the council being unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, policies for the supply of housing are therefore out-of-date in the context of footnote 7 of the NPPF and no weight should be attached to these policies in the planning balance.

6.20 The site comprises ‘infill’ development in a sustainable location within walking distance of amenities with Checkley and Lower Tean including the village school. In

addition, the site is within easy walking distance of regular bus services linking the site to larger conurbations. The site is not subject to any specific landscape or heritage designations that preclude the development of this site.

6.21 The proposed development will provide a small but nevertheless important contribution to the council's chronic under supply of housing and will have indirect benefits for the local construction trade and service economy.

6.22 The benefits of the proposal therefore significantly and demonstrably outweigh any harm that could be associated with the development.

Other Material Considerations

Impact upon the Character and Appearance of the Area

6.23 The built context of the application site is one characterised by variety. Both Checkley and Lower Tean comprise of a mix of dwelling types and materials. The immediate context of the application site is one of lower density, two storey properties in good sized plots set back from the highway with single storey outbuildings running away from the highway to the north.

6.24 The application is submitted in outline with all matters reserved. It is however anticipated that new properties will follow the prevailing character of the area and will be two storeys with traditional design cues and proportions.

6.25 In terms of the wider landscape impacts of the proposal policy DC3 advises that development which is detrimental to the character of the local and wider landscape will be resisted. From wider landscape receptors the scheme will be viewed against the backdrop of the rising land to the north and alongside other peripheral development.

Amenity of Neighbours

6.26 Whilst detailed designs and layouts of individual dwellings have yet to be prepared, the illustrative layout demonstrates that 8 dwellings can be accommodated on the site whilst retaining sufficient separation to neighbouring dwellings to avoid unacceptable impacts upon daylight and privacy.

6.27 Whilst there may be a degree of increased noise and disturbance associated with increased comings and goings, this is unlikely to be significant given the level of development proposed.

6.28 The proposed car parking will serve the cricket club, which is immediately opposite the site, this will be gated and will only be utilised when games / training is ongoing at the club and will be used as overspill parking. The frequency of use will therefore be relatively limited, and the car parking will not be used into the late evening. Therefore, the amenities of the occupiers of the new dwellings will be protected.

Highway Safety

6.29 Paragraph 109 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that development should only be refused on highway grounds where its impact upon the network would be severe.

6.30 The proposed site access emerges onto Uttoxeter Road which is subject to a 40mph speed limit. The location of the access and the width and alignment of the carriageway are such that subject to the removal of a small portion of the existing hedgerow, it will be provided with good visibility in both directions and will not result in an increase in vehicle conflict in the locality.

6.31 Each property is provided with an appropriate level of parking provision, on plot, to meet the needs of the dwelling. With regards to the parking for the cricket club, owing to the success of the club they are finding that both on match days and for

junior training sessions that existing car parking provision is deficient. This leads to parking being undertaken within the highway to the detriment of highway safety. The Checkley Neighbourhood Plan supports the development of this site subject to the provision of additional parking for the cricket club, and Mr Skyrme as a member of the club is happy to provide this much needed community benefit.

6.32 The level of development is such that the proposal will not result in a significant increase in vehicular movements on the local highway network and will certainly not prejudice the safe or efficient use of the adjoining highway network.

Flood Risk

6.33 The Environment Agency shows the site lying entirely within Flood Zone 1, where the annual probability of flooding from rivers or the sea is less than 1 in 1000. The dwellings would not therefore be at unacceptable risk from flooding and neither would they exacerbate flood risk elsewhere.

7 Conclusions

7.1 The application is an outline application for the erection of up-to 8 dwellings and a car park for Checkley Cricket Club.

7.2 Staffordshire Moorlands cannot exhibit a five year supply of deliverable housing and therefore the proposals fall to be considered under the presumption in favour of sustainable development as defined by footnote 7 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The Council are required to grant planning permission unless *'any adverse impacts of development……significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the scheme'*. The scheme will provide a small, but not insignificant benefit, in assisting Staffordshire Moorlands to meet their land supply requirements.

7.3 The site is located on the edge of both Checkley and Lower Tean which are provided with a range of services and facilities including a primary school. The site is within walking distance of all facilities and will support the vitality and viability of the villages.

7.4 The development would not detrimentally affect the amenities enjoyed by the occupiers of nearby dwellings or the safe of efficient use of the highway network. The proposals would not harm protected species or their habitats.

7.5 The proposals therefore constitute sustainable development as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework.