

Energy/sustainability statement

to support outline planning application for a residential development at
Capri Gallows Green, Alton

Date prepared	May 2021
Prepared by	Mr G Willard M.R.T.P.I

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1.0 Introduction

This statement is submitted at the council's request to support an application for housing on a site that the council has recently allocated in its adopted Local plan.

This reports confirms the council's own view that 'in principle' this is capable of being a sustainable development site.

2.0 Energy efficiency and sustainability

Local plan policy position

SMDC Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Feb 2018

In respect of this site the council's own SA document says:

6.705 The proposed delivery of circa 18 dwellings is considered to have a significant positive effect. However, the site is inaccessible to areas of existing employment which is likely to have a significant negative effect. The site's proximity to historic assets and ecological value is likely to have a negative effect. The site is indicated on the predictive map of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land as within an area likely to be urban / industrial.

6.706 The site is located on the southern edge of the village, comprising an individual property (and surrounding gardens) located on the B5032, and the adjacent field to the South. Outline planning permission for 13 dwellings is pending: SMD/2014/0824.

6.707 This site was taken forward as a preferred option for consultation in April 2016.

6.708 The site was considered by the Council's Landscape, Local Green Space and Heritage Impact Study (August 2016) to be of low landscape sensitivity. The study found that an existing strong, vegetated settlement edge is defined by a thick hedgerow on the southern boundary of the field to the south of the site. The Extended Phase 1 Habitat Surveys and Local Wildlife Site Assessment (May 2017) considered that the site has medium ecological value in its potential to support protected species. The site habitats are considered to be of nature conservation value at local and site level. However, more information is required regarding the species rich hedgerow and the potential for bat roosts in the building and trees.

6.709 There are five Grade II Listed Buildings and one Conservation Area within the 400 m buffer. The site was considered by the Council's Landscape, Local Green Space and Heritage Impact Study (August 2016) which notes that the site was well screened with vegetation on the east, west and southern sides. The study considered that to the north, there was no inter-visibility between the site and the Conservation Area due to the intervening buildings and that development would be unlikely to cause adverse effects to their settings.

6.710 The site was proposed to be carried forward into the July 2017 preferred option Local Plan with planning permission pending.

Previous planning history

A previous identical application (SMD/2014/0824) for this site was determined on 15th December 2017. The LPA granted planning permission in accordance with clear officer advice and recommendation to members to approve.

The report to planning committee said the following:

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1. The Local Planning Authority is required to determine planning applications in accordance with the development plan, unless there are material circumstances which indicate otherwise and in determining these applications, it shall have regard to the provisions of the Development Plan, in so far as material to the application and to any other material considerations. The Council's Development Plan is formed of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted March 2014) and the Saved Local Plan Proposals Map / Settlement Boundaries (adopted 1998).

2. Alton is identified in the Core Strategy as a 'larger village'. Policy SS6a states that larger villages shall retain and enhance their role as rural service centres, providing for the bulk of the local housing needs of the rural area and also for limited employment needs of a scale and type appropriate to each settlement. This will be achieved by allocating sites within the built up area or on land outside the built-up area where it is small scale and relates well to the built up area, can be assimilated into the landscape and have good access. The Core Strategy (and NPPF) promote the prioritisation of brownfield sites before greenfield sites. Policies SD1(1), SS1 and SS4, all expect that (sustainable) brownfield sites should be explored before non-allocated greenfield sites. In this instance officers consider and agree with the applicant that currently there are no other deliverable previously developed sites available in the locality and on this basis the development of this greenfield site can be considered.

3. With regards to Policy SS6a – Larger Villages Area Strategy – in which this site falls under. Officers consider that the proposal will help to retain and enhance Alton as a rural service centre and is of an appropriate scale to this locality. The proposal will also increase the number of available and affordable house types in a sustainable location, adjoining exiting residential development. On this basis the proposal is considered to relate well to the existing built environment, whilst being sympathetic to the adjacent open countryside to the south. The proposal also has the ability to provide a good access of Dentstone Lane that raises no specific highway safety issues and is accepted by the Highways Engineer in principle.

4. Currently, there is less than a 5 year land supply (2.08 years as at end of September 2014) against the recently adopted Core Strategy figure. The NPPF states that where the local planning authority cannot justify a five year land supply, relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up to date. Therefore permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF or specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted. The Council is progressing its Site Allocations DPD but this is still at an early stage and the Council has not yet undertaken public consultation on site options.

The recommendation said:

Subject to the prior completion of a S 106 Planning Obligation to secure the financial contribution of £16,622 towards the provision of 1 high school pupil at Thomas Alleyne's High School and to secure the provision of 33% affordable housing, planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

The section 106 was subsequently agreed and planning permission was released.

Site allocated for housing development

The SMDC Local Plan was adopted in September 2020.

The plan allocates this site as a housing site. The plan identifies the need to create sustainable communities as a key challenge for policies and allocations to address. The plans on page 25 says:

Creating healthy, sustainable communities

- *Need to maintain and improve the quality and diversity of the District's communities by ensuring accessibility to services and determining the best pattern of provision and distribution of development across the District, which is sustainable, reflects the role of the different settlements and is not compromised by inadequate availability of infrastructure.*
- *Need to support the quality of community life through partnership working – improving community safety, tackling health inequalities, social isolation, reducing the fear of crime, encouraging community cohesion, and tackling deprivation and inequalities.*
- *Need to improve provision and accessibility to health and education services and facilities.*
- *Need to increase physical activity and encourage active travel across all age groups and address the under-provision or poor quality provision of sport and recreational facilities and open space.*

It recognises the challenge of climate change and says on page 28:

Tackling climate change

Planning has a key role to play in mitigating the causes and effects of climate change through the location and nature of development and by helping to shape places which have lower carbon emissions and are resilient to climate change. The District should aim to contribute to the wider Government objective of achieving a low carbon future

Energy efficiency in the design, construction and use of buildings will be vital to reducing the impact of development on climate change.

Flooding is also an issue which has become significant in recent years due to increased incidences across the country. The Local Plan should seek to steer development to areas of low flood risk and support the delivery of appropriate mitigation and sustainable drainage where necessary.

The 'Vision' for rural areas is set out on page 32 and says:

Vision for the Rural Areas

The Rural Areas will have viable, attractive villages and smaller settlements which will continue to foster appropriate, sensitive growth and vitality to support rural living and work. The larger villages will be the rural centres for services, facilities and jobs acting to sustain the rural areas. Smaller village communities will also continue to thrive with a range of housing opportunities and improved access to community services. There will be a more vibrant and diverse rural economy which will provide a range of local job opportunities and support a thriving agricultural sector. Mixed-use development at Blythe Bridge will support the Rural Areas and potential wider regeneration initiatives.

Well managed, sustainable tourism will be a major driver in regenerating the rural areas and enhancing their character and quality. Major redundant sites in the countryside will have been redeveloped for new uses, improving the environment and diversifying the rural economy. In the countryside, the richness of the District's landscape, heritage and its biodiversity will continue to be valued, maintained and protected in a way which sensitively accommodates the needs of farmers, rural businesses, visitors and residents. Landscape character and quality will be conserved and enhanced and biodiversity fostered with appropriate new landscaping encouraged. Public access to the countryside will be extended with new walking, cycling and horse riding routes developed. Green infrastructure and open space will protect and enhance the environment whilst providing recreational opportunities alongside sport and improvements to health and well being. Neighbourhood Plans will be prepared where desired by local communities to guide development.

Given this 'vision' the Local plan then includes the application site as a sustainable housing site.

The site is allocated as site AL012.

Policy SS 8 deals with development in larger villages of which Alton is one. The policy says:

These settlements shall retain and enhance their role as rural service centres, providing for the bulk of the housing requirement of the rural areas and also for employment needs of a scale and type appropriate to each settlement having regard to infrastructure capacity and character. The Council and its partners will achieve this through the following actions:

1. Retain and enhance their role as rural service centres by:

- Enabling appropriate development which supports and increases the range and quality of community facilities available to the rural areas;*
- Protecting community facilities where loss would be deemed to reduce the community's ability to meet it's day to day needs*
- Improving connections by public transport to surrounding smaller villages and market towns.*
- Meet housing requirements by:*
 - Increasing the range of available and affordable house types, including for first time buyers and families;*
 - Allocating a range of deliverable housing sites with good accessibility to services and facilities*
 - Supporting the development of housing windfall sites within the village boundaries, subject to wider Local Plan policies*
 - Allowing for rural exceptions housing in appropriate locations on the edge of settlements (in accordance with Policy H 1). This will be additional to the housing provision for the rural areas*
 - Giving consideration to limited infilling on the edge of settlement boundaries, subject to the criteria set out in Policy H 1.*

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- *Meet limited employment needs by:
Enabling small-scale new employment development;*
- *Improving and intensifying the use of existing employment areas
and, where appropriate, expanding them.*

2. *Ensure that new development reflects and enhances each village's special character and heritage by:*

- *Giving priority to the reuse and regeneration of existing redundant, underused or surplus sites and premises for new development;*
- *Ensuring that development is of a suitable scale in relation to the role and function of the villages as set out in the Spatial Strategy*
- *Supporting the use of Neighbourhood Plans and Village Design Statements to guide future development*
- *Protecting and enhancing the setting of individual settlements*
- *Supporting the implementation of the Green Infrastructure Strategy and Local Green Spaces*
- *Protecting and enhancing the setting and historic character of the village, including heritage assets*

3 *Ensuring development of site UT019 in Upper Tean is sensitively designed to enhance the Conservation Area and proposals include mitigation measures including appropriate screening of the southern boundary as set out in the Council's Landscape, Local Green Space and Heritage Impact Study*

4. *Ensuring development of site WA004 in Waterhouses is sensitively designed and includes heritage masterplanning and provision of a landscaping plan including submission of landscape and visual impact assessments to address recommendations set out in the Council's Landscape, Local Green Space and Heritage Impact Study.*

5. *Supporting the mixed-use development of the Blythe Vale site at Blythe Bridge in line with policy DSR 1.*

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

3.0 Measuring this Outline planning application in sustainable terms.

This is an outline planning application. As such it should consider in '*principle only*' whether a site is sustainable or not in terms set out in the recently adopted Local plan and the NPPF.

The allocation of the site for housing attests to the council being satisfied the this site is in principle 'sustainable' and nothing further needs to be explained to justify the point any further.

4.0 Measuring future planning applications is sustainable development terms.

Once this planning permission is released future 'detailed' planning applications will fall to be determined on its own merits. Given local and national planning policy it is to be expected that such applications will include sustainable development techniques and design in those submissions and only at that stage can such details be assessed.

Weighing the detailed sustainable development benefits of this site and this development in detail then is a matter for future planning applications.

Local plan policy advises in respect of sustainable design and says:

Policy SD 1

Sustainable Use of Resources

The Council will require all development to make sustainable use of resources, and adapt to climate change. This will be achieved by:

- 1. Having regard to the BMV agricultural classification of the land, with a preference for the use of lower quality over higher quality agricultural land. Development should also aim to minimise soil disturbance and to retain ecological connectivity as far as possible*
- 2. Supporting or promoting proposals that remediate brownfield sites affected by contamination.*
- 3. Re-use of sites affected by mining activity will be supported, provided that any mining legacy is appropriately addressed and it can be demonstrated that the site is safe and stable for the development proposed.*
- 4. Supporting development that is located and designed to minimise energy needs and to take advantage of maximised orientation (subject to design and landscape policies) to achieve energy savings in line with Policy SD 3.*
- 5. The Council will require applicants for all major-scale planning applications (10 or more residential units or 1,000+ square metres floor area) to demonstrate that they have considered the energy efficiency, water conservation, sourcing of construction materials, and site orientation aspects of the scheme, and where possible the feasibility of integrating micro-renewables. The degree of detail expected will depend on the scale/complexity of the proposal.*
- 6. The Council will encourage developers to investigate the potential for re-using construction or construction waste materials, especially those sourced locally (which can include those minerals available on site, as appropriate) and integrates where possible on-site waste management facilities.*

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4.0 Conclusion

In principle this site is considered capable of delivering a sustainable development. It complies with the council's sustainable development, is an allocated housing site and has the benefit of an earlier planning consent granted and considered to be sustainable.

Matters of detailed design and whether that is sustainable and energy efficient or not can only be assessed at detailed application in the future and is not for consideration at this stage.