

Clare Johnson
Development Control
Blackpool Council
PO Box 17
Corporation Street
Blackpool, FY1 1LZ

Our Ref: 2009

Date: 15 October 2020

Dear Clare

REF. 20/0021 - LAND SOUTH EAST OF MARPLES DRIVE, BLACKPOOL

As requested, we have now had an opportunity to review the representation made by the residents of the adjacent Marples Grange development.

As you are no doubt aware, a large number of the issues raised are not relevant planning matters. Notwithstanding, each general issue is considered in turn below.

Layout

The submission layout has been fully assessed by the Council's Planning Officers and statutory consultees. Any required amendments have been made and included in the scheme that is being put before Committee with a recommendation for approval.

Parking, Garages & Road Widths

The representation raises a number of concerns regarding parking provision and the width of unadopted roads.

The Council's Highways service has been formally consulted on the scheme and have asked for a number amendments. All of the requested amendments have been made and the Highway Authority (HA) are now satisfied with the proposal. The HA has considered the proposed layout in detail and no concerns have been raised regarding access to the driveways of specific plots or concerns regarding on-street parking.

Boundary Treatments

A comment has been made suggesting that fencing is set in from the boundaries on corner plots so that residents are required to maintain grass service strips and which in turn reduces the garden space available to the property owners. In these cases, such boundary treatments comprise 1.8 metre high timber fencing or walls to provide privacy in rear garden spaces. Having the fencing set in from the boundary allows for the provision of soft landscaping to soften the impact of the fencing on the streetscene and add visual interest. More importantly, the setback provides for visibility for residents exiting driveways immediately adjacent to these boundaries. The proposed planting provides a further layer of security to the rear gardens of these properties.

It is anticipated that residents would maintain these landscaped areas as they would the remainder of their front gardens. These areas of soft landscaping are not service strips as suggested in the representation.



Rear Access/Bins

The rear access to plot 179 is typical of mews/terraced plots and relevant bin carry distances are met. Paragraph 11.3.4 of the Committee Report confirms that all dwellings meet bin drag distances. The Council's Waste service has not raised any objection to the proposals.

Attenuation Basin

Whilst United Utilities adopt the sewer network within the existing Marples Grange development, the attenuation basin itself is not adopted, although structures such as headwalls are. The attenuation basin will be maintained by the management company, together with the other areas of public open space (POS), with its maintenance funded through the existing properties. The future residents of the subject scheme would also contribute to the future maintenance of the basin. This is standard for new housing developments and there is no requirement for United Utilities to adopt such surface water drainage features.

Provision of Open Space and Maintenance

The LAP is at the end of a cul-de-sac and will be level with the adjacent public footway. Details of the eventual LAP will be agreed by condition but it will include equipment primarily target at the under 6 age group. The size of the LAP exceeds the minimum requirement.

In terms of the future management of open space, the Council would not adopt these areas and as such would be managed by the management company, rather than the Council.

The fees relating to the maintenance of the open space to be provided on the subject scheme will be borne by the future residents of the application site only.

Street Lights and Street Signs

Street lighting and signage will be installed as part of the development in accordance with a scheme to be agreed directly with the highway authority, under a Section 38 Agreement.

Quality & Construction

Rowland Homes strives to build a quality product. They have systems and checks in place throughout the build process to ensure that a good quality product is handed over to the purchaser together with a system post legal completion to ensure that any issues are rectified. Each home benefits from a 10 year NHBC Warranty.

Across Rowland Homes' developments reputable contractors are employed in conjunction with good quality materials. Local Authority Building Control and the NHBC also carry out key stage inspections during the build process.

As a company Rowland Homes use the New Homes Consumer Code and will be joining the New Homes Ombudsman scheme when it is released in the new year.

Rowland Homes also use an external company to carry out post completion surveys with their purchasers. The returned surveys on Marples Grange show that 90% of the purchasers would recommend Rowland Homes which is consistent with the results for 2019/2020 legal completions across all developments.

Management Fees

The properties on the development will all be sold on a freehold basis, the management of areas by a management company is a separate matter.



A quote for the service charge for maintaining the management company managed areas, together with their fees, will be sought from a managing agent at the outset of the development, which will be included on the price lists for the new houses.

The purchasers of each new house pay a proportion of the annual service charge up to the end of that year dependent upon what time of year they purchase their new home. No further service charge is requested from the new homeowners until the management company managed areas are handed over to the managing agent to manage on behalf of the management company.

Until such time Rowland Homes maintain the management company managed areas without utilising the service charges paid by the new homeowners. These monies are held in a fund on behalf of the management company until it is handed over to the new residents who appoint directors to run the management company.

Ultimately the residents can then retain the services of the appointed managing agent or may then wish to appoint a different managing agent or administer the management company themselves.

Residential vs Commercial

There has been no attempt by the applicants to conceal the extant outline permission for the employment use adjacent to the Marples Grange development. Indeed the detailed residential scheme was approved at the same time as the employment use under the same permission. The prospects of the subject land being developed for commercial uses has simply been uncertain for some time given the lack of interest from prospective operators.

As confirmed in the Officer's Report to Committee, the developers have conducted an appropriate marketing exercise which has proved unsuccessful. The residential development of the site will make a substantial contribution to the Council's housing needs in a sustainable location which makes efficient use of previously developed land. The site also forms a proposed housing allocation in the Council's emerging Site Allocations document (Local Plan Part 2), to which no objections have been received.

In any case, it is noted that the introduction to the representation confirms that the residents do not object to the principle of its development for housing.

In summary, it is considered that the large majority of issues raised in the representation are not matters relevant to the determination of the application. There have been no objections raised by statutory consultees and the Officer's Report to Committee confirms that the principle of development is acceptable. The detailed proposals have also been found to accord with relevant policies within the Development Plan.

There have been no matters raised which would warrant a refusal of the application.

Yours sincerely

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