

Blackpool Council
Development Management

Officer Report to Committee

Application ref:	20/0021
Ward:	Marston
Application type:	Full
Location:	Land east of Marples Drive (Part of former N S & I site) off Preston New Road, Blackpool.
Proposal:	Erection of 90 x two storey detached, semi-detached and terraced dwellings with associated car parking, garages, boundary treatment, landscaping, including attenuation basin, and highway works.
Recommendation:	Resolve to grant planning permission and defer the application to the Head of Development Management to issue the decision based on the originally submitted plans, subject to the conditions set out in the appended update note and subject to delegation from the Secretary of State and the signing of a Section 106 agreement.
Case officer:	Clare Johnson
Case Officer Tel No:	01253 476345

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application was initially presented to Members at the Planning Committee meeting on the 20th October 2020. The original report and recommendation is appended to this report along with the update note containing additional representations and proposed conditions.
- 1.2 In that meeting, Members of the Planning Committee considered representations from the agent acting on behalf of the applicant and from a local objector. The application was discussed in detail with Members raising a number of concerns with the proposal, with the principle objection to the scheme being the lack of open space resulting in an overly-dense development. Notwithstanding the officer recommendation to approve the application, Members were minded to refuse planning permission. As a result, the Planning Committee voted to defer the application to a future meeting to either, give the developer the opportunity to take

on board the concerns raised and make amendments to the scheme, or to enable a suggested reason for refusal to be drafted.

2.0 DISCUSSION

Housing delivery

- 2.1 The Committee is respectfully reminded of the key objectives in the Core Strategy which was approved by Member. These include
- Goal 1 – support new housing provision to deliver a choice of quality homes across the Borough for new and existing residents
 - Goal 2 – achieve housing densities that respect the local surroundings whilst making efficient use of land
 - Goal 4 – provide a complementary housing offer between new homes in South Blackpool and those delivered through regeneration in the Inner Areas to avoid competition within Blackpool’s housing market.
- 2.2 Looking at the existing housing stock in Blackpool, there is a shortage of good quality detached family housing when compared to the offer in the wider Fylde Coast. The 2014 Fylde Coast Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) identified that just 8.5% of the housing stock in Blackpool comprised detached properties, compared to 26.2% in Fylde and 28.3% in Wyre. Given the expected economic growth at the Enterprise Zone and through significant regeneration projects across the town, it is considered necessary to provide suitable homes for the skilled/professional employers/employees that this economic growth is expected to attract, who may otherwise locate in neighbouring authorities.
- 2.3 Furthermore, Members will recall that Part 2 of the Local Plan: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies document went through an informal consultation at the beginning of 2019. This site was identified in that document as suitable for 90 houses and no objections were received to this proposed site allocation. Although little weight can be attached to it at present, Part 2 is due to be published for a formal consultation early next year and includes this site as a housing allocation for 90 dwellings.
- 2.4 Once adopted, the site allocations in Part 2 will form part of the Council’s future housing land supply to meet the requirement of delivering 4200 new homes between 2012 and 2027 set out in Core Strategy Policy CS2. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government’s objective to significantly boost the supply of homes across the country (Paragraph 59 refers). The NPPF also states that when allocating sites for housing, the sites need to be available and deliverable. This site is both available and deliverable, with a house builder (the applicant) on site completing phase 1. There are few remaining sites in Blackpool of this scale that

could make a meaningful contribution towards the town's identified housing needs to the end of the plan period.

Housing density

- 2.5 In terms of the density of the proposed scheme, the site area is 3.85 hectares with a density as submitted of 26.3 dwellings per hectare. Members are respectfully advised that the following densities have been approved by the Planning Committee as part of other housing schemes:

Land at Moss House Road

Reference 13/0378 approved by Planning Committee 13/01/2014

No of houses 579

Site area 16.7 hectares

Density 34.7 dwellings per hectare

NS&I phase 1 (the adjacent scheme currently under construction)

Reference 15/0420 approved by Planning Committee 28/10/2016

No of houses 115

Site area 4.95 hectares

Density 23.3 dwellings per hectare

Land at Moss House Road

Reference 17/0095 approved by Planning Committee 03/04/2017

No of houses 422

Site area 15.4 hectares

Density 27.4 dwellings per hectare

Former Co-operative Club, Preston New Road

Reference 17/0361 approved by Planning Committee 23/08/2017

No of houses 53

Site area 1.57 hectares

Density 33.7 dwellings per hectare

Former Booths site, Highfield Road

Reference 17/0416 approved by Planning Committee 08/09/2017

No of houses 26

Site area 1.02 hectares

Density 25.4 dwellings per hectare

Troutbeck Crescent

Reference 19/0144 approved by Planning Committee 04/06/2019

No of houses 75

Site area 2.3 hectares

Density 32.6 dwellings per hectare

- 2.6 Planning Committee Members are also drawn to the density of the refused housing application at Warren Drive, which was subsequently granted permission at appeal:

Land at Warren Drive

Reference 17/0466 refused by Planning Committee 23/01/2018, permission granted at appeal 09/04/2019

No of houses 86

Site area 3.12

Density 27.6 dwellings per hectare

- 2.7 It is not considered that the density of this development is significantly different to these approved schemes and in most cases, is less dense.
- 2.8 Members are also advised that the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment which has been subject to consultation and provides a methodology of estimating the development capacity of potential housing sites, uses a housing density for this type of site of 50 dwellings per hectare. For a 3.85 hectare green-field site like this one, where the net developable area would be approximately 60% of the gross, this would equate to a maximum level of provision of some 116 dwellings. Clearly the number proposed, at 90, would be significantly short of this. On this basis, the proposed density of development on site is considered to be entirely reasonable.

Planning Obligations

- 2.9 Core Strategy Policy CS11: Planning obligations states that development will only be permitted where existing infrastructure, services and amenities are already sufficient, or where the developer enters into a legal agreement to meet the additional needs arising from the development.
- 2.10 As stated in the appended report, the total planning obligations for this site amount to a financial equivalent of just over £1.67million. This figure is made up of the following requirements: £1,547,000 for affordable housing; £99,321.23 towards public open space; and £24,805 towards local health care. Members are advised that, when initially submitted, the scheme did not include any provision either on site or through contribution to meet these obligations.
- 2.11 Officers challenged this and requested a viability appraisal to demonstrate that the impact of the necessary contributions on the viability of the scheme. The submitted appraisal identified that a total sum of £125,000 could be made available. This was independently verified by Lambert Smith Hampton consultants who have also carried out the viability testing on the Local Plan. It is considered that this money is best put towards the provision/improvement of public open space and local healthcare provision. The reasons for this are set out in the original officer report attached.

Open Space

- 2.12 Saved Policy BH10 states that all developments should provide open space on site where possible, but where constraints preclude the full rate of provision on-site, developers may instead pay a commuted sum to improve open space provision to meet the needs of the development.
- 2.13 The developer is prepared to enter into a legal agreement to provide the full amount of contributions to mitigate the shortfall of on-site public open space (calculated at £99,321.23), to be spent on improving public open space off-site for the benefits of not just the future occupants of this site, but for the wider Marton ward community and beyond. This approach is supported by Policy CS11 and Saved Policy BH10. Officers in the Council's Parks Department have identified Lawsons Field as being in need of significant investment to improve toilet facilities, boundary treatment including hedge planting, tree planting, seating, improved entrances, paths and signage. Lawsons Field was identified in the most recent Open Space Assessment as being poor quality public open space and so the commuted sum offered by the developer would go some way to raising the quality of that open space to 'good'. Lawsons Field is approximately 1 mile from the development site and is within the same ward (Marton). Upgrading Lawsons Field would be in accordance with the requirements of SPG11. The details would be set out in a legal agreement.
- 2.14 The developer has considered the concern raised by Members regarding the lack of on-site open space and the density of the development, and they have confirmed that they could reduce the number of houses to 87 by losing a 3 bed detached and a pair of 3 bed semi-detached dwellings from the scheme. This would reduce the density of the scheme to 22.3 dwellings per hectare which would be one of the lowest density housing schemes that Planning Committee has considered in recent years. However, in reducing the number of houses from 90 to 87 and to retain a viable scheme, the applicant's offer to enter into a legal agreement to provide the £99,321.23 contribution towards off-site open space would be withdrawn.
- 2.15 Draft layout plans (attached at Appendix 5b) have been submitted showing three different scenarios where the additional open space could be provided. Having regard to the submitted draft layouts, officers consider that the loss of three houses would not result in more meaningful public open space for the development and would not achieve the most efficient use of the land. However, if the Committee did wish to pursue the option of on-site provision in place of off-site improvement, the area of public open space that would be provided by option 1 is considered to be preferable. This is because it would be immediately visible upon entry to the site and would also be easily accessible by residents of phase 1.
- 2.16 Nevertheless, on balance, it is considered that the £99,321.23 contribution to upgrade facilities at Lawsons Field is preferable to reducing the density of the development slightly and losing three good quality family homes.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION AND OPTIONS

3.1 It is considered that Members now have three options:

1. Resolve to grant planning permission and defer the application to the Head of Development Management to issue the decision based on the originally submitted plans and subject to the conditions set out in the appended update note. This permission would be subject to delegation from the Secretary of State, and the signing of a Section 106 agreement to secure £125,000 of which £100,000 would contribute towards the improvement of off-site public open space and £25,000 would contribute towards local healthcare provision.
2. Resolve to grant planning permission and defer the application to the Head of Development Management to issue the decision upon receipt of amended plans showing the provision of on-site public open space pursuant to Option 1 identified by the applicant. This permission would be subject to delegation from the Secretary of State, the conditions set out in the appended update note, and a Section 106 agreement to secure £25,000 towards local healthcare provision with no contribution towards the improvement of off-site public open space.
3. Refuse the application.

3.2 The above sets out the professional advice of your planning officers on the application, and reflects the advice given at the previous meeting of the Committee. If, notwithstanding that advice, Members wish to refuse the application, the following wording articulates officers' understanding of the concerns expressed by Members at the previous meeting:

"The proposed housing scheme is considered to be an over-development of the land resulting in insufficient open space for future residents. In this instance, given the distance from the site to existing public open space provision, a financial contribution in lieu of on-site provision is not considered to be acceptable. As such, the proposal is considered to be contrary to policies CS6, CS7 and CS12 of the Blackpool Local Plan Core Strategy 2012-2027 and saved policies LQ1, LQ3 and BH10 in the Blackpool Local Plan 2001-2016 and Paragraph 130 of the NPPF."

ORIGINAL REPORT TO COMMITTEE - 20/10/2020

1.0 BLACKPOOL COUNCIL PLAN 2019-2024

- 1.1 The Council Plan sets out two priorities. The first is 'the economy: maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool' and the second is 'communities: creating stronger communities and increasing resilience. The application satisfies the second of these priorities.

2.0 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The application is recommended for approval subject to the signing of a Section 106 legal agreement relating to a financial contribution of £125,000 towards off site public open space, off site affordable housing provision and the up-grading of local health facilities.

3.0 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 The application site forms part of the former 9 hectare N S & I (Premium Bonds) site which was accessed from Mythop Road with a pedestrian entrance from Preston New Road and has recently been replaced with a new access from Preston New Road. N S & I retain a smaller presence on the site within the Moorland building at the northern end of the site. The remainder of the site has been cleared and a housing development of 118 dwellings (79 detached, 30 semi's and 9 terraced houses) is nearing completion on the western half of the site following the granting of planning permission under reference 15/0420. As part of planning permission 15/0420, an office and light industrial development was also approved in outline on the eastern half of the site. It is this eastern half of the site that is the subject of the current detailed planning application for residential development following an unsuccessful period of marketing of the site for office and light industrial development.

4.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 4.1 A new access road, including a traffic signal junction, has been constructed into the site from Preston New Road as part of the on-going housing development to the west of the application site. This access also serves Moorland House and was also intended to serve the approved office and light industrial development. This access road forms the western boundary to this cleared 3.85 hectare site which is bounded to the south by Preston New Road with a chain link fence forming the boundary, to the north by Marton Mere Holiday Park and to the east by the rear gardens of houses fronting Mythop Road. Mythop Court, a part two/ part three storey apartment block with parking to the rear also abuts the southern site boundary. The site boundaries are well landscaped and the central area of the site has been cleared in preparation for re-development. Land levels across the application site drop some 3.5 metres from Preston New Road and the new access road towards the eastern

site boundary where the former site access was located and close to the remaining vehicle access from Mythop Road into the Marton Mere Holiday Park. The application site is located within Flood Zone 1 and has a low risk of surface water or reservoir flooding.

5.0 DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

- 5.1 This is a full planning application involving the erection of 90 x two storey houses comprising 30 x four bed houses, 54 x three bed houses and 6 x two bed houses. The proposed houses are mainly a mixture of detached and semi-detached properties with a single terrace of three dwellings also included. Approximately 210 off street parking spaces would be provided comprising a combination of detached garages and hardstanding areas to the front and sides of the respective dwellings. Two main spine roads feed off the existing access road with a number of dwellings fronting onto the main access road and houses also facing towards Preston New Road with a landscaped buffer along the boundary. A number of dwellings back onto the Mythop Road and Marton Mere Holiday Park, again with a landscaped buffer to the respective boundaries. A significant amount of the existing boundary landscaping will be retained and supplemented with additional planting, the details of which would be agreed by condition.
- 5.2 A 125sqm children's play area is proposed towards the south of the site, which would be accessed directly from one of the proposed cul-de-sacs and close to the Preston New Road boundary. The development includes green infrastructure including tree planting around and within the site. The existing water attenuation basins associated with phase one of the scheme to the west of the site, would be utilised by the proposed development for the discharge of surface water.
- 5.3 The application is accompanied by the following supporting documents:
- Planning statement
 - Transport Assessment and Travel Plan
 - Ecological Appraisal
 - Tree Survey and Arboricultural Method Statement
 - Flood Risk Assessment Addendum Strategy
 - Viability Assessment (Confidential)
 - Marketing Report
 - Construction Environmental Management Plan
 - Design and Access Statement
 - GeoEnvironmental Statement
 - Remediation Strategy
 - Shadow Habitat Regulation Assessment

6.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

6.1 15/0420 Hybrid Planning application comprising -

(a) full planning application for the erection of 118 dwellings with associated garages, landscaping, highway works and new access off Preston New Road.

(b) outline planning application for the demolition of the existing National Savings and Investments Building and the erection of offices (Use Class B1a) and light industrial premises (Use Class B1c) with associated roads, parking/servicing areas and landscaping. Granted 28th Oct 2016 subject to a Section 106 Agreement relating to phasing of the development.

7.0 MAIN PLANNING ISSUES

7.1 The main planning issues are considered to be:

- principle of the development
- site layout and housing mix
- impact on residential and visual amenity
- impact on highway safety/ car parking provision
- design and layout considerations
- public open space/ children play provision
- planning contributions

8.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSES

8.1 **Blackpool Services, Contaminated Land: The Phase 1 and 11 reports shows that there are elevated concentrations within some of the ground conditions. Following the recommendations of the report a remediation and validation is required.**

These matters can be dealt with by way of condition.

8.2 **Natural England: For residential development in this area, proportionate assessment of recreational disturbance impacts on the coastal designated sites resulting from the development is required via the Screening stage of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), as required under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 ('the Habitat Regulations').**

Under Regulation 63 of the Habitat Regulations the determination of likely significant effect is for the Local Planning Authority. If your authority can be satisfied that the proposal can conclude no likely significant effects there is no further need to consult Natural England.

Where the HRA Screening cannot rule out a likely significant effect on the coastal designated sites then an Appropriate Assessment is required, of which Natural England is a statutory consultee, please consult us again at this stage.

Natural England has not assessed this application for impacts on protected species. Natural England has published Standing Advice which you can use to assess impacts on protected species or you may wish to consult your own ecology services for advice.

The planning agent submitted two Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRP) screening documents which show no significant effects. In response, Natural England have not objected to the scheme but are requiring that the development should proceed in accordance with the mitigation measure identified in the submitted Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) by Envirotech dated 09/04/2020 (householder information packs to be provided in the new dwellings).

8.3 **Electricity North West Ltd:** Standard comments where proposed development adjoins and could have an impact upon infrastructure.

8.4 **County Archaeologist Lancashire County Council:** The site is largely under the footprint of the former "ERNIE" complex and its associated car parks. Evaluation of land to the west suggested that area had been planed off to the top of the subsoil levels as part of the development of the N S & I complex, removing any features of archaeological or historical significance.

We are of the opinion that the current proposal, which is on a site which will have undergone considerable more disturbance, is extremely unlikely to be of archaeological interest and would therefore not offer any objections to, or further advice on, the proposed development

8.5 **NHS Blackpool Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)** This proposal will generate approximately 216 new patient registrations based on average household size of 2.4. The proposed development falls within the catchment area of Harris Medical Centre. This need, with other new developments in the area, can only be met through the refurbishment and reconfiguration of the existing premises in order to ensure sustainable general practice. The practice is located less than 0.2 miles from the development and would therefore be the practice where the majority of the new residents register for general medical services.

The CCG has assessed the implications of this proposal on delivery of general practice services and is of the opinion that it will have a direct impact which will require mitigation with the payment of an appropriate financial contribution. This contribution amounts to £24,805

8.6 **Police Architectural Liaison Officer:** I recommend that the development is designed and constructed to Secured by Design 'Homes 2019' security specification early in the design phase to mitigate any risk to crime

8.7 **United Utilities Plc (Water):** No comments have been received in time for inclusion in this report. If any comments are received in advance of the Committee meeting

they will be reported through the update note.

- 8.8 **Head of Transportation:** I accept the parking provision currently shown. I also accept the conclusions in the Transport Assessment. I have a few minor points on the detail of the layout, as below.

Tandem parking spaces are unacceptable on the main road into the site. That applies to plots 120,168,172,173 and 204. They should be amended to side by side, people do not use tandem spaces.

The bin collection points need to move. The one at plot 116 should be moved as close to the road as possible to reduce the standing time for the collection vehicle. The ones at plots 132 and 157 should both be moved as close to the road as possible to reduce the drag for the loaders to a minimum.

I also do not see why a small number of plots have no footway adjacent to what will be an adopted road. For example plots 125,134,157. Without a good reason the strips should be replaced with footway. This will not be accepted in s38 negotiations. Any other highway issues can come out in the s38 process.

Amended plans have been submitted which satisfy the above comments.

- 8.9 **Head of Housing and Environmental Protection Service:** No comments have been received in time for inclusion in this report. If any comments are received in advance of the Committee meeting they will be reported through the update note.
- 8.10 **Assistant Director - Enterprise and Business Development:** No comments have been received in time for inclusion in this report. If any comments are received in advance of the Committee meeting they will be reported through the update note.
- 8.11 **Environment Agency:** No comments have been received in time for inclusion in this report. If any comments are received in advance of the Committee meeting they will be reported through the update note.
- 8.12 **Fylde Borough Council:** No comments have been received in time for inclusion in this report. If any comments are received in advance of the Committee meeting they will be reported through the update note.
- 8.13 **Fire Service:** No comments have been received in time for inclusion in this report. If any comments are received in advance of the Committee meeting they will be reported through the update note.
- 8.14 **Education - Property and Development Officer:** We do not envisage any issues with the proposed 90 additional properties in relation to primary school places. The forecast is for surplus primary places in the next few years. Primary forecasts for Blackpool's south planning area predict surplus places running at around 100 in relation to overall availability. Mereside and Marton primary academies are

currently consulting about reducing their intake numbers from September 2021.

For secondary schools, we predict that things will be tight from September 2023 for 4 or 5 years when pupil numbers will rise. This will require additional secondary places and the Council will be addressing this matter. However, the small number of proposed houses and potential additional pupil yield would not seem to present a significant change. We also expect that the main increase in secondary demand will be in north and central planning areas.

8.15 WASTE- Residential: No comments have been received in time for inclusion in this report. If any comments are received in advance of the Committee meeting they will be reported through the update note.

8.16 Parks and Green Environment: Recommended the on-site provision of a LAP (local area for play and intended for young children) to be enclosed with fencing and a minimum of 100sqm in area. The amended location of the LAP accessed direct from one of the cul-de-sacs and increased in size to 125sqm is acceptable.

(The LAP will fitted with an appropriate level of play equipment to be provided by the applicants. The details of which can be dealt with by condition, including the long term maintenance of the play equipment)

8.17 Ecological Consultations (i.e Biological Heritage Sites): No comments have been received in time for inclusion in this report. If any comments are received in advance of the Committee meeting they will be reported through the update note.

8.18 Head of Transportation (Network Maintenance): No comments have been received in time for inclusion in this report. If any comments are received in advance of the Committee meeting they will be reported through the update note.

9.0 REPRESENTATIONS

Press notice published: 24th January 2020

Site notices x 4 published: 29th January 2020

Neighbours notified: 16th January 2020

Two representations have been received raising the following issues:

9.1 15 Stock Road - Concerns regarding the quality of construction of existing houses built on adjoining land. It is considered the applicants should not be allowed to build any further homes until the existing properties meet the required technical standards.

9.2 26 Mythop Road - Concerns regarding the loss of trees which run along the south eastern site boundary with gardens of the properties facing Mythop Road and the distance the proposed houses will be sited from the common boundary.

The Police Architectural Liaison Officer states that 'rear gardens that are adjacent to public spaces, public rights of way, woodland or countryside are more vulnerable as a concealed and less visible approach is available that makes them more likely to be targeted.' Therefore, the proposal makes the proposed dwellings 140-191 backing onto Mythop Road and the houses along Mythop Road more vulnerable to intrusion.

10.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

10.1 National Planning Policy Framework

10.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was adopted in February 2019. It sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The following sections are most relevant to this application:

- Section 5 - Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
- Section 8 - Promoting healthy and safe communities
- Section 9 - Promoting sustainable transport
- Section 11 - Making effective use of land
- Section 12 - Achieving well-designed places
- Section 14 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- Section 15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

10.3 National Planning Practice Guidance

10.4 The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) expands upon and offers clarity on the points of policy set out in the NPPF.

10.5 Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy 2012-2027

10.6 The Core Strategy was adopted in January 2016.

- CS1 - Strategic location for development
- CS2 - Housing provision
- CS3 – Economic development and employment
- CS5 – Connectivity
- CS6 - Green infrastructure
- CS7 - Quality of design
- CS9 - Water management
- CS10 - Sustainable design
- CS12- Sustainable neighbourhoods
- CS13 - Housing mix density and standards
- CS14 - Affordable housing
- CS15 - Health and education
- CS24 - South Blackpool employment growth

- CS27 - South Blackpool connectivity and transport

None of the policies listed conflict with the policies in the Saved Blackpool Local Plan.

10.7 Blackpool Local Plan 2011-2016 (saved policies)

10.8 The Blackpool Local Plan was adopted in June 2006. A number of policies in the Local Plan have now been superseded by policies in the Core Strategy but others have been saved until the Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies has been produced. The following saved policies are most relevant to this application:

- LQ1 - Lifting the Quality of Design
- LQ2 - Site Context
- LQ3 - Layout of Streets and Spaces
- LQ4 - Building Design
- LQ5 - Public Realm Design
- LQ6 - Landscape Design and Biodiversity
- BH3 - Residential Amenity
- BH4 - Public Health and Safety
- BH10 - Open Space in New Housing Developments
- HN4 - Windfall Sites (for housing development)
- NE6 – Protected Species
- NE7 – Site and Features of Landscape, Nature Conservation and Environmental Value
- DE1 - Industrial and Business Land Provision
- AS1 - General Development Requirements
- AS2 – New development with Significant Transport Implications

10.9 Blackpool Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (emerging policies)

10.10 The Blackpool Local Plan Part 2 has been subject to an informal consultation exercise and will be subject to formal consultation later this year. At this point in time limited weight can be attached to the policies proposed. Nevertheless, the following draft policies in Part 2 are most relevant to this application:

- Policy DM5: Design Requirements for New Build Housing Development
- Policy DM33: Biodiversity
- Policy DM39: Transport Requirements for New Development

The application site is identified as a housing allocation in the Blackpool Local Plan:Part 2 (H22).

10.11 Other relevant documents

- Supplementary Planning Guidance 11: Open Space: provision for new residential development and the funding system
- Draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document

11.0 ASSESSMENT

11.1 Principle

11.2 The site is allocated as a Main Industrial/Business Area on the Proposals Map to the Local Plan and as such, the application constitutes a departure from the Local Plan. Should the Planning Committee be minded to grant planning permission, the application will be referred to the Secretary Of State for the final decision.

11.3 The site is allocated for housing under the draft Part 2: Site Allocation and Development Management Policies document, to assist the Council in meeting its five year housing supply. Little weight can be given to this proposed change of allocation in advance of the publication of Part 2. However, the draft document was subject to an informal consultation early in 2019 and it should be noted that no objections were made to this site being allocated for housing.

11.4 There is concern over the loss of the employment land, especially given the Council has had to approach Fylde Council to provide employment land to meet Blackpool's future needs, but this needs to be balanced against the circumstances on the site and the need to look for a solution in bringing the site back into use. The applicant has demonstrated that the site has been unsuccessfully marketed for business development for a number of years and whilst the housing proposal is a departure from the current Local Plan, there are material considerations which outweigh this conflict and demonstrate a closer alignment to national policy and the adopted Core Strategy.

11.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that planning decisions should give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and should reflect changes in the demand for land. The NPPF confirms that where the local planning authority considers there to be no reasonable prospect of development coming forward for the use allocated in their local plan, they should reallocate the land for more deliverable use that can help address identified needs, and in the interim, applications for alternative uses on the land should be supported where proposals would contribute to meeting an unmet need for development in the area.

11.6 Furthermore, since 2016 the Government and the Council has been actively encouraging new businesses to locate at the Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone, with incentives such as Business Rates Relief and Enhanced Capital Allowances, making employment land elsewhere a less attractive proposition for new businesses.

11.7 The scheme would make a notable quantitative contribution towards meeting Blackpool's housing requirement and provide a qualitative improvement to the housing stock by the addition of 2, 3 and 4 bedroom family homes. This weighs heavily in favour of the scheme in the planning balance.

11.8 Site layout and housing mix

11.9 The proposal would deliver a mix of 2, 3 and 4 bedroom properties and a mix of detached, semi-detached and terraced houses. Core Strategy Policy CS13 normally requires that 20% (18) of the houses should have 2 bedrooms to deliver a good housing mix. The scheme proposes just 6 houses with 2 bedrooms, contrary to the required mix in CS13. However, the applicant has demonstrated that there is limited demand for 2 bedroom properties within their developments, with the highest demand coming for houses with 3+ bedrooms. They also argue that Blackpool has an over-concentration of smaller housing units and a lack of larger, detached and semi-detached houses and replacing 3 and 4 bedroom units with 2 bedroom units would render the scheme unviable.

11.10 Having considered the issue of viability and the benefits that the proposal would bring in terms of meeting an identified housing need, the conflict with Policy CS13 is not considered to weigh significantly against the proposal and the housing mix is considered to be acceptable in this instance.

11.11 The layout has been designed to be primarily outward looking and in an attractive setting, behind linear landscaped buffers to the north, south and east. Trees are including throughout the scheme along with shrubs and grassed areas, minimising the impact of the development on neighbouring residents. The site layout is similar to, and a continuation of phase one to the west and is considered to be acceptable.

11.12 Amenity

11.13 Cross sections have been submitted, showing the site levels in relation to the existing houses on Mythop Road. The levels are acceptable, especially when considering the 30m+ separation distances and the landscaping/tree planting to be provided.

11.14 The proposed houses would all have private amenity space to the side and/or rear and although not all of the houses meet the Nationally Prescribed Space Standards in terms of total floorspace and bedroom sizes, there is no current policy requirement for them to do so. The accommodation proposed would be of a reasonable standard and no amenity issues are identified on this ground.

11.15 The scheme includes green infrastructure which would soften the appearance of the estate and provides some local amenity space which would benefit future occupants of the estate.

11.16 Refuse collection would either be from the pavement or from dedicated bin collection points, all of which would meet bin drag distances.

11.17 On balance, no adverse impacts on amenity are anticipated.

11.18 Visual Impact

11.19 The house types used in the development are the same as in phase one to the west, including materials and should phase two go ahead, both sites would read as one development. The houses are well designed and detailed and offer a variety of materials and finishes which complement each other.

11.20 There would initially be a loss of landscaping around the perimeter of the site, particularly along the northern and eastern boundary which weighs against the scheme. However, additional landscaping and tree planting is proposed and would be secured by condition in mitigation. The landscaping scheme would soften the appearance of the streetscene and would add visual interest to the estate.

11.21 Like phase one, the estate would be open plan. Private garden space would be enclosed by either 1.8m brick walls, 1.8m or 0.9m high timber fences with timber knee rails separating the estate from green spaces. A 125sqm play area would be enclosed by 1m high bow top railings. The various boundary treatments are considered to be appropriate and reflect phase one.

11.22 On balance, the overall design of the scheme is considered to be acceptable and no undue visual impacts are anticipated.

11.23 Other Issues

11.24 Planning Obligations:

11.25 Policy CS11 states that development will only be permitted where the developer enters into a legal undertaking or agreement to meet the additional needs arising from the development. The application was submitted along with a viability report, which stated no developer contributions were viable. The Council worked with the applicant and consultants Lambert Smith Hampton on the issue of viability, and a sum of £125,000 contribution is viable. The applicant is prepared to enter into a Section 106 agreement to pay this sum of money towards essential infrastructure.

11.26 How this sum would be split will be reported in the Update Note.

11.27 Affordable Housing

11.28 Policy CS14 requires that 30% of new houses should be affordable unless such requirements would render a development unviable. The draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (AHSPD) sets out the need for affordable housing in Blackpool, the required mix and the calculations per unit.

11.29 On a development of 90 dwellings, the contribution towards affordable housing of 30% would be 27 affordable housing units on site, or a contribution towards off-site affordable housing in the order of £1,547,000 (2 x 1 bed apartments at £27,000 each = £55,000, 4 x 2 bed apartments at £42,000 each, 4 x 2 bed houses at £52,000 each, 6 x 3 bed apartments at £59,000 each, 6 x 3 bed houses at £67,000 each and 5 x 4+ bed houses at £72,000 each = £1,547,000 according to the needs and costs set out in the AHSPD).

11.30 The issue of the viability on this site has been verified independently by consultants Lambert Smith Hampton. The lack of affordable housing provision weighs notably against the scheme.

11.31 Health

11.32 Policy CS15 states that contributions will be sought from developers towards the provision of health facilities where their development would impact on the capacity of existing healthcare facilities. The NHS Blackpool Clinical Commissioning Group has assessed the implications of the proposal on the delivery of general practice services and are requiring a £24,805 contribution towards the refurbishment and reconfiguration at Harris Medical Centre, which falls within the catchment of the application site.

11.33 The sum of £24,805 contribution can be secured in a Section 106 agreement.

11.34 Public Open Space

11.35 Policy CS6 requires development to incorporate new or enhance existing green infrastructure and confirms that financial contributions will be sought from development for open space and green infrastructure. The Supplementary Planning Guidance 11: Open Space (SPG11) sets out the public open space requirements in new housing development, until it is replaced by the draft Greening Blackpool Supplementary Planning Document.

11.36 SPG11 calculations state that 7,056sqm of open space is required as a result of this development. 125sqm of play space for young children is proposed within the scheme so the total requirement would be 6,931sqm. (30 x 4 bed houses = 2,880sqm, 54 x 3 bed houses = 3,888sqm, 6 x 2 bed houses = 288sqm = 7,056sqm requirement less 125sqm play space = 6931sqm requirement.)

11.37 SPG11 requires a contribution of £14.33 per sqm which equates to £99,321.23 and this could be accommodated within the £125,000 contribution proposed. However, this would leave no contribution towards off-site affordable housing.

11.38 Colleagues will be consulted on whether the remaining £100,000 should contribute towards affordable housing or public open space or a mix of both. The update note will report the findings.

11.39 Flooding and Drainage

- 11.40 The site is in Flood Zone one and so has a low risk of tidal or river flooding. The site also has low risk of ground water, surface water, sewer or reservoir flooding. As the development is not at risk of flooding, the main issue is ensuring that the proposed development does not cause flooding elsewhere.
- 11.41 The submitted Flood Risk Addendum identifies that 62.3% of the site is currently impermeable. Should the site be developed for housing, the impermeable areas would be reduced to 31.7% meaning surface water could infiltrate in a greater area, resulting in less run-off and reducing the chances of flooding elsewhere. The planting of trees and green infrastructure would further increase the capacity of permeable areas to act as a soak away.
- 11.42 The drainage principles for phase one were agreed with United Utilities and phase two would adopt the same drainage principles. Surface water would be fed into an existing attenuation basin with foul water being directed into the foul sewer.
- 11.43 In terms of flood risk and the requirements of Policy CS9, it is not anticipated that the proposed development would cause flooding on site or elsewhere.

11.44 Ecology

- 11.45 The site is within 500 metres of the Marton Mere SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest). The submitted Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRP) screening documents show no significant effects on the coastal designated sites. In response, Natural England have not objected to the scheme but are requiring that the development should proceed in accordance with the mitigation measure identified in the submitted Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) by Envirotech dated 09/04/2020 (householder information packs to be provided in the new dwellings).
- 11.46 The submitted ecological appraisal of the site confirms that plant species and assemblages recorded at the site are all common in the local area and are considered to be of low ecological value. Domestic gardens and sympathetically landscaped open space is considered to offer habitat of equal or greater ecological value. No notable or protected species were recorded on the site.
- 11.47 A tree protection plan has been submitted and the details have been agreed with colleagues in Parks. A condition requiring the felling of trees and removal of vegetation etc to take place outside of the bird nesting season (March to September) is considered necessary.
- 11.48 Installing bird and bat boxes around the development and agreeing the landscaping by condition will offer the opportunity to ensure that the development has overall ecological benefits which would weigh in favour of the proposal.

11.49 Highways

- 11.50 The scheme has been considered by the Head of Transportation and all matters raised during the initial consultation and reported in the Consultation Responses section, have been resolved.
- 11.51 The submitted Transport Assessment demonstrates that the proposed housing scheme would result in a significant reduction in vehicle movements compared to the use of the land as an employment site.
- 11.52 All of the properties would have two parking spaces, with some of the larger houses also having a garage. The garages and driveways should be subject to a restrictive condition to ensure that the development has sufficient off-street parking spaces and reduce the incidences of car being parked on the highway.
- 11.53 The site is in an established residential area, on one of the main routes into Blackpool. The site is considered to have good accessibility, on bus routes on Preston New Road and close to schools and services.

11.54 Contaminated Land

- 11.55 A Phase I and Phase II Geo-Environmental Site Assessment has been submitted which provides an assessment of the geological, geotechnical, mining, hydrological, hydrogeological and contamination setting at the site. This assessment concludes that there is a low potential for groundwater contamination. A condition requiring the submission of a remediation and validation report is necessary to demonstrate that this will be appropriately mitigated.

11.56 Security

- 11.57 A neighbour on Mythop Road has raised the issue of security posed by the landscape strip between the development and the back gardens of properties on Mythop Road. This strip could be gated at either end in a wildlife friendly manner so that the land still functions as a green corridor but prevents unauthorised/unsupervised access. These details can be secured by condition.
- 11.58 Issues to do with the quality of the build are dealt with under the Building Regulations rather than planning.
- 11.59 The scheme would not impact upon biodiversity. Air, land and water quality would be unaffected and the site would not be expected to be at undue risk from such.
- 11.60 The application has been considered in the context of the Council's general duty in all its functions to have regard to community safety issues as required by section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (as amended).
- 11.61 Under Article 8 and Article 1 of the first protocol to the Convention on Human Rights, a person is entitled to the right to respect for private and family life, and the

peaceful enjoyment of his/her property. However, these rights are qualified in that they must be set against the general interest and the protection of the rights and freedoms of others. This application does not raise any specific human rights issues.

11.62 Sustainability and planning balance appraisal

- 11.63 Sustainability comprises economic, environmental and social components.
- 11.64 Economically, the site is safeguarded for employment use and the proposal constitutes a departure from the Local Plan which weighs against the proposal. However, the applicant has demonstrated that the site has been marketed for employment uses for a number of years without any interest. The NPPF states that planning decisions should give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and alternative uses of land should be supported where proposals would contribute to meeting an unmet need for development in the area.
- 11.65 Some limited employment would be generated through the construction process and future residents would help support local shops and services.
- 11.66 Environmentally, no impacts on biodiversity have been identified. Replacement and additional tree planting and green infrastructure is proposed which will be environmentally beneficial, as would the reduced flood risk as a result of increased permeability and green infrastructure across the site. No unacceptable visual impacts have been identified.
- 11.67 Socially, the scheme would deliver good quality family homes in a pleasant environment, making a significant contribution towards Blackpool's housing requirements. No unacceptable amenity impacts are anticipated and no undue impacts on highway safety are expected. The scheme can contribute towards public open space and health provision locally, but cannot make any significant contribution towards the affordable housing requirement as this would render it financially unviable.
- 11.68 In terms of planning balance, the benefits of providing good quality family homes which will assist in re-balancing the town's housing stock and the contribution towards green infrastructure are, in this instance, considered sufficient to outweigh the employment land allocation and the lack of contributions towards affordable housing provision. The design of the scheme is otherwise acceptable and so the proposal is judged to constitute sustainable development. No other material planning considerations have been identified that would outweigh this view and so that scheme is deemed to be acceptable.

12.0 CONCLUSION

- 12.1 As set out above, the scheme is judged to represent sustainable development and no other material planning considerations have been identified that would outweigh this assessment. On this basis, planning permission should be granted.

13.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 13.1 Resolve to grant planning permission and defer the application to the Head of Development Management to issue the decision based on the originally submitted plans, subject to the conditions set out in the appended update note and subject to delegation from the Secretary of State and the signing of a Section 106 agreement.
- 13.2 If the Committee is not minded to grant planning permission it is referred to the other options proposed in paragraph 3 of the report.