

Plans Committee – 26th July 2018

Additional items received since the report was drafted.

Page All
Item No. All
P.A. No. N/A

Site All

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

On 24th July 2018 the Government produced a new NPPF, which replaces the first NPPF which was published in March 2012. This is a wide ranging document that provides guidance across all aspects of planning and forms an important material consideration. In summary key change between the 2012 version and the 2018 version are:

- A strengthening of design policy particularly to aid housing delivery.
- An emphasis on applicants having to justify the need for application stage viability assessment and clarity that the decision taker should decide the weight to be given to such an assessment having regard to all the circumstances including changes to site circumstances.
- Standardised methodology to identifying local housing need and Housing Delivery Test confirmed
- A target that 10% of housing sites are small or medium.
- A recognition of the need for diversification in town centres.
- Setting out available powers for proactive land assembly.
- Changes to assessing impact on the significance of heritage assets and an emphasis on the weight to be given to an asset's conservation irrespective of harm to its significance.
- An expanded definition of affordable housing and an expectation that at least 10% of homes to be available for affordable home ownership.

With specific regard to the five year supply an initial assessment has been undertaken of the new approach to the five year housing land supply calculation and the new housing delivery test. This assessment indicates that the Borough has 5.93 years supply of deliverable housing sites. The Council has also delivered sufficient homes over the past three years to meet the housing delivery test, delivering 117% against the housing requirement in the Local Plan Core Strategy.

The presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11) means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay. The Local Plan Core Strategy policies, although adopted before the new NPPF was published, are less than five years old and are considered generally consistent with the new Framework. On this basis,

proposals for housing development should be approved where they accord with policy CS1 and CS11 of the Core Strategy.

Policies within the Borough of Charnwood Local Plan were adopted more than five years ago and as a result those policies which are relevant to determining housing proposals such as ST/2, CT/1 and CT/2 are not able to be considered up to date. Nevertheless, these policies are considered to be generally consistent with the new Framework and therefore capable of carrying some weight. The degree to which they influence the determination of development proposals will depend on the merits of individual applications and the relevant circumstances.

It is not considered that the new NPPF will lead to a change in any of the recommendations made within this agenda. However, as its implications are still in the process of being assessed officers will report orally to the Plans Committee any implications that relate directly to the items to be discussed.

Councillor Snartt expresses concern about planning condition 14 relating to the provision of the pedestrian crossing and the timing of its implementation. He suggests this should be on the occupation of the 1st dwelling rather than the 10th and be specified as a TUCAN crossing. His full comments can be read on the Council's website.

Officer Response

The Highway Authority is seeking improved pedestrian crossing facilities in the area on the grounds that this will improve the accessibility and connectivity of the site, rather than primarily on highway safety grounds. Because a fundamental highway safety issue has not been identified, the trigger for provision is suggested as the occupation of 10 dwellings, (the threshold for major development), rather than prior to occupation of the first unit. This is considered reasonable, proportionate and will ensure the delivery of housing is not unreasonably impeded.

The planning condition has been written to require a "scheme" rather than precisely defining that this should take the form of a signalised crossing. This is due to advice from the Highway Authority that the introduction of any formal crossing, (such as signals), requires a statutory process of public consultation and as such its introduction is not guaranteed. The condition has been drafted to provide flexibility dependent on the outcome of this process. Although a signalised crossing is preferred, should this become impossible to achieve due to other controls, the condition will ensure that a different form of provision is made rather than none at all.

Conclusion

It is not recommended that this condition be amended.

1. Various representations from the applicant, which can be summarised as follows:

Factual matters

Page D1 - Applicant is Southern Grove Pinfold Gate Ltd
Page D15 – Third Party Representations – Public Comment .There have been 125 letters of support. And 12 letters of objection ,with 5 having a Loughborough postcode.

Objection from University was submitted by their agent ,GVA Grimely, and rebutted by applicant's agent, Knight Frank.

Assessment of the application

Design Policies (CS2 and EV/1) and advice on design in (old) NPPF – Have analysed these policies and advice and consider that the proposal is a high quality, distinctive design which would add to the quality of the town centre, develop a vacant site, reflects the scale recommended in the masterplan and respects its setting. It would be built in red brick and includes managed public and private areas and is a safe, accessible development which would not have an adverse impact upon neighbours. Application is supported by an assessment of long distance views and independent design review.

Town Centre Masterplan – Consider that the proposal accords with the Masterplan. Proposal is good design with a perimeter block, with active frontages and uses on the ground floor. Building height responds to local context, in accordance with the Masterplan which seeks *a landmark building taller in height in height than the remainder of the block*. Development respects scale of nearby listed building. No objection to car parking.

2. Park View Medical Surgery

Page D26 – Developer Contributions - This is now inaccurate as it is now unlikely that provision will be made for the surgery in this development. Ask that application is refused. This is refuted by the applicant.

3. Cllr Draycott

Disappointed that written concerns from February 2018 have not been reported.

Concerned about:

- Scale and height of the building. Too high and would overlook neighbours.
- Higher than the Carillon and contrary to Masterplan
- Student accommodation should be on the west side of the town, closer to the university
- Would increase pedestrian movement between site and university, to the detriment of local residents
- Loss of on-street parking
- Poor environment for future occupiers.

Officer Response

The name of the applicant should be changed as advised and it is accepted that there have been 125 letters of support. The Council's records indicate that 9 of the objections are local, including a number of close neighbours.

It is accepted that the applicants may have a different view from the Local Planning Authority on whether the proposal is in accordance with policies CS2, EV/1 and the Masterplan. Overall the scheme is considered to be contrary to these policies and the Masterplan for the reasons set out in the report. Nothing has been submitted to alter this opinion.

The comments of the local surgery are noted and these may reduce the weight which can be given to the community benefits of the development.

The councillor's concerns are noted and raise matters which are generally addressed in the report, with the exception of the impact of student movements upon the amenities of local residents and the environment for future occupiers.

It is not considered that there is evidence that either of these issues are reasons to refuse permission.

Recommendation

No changes to recommendation