

GNLP Regulation 18 (Stage B) Consultation Response

GNLP0125 – Land to the East of the A140, Horsham St Faith

On behalf of Abel Homes, we strongly recommend that Land to the East of the A140, Horsham St Faith (GNLP0125) should be allocated for residential development of approximately 300 dwellings. The site is considered to be entirely deliverable, and capable of making a significant contribution towards satisfying the Council's housing needs during the period to 2036.

In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework's (NPPF) definition of 'deliverable', the site is available now, offers a suitable location for development now, and is achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered within five years.

The suitability of the site has already been assessed in the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) (2017). Whilst the assessment determined the site to be 'suitable', it raised a variety of site-specific constraints. These points are addressed in further detail below.

Assessment of Deliverability

Suitable

The Greater Norwich Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation document states that in identifying sites to accommodate the additional 7,200 homes required during the period up to 2036, consideration will be given to a range of settlements, including Service Villages (of which Horsham St Faith is one), which will need to accommodate a minimum level of growth of 1,000 units, irrespective of which of the six growth options is identified. On this basis, Horsham St Faith is considered to be a location that is, in principle, a suitable location for additional development.

The site lies to the west of Horsham St Faith. The site is immediately adjacent to the Settlement Boundary to the north and east, and an existing Site-Specific Employment Allocation lies to the south of the site (reference: HNF2). The site would, therefore, provide an infill between the Settlement Boundary, an existing site allocation, and the A140. The development would create a clear and defensible boundary for Horsham St Faith, as detailed on the Concept Masterplan prepared by Feilden+Mawson (drawing no. SK01 A00) which is submitted in support of this allocation.

The attached Concept Masterplan demonstrates how over the site area of 14.84 hectares, a total of 300 dwellings could be provided, resulting in a density of 28 dwellings per hectare. In order to ensure an accurate indication of the quantum of development which could be provided on the site, the Concept Masterplan has been developed in accordance with key planning policy requirements (notably, parking standards and open space provision). However, the scale of development accommodated on the site will ultimately depend on the quantum of growth allocated to Horsham St Faith. On this basis, the plans prepared by Feilden+Mawson demonstrate how the site could be developed in three phases to accommodate a range of growth options from approximately 97 to 300 dwellings. (*It should be noted that in order to ensure a robust submission, the technical information prepared to support these representations assumes the maximum quantum of development on the site*).

In spite of this, the client has adopted a flexible approach to bringing forward development on the site, and is willing to take both direction and advice from the GNLP; in regards to the phasing and the quantum of development which could be provided on the site. Thus, development on the site could be constituted of a variety of phases, to meet the future housing needs of Horsham St Faith and the surrounding area.

In terms of more detailed site-specific considerations, the HELAA identifies the site as a suitable location for residential development. It confirms through a 'Green' rating, that there are no constraints or impacts anticipated in relation to Accessibility to Services; Utilities Infrastructure; Contamination and Ground Stability; Flood Risk; Market Attractiveness; Significant Landscapes; Biodiversity and Geodiversity; Open Space and Green Infrastructure; and, Transport and Roads. Whereas, the following site-specific constraints are rated 'Amber': Access; Utilities Capacity; Townscapes; Historic Environment; and, Computability with Neighbouring Uses.

Access, Transport and Roads

In support of this representation, Richard Jackson Engineering Consultants Ltd (RJ) have prepared a Highway Assessment note. In relation to vehicular access, one principal access point is proposed to the site from Church Street (drawing no. 49455-PP-001). The proposed access road is Type 2, at 6.0m wide, with an initial straight of 15m (as required in the Norfolk Residential Design Guide). It is recognised that adequate visibility splays, based on an initial design, of up to 120m should be available in both directions from a 4.5 setback, to comply with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges TD 42/95. In addition, it is also proposed to reduce the speed limit from 60mph to 40mph along Church Street.

Furthermore, the Assessment note details how a new pedestrian footpath and cycle route along the southern side of Church Street (linking to the current cycle route on the western side of West Lane), could be provided as part of the development. An additional three pedestrian, cycle way and emergency vehicular access points to the east of the site have also been proposed (again connecting to the existing cycle way on West Lane). Whilst the site is within close proximity of two existing bus stops providing access to Norwich, Reepham and Sheringham, a new bus stop is also proposed on Church Street (to the east of the proposed access), alongside a pedestrian refuge island, to allow pedestrians to cross the road to access the proposed bus stop.

The location of the site to the east of Horsham St Faith is also beneficial in highway terms. Horsham St Faith is connected to Norwich via the A140 and Church Street, which enters the village from the west. Therefore, the location of the site would enable those commuting to and from Norwich, and other locations, to not have to pass through the centre of the village.

The Highway Assessment Note prepared by RJ concludes that in terms of access, transport and roads, there are no issues that should preclude development.

Utilities Capacity

The HELAA analysis raised concerns over whether the Utilities Capacity of the area would support development of the site. There is no evidence to suggest that there are any current issues with utility capacity locally; however, this would be assessed in detail through obtaining further technical advice and, if necessary, improvements could be made to facilitate capacity as part of any development.

Historic Environment

The site is in relatively close proximity to a Grade II Listed building (known as 'The Kennels'), which is situated on West Lane (approximately 30m) to the east of the site. In addition, the wider village of Horsham St Faith includes 7 Grade II Listed Heritage Assets (2-5 Church Street, Waytes House, Horsham St Faith War Memorial; Village Hall; Kings Head Public House; Methodist Church and the Old Post House), all which are approximately 30-50m from the site, and one Grade I Listed Heritage Asset (Priory and Church

of the Blessed Virgin and St Andrew), approximately 86m from the site. St Faith Priory, a Scheduled Ancient Monument, is located approximately 147m to the north east of the site. Whilst the site does not fall within, it is adjacent to the Horsham St Faith Conservation Area to the north-east. However, the site is well screened from the settlement of Horsham St Faith due to the site being bound on all sides by mature Poplar Trees.

As detailed on the Concept Masterplan, the proposed scheme would seek to retain the Poplar Trees, where appropriate on the boundaries of the site, or replace them with more suitable species. Therefore, the development will remain screened from the village of Horsham St Faith; thus, the development will not harm the identified Heritage Assets.

In addition to this, the Concept Masterplan seeks to provide a belt of Public Open Space around the northern and eastern boundaries of the site; which will help to further ensure that there will be no impact on Heritage Assets. This will reflect the belt of landscaping and public open space which has been provided to the south of Abbey Farm Commercial Park, which helps to successfully screen the Commercial Park from the wider setting.

In conclusion, the proposal would have a neutral impact on designated or non-designated heritage assets.

Townscapes

The north-eastern corner of the site is adjacent to the Horsham Conservation Area. The HELAA assessment the proposal an amber rating for townscapes, which the assessment Methodology details that development on the site will have a detrimental impact on the townscape; but this can be suitably mitigated through development of the site.

Originally, Horsham St Faith evolved in a linear fashion (predominately around Crown Road, Back Street and Church Street), both towards Newton St Faith and Norwich. Properties along these roads predominately abut the highway and pedestrian footpaths, and range in age between 1600s to 1900s. Horsham St Faith has experienced a range of modern development in recent years, typically infilling parts of the village.

The Concept Masterplan has been designed to reflect the nature of Horsham St Faith; ensuring the site is permeable to afford visual and physical connection at the north-east corner, but also along the eastern and northern boundaries to ensure a continuation of frontage. In addition, development densities have been carefully considered, particularly to respect neighbouring parcels of land. The relationship between the residential parcels of development, and associated public open spaces have been designed to ensure lower densities on the eastern and north-eastern boundaries, enabling a density 'step' from existing development into the development site. This would ensure the creation of a permeable village edge.

The Concept Masterplan also demonstrates how a carefully designed landscape scheme, including the retention of some existing poplar trees, can ensure that the development both integrates and respects the character of the village. Given the views of the site are limited due to the extensive screening, the proposed development is not considered to have an adverse impact on the setting of the village.

In summary, it is considered that the impact of the proposed development on townscapes would be neutral.

Compatibility with Neighbouring Uses

At present, the site is bordered to the north by Church Street, with Abbey Farm Commercial Park beyond; existing residential development to the west (including a range of detached and semi detached two storey

properties); arable farmland to the south (land which has been allocated within the Site Specific Allocations DPD (2016) under HNF3 for employment uses); and, the A140 to the west.

Given the site's relationship to the existing residential dwellings to the east, residential development on the site would be highly compatible with this neighbouring use, and would engender a clear and logical extension to the existing settlement.

To the north of the site is the Abbey Farm Commercial Park, and land to the south of the site is allocated for employment uses. However, Abbey Farm is set back considerably from Church Street by an area of open space and landscaping. In addition, the proposal seeks to provide open space to the north, and a landscape buffer to the south. On this basis, the proposal would be compatible with both areas of employment use.

Furthermore, in relation to the A140 to the east of the site, a further landscape buffer is proposed alongside an area of open space.

On this basis, development of the site is considered to be entirely compatible neighbouring and adjoining uses.

Flood Risk and Drainage

Whilst the HELAA constraints analysis rates the site 'Green' in terms of Flood Risk, given the size of the site (15ha), any proposal would be required to justify that it would not be at risk of flooding, and that an appropriate drainage strategy could be implemented. In support of this representation, an Assessment of Flood Risk and Drainage has been prepared by RJ. The Assessment details that the site falls within Flood Zone 1, and there are no identified influences of fluvial or tidal flooding at the site. In addition, Borehole records reveal a groundwater depth of 6m and, as a result, SuDs / soakaways or other infiltration devices could be utilised on the site to ensure that any potential issues in relation to flooding can be mitigated.

Overall, RJ conclude that Flood Risk, High Risk Surface Water Flooding, Medium Risk Surface Water Flood, Low Risk Surface Water Flooding, and proposed Surface Water Flooding are all rated 'satisfactory'.

Summary

In conclusion, it is demonstrated above that the site, in its entirety, is suitable for residential development. The technical evidence submitted alongside this Representation, alongside the information detailed above, demonstrates that there are no constraints regarding the delivery of the site.

Available

Abel Homes have an option agreement on the land. The land is leased to a local farmer on a temporary basis, and can be terminated with the agreed notice period at any time.

It is anticipated that development on the site would be both available and developable in 1 to 5 years.

Abel Homes are committed to providing contemporary, award winning homes across the region. Abel Homes have demonstrated this dedication, and their commitment to bringing new homes to the district, through a range of recently completed developments, such as the Hops in Hingham (88 dwellings), Swan's Nest, Swaffham (152 dwellings), and The Limes, Little Melton (28 dwellings).

Achievable

Based on the suitability assessment above, there are no site-specific constraints which could threaten the delivery of residential development on the site. Through the provision of The Hops, Swan's Nest, Walnut

Tree Fields, Hus22 and The Limes, Abel Homes have demonstrated that they are committed and able to achieve the delivery of housing of large-scale housing developments, within 5 years.

Therefore, residential development on the site is deemed to be entirely achievable.

Viable

Development of the site for residential purposes is considered viable, taking into consideration the various policy requirements in relation to matters such as affordable housing provision and CIL contributions. Further evidence on viability can be provided on a strictly private and confidential basis, should this be deemed necessary.

Summary

As outlined above, the site is suitable, available, achievable and viable, and is therefore developable. Development in this location would represent sustainable development, as defined within the National Planning Policy Framework. Horsham St Faith, as a Service Village, is identified as a suitable and sustainable location which can accommodate additional development and, as such, is likely to be identified as a location to accommodate some of the additional dwellings required during the period to 2036. The foregoing text demonstrates that this specific site is a suitable location for further development in all respects and is capable of accommodating development of approximately 300 dwellings.

Economically, the site represents the right land in the right place at the right time. Residential development on the site would help to support and sustain the local economy in Horsham St Faith, and would support the long-term planned economic growth of the Greater Norwich Area. In addition, development on the site will achieve the longstanding aspirations of the Broadland Northway, to unlock a range of sites for future development. As well as providing jobs during construction, the development would provide high-quality and desirable homes within easy reach of key employment areas (notably, Norwich City Centre).

Socially, the scale of development envisaged is such that it will enable the creation of a strong, vibrant and healthy community, which is well related and connected to the existing facilities on offer in Horsham St Faith (such as a Post Office and Local Store; Church; car garage; restaurant and B&B; public house; Doctor's Surgery; and, a primary school). In addition, a mixture of dwelling types, sizes and tenures will be provided, informed by local housing need, and CIL payments made will help to provide and enhance the local facilities on offer in Horsham St Faith. Policy compliant levels of affordable housing would be provided on the site, in accordance with the NPPF (2018) definition of affordable housing. Therefore, the provision of residential dwellings on the site will help to meet the future housing needs of Horsham St Faith.

Environmentally, sustainable means of transport could be provided, such as the installation of a new bus stop on Church Street; which would be served by the existing bus services. These services provide relatively frequent services into Norwich City Centre, Reepham, Aylsham, Cromer and Sheringham. This would provide future residents, employees and visitors to the site the option to utilise sustainable transport methods, as well as connecting to a variety of employment opportunities, particularly to those on offer in Norwich City Centre. In relation to the existing Poplar Trees on the site, the Concept Masterplan endeavours to retain the trees, where possible, around the boundaries of the site, or replace them with more manageable species; which will help to maintain the existing visual landscape impact the trees hold. This will help to ensure that the proposed development will not impact upon the setting of the Conservation Area, other identified heritage assets, or the character of the village. In addition, the site holds limited ecological value due to being intensively farmed, and therefore development on the site would not impose any environment impacts which could not be mitigated within the development.

On this basis, the site should be taken forward as an allocation for residential development in the emerging Greater Norwich Local Plan.