

2 August 2021
GNLP0345 - Land in Ditchingham FINAL
FINAL



South Norfolk Local Plan Team

By email to: lp@s-norfolk.gov.uk

Lynette Swinburne BSc (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI
E: lynette.swinburne@savills.com
DL: 01733 209 943
F: 01733 894 649

Stuart House
St John's Street
Peterborough PE1 5DD
T: +44 (0) 1733 567 231
F: +44 (0) 1733 894 649
savills.com

Dear Sir or Madam,

**SOUTH NORFOLK VILLAGE CLUSTERS HOUSING ALLOCATIONS PLAN:
REGULATION 18 PUBLIC CONSULTATION
SN0345/GNLP0345 - LAND TO THE NORTH OF LODDON ROAD, DITCHINGHAM**

Savills (UK) Ltd are instructed on behalf of Ditchingham Farms to submit representations in relation to Site: SN0345. Land to the north of Loddon Road, Ditchingham which is identified as a 'Shortlisted Site' for up to 25 dwellings on a site of 1.62 hectares.

These representations relate to the following:

QUESTION 49: Do you think that any of the shortlisted or rejected sites should be allocated instead of, or in addition to, the preferred site(s)? Please add additional comments to explain your response and please specify which site(s) you are referring to.

Our client, who is the owner of the site, considers that SN0345 would represent an excellent location for residential development within Ditchingham.

The supporting text of the Local Plan notes:

"This site is considered to suitable for allocation, subject to confirmation of highway suitability, provision of a footway and confirmation that the development of the site would not have an unacceptable impact on the nearby SSSI. The site relates suitably to existing services and facilities, the existing form and character of the village and there is limited impact on the wider landscape due to existing screening."

In response to the assessment in the emerging plan, the land owner has undertaken some further work to confirm the deliverability of the site.

Highways

A Highways Suitability Technical Note has been prepared by SLR Highways & Transportation Planning which considers the potential to achieve appropriate access to the site. The report is submitted for consideration by the planning policy team and concludes:

*"This Technical Note has demonstrated that the proposal site location would be considered accessible in terms of local facilities/amenities and that a suitable and safe means of access can be achieved subject to developing the design of the arrangements.
It is therefore concluded that the proposal site is suitable for allocation and development in terms of highways and transportation."*



Ecology

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been undertaken by Wild Frontier. Whilst the full report is being prepared at present and will not be available in advance of 2nd August 2021, initial conclusions have been provided by Wild Frontier following a walkover survey.

These comments note:

“Regarding protected species, mostly the trees have negligible bat roost potential, but a small number were classified as having Low bat roost potential (in accordance with Bat Conservation Trust guidelines), so if these needed to be felled it would need to be done in a sensitive manner (‘soft-felling’); these trees would not need further surveys if they are to be felled as mitigation of Low potential trees is the accepted approach. The trees will also support nesting birds meaning any clearance would have to take place outside of the main nesting bird season which is March to August inclusive. If this isn’t project feasible, a watching brief would be required to confirm the absence of nests; if active nests are found, clearance works would have to be delayed until the nest had reached its natural conclusion.

The nearby ponds on the common were appraised for suitability for great crested newts (GCN) and were found to be suboptimal, primarily because they are fishing lakes, and fish and GCN don’t typically occupy the same water-bodies. Overall, our advice is that surveys for GCN (which are restricted to March/April to June) are not necessary because the proposed development site itself provides suboptimal terrestrial habitat for GCN, and the nearby ponds are actually fishing lakes which are also suboptimal. The data search also returned no records of GCN within 2km of the site. Best-practice mitigation measures during construction (no leaving trenches open overnight, ensuring materials are stored above ground, maintaining the site in arable/farmed condition prior to construction commencing, etc.) would be an appropriate course of action, in our opinion.

The survey found no signs of, or suitable habitat for other protected species such as badgers, reptiles or water voles. Overall, therefore, we do not expect that any further ecological surveys (such as for protected species) would be required, assuming the standard best-practice mitigation measures can be adopted.”

As part of the more detailed PEA, the potential for impacts on the nearby SSSI and overlapping LNR/CWS are being investigated and will be shared with the authority when available.

Layout

An illustrative masterplan has been prepared for the site, based on the technical inputs above.



The layout is supported by the following design principles:

Masterplan principles

- The proposed masterplan delivers 25 dwellings with a mix of house types for illustrative purposes;
- The urban structure is characterised by a linear access road from which two north-south streets extend to Tunneys Lane in the north;
- The north-south streets will be lined with trees and extend into private drives to the north and east;
- The principle open space is characterised by a 'green' at the entrance to the site;
- The urban form is of a denser character to the south adjoining existing development;
- Development to the north is characterised by more generous plots and an informal building line fronting Tunneys Lane;
- Development along the northern and eastern edges is set back from the road and responds to existing buildings and street character;
- Private drives and a footpath create a more informal landscape condition along the northern and eastern edges.

The illustrative layout therefore demonstrates how an attractive and appropriate scheme for 25 dwellings could be arranged on the site. The scheme preserves the existing green character on the frontage, retaining as many of the existing trees as possible, which are a key feature of this part of Loddon Road.

Other matters

It is unclear from the emerging plan and its supporting information which area of land is proposed as a shortlisted site. SN0345 comprises both the parcels in the Map Booklet for the settlement, which together equate to approximately 1.62 ha. The text of the plan confirms that the site is being considered for to 25 dwellings on an area of 1.62 hectares (approximately 15 dph). Therefore, on this basis, a draft scheme has been prepared for both parcels of land.

Closing Comments

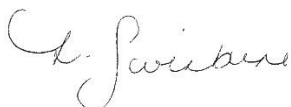
We trust the above comments clearly set out our client's response in relation to Question 49 of the consultation document. In particular, Ditchingham Farms consider that their land is a suitable location for a residential allocation in the village. Technical work has been undertaken to confirm the suitability of the site and demonstrate how a sympathetic scheme could be developed.

We look forward to engaging with the South Norfolk Local Plans Team through the continued preparation of the Plan.

I would be grateful if you could keep me updated in relation to the next stage of the Local Plan process.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information.

Yours faithfully,



Lynette Swinburne MRTPI
Associate Director

Encs:

Illustrative Masterplan, Savills Urban Design
Highways Suitability Technical Note, SLR