

Proposed Residential Development On land west of Queensland, Spooner Row

Submission of Representations relating to South Norfolk Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan (Reg 18)



Ref: 029895

Site ref: SN0567 & SN2082 (formerly GNLPO567)

REPRESENTATIONS TO SOUTH NORFOLK VILLAGE CLUSTERS HOUSING SITE ALLOCATIONS PLAN (REG 18) AUGUST 2021

Land west of Queensland and land adjacent to 2 Cantley Villas, Spooner Row (Ref: SN0567 & SN2082)

Introduction

1. The following comments are submitted in support of the proposed allocation on land west of Queensland, Spooner Row (Ref: SN0567 & SN2082) for residential development.
2. The site was initially promoted through the Call for Sites of the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) in 2016, Additional representations were made in the previous Regulation 18 consultations in March 2018 and March 2020.
3. The following Representations reiterate information already submitted in support of the site, and provide additional information.

Comments on Draft Plan

4. The main aim of the Plan is to allocate a series of smaller sites, typically within the range of 12 to 50 homes, across the 48 Village Clusters in South Norfolk in order to provide at least 1,200 new homes in accordance with the requirements of Draft Greater Norwich Local Plan Policy 7.4. The intention is to distribute development across the District in order to support the sustainability of rural settlements and address the needs of small and medium developers, in line with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (hereinafter 'NPPF').
5. The Plan has sought to assess parishes, in unison and individually, in terms of their provision of local services and facilities. In line with the approach as set out within the Greater Norwich Local Plan (hereinafter 'GNLP') each of the 'Clusters' are centred around the local primary school, with the associated catchment areas serving as a proxy for social sustainability. The availability of other services and facilities has also been considered and has informed the site assessment process. The assessment has been informed by the Norfolk-wide Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) Methodology (2016), site visit, planning history, and Landscape Character Assessment amongst others.
6. The Village Clusters plan should be read alongside the Emerging Draft Local Plan which states that, for those sites that make the best use of the site available and are able to offer additional benefits, a larger number of units will be considered. Whilst the majority of sites will be in the 12 -25 units' range on sites of up to 1 hectare, there will be circumstances where a larger site may be the most appropriate option, including where the site clearly makes the best use of the site available.
7. Spooner Row is identified as forming part of the village cluster that includes Sutton. The cluster is identified a train station on the Norwich to Cambridge line and a short road link to the A11 providing access to Attleborough, Wymondham and Norwich. The services and community facilities include a village hall, rail halt, primary school and pre-school facilities.
8. We are supportive of the preferred site allocation of this site for up to 25 dwellings on a site of 1 hectares. The draft Plan states as a reasoned justification the following:

This proposed allocation comprises two adjacent sites, Site SN0567 and SN2082. Site SN0567 lies adjacent to Station Road at the front of the site and has previously had the benefit of planning permission. Site 2082 lies behind SN0567. As promoted SN2082 is a much larger site and only the element nearest SN0567 is preferred for development. This reduces landscape impacts and bring the overall scale of development in line with the aims of the plan.

Access to the site would need to be achieved via Station Road, this would result in the loss of frontage hedgerow, and the possible need to remove off-site trees. However, the site has a good

relationship with the existing settlement and a linear form of development along the frontage of the site would complement the existing pattern of development.

There would be a landscape impact resulting from the development that would need to be addressed by way of an appropriate landscaping scheme.

9. We support the proposed allocation of this site at Spooner Row. It would appear as a natural extension to the built form, and sit neatly into an extended settlement boundary for the village.

10. In support of the proposed allocation, an indicative plan is submitted as part of these representations in support which highlight how the site could be developed.

11. It should be noted that planning permission was previously granted at the site for the erection of 8 no. dwellings, although this has since lapsed (LPA Reference 2017/1321). A hybrid planning application is currently under consideration by South Norfolk District Council which seeks outline planning permission for 5 no. dwellings at land west of Queensland, and full planning permission for 3 no. dwellings at land west of Queensland.

Highway access

12. A new single centralised access with internal road would be provided directly off Station Road, and would be constructed in accordance with the relevant Highways standards. These access arrangements were previously considered acceptable when planning permission was granted, the Highways Authority raising no objections.

Utilities

13. It is not considered that there is any fundamental impediment to the delivery of the site through any constraints relating to utilities capacity. The proposed development would include suitable investigation and contributions to ensure there is capacity with local network, with suitable provision built into the development.

Benefits/Impact

Access, Transport and Roads

14. A new single centralised access with internal road would be provided directly off Station Road, and would be constructed in accordance with the relevant Highways standards. These access arrangements were previously considered acceptable when planning permission was granted, the Highways Authority raising no objections.

15. A new footpath would be provided within, delivered to adoptable standards, with crossing area provided to allow for connection to the existing footpath network within the village, which provides pedestrian access to the services and facilities on offer there.

Accessibility to Services

16. Spooner Row is currently designated as a Service Village and considered suitable for small-scale housing growth, whilst its location within the former Norwich Policy Area ('NPA') meant that it has been considered suitable to accommodate additional housing growth to help deliver small sites within the NPA allowance.

17. The village has a range of services, including primary school, public house and village hall, together with rail access to the Norwich to Ely line, all of which is located in close proximity to the site and connected by way of the existing footpath network. Whilst it is true that the village does not provide all services required to meet the day-to-day needs of future residents these are only a short distance away at Wymondham. Those services on offer within the village are considered key

to the social sustainability of a smaller settlement, and the proposed residential development would help to support these services and ensure their vitality, vibrancy and viability.

Flood Risk

18. The site falls entirely within Flood Risk Zone 1, and, as such it is considered at low risk of flooding from fluvial flooding. Some areas of the site are shown as being at risk from surface water flooding. However, a suite of technical work, including a Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment, has been undertaken and accompanies the current planning application, whilst the former application was approved and considered to be acceptable in flooding terms. The proposed development would incorporate sustainable drainage measures and would therefore not be at risk of flooding, would not result in an increased flood risk elsewhere in the locality, and would rather reduce the risk of surface water flooding in this location.

Historic Environment

20. A number of listed buildings are located within the wider area, the closest of which are the Grade II listed Spooner Row Church and Spooner Row Ware Memorial, approximately 400 metres south east. The significance of these is predominantly derived from their architectural merit, use of traditional vernacular materials, and peaceful and tranquil nature allow for quiet reflection, together with their setting within the historic core of the village. It is not considered that the proposed development would have a significant detrimental effect upon the significance of the buildings, or their settings by virtue of the distance of separation and intervening built form of the village, and landscaping.

Localised Assessment

Site Characteristics

21. The site forms part of an arable field defined by hedgerow boundaries interspersed with trees to the north, east and west, it is largely flat and rectangular with narrow verges and some lengths of boundary ditches. It lays to the north west fringe of Spooner Row, south of Station Road, abutting the defined settlement boundary and existing residential development to the south east.

Access to local services and facilities

22. As already discussed Spooner is identified within the current Local Plan as a Service Village. It benefits from a number of services and facilities as already set out, all of which are located a short distance from the site, connected by the existing footpath network within the village.

23. A limited bus services operates one day a week from the centre of the village, adjacent to the village hall, providing connections to Wreningham, Bunwell and Wymondham (Semence 805). Additional services operate a short distance outside of the village on the B1172, these provide regular services throughout the week to Wymondham, Attleborough, and Norwich (First Bus 13, 13A 13B, and 13C). The train station within Spooner Row operates a limited service Monday through to Saturday, however there are commitments to improve the Norwich to Cambridge line and there may be potential for additional service within the village.

24. The development would provide a footpath within the site, with crossing point located to the north eastern corner to allow for connection with the existing footpath provision to the north of Station Road, which provides continuous footpath access to the services within the village.

25. Accordingly, it is considered that the proposal development would benefit from good access to local services, and would accord with local and national planning policies which indicate that to

promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Given their accessibility, existing local businesses and services would be likely to derive support from the development due to the addition to the local economy of the spending power of new residents. In these respects, the proposal would support the social and economic dimensions of sustainability as defined in the NPPF.

Landscape

26. The site is located within the Tiffey Tributary Farmland Landscape Character Area, which is characterised by a gently undulating rural landscape, with long range views and sparsely settled settlements. Spooner Row is characterised as a nucleated village with a mix of old and new residences. When considering the previously approved development upon the larger parcel the Conservation and Design Officer noted that Spooner Row was a relatively late settlement from the 19th Century onwards, with significant 20th Century development, predominantly characterised by linear development within a relatively flat rural setting.

27. The proposed development would seek to conserve and enhance this character through sensitive development well related to the existing built form. The proposed development reflects the linear character of development and would fit with the character of the neighbourhood. Whilst uninterrupted views over the open countryside from Station Road would be lost this would balance with other such development which has been permitted within the village. Hedges and trees would be retained as far as practicable, and additional landscaping introduced to enhance the existing natural boundaries and visual enclosure of the site. Consequently, whilst the proposal would inevitably result in a loss of openness, its impact on the landscape setting of the village and the character of the area generally would be limited.

Townscape

28. The established pattern of development in the vicinity is mixed but is made up predominantly of detached and semi-detached two storey dwellings of modest proportions. Dwellings within the village centre are often characterised by red brick and pantile construction.

29. The proposed development would seek to conserve and enhance this through the use of complementary materials and a range of dwelling types and scales. Dwellings would be orientated to create a visually attractive development in keeping with the village character and overall rural character of the surrounding landscape.

Delivery of development

30. No significant infrastructure, contamination or ground instability constraints have been identified to date which would be likely to delay or impede the development of the site for housing. The site is in a single ownership and no further land is needed to enable the land to be brought forward for development. The land is currently available for development and so, subject to approval being granted for the current planning application, could deliver housing in the short term. Planning permission was previously granted at the site for residential development, and there is a planning application currently being considered for 8 dwellings at the site.

31. [REDACTED] are a respected local developer, currently delivering schemes in Watton and Ickburgh. Their high-quality designs and attention to detail result in exquisite homes, which pay homage to the local character whilst creating their own identity. [REDACTED] are keen to develop this site as soon as possible in order to meet local needs and demand, should the site be allocated then the development could be delivered quickly.

32. The proposed development would make a positive contribution to the supply of high-quality market in the area and could facilitate improvements to the local utilities capacity. The proposal would also add to the range of housing sites available in the locality, providing flexibility and a wider choice of development opportunities to the market, and thus strengthening the local supply of housing land. By providing sufficient land of the right type in the right place to support growth, the development would address the economic dimension of sustainable development, as defined in the NPPF.