

Land at School Road (The Triangle), Great Barton: draft development brief

Report number:	CAB/WS/22/053	
Report to and date:	Cabinet	18 October 2022
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Decisions Plan: The decision made as a result of this report will usually be published within 48 hours and cannot be actioned until five clear working days of the publication of the decision have elapsed. This item is included on the Decisions Plan.

Wards impacted: The site is located in The Fornhams and Great Barton ward

Recommendation: It is recommended that Cabinet approves the Land at School Road (The Triangle), Great Barton draft development brief, as contained in Appendix A to Report number: CAB/WS/22/053, for public consultation by the development team.

1. Context to this report

- 1.1 The site is allocated in the Rural Vision 2031 document under Policy RV18, which was adopted in September 2014. Land at School Road (The Triangle).
- 1.2 Since the adoption of the Rural Vision document a Neighbourhood Plan (GBNP) has been prepared and adopted ('made' June 2021). Within this Development Plan Document, the site is allocated again with the GBNP adding another layer of detail on how the site should come forward.
- 1.3 It is worth noting that the submission version of the GBNP sought to limit the amount of development on the site to 150 dwellings. However, the Inspector for the GBNP rejected this approach and the final wording in the GBNP set out that a higher quantum of development could come forward if that is demonstrated to be acceptable in a Development Brief (DB).
- 1.4 West Suffolk Council (WSC) owns a smaller rectangular parcel of the site on the western boundary. Suffolk County Council (SCC) are the majority landowner for the remainder of the land within the allocation and the land to which the draft DB relates.

2. Proposals within this report

- 2.1 The GBNP set out that the Neighbourhood Plan seeks that this development delivers;
 1. An element of self build housing
 2. Dwellings that avoid the use of fossil fuel-based heating
 3. At least 1.1 hectares of land for the expansion of the primary school
 4. A new drop off / pick up facility serving the primary school
 5. Provision of an area of approximately two hectares for community uses that might include:
 - A community building
 - A multi-use games area (MUGA)
 - Children's play area
 - Recreational open space
 6. Housing to include an appropriate mix of sizes and types in accordance the most up to date evidence.
- 2.2 Policy GB3 does not limit the site to a maximum of 150 dwellings. The final Made version of the GBNP (dated June 2021) is worded in such a way that it allows for a higher amount of residential development if a DB demonstrated that a greater amount of development was acceptable.
- 2.3 The draft DB delivers all of the aspirations of the GBNP listed above save for 2 hectares of community use space and a community building. However, the draft DB does demonstrate that 1.71 hectares of community use space.

- 2.4 Additionally, it should be acknowledged that the development would also deliver a serviced plot for a community building that could be delivered by other funding in the future.
- 2.5 As the draft DB was not delivering all of the non-residential elements that the GBNP sought for the allocation to deliver, the Local Planning Authority (LPA) required that the draft DB was tested to ensure that a full two hectares of community use land and a community building could not be delivered. This independent assessment was carried out and the LPA accepts that the development could not deliver the full two hectares or a community building and that what is being delivered is the maximum that would be deliverable.
- 2.6 One of the main benefits of the development delivering a higher number than 150 dwellings is that the development is able to deliver the community facilities like the new play facilities, including a MUGA, a new car park, extensive landscaping and land to allow the primary school to expand. Whilst this deliverability context is important in understanding what can be secured by the development, the draft DB still needs to set out what a higher number than 150 dwellings is acceptable in design, landscaping and place making context which is discussed further below.
- 2.7 As required by the GBNP the draft DB has considered the appropriate housing mix. The suggested mix in the GBNP (para 6.26) seeks to meet local housing need:
- 1 bedroom 8 percent
 - 2 bedrooms 21 percent
 - 3 bedrooms 44 percent
 - 4 bedrooms 17 percent
 - 5 or more bedrooms 17 percent

Based on this mix, which comprises just over 70 percent smaller dwellings (1, 2 and 3 bed), it is estimated that the density would be higher than suggested in the GBNP, at approximately 25-26 dwellings per hectare. Whilst this proposed density is higher than the village density or that which the GBNP identifies this is because smaller dwellings take up less space, require fewer parking spaces etc. Furthermore, the density increase means that the development would be able to deliver more of the other non-residential uses that the GBNP seeks for it to deliver such as the car park, school expansion land and MUGA.

- 2.8 The draft DB sets out that the capacity of the site is between 184-191 dwellings. It is acknowledged that this is an increase on the 150 dwellings that is mentioned in the GBNP. However, the draft DB highlights that a high-density development that wasn't well designed or didn't reflect the well landscaped nature of Great Barton would be inappropriate. The draft DB goes onto highlight relevant sections of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which requires significant landscaping and in particular appropriate space for meaningful street trees (paragraph 131) and high-quality architecture and good place making (paragraphs 126 and 130). It

confirms that the development will accord with these national requirements so that the development would reflect the character of the existing village.

- 2.9 Taking the above in consideration, officers are satisfied that the higher density development is acceptable because the development delivers the smaller types of units that the local housing need has identified, the scheme will deliver the maximum amount of non-residential uses that the GBNP seeks and that the development will still be a well landscaped, vibrant, well designed scheme.

3. Alternative options that have been considered

- 3.1 Policy RV18 of the Rural Vision states that the precise numbers "*The total capacity of the site should be determined through a site Development Brief, with up to 40 dwellings permitted in the period to 2031*". The policy continues by saying "*The amount of land available for development, types and location of uses, access arrangements, design and landscaping will be informed by a Development Brief for the whole 12.4 ha site. The Development Brief should set out how the community uses on the site will be delivered. Applications for planning permission will only be determined once the development brief has been adopted by the local planning authority*".
- 3.2 Policy GB 3 of the GBNP says reiterates the DB process and says that "*12.4 hectares of land at School Road, known as The Triangle and identified on the Policies Map, is allocated for the following development: i) up to 150 dwellings (including 30% affordable housing) or any higher number of dwellings included in any future adopted development brief for the site pursuant to Policy RV18 of the Rural Vision Local Plan Document*";
- 3.3 In order to ensure that a comprehensive and policy compliant development comes forward on this allocated site it is necessary for a DB to be prepared and adopted as informal planning guidance, therefore other options regarding the potential development of the site have not been considered as part of this process.

4. Consultation and engagement undertaken

- 4.1 To date the draft DB has been prepared in accordance with the Council's adopted protocol.
- 4.2 SCC and WSC has previously engaged with the Great Barton Parish Council and the Great Barton Neighbourhood Plan Working Party (now disbanded). Early drafts of a DB were shared with the Parish Council and feedback was provided to the development team. The issues raised through that consultation have been taken into account in the preparation of the current version of the draft DB.

- 4.3 SCC has worked closely with officers at WSC as well as bodies such as the Local Highway Authority and the Lead Local Flood Authority.
- 4.4 If Cabinet approves the land at School Road Triangle Site Great Barton draft DB for public consultation, an Engagement and Consultation Strategy will be agreed with the development team, and the local population as well as statutory bodies and consultees will be consulted, in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).
- 4.5 In accordance with the SCI, and whilst COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted, it is expected that the development team will undertake a six week consultation and will engage the public using a range of methods, including face-to-face techniques.

5. Risks associated with the proposals

- 5.1 There is a risk that failure to sanction the progression of the draft DB to a public consultation will result in a protracted DB process that will impact upon the delivery of an allocated site.

6. Implications arising from the proposals

- 6.1 **Financial**
There are no potential adverse financial or resource impacts results from the progression of the draft DB to the public consultation phase.
- 6.2 **Legal Compliance**
There are no legal implications arising from progression of the of draft DB to the public consultation phase. The preparation of the draft DB for the triangle site is a requirement of planning policy ahead of development proposals on the site. An adopted DB would enable the Local Planning Authority to proceed in determining detailed planning application(s) for the site.
- 6.3 **Personal Data Processing**
No personal data or information is detailed within the draft DB. SCC and WSC will be required to undertake the public consultation and collate the responses to the consultation in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018.
- 6.4 **Equalities**
The public consultation will identify and engage all appropriate members of the community and other key stakeholders.
- 6.5 **Crime and Disorder**
The public consultation will not give rise to any matters affecting crime and disorder.

- 6.6 Environment or Sustainability
The draft DB seeks to promote a sustainable development that accords with local and national policy in this regard.
- 6.7 HR or Staffing
There are no HR or staffing implications as a result of the draft DB progressing to the public consultation stage.
- 6.8 Changes to existing policies
The progression of the draft DB to the public consultation stage does not require any changes to existing policies. The public consultation must be carried out in accordance with the Council's DB protocol.
- 6.9 External organisations (such as businesses, community groups)
See paragraph 6.4 above.

7. Appendices referenced in this report

- 7.1 Appendix A – Draft development brief document, Land at School Road (The Triangle), Great Barton

8. Background documents associated with this report

- 8.1 [Rural Vision 2031 document \(2014\) Development Plan Document](#)
[St Edmundsbury Borough Council Local Plan Policies Map \(2015\) Development Plan Document](#)
[Great Barton Neighbourhood Plan \(2021\) Development Plan Document](#)