

Rose Homes (EA) Limited

Presentation to Whittlesey Town Council Planning Committee

Outline Planning Application for the Erection of up to 249 Dwellings on land to the north of Eastrea Road, Whittlesey.

This outline application is for a well-balanced residential development for the erection of up to 249 dwellings and is in accordance with local plan Policy LP 4, which states: - "Under Policy LP4 Part B any site for between 1 to 249 dwellings may be considered as having potential for development."

The site is located in Flood Zone 1 and is on the east side of Whittlesey which is the preferred location for new development in both the adopted local plan and the recently made Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan. The site will include Starter Homes, Bungalows and Self Build Plots.

All matters are reserved for subsequent approval except the access. There will be two points of access. These accesses have been the subject of a very positive formal pre-application advice and discussions with Cambridgeshire County Council Highways.

The principal access serving up to 200 dwellings will be along the A605 frontage, with a second access serving no more than 50 dwellings off Drybread Road. There will be pedestrian and emergency vehicle access between the two areas, which will also aid permeability across the entire development.

To the west there is the existing Larkfleet/Allison Homes Development. To the south of the A605, there are the Taylor Wimpey & Barratt David Wilson Developments and the newly opened Aldi supermarket. From Drybread Road, views west towards Whittlesey across the application site are dominated by the eastern extent of existing residential development and the absence of planting along rear boundaries.

Views of the site from along the A605 are largely screened by mature hedge and the existing frontage development. Existing hedgerows will be reinforced and extended to define the boundaries of the site and to provide biodiverse corridors between existing and proposed development.

The indicative layout shows how the site could be laid out to incorporate main estate roads, surface water drainage, public open space and biodiversity enhancement measures and landscaping.

The indicative masterplan shows how the site could be developed with a means of access from the A605 and one (serving up to 50 units) from Drybread Road which is to be improved from the site entrance to the A605 junction. The application site lies in Flood Zone 1 and is at a very low risk of flooding.



Planning Policy Context - In Brief

Re - The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF - July 2021)

Paragraph 8 outlines the commitment to sustainable development based on three objectives:

a) an economic objective –

- Build a strong, responsive, and competitive economy.
- Sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time.
- Support growth, innovation, and improved productivity.

b) a social objective –

- Support strong, vibrant, and healthy communities.
- Ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations.
- Creation of well-designed and safe built environments, with accessible services and open spaces.
- Support communities' health, social and cultural well-being.

c) an environmental objective –

- Contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built, and historic environment.
- Effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity.
- Minimising waste and pollution, mitigating and adapting to climate change.

Paragraph 11 provides the framework for decision making in respect of sustainable development and states that for decision-making this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.

Paragraph 38 states –

Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social, and environmental conditions of the area.

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states –

Under the Planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise and The Development Plan for the purposes of this application is made up of the:

- **Fenland Local Plan (2014)**
- **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Plan (2021)**
- **Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan (2023).**

A review of the Local Plan is underway, this has, however, fallen behind the timetable set out in the Local Development Scheme. The extent of the delay is unknown and there is no indication when cabinet might consider a consultation draft local plan.

Fenland Local Plan (2014)

The Fenland Local Plan was adopted in 2014 and includes a number of policies relevant to this development. The main vision for the district is that growth will be focussed on the four market towns.

- Policy LP1 – A Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy LP2 – Facilitating Health and Wellbeing of Fenland Residents
- Policy LP3 – Spatial Strategy - Settlement hierarchy and directs growth towards the four market as the location for the majority of new housing.
- Policy LP4 - Housing - Growth target of 1,000 dwellings for Whittlesey and allows developments of up to 250 dwellings to come forward on the edge of market towns, where proposals comply with the requirements of Policy LP16.
- Policy LP5 Meeting Housing Need
- Policy LP11 Whittlesey - outlines priorities for the town, including the north and south of Eastrea Road and have regard to flood risk.
- Policy LP16 – Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environment - New residential development is expected to provide appropriate open space, play space, and make appropriate arrangements for the collection of waste.
- Policy LP18 – The Historic Environment
- Policy LP19 – The Natural Environment - expects development to conserve, enhance and promote and biodiversity.

Cambridgeshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021)

The Plan includes one policy of relevance to the proposal.

Policy 5- Mineral Safeguarding Areas - Site is safeguarded as a potential source of sand and gravel.

Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan (2023)

This sets out a range of policies of relevant to the proposal.

- Policy 1 – Spatial Strategy - Significant new housing located predominantly east of the town, adjacent to the built area and strategic allocation to the north and south of Eastrea Road. Development adjoining Whittlesey should reduce the causes of flooding, be designed to have a minimal visual impact on the landscape and be supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities.
- Policy 2 – Local Housing Need - Development is expected to contribute towards meeting the housing needs of the local community, as identified in the Whittlesey Town Council Housing Needs Assessment (2017). Meeting needs may mean providing market housing, affordable housing, supporting self and custom build housing or providing residential care and supported housing.
- Policy 7 - Design Quality - Enable suitable circulation by vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists: provide amenity for users of buildings, maximise energy efficiency; be visually attractive; be sympathetic to local character and history and establish a strong sense of place.
- Policy 9 - Coalescence of villages - Retain the physical separation of the villages.

Principle of Development

The application site is located to the east of Whittlesey on the edge of the existing built environment to the north of Eastrea Road and is entirely located within Flood Zone 1. The application site also provides good access and to the newly built supermarket to the south of the A605. The scale of the proposal is, therefore, in proportion with the level of need in the area.

There is existing development to the west and south (south of the A605) of the application site and Drybread Road forms a natural physical boundary to the east.

Scale, Layout and Landscaping

The application is in outline, with only the two points of access committed at this time and all other matters reserved for subsequent approval.

To the west of the application site there is existing residential development and approximately half the site frontage to the A605 also borders existing residential development. The indicative layout we have provided shows how the site could be laid out to incorporate main estate roads, surface water drainage conveyance and retention measures, public open space, biodiversity retention and enhancement measures and landscaping.

The principal access serving up to 200 dwellings will be along the A605 frontage, with a second access serving no more than 50 dwellings off Drybread Road (with a combined amount of up to 249 dwellings). There will be pedestrian and emergency vehicle access between the two development areas, which will also aid permeability across the entire development. These accesses have been the subject of a very positive formal pre-application advice and discussions with Cambridgeshire County Council Highways.

Existing hedgerows will be reinforced and extended to define the boundaries of the site and to provide biodiverse corridors between existing and proposed development. Views from the east along the A605 are largely screened by Gothic Farm and the existing frontage development and planting along the A605. From Drybread Road, views west towards Whittlesey across the application site are dominated by the eastern extent of existing residential development and the absence of planting along rear boundaries.

The application site is presently farmed with very little in terms of trees and hedgerows. The proposal presents an opportunity to create a more biodiverse environment whilst creating a pleasant living environment for future occupiers.

A review of Historic England's map of Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments shows there will be no impact on the significance of these assets.

A scheme of archaeological works is underway on the site, in accordance with a Design Brief for Archaeological Evaluation provided by Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team.

A Geophysical Survey has been completed which indicates the possible remains of the route of the Fen Causeway, which also runs under the adjacent housing development to the west.

An appraisal is being undertaken to quantify the current biodiversity value of the site. This will ensure measures to protect and enhance the biodiversity value of the site can be incorporated into the detailed design. These measures may influence the detailed layout of the site but there are no factors that would preclude development.

Conclusions

The application site is located on the east side of Whittlesey which is the preferred location for new development in both the adopted local plan and the recently made Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan.

The site is located in Flood Zone 1

The application proposal is for the erection of up to 249 dwellings and is in accordance with local plan Policy LP 4 which also sets an approximate target of 1000 dwellings for Whittlesey.

The technical reports which support the application demonstrate that there are no detrimental impacts arising from the proposal which cannot be mitigated, and when exercising the balance, the proposal represents a sustainable form of development that is compliant with local and national planning policy and guidance and is acceptable in all other respects.