

SUPPORTING PLANNING STATEMENT TO ACCOMPANY A PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE ERECTION OF 2 DETACHED DWELLINGS AND GARAGES, TOGETHER WITH THE RETENTION OF THE EXISTING DWELLING FOLLOWING THE REMOVAL OF THE VETERINARY CENTRE AT ROYSTON VETERINARY CENTRE, VALLEY ROAD, ROYSTON.

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This statement accompanies a revised planning application for a modest housing development at the Royston Veterinary Centre site in Valley Road. An earlier application proposing the erection of 2 detached and 2 semi-detached dwellings together with the retention of the existing dwelling was withdrawn, principally following concerns about the scale of the development in relation to the site and its surroundings.
- 1.2 During consideration of the application it was agreed that the principle of developing this site for housing, together with the loss of the existing veterinary centre, would be acceptable. However it was thought that the quantity of development was excessive, but that the concerns could be overcome through a reduction in the number of units, whilst retaining more of the verdant nature of the site, particularly along the northern side of the internal driveway.
- 1.3 This application, for the erection of two detached houses either side of the existing dwelling, responds to those concerns.

2.0 THE REVISED APPLICATION

- 2.1 The location of the application site is edged red on the 1:1250 plan. The revised layout is shown on drawing WHI/24/02. The house types either side of The White House would be identical, as shown on drawings 03 and 05.
- 2.2 Each of the proposed dwellings would have a detached garage and one would be provided for the existing dwelling. The double garage for the house on plot 1 would be to the west of the house and also contain a garden room and cycle store, with a gym in the roof space, shown on drawing 04. The double garage for the house on plot 2 is also to the west of the house and shown on drawing 06.

- 2.3 The two x 5 bedroom houses would be built in light cladding upper walls above a rendered ground floor and beneath brown tiled roofs with integrated solar panels on their rear south facing roof slopes.
- 2.4 Sections through the site are shown on drawings 07 and 08. The application drawings are completed with a landscaping plan shown on drawing 09.
- 2.5 A Biodiversity Net gain (BNG)/Biodiversity Impact Assessment (BIA) for the site has been provided by Cherrifield Ecology to determine the biological impact of the proposed development. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is an approach to development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than it was before. The process relies on the mitigation hierarchy, which sets out that everything possible must be done to firstly avoid, secondly, minimise and thirdly restore and rehabilitate losses of biodiversity on site. The assessment uses the Statutory Biodiversity Metric (DEFRA 2024), to quantify the biodiversity baseline for the site and calculate the post-development biodiversity unit for the proposed scheme following the best practice guidelines as set down by CIRIA (2019).

3.0 THE MATERIAL ISSUE

- 3.1 In the statement that accompanied the previous application all of the relevant Local Plan Policies were addressed in detail. However, for the purposes of this application, whilst all are still relevant, in view of the issues raised throughout its consideration, it is felt that it is not necessary to repeat all of those policy provisions and requirements. The material issues in this case relate to the reduced density, landscaping and biodiversity.
- 3.2 The application site lies within an established residential area within the Settlement boundary of Royston. **Policy SP1** of the adopted Local Plan deals with sustainable development and supports the principles of sustainable development within North Hertfordshire. It has been agreed that this development is acceptable in principle under Policies SP1 and SP2 of the Local Plan. In detail, as a result of the changes made to the previous scheme the development now complies with Policies SP9, D1 and D3 of the Local Plan dealing with sustainable design and living conditions.

- 3.3 The density, scale and character of the development in this revised scheme satisfies the requirement of Policy HS3, being appropriate to its location and surroundings.
- 3.4 The application is accompanied by a Biodiversity Net gain (BNG)/Biodiversity Impact Assessment (BIA), together with a landscaping scheme that combine to satisfy the requirements of Policy NE4 of the Local Plan.
- 3.5 All other aspects of the development relating the loss of the veterinary use, highway and parking provision, internal and external living standards, neighbour amenity, drainage and air quality satisfy the relevant provisions of the Local Plan.
- 3.6 For these reasons it is hoped that the Council will now find this revised development for the 2 detached houses acceptable in every respect. However, should clarification or amplification of any of the information submitted with this application still be required then we would welcome the opportunity to provide it, before a decision is taken upon it.

Alan Breckon
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