

MEMORANDUM

To: Sarah Kasparian
Senior Planning Officer

From: Debbie Ealand
Housing Supply Officer
Ext: 4526

Your Ref: 24/01013/OP

Date: 11 June 2024

**Outline Application: Hybrid application for residential development of up to 325 dwellings comprising (a) full planning application for Phase 1 comprising 102 dwellings and associated infrastructure including access from Newmarket Road, emergency and pedestrian/cycle access from Burloes Hall Drive, internal highways, public open space, landscaping and drainage and b) outline application for up to 223 dwellings and associated infrastructure with all matters reserved apart from primary means of access and emergency and pedestrian/cycle access from Burloes Hall Drive. Land Surrounding Burloes Cottages, Newmarket Road, Royston, Hertfordshire.
Ref No: 24/01013/OP**

Dear Sarah,

Thank you for your memo of 21 May 2024 in respect of the above application for full planning permission on phase 1 and outline permission for the remainder.

The affordable housing requirement is 40% on sites which will provide 25 dwellings or more, in accordance with the Local Plan.

There are four allocated housing sites in Royston in the Local Plan, which are expected to deliver approximately 500 new homes. The site is an allocated site, site RY10 and is expected to deliver 300 new homes.

The preparation and review of all policies should be underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence. This should be adequate and proportionate, focused tightly on supporting and justifying the policies concerned, and take into account relevant market signals, in accordance with the NPPF.

Paragraph 63 of the NPPF says “Within this context of establishing need, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies. These groups should include (but are not limited to) those who require affordable housing; families with children; older people (including those who require retirement housing, housing-with-care and care homes); students; people with disabilities; service families; travellers; people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes”.

Paragraph 64 of the NPPF says “Where a need for affordable housing is identified, planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required³⁰, and expect it to be met on-site unless:

- a) off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution in lieu can be robustly justified; and
- b) the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities.”

Within the overall affordable housing requirement, a 65%/35% rented/ other intermediate affordable housing tenure split is required, in accordance with the Local Plan and the council’s Developer Contributions SPD, supported by the 2016 Stevenage and North Hertfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) Update.

The affordable housing requirement on phase 1 is for 41 dwellings; 27 for rent and 14 for intermediate affordable housing. For the remainder of the site based on 223 dwellings the affordable housing requirement is 89 dwellings; 58 for rent and 31 intermediate affordable housing.

Within the 65% rented affordable housing element for phase 1 the following mix best meets housing needs, as identified in the 2016 SHMA:

21% x 1 bed flats (6)
12% x 2 bed flats (3)
26% x 2 bed houses (7)
35% x 3 bed houses (9)
6% x 4+ bed houses. (2)

Within the 35% intermediate affordable housing element for phase 1 the following mix best meets housing needs as identified in the 2016 SHMA:

8% x 1 bed flats (1)
8% x 2 bed flats (1)
20% x 2 bed houses (3)
54% x 3 bed houses (8)
10% x 4+ bed houses (1)

The applicant is proposing the provision of 22% affordable housing across the development including phase 1 which does not meet the council’s affordable housing requirements and is therefore unacceptable.

There is high housing need across the district for two bedroom family homes for rent and the provision of two bedroom houses is welcomed. The provision of an increased number of two bedroom houses and fewer three bedroom houses would also be considered favourably.

In addition, there is a growing need for three and four bedroom wheelchair adapted/ accessible bungalows/ houses for families with a child or other family member in a wheelchair and/ or with limited mobility. The provision of this type of

accommodation is required to meet some of this need, in accordance with Policy HS5: Accessible and adaptable housing.

It is noted that the applicant is proposing the provision of some two bedroom bungalows to M4(3) wheelchair accessible standards. It would be beneficial if a couple of these bungalows could be at least three bedrooms to meet this growing need.

For phase 1 the following affordable housing mix would better meet the Council's housing needs:

For the rented element

- 1 bed flats (6)
- 2 bed flats (2)
- 2 bed houses (8)
- 2 bed bungalow M4(3) wheelchair adapted (2)
- 3 bed bungalow M4(3) wheelchair adapted (2)
- 3 bed houses (5)
- 4+ bed houses. (2)

For the intermediate affordable element

- 1 or 2 bed flats/ maisonettes (2)
- 2 bed houses (6)
- 3 bed houses (5)
- 4 bed house (1)

For the remainder of the site the 65% rented affordable housing mix would comprise the following to meet housing needs as identified in the 2016 SHMA:

- 21% x 1 bed flats (12)
- 12% x 2 bed flats (8)
- 26% x 2 bed houses (15)
- 35% x 3 bed houses (20)
- 6% x 4+ bed houses. (3)

And for the 35% intermediate affordable housing the following mix best meets housing needs as identified in the 2016 SHMA:

- 8% x 1 bed flats (2)
- 8% x 2 bed flats (2)
- 20% x 2 bed houses (7)
- 54% x 3 bed houses (17)
- 10% x 4+ bed houses (3)

The affordable homes should be owned and managed by a registered provider, be spread across the site in small clusters rather than be situated on one part of the site and should be physically indistinguishable from the market housing.

Where a need for affordable housing is identified the definition in Annex 2 of the Framework should be applied to the type of affordable housing required.

The definition for affordable housing includes housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers).

The council currently accept social rent and affordable rent for the rented tenure dwellings, but it should be noted that the affordable rent for one or two bedroom dwellings should be no more than 80% of the equivalent local market rent (including service charges, where applicable).

For three bedroom dwellings the affordable rent should be no more than 70% of the equivalent local market rent (including service charges, where applicable) and for a four bedroom dwelling the affordable rent should be no more than the equivalent rent (excluding service charges, where applicable) to a social rented home in the locality, to ensure affordability.

All rents must be within Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates, in accordance with the council's Tenancy Strategy and the Developer Contributions SPD.

The nationally described technical housing standards provide the nationally recognised standards for bedrooms, storage and internal areas in new dwellings across all tenures. All the affordable units are required to meet these standards.

Parking courts are not desirable as there is often limited or no natural surveillance and residents prefer to park outside or near to their homes. To minimise on street parking, parking spaces should be provided in front of or adjacent properties with good natural surveillance.

Registered Providers (RPs) usually prefer any affordable units/flats, particularly for rent, to be in a self-contained block, with their own entrance as this works better in terms of management and maintenance. In addition, service charges costs for affordable housing residents are generally cheaper in self-contained blocks as RPs are often able to negotiate their own service contracts or use their in-house maintenance teams.

In June 2021, the Government introduced a policy requiring 25% of affordable housing provided to be First Homes, although there are transitional arrangements in place. First Homes can be considered on merit where the overall proportion of affordable housing that can be achieved on site will not be adversely affected and the Local Plan requirement for 65% of affordable homes for rent is met. Based on the provision of 40% affordable housing on phase 1, ten of the fourteen intermediate affordable housing units could be delivered as First Homes to meet this requirement.

Grant funding for the provision of affordable housing is not available on S106 sites and any affordable homes should be delivered through planning gain alone.

The applicant will need to provide documentary evidence of any viability issues using a recognised financial toolkit, which the council will have independently assessed at full expense to the applicant.

I hope this information assists you. Please contact me if you require any further information.

Regards

Debbie Ealand
Housing Supply Officer