

DELEGATED REPORT

Application No:	18/P/5035/OUT	Target date:	05.03.2019
Case officer:	Lee Bowering	Extended date:	
Proposal:	Outline application for the proposed erection of 14no. dwellings with matters of appearance, landscaping and scale reserved for subsequent approval		
Site address:	Land Off Purn Way, Bleadon, BS24 0QF,		

DELEGATED REPORT

18/P/5035/OUT

Outline application for the proposed erection of 14no. dwellings with matters of appearance, landscaping and scale reserved for subsequent approval at land off Purn Way, Bleadon, BS240QF

SUMMARY OF MAIN ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATION

The suitability of the site for development being located outside the settlement boundary of an infill village and the weight to be given to the existing development plan having regard to the five-year land supply and the consideration of the tilted balance. Other planning issues are referred to within the report.

It is recommended that the application be refused.

Planning History/Background – most recent applications

Reference	Proposal	Decision
17/P/1351/O	Outline application for residential development of up to 16 dwellings and access with all other matters reserved for subsequent approval on land off Purn Way, Bleadon, BS24 0QF,	Refused 17 April 2018
05/P/2450/F	Erection of dwelling on land off Purn Way, Bleadon	Refused 07 December 2005
2510/80	Residential development on land north of Purn Way, Bleadon off	Refused 05 November 1980

Site / Proposal

The site is approximately 0.82ha and comprises an open field. Vehicle access to the land is via an existing farm track taken from Purn Way which borders properties alongside their side/rear gardens. Purn Way is a no through route and the road which ends to traffic some 70m east of the site. The West Mendip Way footpath skirts the northern boundary, beyond which are allotments. To the east of the site is a smallholding, also separated by the West Mendip Way.

It is proposed to erect ten detached bungalows and two pairs of semi-detached houses served by a new roadway to be constructed along the existing farm track that is accessed onto Purn Way. A landscape/ecological buffer, approximately 17 metres wide is proposed within the site parallel with the northern site boundary with a similar, but narrower landscape/ecological buffer, approximately 9 metres wide, within the site, adjacent to the site's eastern boundary.

Two parking spaces are shown to be provided to each dwelling on the submitted layout plan which now shows two fewer dwellings than previously proposed in the initial application submission.

Monitoring Details (if applicable)

To ensure compliance of National Space Standards requirements and delivery of the required affordable housing provision, Cill and s106 requirements.

Affordable Housing (if applicable)

All sites proposed for 11 or more dwellings, are required to provide a minimum of 30% on-site affordable housing, at nil public subsidy, with a tenure split of 77% social rent and 23% shared ownership.

This application proposes 14 dwellings; therefore, the affordable housing requirement is 5 of these units.

Policy Framework

The site is affected by the following constraints:

- The site is outside the settlement boundary for Bleadon;
- Bleadon is an infill village and is covered by a Neighbourhood Plan which does not identify the site for development purposes.

The Development Plan

The Development Plan comprises:

- North Somerset Core Strategy - Adopted January 2017
- The Sites and Policies Plan Part 1: Development Management Policies (DMP) - Adopted July 2016

North Somerset Core Strategy

Policy Ref	Policy heading
CS1	Addressing climate change and carbon reduction
CS2	Delivering sustainable design and construction
CS3	Environmental impacts and flood risk management
CS4	Nature Conservation
CS5	Landscape and the historic environment
CS7	Planning for waste
CS9	Green Infrastructure
CS10	Transport and movement
CS11	Parking
CS12	Achieving high quality design and place making
CS13	Scale of new housing
CS14	Distribution of new housing
CS15	Mixed and balanced communities
CS33	Smaller settlements and countryside
CS34	Infrastructure delivery and Development Contributions

The Sites and Policies Plan Part 1: Development Management Policies (adopted 19 July 2016)

The following policies are particularly relevant to this proposal:

Policy	Policy heading
DM1	Flooding and drainage
DM2	Renewable and low carbon energy
DM6	Archaeology
DM8	Nature Conservation
DM9	Trees
DM10	Landscape
DM19	Green Infrastructure
DM24	Safety, traffic and provision of infrastructure etc associated with development
DM25	Public rights of way, pedestrian and cycle access
DM27	Bus accessibility criteria
DM28	Parking standards
DM32	High quality design and place making
DM34	Housing type and mix
DM36	Residential densities
DM42	Accessible and adaptable housing and housing space standards
DM71	Development contributions, Community Infrastructure Levy and viability

Sites and Policies Plan Part 2: Site Allocations Plan (adopted 10 April 2018)

The following policies are particularly relevant to this proposal:

Policy	Policy heading
SA1	Allocated residential sites (10 or more units)
SA2	Settlement boundaries and extension of residential curtilages

Other material policy guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (February 2019)

The following is particularly relevant to this proposal:

Section No	Section heading
2	Achieving sustainable
5	Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
6	Building a strong, competitive economy
8	Promoting healthy and safe communities
9	Promoting sustainable transport
11	Making effective use of land
12	Achieving well-designed places
14	Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
15	Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

National Planning Policy for Waste (October 2014)

National Planning Practice Guidance (Revised 24 July 2018)

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Development Plan Documents (DPD)

- Residential Design Guide (RDG1) Section 1: Protecting living conditions of neighbours SPD (adopted January 2013)
- Residential Design Guide (RDG2) Section 2: Appearance and character of house extensions and alterations (adopted April 2014)
- North Somerset Parking Standards SPD (adopted November 2013)
- North Somerset Landscape Character Assessment SPD (adopted December 2018)
- North Somerset and Mendip Bats SAC guidance on development SPD (adopted January 2018)
- Creating sustainable buildings and places SPD (adopted March 2015)
- Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Arrays SPD (adopted November 2013)
- Travel Plans SPD (adopted November 2010)
- Biodiversity and Trees SPD (adopted December 2005)
- Affordable Housing SPD (adopted November 2013)

- Accessible Housing Needs Assessment SPD (adopted April 2018)
- Development contributions SPD (adopted January 2016)

Nationally described space standards – March 2015

To be read in conjunction with policy DM42

Consultation summary

Copies of representations received can be viewed on the council's website. This report contains summaries only.

Bleadon Parish Council

Comments dated 26 January 2020

“Situated between the allotment gardens and the settlement boundary. The number of proposed dwellings had been reduced from the previous refused application to 2no houses and 10 no bungalows. The recommendation was that it be approved as the development was deemed to be appropriate for the site and had an element of social housing within it. Councillors were reminded that the village had very little areas left for development and growth.

Resolved to recommend approval with one Councillor voting against.”

Neighbours' views

In excess of 77 letters of representation have been received.

- The principal planning points made are as follows:
- Conflict with local plan-outside village boundary and villager has infill status;
- Inadequate access to site;
- Increase in traffic - danger to pedestrians;
- Access roads that are barely wide enough for one domestic vehicle and with no continuous pavement, inadequate parking;
- The plans only mitigate travel through the site not to and from the site;
- Adverse effect on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties by reason of close to adjoining properties; noise, disturbance, overlooking, loss of privacy and overshadowing;
- Out of keeping with character of area;
- Out of scale with village; visual impact and on character of village;
- Inadequate public transport provisions;
- Increase danger and risk of flooding;
- Strain on existing community facilities;
- Street lighting inadequate;
- Effect on local ecology, loss of wildlife;
- Development too high;
- Overdevelopment;
- Information missing from plans.

Avon & Somerset Police – Designing Out Crime

[Comments dated 10 January 2019]

At this stage where only outline planning is sought, it is difficult from a crime reduction/prevention point of view to give detailed comments as the areas to be addressed as detailed design would normally be decided upon at Reserved Matters stage and any layout plans submitted at this stage are only indicative.

Taking the above into account the applicant may wish to consider the below observations and incorporate them in the design and layout of any future reserved matters application should the council be minded to grant outline approval:

Car parking provided within garages or on a hard standing within dwelling boundary.

Dwellings orientated to offer good levels of natural surveillance.

Windows incorporated in habitable rooms in elevations overlooking parking spaces between plots.

Appropriate boundary treatments creating clear demarcation between public and private space.

Street lighting for adopted highways and footpaths, private estate roads and footpaths and car parks to comply with BS 5489:2013

Achieving compliance with Secured by Design (SBD Homes 2016) continues to provide a 'police preferred specification' for new developments (Proving compliance with Part Q of building Regulations)

[Comments dated 06-01-2020]

"This amended layout proposes removal of the pedestrian route through the development and enhanced ecological buffer to the north and east of the site. The number of dwellings is reduced but the layout of the dwellings and position of car parking spaces shown are similar to the previous layout.

Comments I submitted previously (January 2019) remain relevant to this outline planning application."

Axe Brue Internal Drainage Board

"The Board has no objection to the proposals as the applicant has demonstrated that a surface water drainage scheme can be delivered on site. As the proposal is in outline the Board recommends a condition that no development takes place until surface water drainage details are submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. An assessment shall be carried out of the potential for disposing of surface water by means of a sustainable drainage system."

Natural England

“We have considered the application details, including the Bat and Reptile Survey report, dated November 2018 and offer the following comments:

Internationally and nationally designated sites – further information required. The application site is in close proximity to the Mendip Limestone Grasslands Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the North Somerset & Mendips Bats SAC, which are European sites. These sites are also notified at a national level as a series of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI(s)).

In considering the European site interest, Natural England advises that you, as a competent authority under the provisions of the Habitats Regulations, should have regard for any potential impacts that a plan or project may have. The Conservation objectives for each European site explain how the site should be restored and/or maintained and may be helpful in assessing what, if any, potential impacts a plan or project may have. The consultation documents provided by your authority do not include information to demonstrate that the requirements of Regulations 63 and 64 of the Habitats Regulations have been considered by your authority, i.e. the consultation does not include a Habitats Regulations Assessment.

In advising your authority on the requirements relating to Habitats Regulations Assessment, it is Natural England’s advice that the proposal is not necessary for the management of the European site. Your authority should therefore determine whether the proposal is likely to have a significant effect on any European site, proceeding to the Appropriate Assessment stage where significant effects cannot be ruled out.

The application site lies within Band C of the bat consultation zone, as identified in the North Somerset and Mendip Bats SAC Guidance. The required level of survey within Band C depends on whether a commuting structure is present and the suitability of the adjacent habitat to support prey species hunted by horseshoe bats.

The application site contains and is connected to habitats and features that are favourable to bats and bat surveys have confirmed the site is used by greater and lesser horseshoe bats.

The bat surveys consisted of two walked transects (one in July and one in August) and the deployment of two automated static detectors for five nights during July in ‘Positions A1 & A2’ and two automated static detectors for five nights during August 2018 in ‘Positions B1 & B2’. A single greater horseshoe bat was recorded within the southeast extent of the site during the August walked transect. Greater and lesser horseshoe bat passes were also recorded by static detectors deployed in different parts of the site during July and August 2018. Given the modest level of survey effort and the difficulty of detecting horseshoe bats, these results appear notable.

The Bat Activity and Reptile Survey report suggests: With specific consideration of lesser horseshoe and greater horseshoe bat, recordings for these species within the development area was low, with activity associated with the field boundaries. Therefore, without mitigation, it is considered that the development would cause a minor impact to bat species in general, and minor/negligible impact to greater horseshoe and lesser horseshoe bats (with impacts to lesser horseshoe and greater horseshoe bats, in turn considered to represent a minor/negligible impact upon the North Somerset and Mendip Bats SAC).

Natural England advises that there is currently not enough information to determine whether the likelihood of significant effects can be ruled out. We recommend you obtain the following information to help undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment:

□ Further details of the recommended mitigation proposed in the Bat Activity Survey & Reptile Survey report, including in relation to lighting and planting schemes, to ensure these are compliant with the requirements of the Bat SAC Guidance SPD.

There may also be a need for additional bat surveys to ensure the use of the application site and adjacent areas by horseshoe bats is adequately understood, including its contribution to the wider network of foraging and commuting habitats. This would increase confidence that mitigation measures would be effective.

Sites of Scientific Interest. The application site is approximately 350m from Purn Hill SSSI, designated for its exceptionally diverse unimproved calcareous grassland flora, which includes three nationally rare species. These habitats can be vulnerable to the effects of recreation, for example, by trampling or by causing disturbance to grazing animals. Grazing is a particularly important element of the SSSI management as it is necessary to maintain the interest features and botanical diversity of the site. We would therefore encourage the Council to consider the potential for this development to compound this issue and ways in which this might be alleviated, for example, by requesting further information from the applicant regarding access to alternative natural green space, perhaps coupled with the provision of educational visitor information.

Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The proposed development is approximately 300m from the Mendip Hills AONB, which is a nationally designated landscape. The statutory purpose of the AONB is to conserve and enhance the area's natural beauty. Relevant to this is the duty on public bodies to 'have regard' for that statutory purpose in carrying out their functions (S85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000). The Planning Practice Guidance confirms that this duty also applies to proposals outside the designated area but impacting on its natural beauty.

You should assess the application carefully as to whether the proposed development would have a significant impact on or harm that statutory purpose. We advise that you consult the AONB Partnership. Their knowledge of the site and its wider landscape setting, together with the aims and objectives of the AONB's statutory management plan, will be a valuable contribution to the planning decision.

Protected species We have not assessed this application and associated documents for impacts on protected species.

Natural England has published Standing Advice on protected species. The Standing Advice includes a decision checklist which provides advice to planners on deciding if there is a 'reasonable likelihood' of protected species being present. It also provides detailed advice on the protected species most often affected by development.

You should apply our Standing Advice to this application as it is a material consideration in the determination of applications in the same way as any individual response received from Natural England following consultation.

The Standing Advice should not be treated as giving any indication or providing any assurance in respect of European Protected Species (EPS) that the proposed development is unlikely to affect the EPS present on the site; nor should it be interpreted

as meaning that Natural England has reached any views as to whether a licence may be granted.

If you have any specific questions on aspects that are not covered by our Standing Advice for European Protected Species or have difficulty in applying it to this application, please contact us at with details at consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Other advice:

We would expect the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to assess and consider the other possible impacts resulting from this proposal on the following when determining this application:

- local sites (biodiversity and geodiversity)*
- local landscape character*
- local or national biodiversity priority habitats and species.*

Natural England does not hold locally specific information relating to the above. These remain material considerations in the determination of this planning application and we recommend that you seek further information from the appropriate bodies (which may include the local records centre, your local wildlife trust, local geoconservation group or other recording society and a local landscape characterisation document in order to ensure the LPA has sufficient information to fully understand the impact of the proposal before it determines the application. A more comprehensive list of local groups can be found at [Wildlife and Countryside link](#).

Environmental Net Gain The 2018 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), includes a number of strong references to net gain. This approach is also strongly encouraged by the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan. In light of this and the forthcoming Joint Spatial Plan priority on development providing a net gain for biodiversity, we would encourage your Authority to seek a net gain in biodiversity from this application.

Natural England supports the use of the Defra biodiversity metric as a tool to be used in conjunction with ecological advice to quantify biodiversity net gain in the terrestrial environment. It calculates before and after habitat value in terms of 'biodiversity units'. Natural England encourages the incorporation of the 10 best practice principles developed by CIRIA/CIEEM/IEMA for those delivering biodiversity net gain."

Wessex Water

"No comment received"

Avon Fire and Rescue

"Fire Hydrants - The additional residential and commercial developments will require additional hydrants to be installed and appropriately-sized water mains to be provided for fire-fighting purposes. This additional infrastructure is required as a direct result of the developments and so the costs will need to be borne by developers either through them fitting suitable mains and fire hydrants themselves and at their cost or through developer contributions. Avon Fire & Rescue Service has calculated the cost of installation and five years maintenance of a Fire Hydrant to be £1,500 per hydrant. Again this cost should be borne by the developer. Importantly, these fire-fighting water supplies must be installed at the same time as each phase of the developments is built so that they are immediately available should an incident occur, and the Fire & Rescue Service be called."

Principal Planning Issues

The principal planning issues in this case are (1) the principle of development, (2) sustainable development, (3) Accessibility, Transport and Road Safety, including parking provision (4) Impact on landscape (5) flood risk and drainage, (6) The impact of the proposals upon the site ecology and surrounding area, (7) impact on residential living conditions and (8) Design, layout and energy (9) Other issues (Archaeology, Planning Obligations, Affordable Housing, Lighting)

Issue 1: Principle of development

Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan includes: 'The North Somerset Core Strategy' (adopted January 2017); 'Development Management Policies' DPD (adopted July 2016), the 'Site Allocations Plan' SAP (adopted April 2018)

The development plan interprets and defines what sustainable development means for North Somerset. Policy CS13 of the Core Strategy (CS) requires sufficient developable land to deliver a minimum of 20,985 dwellings between 2006 and 2026.

Policy CS14 of the Core Strategy (CS) deals with the distribution of the housing requirement (the 'spatial strategy' pursuant to policy CS13) across the settlement hierarchy. It prioritises new housing at Weston-super-Mare followed by the other Towns and then at nine 'Service' villages. This is given effect by Policies CS28 ('Weston-super-Mare'); CS30 ('Weston Villages'), CS31 ('Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead') and CS32 ('Service Villages'). These policies include flexibility to deliver an appropriate scale of housing growth adjacent to town and service village settlement boundaries through the development management process. The Site Allocations Plan (April 2018) does not identify this site for development.

Policy CS33 does not support housing outside the settlement boundaries of identified infill villages, such as Bleadon. The proposal is therefore contrary to the adopted development plan in that the residential development of the site would be in conflict with policy CS33 of the Core Strategy.

The Site Allocations Plan identifies the detailed allocations to deliver the Core Strategy housing requirement and was adopted in April 2018. This includes additional housing supply required by the Inspector to provide additional flexibility and choice at sustainable locations, but not sites at Bleadon. The SAP confirms the settlement boundary; the current proposal lies outside the adopted settlement boundary.

The proposal is not considered to conflict with Policy DM 34 as it proposes both two storey housing and bungalows which it is in response to the 2012 Housing Needs Survey for Bleadon Parish which recognised the need for;

- Single storey bungalow for single people or retired couples;
- Larger family houses to attract a younger population;
- Low-cost housing for existing, elderly residents and younger people in the village wanting to enter the housing market.

The affordable housing requirement for the site is five units although the actual mix of units across the site would be determined at a reserved matters stage, if the application were to be approved.

One of the most recent tested position on housing land supply is an appeal decision for housing at Laney's Drive, Locking dated 18 June 2018 (planning application reference number 16/P/0329/O). The Inspector concluded (in paragraph 54 of the appeal decision) that the Council has a housing land supply equivalent of 4.4 year against a base date of October 2017. The significance of this is that the NPPF, at paragraph 11d, says: "Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites". Paragraph 14 of the NPPF is therefore engaged and brings into consideration the 'tilted balance'. The consideration and assessment of Sustainability, in so far as the site and proposal is concerned is referred to in the following Planning Issue (2).

Par 11 d) ii. Is nevertheless relevant to the decision makers assessment and consideration of the application in that d) *"where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*

ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole;"

Par. 213 of the NPPF states:

"However, existing policies should not be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted or made prior to the publication of this Framework. Due weight should be given to them, according to their degree of consistency with this Framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given)."

Therefore, out-of-date housing policies does not make them irrelevant, but the weight given to them is a matter of judgement. This may depend on the extent of the housing land supply deficit, steps being taken to reduce it, and the degree to which the housing policies otherwise accord with the NPPF. On the latter, the SAP was only adopted in April 2018, having found to be sound in process and content.

The distribution of housing sites in the SAP allied to the Core Strategy provides a sustainable distribution of housing across the settlement hierarchy, which accords with the NPPF and should be given significant weight in the planning balance.

It is considered that the proposal is contrary to policies CS 14 and CS33 of the North Somerset Core Strategy.

Issue 2: Sustainable Development

The NPPF says sustainable development has three inter-dependent dimensions, namely; economic; social and environmental.

Proposals should strike the right balance between these dimensions to be considered as sustainable development. The adopted Core Strategy confirmed the settlement hierarchy for North Somerset. Infill villages such as Bleadon are comparatively less sustainable settlements, where development opportunities are more limited. The village lacks a number of key community facilities and features that would make it sustainable. Whilst there are bus services to Weston and Burnham from the A370 (approximately 0.4 mile on foot) the paucity of facilities including no primary school combined with the distance (2.0 miles to the hospital on the edge of Weston, and 4.0 miles to the centre (Town Hall) and the lack of cycle routes render the site unsustainable.

The economic impacts of the proposal will result in construction jobs and other local investment during its build out. Such benefits are however transitory and are given only moderate weight in the planning balance. The scheme would also generate New Homes Bonus and Council Tax, but these are generic benefits and are given low weight.

Increased local spending could ensue from the proposal, but as this is not quantified it can only be given very limited weight. Increasing the number and range of homes is a social benefit. Social sustainability is also concerned with building houses in the right places to facilitate social interaction and create inclusive communities. The site is in a location where new residents may feel part of a wider community but where local facilities and services that are easily available and accessible are limited and do not include a school, or doctor's surgery (See Issue 3 for further analysis).

In the recently dismissed Appeal decision (Appeal Ref: APP/D0121/W/18/3211789 dated 23 December 2020) for the erection of 200 houses on land adjoining Bridgwater Road, Bleadon, the Planning Inspector at paragraph 85 stated:

“An Infill Village does not provide the necessary level of services or facilities to provide for fully sustainable location. While the proposed improvements to the bus service would represent a better opportunity for current and future residents to utilise public transport, the development would still place a larger reliance on the use of the private car than introducing such a scale of development within a higher order settlement.”

Issue 3: Accessibility, Transport and Road Safety, including parking provision

The site & proposal

The site is in Bleadon on Purn Way which is unclassified highway subject to a 30mph speed limit. The development land comprises of approximately 0.77 acres of land currently being used as a pony paddock. The site is bordered on the northern side by the West Mendip Way footpath and beyond this are allotments. The southern side and part western side are existing developments on Purn Way and Manor Grange. The eastern field is being used for horticulture and mixed usage. A planning application was submitted and refused in 2009 (application No 09/P/1860/F) for a single dwelling on what is now the proposed access into the development. A planning application was also submitted in 2018 (application No 17/P1351/O) which was refused but not on highway grounds.

The amended applicant is for 14 dwellings although the property sizes have not been confirmed. Purn Way is not a through route and the road ends to traffic some 70m east of the site. In the opposite direction it connects to Bleadon Road which leads to the A370, Bridgwater Road the main route to Weston-s-Mare. There is also a through route to Bleadon Road via Chestnut Lane which is relatively narrow and some 80m in length. This would probably be an attractive route for residents from the proposed development.

Traffic Generation

A development of this size could generate between 50 and 78 vehicle movements each day. The TRIC database has been used by the applicant to forecast the number of movements during the peak period hour associated with a development for 16 dwellings and this predicts between 9-8 movements in each case. The overall level of traffic at peak and throughout the day is unlikely to cause significant effect on local highway conditions. As facilities in the village are limited and there will be new travel for employment, education and shopping. The village has a local bus service, but this will probably not be suitable for the majority of travel.

Access

The plans submitted indicate that access would be taken from an existing farm track of varying width onto Purn Way. The planned access into the development runs internally in the development to a central area in the development. The applicant has submitted plans showing a 5.5m wide carriageway and a 2m footpath into the site. Visibility displays and tracked plans for larger vehicles have also been submitted which demonstrate that refuse and delivery vehicles can enter the development safely allowing other vehicles to pass. In terms of visibility from the site the applicant has indicated that at a point 2.4m back from the edge of the carriageway, 48m of visibility can be achieved to the west and 26m to the east which is below standards specified in Manual for Streets. This is satisfactory as the eastern section of Purn Way only continues for a further 70m serving a small number of properties and so traffic speeds will be well below the 30mph speed for which the guideline displays are specified.

Servicing Arrangements

Consideration should be given to refuse collection arrangements. Manual for Streets recommends that residents should not be required to carry refuse more than 30 metres to the collection point. The applicant states that a central refuse collection point might be required if refuse vehicles cannot access individual plots. The application form however

states that layout and access is to be considered at the outline stage. The applicant would however be required to comply with the requirements of the Council's Residential Design Guide – Section 4 – Recycling and Waste, at the reserved matters stage, should outline planning permission be granted.

Parking

Local residential car parking standards are set out in the North Somerset Parking Standards SPD and outline the minimum required number of car parking spaces for residential development. Furthermore, Policy CS11 of the Adopted Core Strategy states that adequate parking must be provided and managed to meet the needs of anticipated users (residents, workers and visitors) in usable spaces. The amended site layout shows two spaces allocated alongside each property and this would be a sufficient number of spaces for two- and three-bedroom units, although four-bedroom units require one additional space. The plans also indicate some parking spaces available alongside the neighbourhood open space area in the centre of the development. Further details in this regard would need to be addressed at the reserved matters stage.

Cycle Parking

Cycle parking standards are set out in the Parking Standards SPD and the required number of spaces must be provided.

Sustainable Travel

There are bus stops to the southwest and southeast of the site. There is a bus stop at the Purn Way junction with Bleadon Road some 320m walking distance from the site access. There is a bus stop with a shelter on Coronation Road some 530m walking distance from the site. There has been a reduction in bus service provision locally which has not been accounted for by the applicant.

- Community bus service B1 – Bleadon to Weston-super-Mare
 - This service operates four times a day and inter-works another community bus service (L1). It operates on Mondays to Fridays only this operates at a much-reduced frequency than the previous bus service 4A.
 - The route operates around Bleadon village and Bleadon Hill in an anti-clockwise direction with a bus stop on Bleadon Road, close to the proposed development. However, this service is operated by 15-seater minibus, so additional development could lead to capacity issues on this service.

- Bus service 20 – Burnham-on-Sea to Weston-super-Mare: This service operates on Bridgwater Road and there are not continual footpath links from the development along Bleadon Road to the closest bus stops making this less attractive for bus passengers.

Given the above taster tickets should also be provided to residents to encourage the trial of public transport services.

Home to School Travel

There is no primary or secondary school in Bleadon and for this reason there is currently home to school transport provided for the dwellings in the areas surrounding the

application site due to these dwellings exceeding statutory walking distances and because there are no safe walking routes. The applicant would be required to enter into a s106 Agreement to secure contributions for home to school transport if planning permission were to be granted.

Addendum - dated 30.12.19

The revised site layout has been submitted to accommodate an ecological buffer along the northern and eastern site boundaries. This has resulted in two fewer dwellings on the site with revisions to the internal road layout. The proposed dwellings are now shown to be served by a simple T junction with spur roads from each side.

The revised site layout comprising 14 dwellings is considered to be acceptable on highway grounds and therefore the proposal complies with policies CS10 and CS11 of the Core Strategy and policies DM24 and DM28 of the Sites and Policies Plan Part 1.

Issue 4: Landscape

The reduction in the number of dwellings appears to have been brought about by the need for substantial ecological buffers to the north and east of the site where most of the perimeter hedgerow and its adjacent landscape are to be retained and enhanced. This also includes new perimeter hedge planting adjacent to the revised residential boundary. Regrettably this layout removes the central green, but this is a loss of potential amenity to future residents rather than being harmful to the landscape.

The visual containment of the site is already relatively good. Notwithstanding this, care would need to be taken at reserved matters stage to ensure adequate space is retained for landscaping, to enable the development to be assimilated into the landscape. This is best achieved via a revised landscape parameter plan, with a similar plan controlling building height and developable area.

Buffer Green Corridors; These can provide valuable wildlife corridors and assist screening. Re-instatement of the site's boundary hedges will help retain green corridors and define the extended area of settlement.

Inevitably there are impacts upon a number of adjacent properties as summarised in the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. Views from private dwellings (Viewpoints VP2,3 and 4) are the only 'substantial' significance of impact. The siting of new development and screening of these properties should be a consideration in planning the layout. Care should also be taken not to damage existing perimeter hedges and trees in adjacent gardens.

There is no significant harm identified to views out of the AONB, the development being seen in the context of the village. The Ridges and Combes Landscape Character Area is said to have a moderate Significance of Impact arising from the proposal, but again this is very localised.

The NSC Landscape Sensitivity Assessment, in respect of Bleadon, notes:

Fields to the west of Celtic Way are more open, however, these are not located within the AONB and are not visible from it. Owing to this, land to the north of the settlement adjacent to the settlement edge is of medium sensitivity.

The following link is for reference purposes:

<https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Landscape-Sensitivity-Assessment-2018.pdf>

The meaning of Medium Sensitivity for the purpose of the report is:

Medium sensitivity: Land with a medium susceptibility to change and/or which is of medium value, e.g. land which has medium visual prominence, land which partially contributes to heritage or ecological assets.

Combined with the submitted LVIA assessment and the nature of the existing uses surrounding the site, it is considered capable of accommodating residential development of a suitable scale and height (note the bungalows along the northern edge), without significant harm arising to the surrounding wider landscape (including the AONB). The submission of a fully detailed landscape planting scheme would be a requirement of the reserved matters application submission thereby satisfying the requirements of policies CS5 and CS12 of the North Somerset Core Strategy and policies DM10 and DM32 of the Sites and Policies Plan Part 1

However, under CS33 the proposal cannot be viewed as infilling, as it lies outside the settlement boundary for Bleadon and is not an allocated site. Were this to be permitted, submission of a detailed landscape scheme should be a condition of any approval.

The supporting Arboricultural information submitted with the application is considered to be acceptable however it will be necessary to condition the requirement for the submission, for approval, of a Method Statement Report together with a Tree Survey and Tree Protection Plan.

Issue 5: Flood risk and drainage

This site is located within Axe Brue Internal Drainage Board area (now part of the Somerset Drainage Boards Consortium) and as such their response and requirements have been reviewed alongside the comments of the Council's Flood Risk Management Team.

One of the reasons for refusal of the previous planning application, 17/P/1351/O, was that the submission was unable to sufficiently demonstrate that the site would not increase

flood risk in the surrounding area. The submitted documents received since this earlier submission, have now answered the previous concerns raised.

It should be noted that infiltration testing has been carried out for the site, with the lowest value being 0.041m/hr. These tests were repeated twice for each soakaway. Best practice recommends three times for each pit. However, as the results were consistent this is sufficient for outline planning, but further investigation will be required for discharge of conditions.

The submission of the required surface water drainage detail and further investigation work which will include an assessment of together with an assessment for the potential for disposing of surface water by means of a sustainable drainage system would be secured by planning condition in the event that the application was to be recommended for approval.

It is considered that subject to the relevant drainage conditions the proposal would comply with Policies DM 1 of the Sites and Policies Plan Part 1 Development Management Policies and Core Strategy Policy CS3 if approved.

Issue 6: The impact of the proposals upon the site ecology and surrounding area

Section 99 of OPDM Circular 06/2005 states: 99. It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision. The need to ensure ecological surveys are carried out should therefore only be left to coverage under planning conditions in exceptional circumstances, with the result that the surveys are carried out after planning permission has been granted.

The site is located within Band C of the North Somerset and Mendip Bat Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and is also within close proximity to a number of other designated sites.

Unlike the previous refused application submission that lacked the evidence to demonstrate that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on the biodiversity of the area, the current application proposal has the support of an Ecological Impact Assessment together with a suite of surveys which were undertaken during the course of 2018 and 2019 with an updated survey undertaken in mid-August 2019.

The surveys undertaken covered a range of habitats and protected species. The surveys undertaken included an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey, Walked Transect Surveys and Static Detector Survey. The following species were included in the survey: bats, badgers, great crested newts, common toad, reptiles, brown hare, dormouse and hedgehogs.

The survey findings established that, with the exception of the presence of bats and slowworms, there was no evidence of other protected species recorded on site, or in the immediate locality that would be adversely affected by the proposed development.

The update survey, which includes additional data on flora, found that the habitats on site were generally of poor quality with the grassland and other central habitats being of low

ecological value. The hedgerows, although well-established and tall, were species-poor and had suboptimal structure.

Previous surveys identified the presence of a low population of slow worms on site. Bat activity surveys, including the use of static detectors, recorded 8 bat species using habitats for foraging/commuting within the site, including low use by both greater and lesser horseshoe bats.

Updated survey

The grassland vegetation has been confirmed as semi-improved. The report highlights that underlying rocks and soils may allow beneficial re-establishment of limestone/chalk grassland with a more diverse flora than is currently present if appropriate longer-term grassland management is implemented in retained habitat corridors.

Overall the new ecological impact assessment report represents a higher quality ecological submission than that submitted previously and provides sufficient information to consider the impacts of the proposal.

Bats

There is some potential for lesser and greater horseshoe bats associated with the North Somerset and Mendip SAC to experience a minor adverse impact from the removal of habitat on site in the absence of mitigation. However, it is considered that the removal of two dwellings reduced from 16 to 14, (10 of which would be bungalows reducing the potential for light spill onto key hedgerows) and the proposed wide ecological buffer habitat areas shown on the amended plan, will potentially eliminate the minor adverse impact. Indeed, it is considered that the revised scheme will be able meet the mitigation requirements of the bat SAC guidance provided the ecological buffer as identified on the revised site plan is provided. Appropriate additional supporting tree and hedge planting and grassland management will also need to be included in a long-term site ecological planting plan and management plan.

It is considered that a new native hedge should be planted to the rear of properties on the northern and eastern sides of the site to help prevent light spill together with a central managed grassland foraging habitat corridor aiming to enhance grassland quality (as advised in the new ecological report) is offered within the proposed ecological buffer zones to support the bat SAC and other local wildlife.

The wide ecological buffer would also serve to protect the foraging and commuting routes from householder damage and light spill thus the development as amended could be considered acceptable and provide sufficient mitigation and protection of the important features for the SAC bats.

Hedgerows

The overgrown hedgerows to the north and east site boundaries should be protected and buffered as proposed in the revised site plan to ensure they can continue to function as wildlife habitat and commuting/foraging routes for bats. Some supplementary planting of trees and shrubs to fill gaps would be needed.

Protection of Local Wildlife Sites and SSSI

It is likely that the closer non-statutory wildlife sites may experience a minor adverse impact from additional recreational pressure as a result of the development.

It is important that the nearby rural SSSI and Local Wildlife Sites retain an agricultural buffer around them to protect and support their ecosystems and ensure agricultural practices are still viable on these high-quality habitats. In addition, bat commuting and foraging routes to the north, east and west of the site must be protected from damage and erosion from light spill.

It is considered that whilst the modified proposal with its reduced number of dwellings and the proposed significant and wide ecological buffers, could be accommodated with minimal or no damage to these protected sites due to its location adjacent to existing housing on two sides, further extensions of the village into the fields north and west of the village would be potentially more damaging to these designated and Local Wildlife sites by reducing agricultural/rural buffers and expanding impacts.

Ecological Mitigation

The recommendations for habitat and species mitigation, habitat retention, creation and management as outlined in the Ecological Impact Assessment prepared by Clarkson and Woods are broadly acceptable and these should be incorporated into the detailed planning stage proposals should the conclusion be to grant outline planning permission to develop the site.

Notwithstanding other policy considerations associated with the consideration of this application, it is considered that subject to the necessary Habitat Regulations Assessment, and to the submission of satisfactory detail at the reserved matters application stage, the proposal is in accordance with policy CS4 of the Core Strategy and policy DM8 of the Sites and Policies Plan Part 1: Development Management Policies; and the provisions of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and Section 99 of OPDM Circular 06/2005.

Issue 7: Impact on residential living conditions

The site is generally well-contained by trees adjacent to its north boundary and along its eastern boundary. This will partially screen views of dwellings. The impact of the development on the occupants of neighbouring dwellings in Purn Way and Manor Grange is likely to be minor in terms of outlook and privacy, although this will ultimately depend on

the position of windows, scale and design of dwellings, which is set aside for reserved matters. Further landscaping and reinforcement of the existing landscape planting and boundaries would be secured by way of an appropriate landscape planting

Concern from nearby residents about noise and disturbance even during the development process would be difficult to sustain. The construction activities could be mitigated to satisfactory levels through a Construction Management Plan.

It is considered that, subject to appropriate detailing at the Reserved Matters application stage, the proposal complies with policies DM32 of the Sites and Policies Plan Part 1 Development Management Policies and the Residential Design Guide Section 1– Protecting living conditions of neighbours January 2013.

Issue 8: Design, layout and energy

Whilst this is an outline application submission the applicant has asked for the access and layout to be determined at this stage and therefore the number of dwellings proposed, and their respective layout within the site, is as shown on the amended plan received.

The dwellings largely overlook a central turning area and garden land which, due to the constraints of the site, may not be convenient for larger vehicles requiring access to the site and may be considered be rather formal and rigid in nature for this edge of village location, notwithstanding its equally formal neighbouring development to the west.

The scale of the buildings is predominantly single storey with the two pairs of two storey dwelling located closest to existing dwellings to reflect the scale of surrounding housing. Single storey buildings are located on the edge with surrounding countryside. This demonstrates it is possible to achieve a sensible scale of development in that specific sense.

The external form and detailing of the proposed dwellings, including the materials to be used would be submitted at a Reserved Matters stage. There would however need to be additional conditions added to the outline planning consent should the decision be taken to approve the application, and these would cover a range of issues, including energy requirements, National Space Standard requirements and construction management plans.

Issue 9: Other issues (Archaeology, Planning Obligations, Lighting, Listed Buildings)

Archaeology

The archaeological investigations were undertaken and revealed no significant archaeology. The applicant has since submitted a detailed archaeological evaluation

report and based on the results from the trenches. Sufficient information is now available and there will be no further requirements for archaeological investigations or mitigation.

Planning Obligations

Policies CS16 and CS34 of the North Somerset Core Strategy and policy DM71 of the North Somerset Sites and Policies Plan, Part 1 set out the position on s106 planning obligations, together with the SPD on Development Contributions. Policy CS16 of the NS Core Strategy indicates that affordable housing will be sought on all residential developments of 11 dwellings or more. The development proposal is for 14 and therefore the affordable housing requirements would be secured by s106 Agreement in the event that this outline planning application was to be recommended for approval.

Policy DM71 sets out broad requirements for planning obligations which are now mainly focused towards site-specific requirements. In this case though a contribution towards the Mendip Way PROW, that passes the rear of the site is considered justified, together with the following on site s106 contribution requirements:

- The cost and installation of a fire hydrant;
- 192 m2 Neighbourhood Open Space – New provision is sought due to under-supply and this is to be delivered on site as part of a perimeter buffer;
- 384 m2 Conservation Site (rural) – To be delivered in combination with the neighbourhood open space above;
- On-site provision will require 15-year commuted maintenance sums to be paid prior to adoption

Allotments: – There is no requirement for on-site allotment provision as there is an adjacent site.

Surface water drainage: - Further examination of the commitment to a surface water drainage scheme would likely be required if the application were to be approved.

Off-site requirements; are now mainly covered by the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). All large-scale off-site provision is now dealt with through CIL, including school places and libraries, Woodland, Conservation Sites, Allotments, Formal Parks & Public Gardens and Community Parks (except in Strategic Development Areas) for which this development would be liable.

Lighting

It has been established that a number of bats of different species frequent the site which at present occupies a reasonably dark location suitable for the habitat of bats. For this reason, it is considered appropriate that a condition requiring details of all external lighting associated with the development be submitted in the event that planning permission is granted for the development.

Listed Buildings

The proposal does not affect the setting of any listed buildings. The proposal is therefore in accordance with policy CS5 of the North Somerset Core Strategy, policy DM4 of the Sites and Policies Plan (Part 1), section 16 of the NPPF and section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended).

Conclusions

This site is located outside of the settlement boundary of an infill village and has not been allocated for development in the Site Allocations Plan. The approach to the settlement hierarchy and distribution of development in North Somerset is directed to the fundamental objective of delivering more sustainable patterns of development in the district in future . The approach to development in Bleadon, as set out in the development plan is fully consistent with the approach to sustainable development contained in the NPPF and therefore should be accorded significant weight? Thus, the development not only consists of an extension to the village into the countryside, but is contrary to this principle underlying the settlement policy.

The proposed development would represent an extension of the built-up area into open countryside where development is strictly controlled to protect the character of the rural area and prevent unsustainable development. Whilst the Council does not currently dispute that it cannot demonstrate it has a five-year supply of housing land it is considered that, having regard to the tilted balance, significant weight should nevertheless be accorded to the Development Plan, and this outweighs the transient and generic economic benefits that would derive from the scheme and its modest contribution to local housing supply.

The layout and form of development has been influenced by the requirements to provide onsite the necessary ecological landscape buffers /margins on the Northern and Eastern boundaries. This has had the effect of reducing the number of dwellings proposed and in turn has reduced plot sizes and available on-site amenity space. It is therefore likely to pose extremely challenging, but not insurmountable to accommodate the necessary on-site cycle storage and recycling/waste facilities without making further changes to the layout which is under consideration as part of this outline application submission.

The layout principles are however considered acceptable and would be subject to further detail as part of the reserved matters application in the event that outline planning permission was forthcoming.

The facilities available to this infill village are limited and the site is not ideally located because of the limitations of access to the site and the restricted width of Purn Way albeit that a highway refusal reason is not justified. Due to the unsustainable nature of the site and village drainage and flood risk is no longer considered to be a reason that would justify refusal and it is considered that the relationship to neighbouring properties can be satisfactorily addressed at the reserved matters submission stage if outline planning permission is granted. The lack of information concerning biodiversity which led to one of the previous refusal reasons has now been satisfactorily addressed albeit that further detail and mitigation by condition would be required as part of any grant of planning permission to develop the site for residential purposes, given the findings and conclusions reached by the applicant's own appointed Ecologist. A formal requirement for an HRA to

be signed off nevertheless remains. Other issues have been considered but these are not enough to influence the recommendation.

Balancing of Issues

The site lies outside the settlement boundary of Bleadon, which is an infill settlement and the proposal would not amount to sustainable development and the material considerations in this case do not warrant a decision other than in accordance with the development Plan). The proposal is thus contrary to policies CS14 and CS33 of the North Somerset Core Strategy.

REFUSE for the following reasons:

1. The proposal is not on a site allocated for development in the North Somerset Sites and Policies Plan Part 2 – Site Allocations and falls outside the settlement boundary of an infill settlement. The proposal is therefore contrary to policies CS14 and CS33 of the North Somerset Core Strategy where development is strictly controlled in order to protect the character of the rural area and prevent unsustainable development.

Reason for Overriding Parish Council comments (if appropriate)

conflict with the Parish Council who now support the proposal contrary to their earlier objections against the development of the site.

In recommending this application, I have taken into consideration the relevant policies of the Development Plan and the comments made by the consultees and other interested parties and the:

- Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006:

NERC places a duty on Local authorities to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in exercising their functions.

- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998:

The proposed development will not have a material detrimental impact upon crime and disorder.

- Human Rights Act 1998

- Local Financial Considerations:

The Localism Act 2011 amended section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 so that local financial considerations are now a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. This development is expected to generate New Homes Bonus contributions for the authority. However, it is considered that the development plan and other material considerations, as set out elsewhere in this report, continue to be the matters that carry greatest weight in the determination of this application.

Signed: Lee Bowering