

Agenda Item

Bath & North East Somerset Council	
MEETING:	Development Control Committee
MEETING DATE:	29 July 2015
REPORT OF:	Lisa Bartlett, Divisional Director - Development
REPORT	REPORT ON THE MASTERPLAN IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY KE4 OF THE CORE STRATEGY
ORIGINATOR	Rachel Tadman, Senior Planning Officer
TITLE:	Parcel 3100 Charlton Road, Keynsham, Bristol
WARD:	Keynsham South
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM	

RECOMMENDATION

That Members of the Development Management Committee note the submitted Masterplan.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Site is located to the south West of Keynsham, along Charlton Road and Parkhouse Lane. The site is broadly triangular in extent, bounded primarily to the east by Parkhouse Lane and Park House Farm, and to the west by Charlton Road. To the north of the site is the residential development of K2A (14/00049/FUL), currently under construction, and also Abbots Wood.

The site is just over 8ha in size and is generally open with relatively few trees and woodland.

The proposal forms the submission of a concept masterplan for the residential development (to include 30% affordable housing) of Parcel 3100 Charlton Road, Keynsham but described under Policy KE4 of the Core Strategy as Land adjoining South West Keynsham.

The masterplan area includes three agricultural fields and two existing residential units. The existing residential units and associated outbuildings would be demolished.

The residential development is shown within 3 clusters with two new vehicular access points off Charlton Road. Cycle and pedestrian connections are proposed from Charlton Road to the west, the K2A development and Abbots Wood to the north and Parkhouse Lane to the east.

The development will include open space, allotments, landscaping and drainage attenuation and will require minimal hedgerow and tree loss to facilitate vehicular, pedestrian and cycle connectivity, including provision for potential bus access through the site. Further landscaping is proposed, including the strengthening of existing hedgerows and tree screening surrounding the site, with new screening along unplanted boundaries.

RELEVANT HISTORY

None relevant

DECISION MAKING FRAMEWORK

In preparing this report, due consideration has been given to the following Policies, Guidance and Legislation:

The Core Strategy for Bath and North East Somerset was formally adopted by the Council on 10th July 2014. The Core Strategy now forms part of the statutory Development Plan and will be given full weight in the determination of planning applications. The Council's Development Plan now comprises:

- Bath & North East Somerset Core Strategy (July 2014)
- Saved Policies from the Bath & North East Somerset Local Plan (2007)
- Joint Waste Core Strategy

The following policies of the Core Strategy are relevant:

- Policy DW1 - District Wide Spatial Strategy
- Policy SD1 - Sustainable Development
- Policy KE4 – South West Keynsham Strategic Site Allocation
- Policy CP6 - Environmental Quality
- Policy CP9 - Affordable Housing
- Policy CP10 - Housing Mix
- Policy CP2 - Sustainable Construction
- Policy CP3 - Renewable Energy
- Policy CP6 - Environmental Quality
- Policy CP7 - Green Infrastructure
- Policy CP13 - Infrastructure Provision

The following saved policies of the Bath and North East Local Plan, including minerals and waste policies, adopted October 2007 are also relevant:

- Policy SC.1: Settlement classification
- Policy SR.3: Provision of recreational facilities to meet the needs of new development
- Policy CF.3 Contributions from new development to community facilities
- Policy IMP.1 Planning Obligations
- Policy D.2: General design and public realm considerations
- Policy D.4: Townscape considerations

- Policy NE.4: Trees and woodlands
- Policy T.1: General Transport Policy
- Policy T.24: General development control and access policy

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

- Planning Obligations SPD
- Sustainable Construction & Retrofitting SPD
- Bath & North East Somerset Council Green Space Strategy adopted March 2007
- Bath & North East Somerset Council Green Infrastructure Strategy adopted March 2013

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK, 2012

Full consideration has been given to the provisions and guidance set out in the NPPF particularly in respect of the provision of housing.

NATIONAL PLANNING PRACTICE GUIDANCE, 2015

Full consideration has been given to the guidance set out in the NPPG.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS:

Planning Policy: No objections - the amendments to the masterplan are positive, and enhance the proposed development.

However there are still outstanding concerns with regard to landscaping along Parkhouse Lane, which although increased, are still less than required in the concept diagram.

Furthermore, although public consultation has been undertaken as per Policy KE4 placemaking principle 2 a statement of community involvement has not been submitted to support the masterplan.

Highways Development Officer: There are no in-principle objections in respect of the highways or transportation aspects of the masterplan.

However the proposal lacks a circular bus connection route through the site which needs to be addressed.

Landscape: No objections - the conceptual masterplan is much improved from the previous iteration and, on the whole, is considered to be acceptable.

However, with regard to the landscaping and layout of the site adjacent to Parkhouse Lane, the interface with the lane is of paramount importance and the treatment shown is different from that illustrated in the Core Strategy and envisaged by the initial LVIA work that informed the Core Strategy. In light of this the proposed masterplan has failed to demonstrate how the proposed planting achieves the objectives as set out in the Core Strategy with visual impact on the lane and mid /

long distance views of the site being the key issues. Impact on the character of the lane also needs to be addressed in respect of the differing landscape treatments.

Parks and Open Spaces: No objections - overall the quantity of formal green space, allotments and connections to off-site space are acceptable.

Urban Design Officer: No objections - the master plan is much improved and the framework can be recommended as a basis of a scheme that can, subject to detailed design and landscape specification, reflect the development criteria of the Core Strategy allocation.

Ecology: No objections

Arboricultural Officer: No objections

Archaeology: No objections

Keynsham Town Council: No adverse comments.

Compton Dando Parish Council: No comments received.

Local Ward Councillors: No comments received.

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS / THIRD PARTIES

As the masterplan is not an application for planning permission there is no formal consultation process to be followed and therefore local residents have not been consulted.

OFFICER ASSESSMENT

Policy background for the Proposed Masterplan:

The site is allocated under Policy KE4 of the Core Strategy as a strategic site allocation for residential development and which seeks the provision of 180-200 dwellings in the plan period.

Policy KE4, includes a concept diagram and a comprehensive list of key Placemaking Principles that need to be met in order for the development of the site to be considered acceptable. Crucially Policy KE4 requires the preparation of a comprehensive masterplan, through public consultation, and agreed by the Council, ensuring that the development is well integrated with neighbouring areas and reflects best practice in urban design.

The masterplan is being brought forward by the two main landowners, Persimmon and Bloor, although the site also includes The Bungalow, a dwelling and garden that is owned by a third party. Although the owners of The Bungalow do not form parties to the submission of the masterplan, it nevertheless includes this land, with an indicative access, in order to ensure that the masterplan is comprehensive and complies with Policy KE4, and the concept Plan, of the Core Strategy.

A Statement of Community Involvement has been submitted which has acceptably demonstrated that a public consultation process has been carried out and that the resulting masterplan has been designed to reflect the responses received.

Design and Layout

The masterplan proposes that the site is laid out in 3 clusters in order that the existing green infrastructure is, as far as possible, retained. This has resulted in the provision of two accesses off Charlton Road and a hierarchy of roads within the development.

The layout of the site has also ensured, where relevant, that dwellings would front onto the green infrastructure thereby avoiding the inclusion of existing natural features into private garden areas where they may be subject to varied levels of management. In doing this it has also allowed the integration of pedestrian paths through and around the site following the existing hedgerows and ultimately leading to the area of open space within the eastern area of the site.

Furthermore the masterplan also shows a good level of permeability within the site with external pedestrian and cycle links being carried through and around the site, including to the allotments at the southernmost boundary.

The proposed building heights of 2 - 2.5 storey is considered acceptable as is the commitment to incorporate an element of traditional materials in the key (special) locations.

When judged against the placemaking principles within Policy KE4 the proposed masterplan is considered to be acceptable and forms a sound basis upon which the detailed design and development of the site can go forward.

Landscape

The level of provision of open space across the site is considered to be acceptable and makes a positive contribution in a form that also helps to protect existing hedgerows and provides a logical layout for the path network around the site. All the important existing hedges are now protected from housing and this is a welcome achievement.

The access into the easternmost cluster of residential development has always been a difficult issue but the location now proposed, albeit forming probably the 'least worst' of the options, is considered to be acceptable.

The attenuation pond feature in the north east corner of the site has always been envisaged as a natural pond feature and not a dry solution. It is now apparent that this is no longer possible and that it will form a dry solution but will consist of an underground tank with a natural grass depression above. Whilst an engineered solution with banks, handrails and fences should be avoided at all costs it is considered that the proposed solution has the potential, subject to its detailed design, to form a useable landscape feature and add the existing green infrastructure on the site.

The concept diagram within Policy KE4 includes a requirement for additional green landscaping/buffer along the boundary of Parkhouse Lane . Following concerns that the buffer shown on the submitted concept plan was not in compliance with the diagram additional landscape and visual impact work, including additional text and cross sections were submitted for consideration. This information has proved to demonstrate that the proposed approach would not result in unacceptable impacts on mid/long distant views and also the character of Parkhouse Lane.

Impact on Heritage Assets

The north eastern part of the site is within the setting of the Grade II listed Parkhouse Farm, Parkhouse Lane.

It is considered that the proposed Masterplan represents a low risk to the heritage significance of the building, and it is considered that the location of the open space adjacent to the boundary with Parkhouse Farm, along with the attenuation pond, is considered a suitable setting for the building.

Arboriculture

The Concept Plan is considered to respect the most important trees and landscape features. The green infrastructure linkages also appear to be outside of individual ownership which is also welcomed to ensure appropriate retention, enhancement and management of trees and hedges.

At present there is insufficient detail to comment on in detail, however, it is not clear how much space is likely to be provided for T32 (Oak) which requires sensitive consideration. However, this can be dealt with at detailed application stage.

Ecology

The layout using two accesses off Charlton Road has enabled a more substantial area of open space and more robust green infrastructure, with broader ecological / pedestrian access zones alongside habitats and the adjacent woodland, to be achieved.

There is an existing badger sett close to the south eastern boundary of the site which is shown to be retained within an area of open space. The truncation of the wider area of open space in this area by the access road to the easternmost cluster of development has previously raised concerns due to the impact on the badgers but, following improvements to the overall layout of the development, this is now considered to be acceptable.

However the inclusion of The Bungalow land, and its indicative access, has resulted in the sett being almost on an island, with housing to the east and west and access roads to the north and east and the only remaining connective habitat being to the south. This remains a concern of the Ecologist but it is considered that any adverse impacts on the badgers can be avoided through careful consideration at detailed design stage.

The replacement of the natural pond feature with an attenuation tank and natural grass depression within the north east corner is a concern as there is no longer any mitigation for the loss of existing ponds. The provision of a pond or ponds within the development forms a recommendation within the supporting ecological report and additional suitable features will need to be incorporated elsewhere (preferably close to the existing pond locations) as part of the detailed design proposals in order to avoid a net loss of habitat.

Parks and Open Spaces

The masterplan includes a large area of open space with planting on the northern boundary and a number of access points into Abbots Wood. The location of the

open space provides road free access to Abbots Wood enhancing natural play opportunities and a safer route to school.

The formal open space has the potential for good surveillance and integrates the woodland into the site as required by the KE4 Placemaking Principles. It forms part of the north-south green corridor and also benefits from road free connection to the attenuation/balancing pond area. This area is approximately 4700m² and has dimensions that will serve multiple opportunities for residential amenity which, overall, is acceptable and forms a positive feature of the development.

On-site play provision, in the form of Natural Play equipment within the green corridors and the public open space is included which, in view of the availability of formal equipped play provision to the north of the site (on the K2A development), is considered to be acceptable.

The provision and location of on-site allotments at the southern point of the site is strongly supported and will satisfy demand generated from the development.

The development benefits from a connection to Abbots Wood which provides off-site Natural Green Space directly related to the proposal.

Highways, Access and Circulation

The provision of two vehicular accesses to the development from Charlton Road is considered acceptable, and the additional pedestrian and cycling accesses from Parkhouse Lane and adjacent development are welcomed.

The internal site layout is considered to be acceptable and it is noted that it is intended that the road hierarchy will reduce at the earliest opportunity, which is also acceptable with lower-key road designs used as appropriate.

As the road which enters the easternmost portion of the site is the only access in this direction, it is possible, at detailed design stage, that one of the pedestrian/cycle links to Parkhouse Lane will need to be designed to be used by vehicles in the event of emergency (if the main access was blocked, possibly by an accident or road-works). However this will depend on the level of development proposed for this portion of the site.

The pedestrian and cycle linkages to Parkhouse Lane, Abbots Wood, Charlton Road and K2a are considered to be acceptable and serve to exploit the wider linkages available to improve the access to alternative travel modes available to the future residents.

However the access to regular public transport is not ideal and the development relies on the new 637 service on Charlton Road, which has not yet proved viable. Other bus services are at the very limits of what is considered to be convenient for walking, especially from the furthest corners of the development.

The Highways Development Officer is keen that the masterplan does not preclude the future provision of a north/south bus link in order to provide a circular bus route through the site as there is the potential, and the capacity, for the existing 349 service to divert to the site.

As a result, through negotiation, the concept plan does show a gap in the hedge running east to west which would allow a north/south bus link to be provided at detailed design stage were such a link justified at that point.

Whilst it is disappointing that this provision is not specifically mentioned within the Masterplan, or indicated on the Concept Plan, it is considered that the presence of the gap means that the potential remains for bus permeability and that this can be dealt with further at detailed design stage.

CONCLUSION

Overall it is considered that the submitted masterplan is considered to be acceptable and forms a sound basis upon which the detailed design and development of the site can move forward.