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Low Lane, Swinton (Site 346) Response to consultation

Background

Proposals were developed in 2008 for Low Lane, Swinton to build a small development of mainly low-cost houses on a 0.78ha site adjacent to the Sports Centre. A feasibility study was carried out at the time which demonstrated that a mixed development would be possible which responded to housing needs identified by Ryedale's Housing Manager. This provided 7 No 3-bed houses, 3 No 2-bed houses and 2 No 2-bed elderly person's bungalows all for rent in partnership with Yorkshire Housing at a density of around 30 units per hectare.

Subsequent to this we have maintained contact with the local authority through the lengthy consultation process. We confirmed in May 2014 that discussions had been ongoing with a local social housing provider in respect of 35% of the development and offered to take the proposals forward to a more developed state, although no response was received to this.

The current Site Selection Methodology spells out the scoring process used in determining which sites are viewed as most suitable for inclusion within the housing provision set out in the Local Plan. It is our view that the comments, and hence scoring, for this site do not accurately reflect the current position, and this document sets out our reasons for this.

Responses to SSM Document

Responses below deal only with issues where we feel the SSM methodology is inaccurate or incorrect. We have used the same numbering as within the SSM Document.

Q2D Has a Flood Risk Assessment been undertaken?



As shown left, the site is outside of Flood Zones 2 and 3. A FRA would be carried out as part of a Planning Application but on the basis of the EA Flood Map no special provisions would be expected.

Q3 What are the conclusions of the Highways Authorities (NYCC) and Highways Agency (HA) (where appropriate) initial highway assessment?

The SSM states that "To consider additional development in the area Low Lane would need significant improvement, widening and foot paths". We do not contest the view that improvement of Low Lane is required, but would emphasise that Low Lane already serves a sports centre (Broughton, Swinton And Amotherby Sports Centre) and therefore any current deficiency in road access will be impacting the use of this facility, making improved access of benefit to a far wider community than simply new residents in proposed housing.

It further states "Site does not include a sufficient frontage to enable access of acceptable standards to be formed onto the public highway." In fact the site frontage is around 114m in length which offers more

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Q5 Would the development provide opportunities for the provision of green infrastructure, including linking in with existing green infrastructure/corridors

than adequate room to allow for safe entrance(s) to the site with good sight-lines and turning space.

The SSM states “No information has been submitted concerning the nature of Green Infrastructure on the site. Though there is no reason to suggest that such an approach is not possible.” This is certainly the case; our original proposal stated clearly that tree planting would be used to improve microclimate and help the development blend in with the surrounding landscape. The architect is currently chair of York Environment Forum and regularly works with private and voluntary sector Green Infrastructure professionals and organisations.

Q6 Would the development impact on protected and unprotected trees, hedgerows and ancient woodland

The SSM states “No information has been submitted concerning the impact on trees and hedgerows.” The site has hedging to the frontage with Lowfield Lane, which would be retained as far as possible, and hedging and trees separate it from the adjacent industrial buildings. These have benefitted from planting and thickening in recent years and would be retained. There are no other trees and hedges on the site; although hedges and trees would be planted along the remaining site boundaries to reinforce the historic field pattern.

Q8 What is the capacity of the landscape to accommodate the site according to the Landscape Character Assessments which cover the Ryedale Area and Special Qualities Study?

The SSM sets out the Local Landscape Character and notes that “The field boundaries, hedgerows, are particularly important as a landscape feature. This site is currently an open grazed field, adjacent to the sports centre. The field is low-lying and open. Development here would be both visually prominent and separated from the settlement”.

Our original proposal noted that the 1½-storey dwellings proposed had been specifically chosen to minimise the impact on the open countryside, and the proposed use of natural materials (timber cladding and clay tiled roofs) to likewise blend with the palette of surrounding materials.

It should be noted that both the nearby sports centre and the neighbouring large buildings (originally agricultural but now used for industrial purposes) have already had an impact on the openness of the countryside and visually suggested a broader edge to the village.

Furthermore, several large agricultural buildings have been constructed recently to the east of the pumping station, and permission exists for the construction of a dwelling tied to this agricultural use. To argue that our proposed development “is separated from the settlement” ignores the fact that the settlement has already grown adjacent to our site.

See photograph below.



Image (left) shows front part of site with mature hedgerow screening Lowfield Lane. The adjacent industrial buildings are visible through trees on the opposite side of the site, and the sports centre can be seen above the hedge to the right of the photograph.



Image (left) shows the very substantial agricultural buildings recently erected to the east of the pumping station along Lowfield Lane. These, unlike the proposed site, are clearly visible from the B1257 and impact on the "panoramic views across the Vale of Pickering".

Q8. What impact would the site have on the nationally designated landscapes of the North York Moors National Park & Howardian Hills AONB?

The SSM states that the proposal "would harm the settlement character of Swinton" although it does not specifically state how. The Local Landscape Character describes "Gently, sloping terrain, strongly rural and predominantly pastoral, distinctive pattern of villages along the B1257, and panoramic views across the Vale of Pickering". As can be seen from an aerial view, the proposed site is actually hidden from views from the B1257 by the elongated nature of the village, and where views are possible to the north it would read visually simply as a northern part of the continuous village development (*photo below, but note this is an old image and considerable development has occurred to the eastern end of Lowfield Lane since it was taken*).



Q10 Is the site capable of utilising existing landscape features to minimise its impact or provide adequate landscape mitigation measures?

The SSM states “No information has been submitted concerning the landscaping. This site is physically separate from the village-proper, and would be proximal to an isolated collection of dwellings, but because of the nature of the topography which although being flat is relatively open. It is considered that this site is physically distanced from the village, and there is no landscape mitigation measures which can overcome this”.

Low Lane itself has substantial mature trees on both sides which link the site to the main part of the village in landscape terms. There are a number of belts of mature trees which run through the northern part of the village which suggest former field boundaries. Although these have been ignored by a number of recent developments their continuing existence does provide a link to the proposed development.

Q13 Will the site affect a non-designated heritage asset which the Council identifies as having a degree of significance that is worthy of consideration?

The SSM states “The development of this site would be separate from the existing settlement, it would not pay reference to the historic form and character of Swinton”. As noted above we would contest this view in that the development would sit between the sports centre and the rest of the village, and linked to it by existing landscape features. Given the desire to maintain separation between the villages along the B1257 and to maintain views to the north across the flat land there, any future development of the villages (to provide for the growth of existing families and to avoid outward migration) will have to be to the north of the villages. In the case of Swinton, where the village is largely built around West Street and East Street, it makes sense for future development to focus where these streets join at Low Lane, and to the north of this. Developments which run counter to this pattern (Cherry

Avenue and Pearsons Yard, for example) are far more harmful to the character of the village.

It further states "NYCC Heritage Unit advise: Site lies further south of Roman road than other sites in the village of Swinton, however, remains of the Roman period, including burials, have been found in a similar location close to the former railway line in nearby Broughton village, so this site is considered one of potential for Roman period remains. Advise geophysical survey to be followed by trial trenching to clarify the nature and significance of any archaeological remains". We are happy to engage professional archaeological support and to draw up an archaeological method statement prior to development.

Q.21 Can the site achieve an appropriate density to achieve the most efficient use of the land?

The SSM states "Assuming a theoretical yield of 30 dwellings per hectare, with a 0.7 site development factor, the site could deliver c. 16 dwellings". However our initial design studies showed that a development of 24 dwellings (including 2-bed and 3-bed houses and two-bed bungalows) was possible – a significantly higher provision.

Q. 35 What other measures have been considered which ensure the development is resilient to climate change?

The SSM states "No information has been submitted concerning the application of other measures to increase resilience to climate change". In fact the proposals are based upon Passivhaus design and specification, which is extremely robust in the face of climate change, both in terms of avoidance of overheating issues in summer and minimisation of heating needs (and hence avoidance of fuel poverty) in winter.

Q. 40 Will the proposed development attract a balanced living and/or working population, reducing inequality of opportunity?

The SSM states "No details have been provided concerning the nature of the type of dwellings that are proposed. On site affordable homes would need to be provided". In fact the proposals showed an initial mix of 2-bed and 3-bed houses and two-bed bungalows, and was supported by later correspondence confirming interest from a local social housing provider in taking on 35% of the units for affordable housing.

Q. 42 What level and type of affordable housing is proposed?

The SSM states "In 2009, a scheme proposed 7no 3 bed, 3no 2 bed and 2no 2 bed elderly persons bungalows for rent with Yorkshire Housing with 12 units for sale. On site affordable homes would need to be provided in accordance with SP3. Limited potential for delivery". However no supporting evidence is given as to why the potential for delivery is seen as limited.

Q. 46 Is highway mitigation

The SSM repeats the points made following consultation with County Highways Authority in Question 3. We would repeat our response in this respect.

required as part of the development and what is the impact of the development on the highway network following mitigation?

Q. 49 Does the proposal involve new public realm or enhancements to the existing public realm as part of its development?

Q. 50 What is the capacity of existing utilities and infrastructure to cope with impact of the development?

The SSM states “Proposal seeks to improve Low Lane which provides access to the sports pitches and sports centre” but then fails to acknowledge this as a positive measure contributing to community facilities, utilities and infrastructure.

The SSM states that the proposal is within 400m of the boundary of a Waste Water Treatment Works, and that Yorkshire Water are likely to object. However there is no treatment works in the vicinity, and the Yorkshire Water facility near the site is actually a pumping station. Furthermore the original project proposal stated that “The proposals will... ..include major improvements to surface water drainage to eliminate current flooding problems. This will be combined with sustainable drainage systems and rainwater collection within the new housing site”.

Q56. How does the site perform against the SHLAA Update (housing) in terms of its ability to come forward and its suitability for development?

The SSM states “Category 3 site in 2009 in SHLAA”. As stated previously, the site owner and prospective developer has continued development with social housing providers with a view to having a ready development partner should the site be considered as part of the Local Plan.

SSM consultation response.docx printed/PDF 11 December 2015

