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**OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION
TO
RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
BY
MR M and MRS H SMITH
FOR
RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT (4 DWELLINGS)
AT
LAND OFF RIMINGTON LANE,
RIMINGTON, LANCASHIRE**

PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

April 2013

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Planning, Design and Access Statement is in support of an outline planning application submitted by Mr M and Mrs H Smith for the residential development (four dwellings) of land at Rimington Lane, Rimington. It should be read in conjunction with the following documents also submitted in support of this application:

- topographical survey;
- phase 1 habitat survey;
- tree survey;
- bat survey;
- illustrative site layout plans, elevations and sections; and
- site location plan.

2. THE PROPOSAL

2.1 This outline application relates proposes a residential development of four dwellings. The application seeks approval in outline, with only the means of access detailed. The layout, appearance, scale, landscaping and associated details are reserved for future consideration.

2.2 An indicative layout plan showing how the site could be developed is submitted with the application. The indicative layout plan shows:

- four dwellings are proposed (two detached houses and one pair of semi-detached dwellings);
- vehicular access would be via an existing access track (currently serving Manor Barn) from Rimington Lane;
- the dwellings would be arranged facing outward (ie to the north, south and east); and
- the hedgerows along the site's boundaries and main trees would be retained and supplemented with additional planting.

3. APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

3.1 The site is located on the eastern edge of the settlement of Rimington. The application site extends to some 0.55ha, including the access track. The development parcel extends to approximately 0.35ha. The site is down to rough

grass, with an area of hardstanding and a utilitarian former milking parlour central to the site. There are some trees at the site, mainly self-sown and to site boundaries. A hedge runs along the eastern site frontage. A post and rail fence and an overgrown and intermittent hedge mark the southern site boundary to Rimington Lane. Low stone walls and fences mark the western boundary. The northern site boundary to the access track is open. Levels generally fall gently across the site to the east, with a steeper fall adjacent to the site's east boundary. There is an existing vehicular access track to the land from Rimington Lane, having a length of some 170 metres. The access track has a bell-mouth surfaced junction with Rimington Lane, with excellent visibility along the public highway in both directions. The access track has a hedge running along its northern side and trees stand to the south of it.

- 3.2 The application site is bounded to the west by existing development in Rimington. To the south of the application site is Rimington Lane, beyond which are some sporadic dwellings and open countryside. To the east and north of the site is open countryside. Rimington Lane has a speed limit of 30mph in the vicinity of the application site and at the access point.
- 3.3 More generally, Rimington is a village with a mix of housing, including traditional stone dwellings of varied scale and modern housing development with a more suburban character. There is a pub, a shop and a mobile library service in Rimington. More extensive shopping, community services and workplaces are available at Chatburn (4.0km to the south west) and Gisburn (3.5km to the north east), including primary schools. A still more extensive range of services and facilities are available at Clitheroe (7.5km to the south west), including secondary schools, food supermarkets, comparison stores and a public transport hub. Bus services from Rimington provide direct connections to Clitheroe, Chatburn, Barrowford and Nelson. Secondary school transport services also serve Rimington.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 There is no relevant planning history relating to the site.

5. THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- 5.1 The relevant parts of the Development Plan for the purposes of this application are the North West of England Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (published in September 2008) and the saved Policies of the Ribble Valley Local Plan (adopted in June 1998).

North West of England Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021

- 5.2 The Localism Act 2011 provides for abolition of the North West of England Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). A Strategic Environmental Assessment for its revocation is has been consulted upon. The RSS remains in place for the time being, although its formal revocation can be expected soon. The RSS sets out the strategic planning and development framework at a regional level. It is primarily directed at providing a framework for policy planning at the local level. As such, it does not provide site specific guidance. The following saved policies of the RSS are relevant to the proposal.
- 5.3 Policy DP1 (Spatial Principles) – sets out principles that underpin the RSS and to which all sub-regional and local plans and strategies and all individual proposals, schemes and investment decisions should adhere to. The principles include promoting sustainable communities and environmental quality.
- 5.4 Policy DP2 (Promote Sustainable Communities) – sets out the means by which sustainable communities may be fostered, including the relationships between homes, workplaces and services, conserving heritage and promoting safety.
- 5.5 Policy DP7 (Environmental Quality) – states that environmental quality should be protected by, among other things, promoting good quality design.
- 5.5 Policy L4 (Regional Housing Provision) – expects Councils to manage the availability of land identified in plans and through development control decisions to achieve the housing provision levels stipulated. The provision levels required in Ribble Valley (net of clearance) for the period 2004 – 2021 was 2900. This figure equates to 161 per year.

Ribble Valley Local Plan

- 5.6 The following saved policies of the adopted Ribble Valley Local Plan (which was adopted in June 1998 and written to plan for development over the period 1991-2006) are relevant to the proposal.
- 5.7 Policy G1: Development Control – all development proposals will be expected to provide a high standard of building design and landscape quality. The various detailed criteria to be applied in deciding planning applications are set out in the policy.
- 5.8 Policy G4: Settlement Strategy – within specified villages (including Rimington) planning permission will be granted for proposals falling within certain categories.
- 5.9 Policy G5: Settlement Strategy – outside the main settlements and village boundaries planning consent will only be granted for small scale developments which fall within specified categories, including sites to be developed for local needs housing.
- 5.10 Policy ENV3: Open Countryside – in the open countryside and immediately adjacent development will be required to be in keeping with the character of the landscape area and should reflect local vernacular, scale, style, features and materials.
- 5.11 Policy T1: Transport – a list is provided of criteria to which the Council will attach weight in deciding planning applications.
- 5.12 Policy T7: Parking Provision – requires all development proposals to provide adequate car parking and servicing space.
- 5.13 The Local Plan Proposals Map identifies the development site as within the Rimington village settlement boundary (Policy G4), although the existing access track extends into an area of adjoining open countryside (Policy G5).

6. THE NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

6.1 The relevant policies and provisions of the national Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in March 2012, are identified below.

6.2 The NPPF clearly states *'that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development'* (paragraph 6). Paragraph 197 confirms that *'in assessing and determining development proposals, local planning authorities should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development'*. Paragraph 14 states that a presumption in favour of sustainable development is at the heart of the NPPF. It goes on to say that *'for decision-taking this means:*

- *Approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and*
- *Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting planning permission unless:*
 - *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework as a whole; or*
 - *specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted'*.

6.3 At paragraph 7, the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental) are outlined. An elaboration of the Government's view of what sustainable development means in practice for the planning system is detailed later in the NPPF. Relevant parts are referred to at paragraph 6.7 below.

6.4 The NPPF (paragraphs 2, 11, 12 and 196) confirms that planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, ie the development plan is the starting point for decision making.

6.5 The NPPF, published in March 2012, highlights the importance of development plans being kept up to date (paragraph 12). Decision taking in the absence of an up to date development plan is addressed at paragraph 14 (see 6.2 above). At paragraph 214 it is confirmed that *'for 12 months from the day of publication,*

decision-takers may continue to give full weight to relevant policies adopted since 2004 even if there is a degree of conflict with this Framework'. Paragraph 215 continues by stating that 'in other cases and following this 12-month period, due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to the degree of consistency with this framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater weight that may be given)'. Paragraph 49 provides further guidance on the matter. It states 'housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. 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'.

6.6 Paragraphs 2, 8, 13, 196 and 212 confirm that the NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions.

6.7 The main body of the NPPF addresses the components of sustainable development. Those most relevant to the appeal are:

- 'promoting sustainable transport' – decisions should take account of whether safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people and development should only be refused where the residual impacts of development are severe (paragraph 32);
- 'delivering a wide choice of high quality homes' – local planning authorities are expected to boost the supply of housing (paragraph 47). In this regard, local planning authorities should *'identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years worth of housing against their housing requirements'*. Paragraph 47 goes on to require an additional 'buffer' of 5% to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. Local planning authorities should increase the 'buffer' to 20% where there has been a record of persistent under delivery of housing;
- 'requiring good design' – developments should add to the quality of the area, and reinforce local distinctiveness;
- 'meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change' – it is expected that *'inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk'*

(paragraph 100) and that *'when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure flood risk is not increased elsewhere'* (paragraph 103);

- 'conserving and enhancing the natural environment' – in deciding planning applications local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying various principles including resisting development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (paragraph 118; and
- 'conserving and enhancing the historic environment' – the significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal should be identified and assessed. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on the significance of the heritage asset (paragraph 128).

7. EMERGING LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Ribble Valley Borough Council Core Strategy

- 7.1 In summary, the Core Strategy is currently at the submission stage. However, the Inspector appointed to examine the soundness of the Core Strategy has highlighted the need for evidence documents to be updated. The Council subsequently requested a suspension of the examination process. By letter dated 9 January 2013, the Inspector agreed to suspend the examination until July 2013.
- 7.2 The Council has been engaged in a process of evidence gathering and produced a six page Core Strategy Issues and Options Consultation leaflet in late 2007. In August 2010, a Core Strategy consultation document was published. The consultation document included three optional strategies for the distribution of housing development, along with key statements on a variety of planning issues and draft development management policies. The consultation document confirmed the level of housing provision to be at least 161 dwellings per year (ie as per the housing provision levels contained in the approved Regional Spatial Strategy), and the requirement for affordable housing to be 30% of site yield. A further round of consultation took place in July / August 2011. The consultation document included an additional five optional strategies for the distribution of housing development, along with revisions to the key statements on a variety of

planning issues and the draft development management policies. The consultation document re-confirmed the level of housing provision to be at least 161 dwellings per year (ie as per the housing provision levels contained in the approved Regional Spatial Strategy), and the requirement for affordable housing to be 30% of site yield. During 2011 the Council commissioned Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners (NLP) to prepare an evidence based report to assist it in further consideration of the issue of housing land requirements. The Council published the report for consultation in late 2011. The NLP report presented a range of housing requirement figures for the next 20 years based on a number of scenarios. The NLP report concluded the average dwelling requirements for Ribble Valley Borough should be in the range of 190 to 220 dwellings per annum between 2008 and 2028. Furthermore, any figure significantly lower than this 190 – 220 range would be unlikely to allow for the provision of a suitable level of affordable housing in the borough; nor would it allow the borough to pursue its economic growth objectives without potentially encouraging unsustainable levels of in-commuting from neighbouring districts. Following consultation, the Council's Planning and Development Committee resolved to adopt a housing requirement figure of 200 dwellings per year for the Core Strategy plan period 2008 – 2028.

- 7.3 The optional strategies for the distribution of housing development as included in the August 2010 Core Strategy consultation document made provision for housing within the Borough's villages (ie including Rimington) of between 300 and 900 dwellings. In turn, the additional options included in the July / August 2011 consultation made provision for either non-specified numbers of dwellings in the villages or 310 and 620 dwellings.
- 7.4 A publication draft of the Core Strategy was approved by the Council's Planning and Development Committee at its meeting on 4 April 2012. The document was published for consultation in May / June 2012. An updated document was subsequently submitted in October 2012.
- 7.5 With the exception of the Standen site no site allocations are made. These are to follow in a Site Allocations DPD. The Council has not published a consultation draft Site Allocations DPD.

- 7.6 The following policies of the submitted Core Strategy are relevant to consideration of the proposal – DS1 (Development Strategy), DS2 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development), EN3 (Sustainable Development and Climate Change), H1 (Housing Provision), DMI2 (Transport Considerations), DMG1 (General Considerations), and DMG2 (Strategic Considerations).
- 7.7 Policy DS1 provides for development in all the borough's settlements, including small-scale development in the smaller settlements that are appropriate for consolidation and expansion or rounding-off of the built up area.
- 7.8 Policy DS2 reflects the central theme of sustainable development within the NPPF.
- 7.9 Policy H1 provides for 200 dwellings per year. That is, 2534 dwellings over the plan period to 2028, additional to those dwellings for which planning permission had been granted at 1 July 2012. The planned distribution for those dwellings is as follows:
- Standen Strategic Site (edge of Clitheroe) – 1040;
 - Clitheroe – 126;
 - Longridge – 558;
 - Whalley – 227; and
 - Other settlements (ie including Rimington) – 583.
- 7.10 Policy DMG2 provides the general policy context. It states that development proposals in defined settlements (which would include Rimington) should consolidate, expand or round-off development so that it is closely related to the main built up areas, ensuring this is appropriate to the scale of, and in keeping with, the existing settlement.
- 7.11 The other submitted Core Strategy development management statements and policies identified at 7.6 above generally re-affirm those identified as relevant in the Local Plan.

8. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK EVIDENCE DOCUMENTS AND OTHER RELEVANT POLICY DOCUMENTS / INFORMATION

Ribble Valley Borough Council Strategic Housing Market Assessment

- 8.1 The Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) was published in December 2008. It concluded that Ribble Valley has high levels of owner-occupation, with considerable numbers of large detached houses and a relatively small social housing stock. The Borough's population is growing and average household sizes continue to shrink. More housing needs to be constructed. In short, the SHMA points to a need to increase the supply of housing.

Ribble Valley Borough Council Annual Monitoring Report

- 8.2 The Council's Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) 2011 provides a statement on the 5 year supply of housing land based on RSS figures, to 31 March 2011. It indicates that the total supply of dwellings under construction and deliverable permissions (discounted by 10% slippage allowance) to be 555. When compared to the RSS / Ribble Valley annual provision requirement of 161 units, this figure equates to 2.9 years' supply.

Housing Land Supply

- 8.3 There has been a longstanding recorded shortage of housing land within the Borough. The most recently published update (monitoring to 31 December 2012, published April 2013) to the Borough's housing land supply shows a total supply of 1639 units, equating to a 5.92 years' supply based on Core Strategy provision levels a 6.97 years' supply based on RSS provision levels. However, the calculations do not take proper account of deliverability considerations and the need to make up the deficit in delivery over the years since 2008. The monitoring information shows there to be a residual housing requirement (when account is taken of completions / permissions) for 'other settlements' (ie including Rimington) of 474 dwellings, based on Core Strategy housing provision levels.

9. DESIGN AND ACCESS

- 9.1 This section of the report comprises the formal Design and Access Statement. The layout and design information submitted with this application is for illustrative purposes, given the application is in outline only. However, the information provided

indicates the general parameters and design principles for a development at the site. Particular regard has been given to the fact that the site is situated on the edge of Rimington village. Its location provides the opportunity to achieve a development that is outward looking and presents an appropriate edge to the settlement.

- 9.2 Use: The proposal is to develop the site for housing, with associated garden areas and accessway. The proposed use has been selected as it would be the most complementary use to nearby housing.
- 9.3 Amount: Four dwellings are proposed. The numbers of units has been determined having regard to the configuration of the site, the site features including access arrangements, levels and existing vegetation, the density / form of development immediately adjoining the site and the need to achieve an appropriate relationship between existing and proposed development.
- 9.4 Design and Layout: The details of design are reserved for subsequent approval at the reserved matters stage. However, the applicant is committed to ensuring a high standard of design. An indicative layout plan is submitted with the application. The general arrangement of the proposed houses has been determined having regard to the configuration of the site, the site features including access arrangements, levels and existing vegetation, the density / form of development immediately adjoining the site, the need to achieve an appropriate relationship between existing and proposed development, and having regard to an outlook from the site and of views of the site from the surrounding area. This is a site where unique house types tailored to the characteristics of the locality would be most appropriate. The illustrative house types are just that. Each dwelling has been designed to suit its particular location on the site and to be reflective of the style and scale of development found locally.
- 9.5 Materials: The details of materials are reserved for subsequent approval at the reserved matters stage. However, the external facing materials to be used in the construction of the properties would be complementary to the character and traditions of the area, including stone walls and slate grey roofs.

- 9.6 **Scale:** The details of the scale of the development are reserved for subsequent approval at the reserved matters stage. However, it is anticipated that the proposed dwellings would be of two-storey scale, consistent with other dwellings in the vicinity. The opportunity would be taken of the site levels to achieve an undercroft including parking spaces for three of the dwellings.
- 9.7 The houses would be expected to be within the following size parameters:
- Approximate Eaves Height – from 2.5m to 6.0m;
 - Approximate Ridge Height - from 6.0m to 9.0m;
 - Approximate Width Range – from 9.5m to 18.0m;
 - Approximate Depth Range - from 7.5m to 9.5m.
- 9.9 **Landscaping:** The details of landscaping are reserved for subsequent approval at the reserved matters stage. However, to assist in absorbing the development into the local landscape, trees, hedgerows and other landscaping would be provided as part of the development. Such provision is shown in illustrative terms on the submitted site layout plan.
- 9.10 **Access:** Vehicular access would be via the existing track off Rimington Lane. The access track may be provided with one or more passing places and re-surfaced if deemed necessary. This access arrangement has been selected having regard to the excellent visibility available onto Rimington Lane and to avoid any unnecessary change in the local landscape. More direct pedestrian links to the village are available to the west of the site. The lower levels to the east of the site allow for an internal access road to be formed serving three of the dwellings at the lowest possible level within the site. Undercroft parking would be provided to these dwellings. This approach to development of the site enables the access track and cars to be effectively concealed from outward view and keeps vehicular activity away from other nearby houses. Level access would be provided into each of the dwellings.

10. CONSULTATION

10.1 The occupiers of nine properties closest to the application site have been personally visited by the applicant to notify them of the intended planning application and to seek their views. Of the nine, six had no objections to or were supportive of the proposal. In particular, mention was made of the benefit of removal of an unsightly building, that the design of the development had been sympathetically treated and that the development would result in an improvement in the area's appearance; one was neutral; and, two objected on the basis of not wishing to see any change and 'on principle'. The applicant is willing to discuss and address any issues that may arise as a result of the Council's neighbour notification exercise.

10.2 The Parish Council has also been made aware of the intended planning application.

11. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

11.1 Having regard to the nature of the proposal, its context, relevant national and local planning policies, the main planning issues for consideration, are as follows:

- status of the adopted Ribble Valley Local Plan having regard to the NPPF and housing land supply;
- assessment of adopted Local Plan policies relating to the application site;
- benefits of the development in relation to NPPF;
- highway safety;
- layout, design and landscape impact;
- neighbour amenity; and
- miscellaneous considerations.

Each of these issues is addressed in turn below.

Status of the adopted Ribble Valley Local Plan having regard to the NPPF and housing land supply

11.2 The usual starting point for decision making is the Development Plan (see paragraph 6.4 above). However, it is evident from the Council's monitoring that over the period 2009 to 2012 there was a persistent under delivery of housing land with less than a five year supply of housing land within the Borough. Accordingly, a 20% buffer has to be adopted in calculations of housing land supply. A 5.92 year supply

of housing land is now claimed by the Council (see paragraph 8.3 above), when measured against the submitted Core Strategy housing provision requirements.

- 11.3 An examination of the housing land supply calculation reveals that in the first 4¾ years of the plan period there to be a considerable deficit. An annual requirement of 200 dwellings should have yielded 950 dwellings by now, but only 481 have been delivered. The Council apparently plans to make up the deficit over the rest of the plan period, ie to 2028, instead of including the deficit in the requirement for the following five years, ie to 2018. If the deficit is made up over the next five years, which is the correct approach based on appeal decisions, the five year supply falls from 5.92 years (as claimed) to 4.64 years. In addition, the Council has failed to undertake an assessment of the deliverability of sites it has included in the housing land supply calculations. Rather, with the exception of two sites, the Council has simply claimed a 10% slippage allowance. This is not in accord with the NPPF and consequently the Council's housing land supply figures are unreliable.
- 11.4 In any event, it should be noted that there is no local or national planning policy basis upon which to resist development even if there is a five year supply of deliverable housing sites. Also, there is a considerable residual housing requirement within 'other settlements', ie including Rimington.
- 11.5 Given the provisions of NPPF (see paragraph 6.5 above), and having regard to the above, the relevant Local Plan (adopted in 1998) policies for the supply of housing can not be considered up to date or consistent with the NPPF. Accordingly, minimal weight can be given to those provisions of the adopted Local Plan. Rather, greater weight should be given to the policies of the NPPF and its presumption in favour of sustainable development. Specifically, whether there are any adverse impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits associated with the development, in particular the delivery of additional and needed housing.

Assessment of adopted Local Plan policies relating to the appeal site and Rimington

- 11.6 Notwithstanding the conclusion reached in the previous section in respect of the status to be accorded to the supply of housing provisions of the Local Plan, the

Local Plan policies relating to the application site and Rimington are reviewed and further consideration given to how appropriate it is to consider the proposal against Local Plan policies.

- 11.7 The portion of the application site to be developed lies within the settlement boundary of Rimington. As such, it is subject to Local Plan policy G4, which established categories of acceptable development. The policy does not preclude housing development. However, to accord with the policies any housing development would be restricted to allocated sites (of which there are now none in the Borough), infill sites, the re-use of rural buildings and that intended to meet a proven local need.
- 11.8 In addition to the housing land supply factors reasons referred to at 11.3 above, the reasons why the specific criteria of Local Plan policy G4 should not be given any significant weight in deciding the application are set out below:
- the Local Plan only provided for development needs for the period up to 2006. That the Local Plan is 'out of date' has been confirmed by the Council. A report to the Council's Planning and Development Committee on 17 June 2010 acknowledged that there is *'very limited capacity (for development and growth) within existing tightly drawn settlement boundaries and (there are) no further (Local Plan) allocations of housing land in particular to be brought forward'*. The report also states that Core Strategy options developed so far would require the release of extensive areas of greenfield land;
 - circumstances have changed considerably since preparation of the Local Plan. The Local Plan was prepared in the context of the then current Lancashire Structure Plan (1991-2006). That document has since been superseded by the Lancashire Structure Plan Review (2001-2016) and, in turn, by the RSS adopted in 2008, which provided for higher levels of housing growth in the Borough; and
 - on the basis of latest evidence, and for the purposes of its Core Strategy, the Council has adopted a still higher housing provision figure (200 dwellings per year) than within the RSS.
- 11.9 In the circumstances outlined, it is more appropriate to look beyond the specific Local Plan policies cited and consider the wider development strategy. The Local

Plan sets out a hierarchy of settlements. Policy G4 provides for development within the villages including Rimington. It is clear that the small scale and the general location of the proposal (ie well related to and within the defined settlement area of Rimington) accords with the overall development / settlement strategy for the Borough as set out in the Local Plan.

- 11.10 It is significant to note that the proposal is consistent with the emerging Core Strategy in respect of the spatial distribution of housing development, as detailed at paragraph 7.9 above. This envisages 583 dwellings in 'other settlements' (of which there are 32 listed in the Local Plan at Policy G4). Rimington is one of those 'other settlements'. As such, and whilst no Site Allocations DPD has yet been prepared (or in prospect), it is reasonable to expect that Rimington would and should attract some housing development / growth in housing numbers. Indeed, Core Strategy Policy DMG2 allows for development proposals in defined settlements (which would include Rimington) that would consolidate, expand or round-off development so that it is closely related to the built up areas, ensuring this is appropriate to the scale of, and in keeping with, the existing settlement. The proposal accords with that policy provision. In addition, it should be noted that the proposal is of insufficient scale to in any way be considered premature or prejudicial to the emerging Core Strategy or, indeed, any future Site Allocations DPD.
- 11.11 To conclude, the specific criteria of Local Plan Policy G4 can no longer be regarded as an appropriate basis for an assessment of the application. The proposal does, however, accord with the overall development strategy for the Borough as set out in the Local Plan and the policy provisions of the submitted Core Strategy.
- 11.12 Against this background, what also becomes central to the decision-making process is the statement at paragraph 14 of NPPF (see paragraph 5.18 above) and not the specific but out-of-date criteria within Local Plan Policy G4. That is, the proposal should be considered against the presumption in favour of sustainable development and planning permission should be granted unless there are specific adverse impacts that outweigh the benefits or that specific policies in the NPPF indicate that the development should be restricted. The benefits of the development are considered in the following section. Issues drawn from NPPF policies and relevant

aspects of sustainable development, along with detailed considerations arising from Local Plan and submitted Core Strategy development management policies, are examined in the subsequent sections.

Benefits of the development in relation to NPPF

11.13 The proposal represents sustainable development and there are benefits associated with the development, as summarised below:

- economic – the construction of new housing would contribute to economic growth, during the construction phase and through the introduction of new households to the area;
- social – the proposal would contribute to the provision of housing, for which there is a need, and the continued vitality of Rimington; and
- environmental – the proposal provides an opportunity to enhance the biodiversity value of the site and, through the removal of the existing unsightly former farm building, improve the visual amenity of the local area.

Highway Safety

11.14 The traffic generated by the proposed development would be low and have no detrimental impact on the conditions, operation or safety of the local highway network in the vicinity of the site. The access onto Rimington Lane, which is subject to a 30mph speed limit, would have excellent visibility.

Layout, Design and Landscape Impact

11.15 The Design and Access section of this Statement describes the proposal and the submitted indicative layout. All matters of detail (other than access) are reserved for subsequent consideration and the layout and design shown are for illustrative and indicative purposes only.

11.16 The general arrangement of the proposed houses has been determined having regard to the need to respond to the characteristics of the site and the character of the locality. In particular, the configuration of the site, the site features including access arrangements, levels and existing vegetation, the density / form of development immediately adjoining the site, the need to achieve an appropriate relationship between existing and proposed development, and having regard to an

outlook from the site and of views of the site from the surrounding area. The scale of the proposed dwellings would reflect the predominant scale of property in the area. The detailed design of the dwellings would draw from local design characteristics and utilise the same range of materials to ensure the development harmonises with the area.

11.17 The proposed development would not appear visually prominent from any public viewpoints. Nevertheless, when viewed the development would appear well related to and integrated with adjoining and nearby built development. It would not appear as a discordant feature in the local landscape. Indeed, having the dwellings arranged with an outward aspect, the development would form a most appropriate edge to the village of Rimington.

11.18 To conclude, the layout and design of the development represents a considered and appropriate response to the characteristics of the site and its context. The proposed development would be complementary to and integrate well with the locality without undue harm to the general character, appearance or visual amenities of the area and the wider landscape.

Neighbour Amenity

11.23 The proposed development is on a site near to other housing. The amenities of the occupiers of nearby housing deserve due consideration. The proposed housing, as shown on the illustrative layout, would have no harmful impact on the amenities of existing residents, by reason of loss of outlook, loss of privacy, overbearing or overshadowing. The traffic generation associated with four dwellings would be low and by reason of this, the position of the accessway and the routing of traffic, would have no discernible impact on the amenities of the occupiers of any nearby houses.

Miscellaneous Considerations

11.24 The site lies within the Environment Agency Flood Risk Zone 1 (a less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river or sea flooding). That is, within an area of low flood risk to which NPPF expects development to be directed (see paragraph 6.7 above). With appropriate surface water drainage arrangements, which may be dealt with by way of condition, the development would not increase flood risk elsewhere.

11.25 The site is not designated as one having any wildlife / ecological value or significance or subject to any designation, either at the local or national level. It mainly comprises an area of grassland. The submitted phase 1 habitat survey demonstrates that the site is not ecologically significant and recommendations are provided for the development works. In addition the bat survey demonstrates that there is a low probability of bats using the existing building at the site and its loss would have no detrimental effect on the local bat population. Accordingly, the proposal would result in no detriment to nature conservation / ecological interests.

11.26 There are no heritage designations or features of heritage interest relating to the site. There are no heritage designations in the vicinity of the site other than Halstead Farm (grade II listed). It is situated some 200 metres to the north east of the portion of the application site to be developed. At such a distance, with an intervening road and vegetation, and with no historical association between the heritage asset and the application site the proposal would have no impact on the setting of the listed building. The access track to the proposed development exits onto Rimington Lane near to and on the opposite side of Rimington Lane. No changes are proposed to the access layout and, as such, there would be no implications for the setting of the listed building. Accordingly, the proposal would result in no detriment to heritage interests.

11.27 Utility services required for the development, ie water, electricity and foul drainage are available at / immediately adjacent to the site.

12. CONCLUSION

12.1 The portion of the application site to be developed lies within the settlement boundary of Rimington. As such, the development is subject to Local Plan policy G4. The policy does not preclude new housing but limits it to certain categories. However, this Local Plan policy relating to the supply of housing can not be regarded as 'up-to-date', having regard to the provisions of the NPPF. More importantly, the proposal accords with the development strategies of the Local Plan and the submitted Core Strategy. In particular, the submitted Core Strategy allows for development that would consolidate, expand or round-off development so that it

is closely related to the built up areas. The proposal is entirely consistent with this policy provision and the small scale of the proposed development would be in keeping with the scale of the existing settlement of Rimington.

12.2 Having regard to the provisions of the NPPF, the persistent under-supply of housing land within the Borough and the absence of an up-to-date Local Plan, the presumption in favour of sustainable development should also apply and consideration given to whether there are any adverse impacts associated with the development which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. Such considerations and impacts have been assessed. It is demonstrated that the proposal has benefits in relation to the three pillars of sustainable development and no adverse impacts have been identified.

12.3 The development would assist in boosting the supply of housing in a sustainable location and in a manner which is compliant with the NPPF and the development strategies and development management policies of both the adopted Local Plan and the submitted Core Strategy.

12.4 It is submitted that:

- the low levels of trip generation attributable to the proposal would be accommodated without detriment to highway operation or safety;
- the access arrangements would provide for adequate visibility and the safe movement of traffic;
- the scale, layout and design of the proposal would be complimentary to and integrate well with the locality;
- there would be no harm to the amenities of local residents; and
- the proposal would cause no harm to interests of nature conservation and the historic environment.

12.6 As set out in this Statement, the proposal constitutes sustainable development, for which there is a national planning policy presumption in favour, and there are no adverse impacts which would outweigh the benefits of the development. The proposal also accords with the development strategies of the Local Plan and

submitted Core Strategy. For these reasons, the Council is respectfully invited to grant outline planning permission for this small scale development proposal.