

Memo

From: COLIN HIRST and RACHAEL STOTT

To: LAURA EASTWOOD

cc:

Ref: CH/CMS

Ext: 4503

Date: 7th June 2021

**Re: PLANNING APPLICATION 3/2021/0076
LAND AT QUEEN MARY AND BRIDGE TERRACE, MITTON ROAD, WHALLEY
DEMOLITION OF 34 DWELLINGS AND REPLACEMENT WITH 50 NEW HOUSES**



Ribble Valley
Borough Council

www.ribblevalley.gov.uk

This advice note replaces the previous note issued on 25 March 2021 which identifies the incorrect settlement status that the proposal site lies within.

To clarify the site is within the Calderstones settlement boundary which is a Tier 2 settlement and forms part of the former hospital estate. Whilst the houses have provided low-cost accommodation for staff members, they are not considered affordable in planning terms and are not subject to any controls.

The proposal is to demolish what are predominantly vacant and unused houses and replace them with new housing, including some affordable units, the site also incorporates an area of undeveloped open space. The proposal will introduce new housing and will deliver a small number of affordable units as part of the scheme. The applicant is using the provision of the vacant buildings credit system to offset the requirement for affordable units on this development in accord with Government guidance.

The proposal is to demolish the 34 former staff houses and replace with 50 new dwellings, giving a net gain of 16 units overall. There will be a net gain of 3 affordable units. The majority of the new dwellings will be developed on previously developed land.

The open space associated with this development is an area of some 0.4ha but is not part of the designated areas of public open space identified in the local plan, however the scheme does result in the loss of open space and does need to be considered as previously identified against policy DMB4.

In terms of the Development Strategy for the area as set out in Policy DS1 of the Adopted Core Strategy, development in Tier 2 settlements will need to meet proven local needs or deliver regeneration benefits to be compliant. The scale of this development will need to reflect existing population size in the settlement, and we need to consider the opportunity to provide facilities to serve the development as well as the extent to which development can be accommodated within the local area. The strategy includes provision for development to deliver regeneration benefits to be considered in all the borough's settlements, including small-scale development in the smaller settlements that are appropriate for consolidation, expansion or rounding-off of the built-up area.

Given the scale of the scheme and its location, the proposal is considered consistent with this policy and does not result in any harm to the development strategy in my view.

The current housing land supply position as of March 2021 demonstrates that there is no requirement to meet additional housing provisions, however the fact that the Council can demonstrate a five-year supply, it not sufficient reason to warrant a refusal. In terms of the scale that the additional growth from

this proposal would generate the net additional housing would model an increase in population for the Calderstones Settlement of 34 persons, this is not considered to be harmful to the strategy or contrary to the management policies of the plan.

The proposed affordable housing contribution of 2 x 3 bed rental units and 1x 3 bed affordable homeownership unit is the requested tenure mix and best reflects the housing needs of the settlement. In addition, 6 of the units are Lifetime Homes M4(2) compliant as per the policy, the preference would have been for these older persons units to be delivered as bungalows, not 3 bed units however they do meet the policy. Likewise, there was an initial expectation of 5 affordable units on the site to meet the 30% affordable offer and this would have allowed for a greater house type mix of the affordable units being provided.

Consideration does need to be given to the requirements of Policy DMG2 which is intended to provide a mechanism to assist with implementing the Core Strategy and understanding what is acceptable in terms of the differing settlements. Within the Tier 2 villages development must meet at least one of the given considerations listed in the Policy. This proposal sits to be considered against the first condition that the development should be essential to the local economy or the social wellbeing of the area. This proposal would utilise a previously developed site in the main, replacing vacant, underused stock and it would deliver additional affordable units. Whilst the provision of affordable housing is less than would be normally required, the applicant is taking advantage of the Government's vacant buildings credit system due to the scheme redeveloping vacant buildings and has provided viability evidence.

The development will contribute to the local economy as it will make use of properties that are currently empty; introducing new development, the residents of which will contribute to the local economy. There will be some small economic gain because of the construction phase, however the redevelopment is not deemed essential to the local economy in the current circumstances. The proposal does however deal with an area of derelict vacant properties and bring the land back into use. This is a substantial regeneration benefit of the scheme and supports the social wellbeing of the area. The applicant would need to ensure that this is justified in terms of their case.

The proposal does have an impact upon an area of open space, which although not identified in the Council's local plan, it has been available as an informal playing field, remains undeveloped and the provisions of Policy DMB4 need to be addressed. As a principle the Policy does allow for the site to be developed in exceptional circumstances where an assessment has been undertaken regarding the loss of the site, and its loss is justified based on social and economic benefit (which would be a supporting circumstance in this case). Policy does permit the loss of this space where there are going to be benefits and the loss is justified, and appropriate mitigation made which can include the upgrading of open space that serves the vicinity.

The proposal as a principle does not harm the Development Strategy. It will bring previously developed land back into use and reflects national policy to increase the supply of new homes. Policy enables open space to be developed with mitigation and where justified. The regeneration and social well-being benefits arising from the scheme are key to the proposal and do need to be substantiated to demonstrate the policy requirements are addressed. The scheme includes additional affordable housing and makes provision for lifetime homes that will contribute to the objective of delivering additional older persons accommodation.

Subject to the above comments being satisfied I would see no policy, housing or regeneration issues sufficient to warrant refusal of the application.

Colin Hirst
Head of Regeneration and Housing
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Rachael Stott
Housing Strategy Officer