

WEST BECKHAM – PF/23/1065 – Erection of 5 dwellings (affordable homes) with associated access, parking, and landscaping at Land to the North of Church Road West Beckham.

Minor Development

Target Date: 18th July 2023

Extension of time: 22nd September 2023

Case Officer: Miss Jamie Smith

Full Planning Permission

CONSTRAINTS

Countryside

Agricultural Land Grade 3

Landscape Character Area TF1 (Tributary Farmland)

Mineral Safeguard Area

Nutrient Neutrality Surface Water - Name: River Bure

GIRAMS

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

No relevant planning history.

THE APPLICATION

Seeks permission to erect 5 affordable dwellings as part of an exception housing scheme. The proposal comprises 1 no. 2-bed dwelling, 3 no. 3-bed dwellings and 1 no. 4-bed dwelling with associated gardens, parking area, landscaping, and bin storage.

The proposal also includes an area of meadow and open green space where a pedestrian access will be provided along the eastern boundary between the proposed open space and the existing play area.

The proposal is accessed via a new entrance onto Church Road serving the proposed dwellings. A total of 11 No. car parking spaces will be provided across the site, to accord with Norfolk Parking Standards. Hardstanding is present within the development to accommodate visitor parking without the need for parking on Church Road.

REASONS FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE:

At the request of Cllr Ringer given the public interest in the proposal.

CONSULTEE COMMENTS

Parish Council. Comment: Comment. Earlier presentations by Broadland Housing stated that the development would have their own sewage system. The plans show connection to the existing sewage system which already has problems with overloading during wet weather. A gate is shown leading to the village playing field. If this is installed the boundary fences will need replacing. The houses should be rental only for tenants with local connections the aim being to re-vitalise the village.

North Norfolk District Council Strategic Housing Officer. Supports application. This site will provide five new high-quality, energy efficient and much needed affordable homes. The Strategic Housing Team supports this development. There are two specific areas for comment:

Housing Need.

This site is a rural exceptions housing site, and the Council will allocate the homes to households with a strong local connection to West Beckham and the adjoining parishes. As at June 1st 2023 there are 45 households on the Council's housing list with a local connection of whom 34 households have the strongest Bands A to C connections. There is therefore plenty of demand for the five proposed homes.

Property Types

Affordable homes are often fully occupied e.g., a three-bedroom house may house two adults and three children. The Broadland three-bedroom houses (x3) are suitable for two parent/three childrens families. The other two properties also have the flexibility we seek. The two-bedroom home has space for four persons e.g., a family with two children of the same sex. The four-bedroom home has space for seven persons and is suitable for a large and/or multigenerational family.

North Norfolk District Council Conservation and Design Officer: No objection (verbal discussion), subject to minor amendments to the design of the dwellings. Some harm identified to the setting of the non-designated heritage asset, the St Helen & All Saints Church asset by way of how the church will be appreciated in the wider landscape by way of views within, to and from. Applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. In this instance, the provision of affordable housing will need to be weighed in the balance of public benefits which is given great weight.

North Norfolk District Council Landscape Officer (Ecology and Landscape): No objection (verbal discussion), subject to minor amendments to the landscaping plan. Any decision granted will need to secure conditions of ecological mitigation and enhancement measures recommended within the submitted Preliminary Ecological Assessment, Landscaping Scheme, Arboricultural Impact assessment, CEMP and lighting.

Environmental Health. No objection but request further details regarding the Air Source Heat Pumps.

Norfolk County Council Highway Officer: Comments. National Policy sets out the outcomes that should be achieved if sustainability objectives are to be met. These include:

- Sustainable access to areas of new development and regeneration.
- Safe, efficient and sustainable movement between homes and workplaces, education, town centres, health provision and other key destinations.
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The proposed development site is remote from schooling; town centre shopping; health provision and has restricted employment opportunities with limited scope for improving access by public transport. The distance from service centre provision precludes any realistic opportunity of encouraging a modal shift away from the private car towards public transport. The distance from service centre provision precludes any realistic opportunity of encouraging a modal shift away from the private car towards public transport.

It is the view of the Highway Authority that the proposed development is likely to conflict with the aims of sustainable development, it is recognised that the application is for affordable rental properties for a housing provider, which would be permissible under exception housing policy HO3 and could be secured by agreement. Should the Local Planning Authority grant consent, planning conditions are advised.

Norfolk County Council Minerals and Waste Officer: No comments received.

Anglian Water: Standing advice detailing comments are provided on schemes of 10 or industrial or commercial development, 500sqm or greater.

REPRESENTATIONS

4 received with **objections** on the following grounds:

- Sustainability credentials of the site, such as lack of facilities or public amenities (such as shops, medical or social, schools, leisure, post office etc – other than the pub), remoteness which encourages car use, no footpaths or lighting, limited bus service, isolated location.
- Conflict with the aim of sustainable development.
- Essential use of the private car.
- Understood the area is impacted by Nutrient Neutrality.
- Loss of farmland.
- Increased risk to road users, vehicular and pedestrians.
- The site is situated on a dangerous bend and a remote part of the village – danger to road safety.
- The scheme will not bring community or economic benefits.
- Previous public consultation undertaken at the site not reflective of the current application.
- Lack of consultation with the community and unsewered questions from the consultations that took place.
- Mobile phone signal inadequate.
- Lack of regular employment.
- Significant constraints will be placed on local infrastructure.
- The site conflicts with the outcome of the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment which discounted the site for residential development on sustainability grounds.
- Loss of hedgerow to the front of the site and therefore wildlife and a natural part of the landscape.
- Impact on ecology, bats, birds and owls.
- Lack of electric charging points on the site.
- Construction Management Plan - review objection.
- No provision for pedestrians, prams scooters, disabled.
- The scheme does not comply with Policy HO 3 of the adopted Core Strategy.

HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

It is considered that the proposed development may raise issues relevant to

Article 8: The Right to respect for private and family life.

Article 1 of the First Protocol: The right to peaceful enjoyment of possessions.

Having considered the likely impact on an individual's Human Rights, and the general interest

of the public, approval of this application as recommended is considered to be justified, proportionate and in accordance with planning law.

CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998 - SECTION 17

The application raises no significant crime and disorder issues.

LOCAL FINANCE CONSIDERATIONS

Under Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 the council is required when determining planning applications to have regard to any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application. Local finance considerations are not considered to be material to this case.

RELEVANT POLICIES:

North Norfolk Local Development Framework Core Strategy (September 2008):

Policy SS 2: Development in the Countryside

Policy SS 3: Housing

Policy SS 4: Environment

Policy SS 6: Access and Infrastructure

Policy HO 1: Dwelling mix and type

Policy HO 3: Affordable housing in the Countryside

Policy HO 7: Making the most efficient use of land

Policy EN 2: Protection and enhancement of landscape and settlement character

Policy EN 4: Design

Policy EN 6: Sustainable construction and energy efficiency

Policy EN 8: Protecting and enhancing the historic environment

Policy EN 9: Biodiversity and geology

Policy EN 10: Flood risk

Policy EN 13: Pollution and hazard prevention and minimisation

Policy CT 5: The transport impact on new development

Policy CT 6: Parking provision

Material Considerations:

Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance:

Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (December 2008)

North Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment (2021)

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021):

Chapter 2: Achieving Sustainable Development

Chapter 5: Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes

Chapter 9: Promoting Sustainable Transport

Chapter 11: Making Effective Use of Land

Chapter 12: Achieving Well Designed Places

Chapter 14: Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change

Chapter 15: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

Chapter 16: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

Other material documents/guidance:

Norfolk Green Infrastructure and Recreational Impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy - Habitats Regulations Assessment Strategy Document (2021)

OFFICER ASSESSMENT:

MAIN ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

- 1. Principle of Development**
- 2. Affordable Housing**
- 3. Highway Safety**
- 4. Housing Mix**
- 5. Design, Layout, Scale and Massing**
- 6. Residential Amenity**
- 7. Impact on Heritage Assets**
- 8. Impact on Landscape Character**
- 9. Impact on Trees**
- 10. Impact on Ecology**
- 11. Drainage**
- 12. Nutrient Neutrality**
- 13. GIRAMS**
- 14. Planning Balance and Conclusion**

1. Principle of Development

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 sets out a statutory requirement that, applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) at paragraphs 2 and 12 restates this requirement.

The development plan for North Norfolk comprises the North Norfolk Core Strategy (adopted 2008)

The site is located in the defined countryside under Core Strategy Policy SS 2 where affordable housing in accordance with the Council's 'rural exception site policy' (Policy HO 3) would be permitted.

Therefore, subject to the proposal being considered in accordance with Policy HO 3 and other relevant Core Strategy policies, the principle of the development would be considered acceptable.

Where conflicts arise between the proposal and the development plan, it is a matter of planning judgment as to the weight to be afforded to any relevant material planning considerations in favour of the proposal when making the planning balance.

2. Affordable Housing

The application is submitted on the basis of being a purely affordable housing proposal. Core Strategy Policy HO 3 sets out the basis on which affordable housing in the countryside will be permitted. Officer assessment is as follows:

- The proposal would help to meet a proven local housing need (as confirmed by the Council's Strategic Housing Team).
- As a scheme of 5 dwellings the site is located adjacent to an existing group of 10 or more dwellings.

- There are no other affordable schemes permitted under Policy HO3 within 1km of the site*.
- The affordable housing provided will be made available to people in local housing need at an affordable cost for the life of the property. This will be secured via S106 Obligation.

*(*The application is running in tandem with another affordable housing scheme in West Beckham, Planning ref No. PF/23/1578 for 5 affordable single storey dwellings along Sheringham). The two sites are being delivered by the same housing association (Broadland Housing) at the same time to meet local housing need. Both sites combined do not exceed 10 units, will meet proven local need, are located adjacent to a group of 10 more dwellings where the housing will be provided in perpetuity).*

In summary, the affordable scheme as presented would help meet a proven local need and allocation would be secured through a S106 Obligation setting out the allocation policy. The proposal accords with the requirements of Core Strategy Policy HO 3 and it is therefore acceptable in this regard.

3. Highway Safety

The site is accessed from Church Road with St Helen & All Saints Church situated immediately to the south of the site. To the east is an existing children's play area separated from the site by a field hedge and both north and west boundaries adjoin the open farmland. Residential dwellings are present immediately east of the play area.

The proposed access road off Church Road is to remain private and to be constructed as a shared surface facility to accommodate pedestrian, cycle and vehicular traffic. A new informal footway link is to be provided through the existing hedge to link the development to the children's play area.

Access to the site would be taken via a new priority T-junction with Church Road to the south. Offsite highway improvements include the widening of Church Road across the site frontage to increase the narrow single lane road to 4.8m to meet required standards. At present, Church Road has no pedestrian footways and no formal footway is presented as part of the application proposal. However, the Highway Officer, although recognising the lack of sustainability credentials to the site, does not raise an objection to the scheme on highway safety concerns.

In terms of vehicular parking there are 10 vehicle parking spaces proposed (two per dwelling) plus 1 parking space within the garage for unit 1. The proposal includes areas of hardstanding to accommodate visitor parking. This complies with Core Strategy Policy requirements.

Turning facilities are provided within the site to enable vehicles such as fire and service vehicles to enter and egress the site in forward gear. Site access for refuse collection vehicles is not proposed and a bin collection point is to be provided instead to allow collection of bins from Church Road.

In respect of the highway sustainability credentials of the site, Officers fully recognise that West Beckham has limited public transport, or safe and convenient walking or cycling opportunities to reach higher order settlements for shops and services. This is the case across much of North Norfolk and points to why limited growth is permissible in this area. The Highway Authority are duty bound to raise concerns about the sustainability of the site. However, it is a matter of planning judgment as to whether the conflict with the aims of sustainable development is outweighed by the benefits of the proposal.

On balance, it must be recognised that the relatively isolated nature of West Beckham means that the majority of trips to higher order settlements to access shops and services will be completed using the private car. Whilst the proposal accords with Core Strategy Policy CT 6, it is not fully in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CT 5 and it is therefore a matter of planning judgment to consider whether there are material planning considerations in favour of the proposal to justify a departure from Development Plan Policy.

4. Housing Mix

Core Strategy Policy HO 1 sets out that 'on schemes of five or more dwellings at least 40% of the total number of dwellings shall comprise of not more than 70sqm internal floor space (now 80sqm) and incorporate two bedrooms or fewer; and on schemes of five or more dwellings at least 20% of dwellings shall be suitable or easily adaptable by the elderly, infirm or disabled.'

The housing mix is designed to meet an identified local housing need. The development of 5 affordable dwellings comprises a mix of:

- 1 x four-bed (six person) dwelling (112.6 sqm)
- 3 x three-bed (five person) dwellings (2 x 84.7 and 1 x 85.3 sqm)
- 1 x two-bed (four person) houses (77 sqm)

For the scheme to fully comply with Policy HO 1, two of the dwellings should be two bedrooms or fewer and under 80 sqm. Whilst Officers note that only one dwelling provides two bedrooms only and under 80 sqm, two of the three-bedroom dwellings are approximately 84.7 and 85.3 sqm, where the scheme has been supported by the Strategic Housing Officer. All the proposed dwellings have ground floor WCs and rooms could be adapted for ground floor living in the future.

The proposal provides a mix of dwelling sizes that would help to meet the identified local need within the District and is considered, on balance, to accord with the requirements of Core Strategy Policy HO1.

5. Design, Layout, Scale and Massing

The development of 5 affordable dwellings comprises a mix of:

- 1 x two-bed (Four person) house
- 3 x three-bed (Five person) houses
- 1 x four-bed (Six person) house

The proposed layout of the site sees the proposed dwellings set back approximately 45m from Church Road. The dwellings have been set back to reflect the existing pattern of development to the east and to retain views to and from the church to the south of the site. Between the proposed housing and Church Road, the applicant proposes a meadow area and green open space provision. The meadow area is situated to the south-west of the site and will contain flower rich grassland. The proposed area of green open space is located to the south-east of the site. Both areas, located at the front of the development along Church Road, will allow views to and from the church to the south of the site to be retained. The green open space links to the existing play area to the east of the site. Private gardens are provided to the rear of the dwellings screened by 1.8 metres timber fencing between properties but with a 1.2m high field fence with timber posts around the outside field boundaries (together with landscaping). A communal bin storage for collection is also proposed.

In terms of appearance, the proposal provides a detached 'farmhouse', a semi-detached 'converted barn' and semi-detached 'cottages' situated around a mews, reflecting the more rural context of the site. Plot 1 also contains a single storey garage which contributes to breaking up the scale of development.

In terms of scale the dwellings, the dwellings would have a height to the eaves of approximately 5 to 5.3m and a height to the ridge of approximately 8m and 8.5m.

In terms of the palette of materials, the scheme proposes a mix of facing brick, flint work and timber cladding including traditional detailing to give character to individual buildings and to assimilate comfortably into this rural setting. Officers support the traditional design and appearance including the general palette of materials given the rural location. Minor amendments to the scheme have been sought regarding the elevational treatment to plots 4 and 5, roofing material and changes to openings on Plot 2 and 3 where revised plans and details are currently being awaited from the agent.

The layout suggests that the dwellings are designed to be accessed primarily by people arriving by car. There is no existing pedestrian access along Church Road, and none proposed as part of the scheme. A new vehicular access is proposed from Church Road to the south. The new access leads onto the mews, which then splits into three drives which lead to each of the dwellings and their associated parking spaces. Each dwelling has sufficient parking facilities within their curtilage with adequate turning areas to allow vehicles to enter and egress the site in a forward gear.

In terms of minimising carbon in the development and to meet the highest standards of sustainability, the scheme includes a range of measures to reduce its environmental impact including the installation of air source heat pumps; potential for the installation of solar photovoltaics (to be confirmed by the agent); and designed to a high standard of thermal efficiency. The proposed dwellings will also achieve a water consumption rate of no more than 105 l/p/day to minimise water resource usage.

In summary, subject to minor amendments to the overall design and materials palette, Officers consider that the design, layout, scale, and massing of the development is acceptable and would accord with Core Strategy Policies EN 4 and EN 6 and section 12 of the NPPF.

6. Residential Amenity

In respect of impact on amenity, the closest existing residential dwelling (No.1) Church Road would be approximately 26 metres from proposed unit 5. This distance includes intervening features of a play area and existing landscaping by way of hedgerows. Officers consider that this would reduce any adverse impacts on the amenity of existing residents to an acceptable level.

The layout, scale and orientation of the proposed dwellings both in relation to each other would not result in any harm to the amenities or privacy between each dwelling (future occupiers) of the development by reasons of overlooking, overbearing or loss of daylight or sunlight.

The proposed dwellings would all have sufficient amenity space commensurate with the size of the property footprint. Additionally, details of boundary treatments are shown on the site plan including 1.8m close boarded fencing between each plot, which is considered appropriate to ensure privacy for and between the private amenity space.

The proposal is considered to have acceptable residential amenity for existing and proposed residential properties and would comply with Core Strategy Policy EN 4 and Section 12 of the NPPF.

7. Impact on Heritage Assets

The site is not located within a designated Conservation Area and whilst there are no statutorily listed buildings on or immediately adjacent to the site, the site is in the vicinity of St Helen & All Saints Church which is considered by the Councils Conservation and Design Officer as a non-designated heritage asset.

Paragraph 203 of the NPPF states that:

‘the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.’

The proposal involves the introduction of a residential use into what is currently an agricultural field on the edge of a rural village, located to the north of St Helen & All Saints Church. The immediate surroundings to the north and west of the Church are largely undeveloped where the openness and more undeveloped nature can be considered to contribute positively to the setting of this non designated heritage asset. The scheme, as presented has had regard to the pre-application advice from of the Conservation and Design Officer whereby the number of dwellings have been reduced and set back within the site and includes a green buffer by way of the provision of open space and meadow to the south of the site.

The proposed development would still maintain a separation distance of approximately 45m and the proposed dwellings have been set back within the site and include a green buffer by way of open space and meadow, to provide an increased feeling of openness within the street scene and improve the relationship between the church and new dwellings.

Notwithstanding this, the proposed scheme is considered to result in some harm to the setting of the Church as the new dwellings will affect how the overall church is appreciated in the wider context including views to and from. Where applications directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Paragraph 203 of the NPPF is now engaged and in determining the application, the Local Planning Authority is obliged to take account of the balance of public benefits acquired from the provision of affordable housing against the harm to the setting of the St Helen & All Saints Church. In this case, the provision of affordable housing serving the local community is given great weight. On that basis, it is considered that the public benefit outweighs the harm identified and is acceptable in terms of Core Strategy Policy EN 8 and Section 16 of the NPPF.

8. Impact on Landscape Character

The proposal would represent a change in the appearance of the land to which the application relates. The site currently forms part of a larger agricultural field, with hedgerows along the eastern and southern boundaries. The proposal will retain the existing landscaping along the eastern boundary of the site and include new landscape planting to the north and west boundaries. This will compensate for loss of the existing hedge from the south boundary and aid in screening the development. A meadow area and open green space area are proposed to the front of the site, which would enhance the site and its contribution within the street scene.

The application has been supported with a detailed landscaping scheme where the site has been discussed with the Landscape Officer at both pre-application stage and post submission.

It is considered, in most part, that the proposed landscaping will aid in assimilating the development into its landscape setting.

Minor amendments to the landscaping are proposed to the frontage where amended plans are being awaited by the agent. These include a timber post and rail to the south, west and east of the meadow area as opposed to estate railings and a further hedgerow to the south of the meadow, adjacent to Plot 1, to frame the dwellings. These revisions would be more appropriate boundary treatments in this setting.

The scheme, subject to minor amendments to the landscape frontage will result in both a layout and landscape solution which is considered compatible with the settlement character of this part of West Beckham.

Lighting has been detailed to be kept to a minimum to avoid unnecessary light pollution and ecological impact. Lighting can be managed by way of a planning condition.

Subject to receipt of amended plans detailing the minor amendments to the landscape frontage as requested, it is considered that the proposal would broadly accord with the requirements of Core Strategy Policy EN 2 and NPPF Section 15 and would have an acceptable impact on the wider landscape character.

9. Impact upon Trees

The application has been supported by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) which details the tree and hedgerow constraints on site in relation to the proposed dwellings. The AIA concludes that the cumulative impact of the development on the rooting areas of trees and hedging is minimal. A Tree Protection Plan and Method Statement to protect and avoid damage to trees and hedgerows on and adjacent to the site during and after the development has been provided. It is therefore considered that, subject to conditions securing these works, the proposal is acceptable in terms of impact upon trees and vegetation and complies with Core Strategy Policy EN 4 and Section 12 of the NPPF.

10. Impact on Ecology

The application has been supported with a Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA). Discussion with the Council's Landscape Officer raises no objection to the scheme on ecology grounds subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions requiring mitigation and enhancement measures for biodiversity as detailed in the PEA. Mitigation includes installation of bird and bat boxes, planting, under sowing of hedgerows and the creation of wildflower meadows. It is therefore considered that, subject to conditions securing these mitigation and enhancement measures, the proposal is acceptable in terms of ecological impact, and complies with Core Strategy Policy EN 9 and Chapter 15 of the NPPF.

11. Drainage

In respect to the foul and surface water drainage strategy for the site, it is proposed that the site will connect to the existing foul water public sewer in Church Street and use sustainable drainage systems to manage surface water drainage.

In terms of foul water, the Parish Council raised concerns regarding the capacity of the Water Recycling Centre (WRC) and the foul water flows from the additional 5 dwellings in wet weather. Anglian Water were consulted on the application but no specific comments were provided in relation to this issue. However, the Drainage Strategy submitted as part of the planning application states that Anglian Water had confirmed, via pre-application discussions, that there is capacity to accommodate the development. The Drainage Strategy also

recognised the Parish Council concerns in that flooding had been identified locally, where the strategy states that the majority of the concerns had been caused by blockages and some odour complaints to which Anglian Water had responded. Anglian Water has advised, as part of the Drainage Strategy that these are not foul water capacity related issues.

It is therefore considered that the proposal is acceptable in terms of drainage and flooding and complies with Core Strategy Policy EN 10 and meets the foul and surface drainage hierarchy of the NPPF.

12. Nutrient Neutrality

The application has been assessed against the conservation objectives for the protected habitats of the River Wensum Special Area of Conservation and the Broads Special Area of Conservation and Ramsar site concerning nutrient pollution in accordance with the Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations 2017 (as amended) (Habitats Regulations). The proposal will result in additional overnight accommodation; and it is located within the surface water catchment for the River Bure.

The Drainage Strategy submitted as part of the planning application confirms that the foul water sewer discharges to the catchment for Cromer Water Recycling Centre (WRC), and then out to sea. Foul water therefore is discharged outside of the nutrient catchments.

On the basis that foul water is discharged outside of the nutrient neutrality catchments, the proposal is not likely to have a significant effect on the conservation objectives either alone or in combination with other projects and there is no requirement for additional information to be submitted to further assess the effects. The application can, with regards nutrient neutrality, be safely determined with regards the Conservation of Species Habitats Regulations 2017 (as amended). For the reasons provided above, it is considered the proposal complies with the requirements of Policy EN 9, and Chapter 15 of the Framework.

13. GIRAMS

The Norfolk wide Green Infrastructure and Recreational Impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (GIRAMS) is a strategy agreed between the Norfolk planning authorities and Natural England. The Strategy enables growth in the District by implementing the required mitigation to address adverse effects on the integrity of Habitats Sites arising from recreational disturbance caused by an increased level of recreational use on internationally designated Habitat Sites, particularly European sites, through growth from all qualifying development. Increased recreation without mitigation is likely to affect the integrity of these Habitat Sites across Norfolk. It would result in the significant features of the sites being degraded or lost, and these internationally important areas losing significant important areas for birds, plants and wildlife generally and, therefore, their designations. All new net residential and tourism development are required to mitigate the effects of the development.

This Strategy recommends a tariff approach to ensure funds are collected and pulled together to deliver the Recreational Impact Avoidance and Mitigation (RAMS) package proposed. This reflects the entirety of Norfolk including all partner Local Planning Authorities and would see a common tariff amount for all net new dwellings in the county (£210.84) alongside a 6:1 ratio for tourism development. This has been calculated from the RAMS mitigation package to cover the lifetime of the Local Plans.

The proposed development would create 5 net new dwellings, and the agent has confirmed the requisite GIRAMS contribution of **£1,054.20** will be made via the S106. The Local Planning Authority as the 'competent authority' has completed an Appropriate Assessment and concluded that subject to securing the GIRAMS financial contribution, the planning application

would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the European Sites identified above from recreational disturbance, when considered alone and 'in combination' with other development. Consultation with Natural England is not considered to be necessary as the proposed development would be subject to the GIRAMS payment to offset potential impacts of an increase in recreational disturbance to nearby Habitat Sites.

Subject to the payment of the GIRAMS through the S106, the scheme would comply with Policy EN 9 of the adopted Core Strategy and Section 15 of the NPPF.

14. Environmental

The Environmental Health team has assessed the proposal and considered there are no adverse environmental health concerns in relation to this proposal, subject to further details of the Air Source Heat Pumps which can be treated by way of a planning condition. On that basis, it is considered the proposal would comply with Policy EN 13, and Chapter 15 of the Framework.

Other Matters

Loss of Grade 3 Agricultural Land

NPPF (Chapter 15) Paragraph 174(b) requires that developments should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.

In respect of loss of agricultural land, the land is designated as grade 3 agricultural land. Whilst the loss of farming land for crop growing is regrettable, this has to be balanced against the provision of affordable housing for local people and in this respect is considered acceptable.

Conclusion and Planning Balance

Officers recognise that the proposal does not fully accord with Development Plan policy with deficiencies identified in relation to matters of sustainability and identified harm to the setting of a non-designated heritage asset. These are matters that collectively weigh against the proposal.

In favour of the proposal, the application is for the provision of 5 affordable dwellings under the exceptions housing policy to be provided in perpetuity by a recognised affordable housing provider (Broadland Housing) to meet a clearly identified local housing need. Officers consider that substantial weight can be afforded to the provision of the affordable housing.

Officers consider that the benefits of the proposed development considerably outweigh the adverse impacts identified in the report such that approval is recommended.

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL

SUBJECT TO:

- 1. Receipt of amended plans (relating to design and landscaping);**

- 2. Securing of S106 Obligations for affordable housing, management of open space and meadow area, and the payment of £1,054.20 for GIRAMS mitigation; and**
- 3. Imposition of conditions including any considered necessary by the Assistant Director - Planning including matters relating to:**
 - **Time Limit for implementation**
 - **In accordance with approved plans**
 - **Securing maintenance of open space and meadow and all other hard and soft landscaping within the site;**
 - **External materials (as submitted within the material schedule);**
 - **final window designs;**
 - **Lighting details;**
 - **Highway access and visibility;**
 - **Ecology and tree requirements;**
 - **Securing a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP);**
 - **Air source heat pump details**

Final wording of conditions to be delegated to the Assistant Director – Planning.

That the application be refused if a suitable section 106 agreement is not completed within 4 months of the date of resolution to approve, and in the opinion of the Assistant Director - Planning, there is no realistic prospect of a suitable section 106 agreement being completed within a reasonable timescale.