

**WEST BECKHAM – PF/23/1578 – Erection of 5no. bungalows (affordable) with associated new access, parking and landscaping at Land to the East of Sheringham Road, West Beckham for Broadland Housing Association**

**Minor Development**

**Target Date: 18th September 2023**

**Extension of time:**

**Case Officer: Mark Brands**

**Full Planning Permission**

**CONSTRAINTS**

Countryside

Agricultural Land Grade 3

Landscape Character Area TF1 (Tributary Farmland)

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 4 no. 2-bed dwellings, 1 no. 1-bed dwelling with associated gardens, parking area, landscaping, and bin storage. All dwellings are single storey.

The proposal also includes an area of open green space to the south of the site, with footway access onto Back Lane from the south to the proposed open space meadow area.

The proposal is accessed via a new entrance onto Sheringham Road serving the proposed dwellings. A total of 12 no. car parking spaces would be provided across the site to accord with parking standards comprising 10 to serve the dwellings and 2 no. visitor parking spaces.

**Amended plans / further details received during the course of the application**

Amended Site location plan received and amended certificate (B) signed on the application form (serving notice on the owner of the grass verge (County Highways). The red line was increased to include the grass verge to the west and visibility for the new access onto Sheringham Road. This change was also reflected on the site plans.

11/10/2023

PL08 B

Application form

Site location plan PL01 C

Site Plan existing PL02 D

Site plan proposed PL03 J

Block Plan proposed PL08 B

CMP PL09 D

C-800 P02

Following the comments from the landscape section, more details have been provided and clarified on materials, and some revisions on the landscaping and arboricultural details.

23/10/2023

Site plan as proposed 1540-CAM-XX-XX-DR-A-PL03 Rev. K

Site plan as proposed showing external finishes 1540-CAM-XX-XX-DR-A-PL07 Rev. D

Schedule of materials 1540-CAM-XX-XX-SH-A-SCH- REV D

Ecological enhancements plan (C J Yardley Landscape Survey and Design LLP, October 2023)

Landscape schedule (C J Yardley Landscape Survey and Design LLP, October 2023) (maintenance and management plan)

Landscape schedule (C J Yardley Landscape Survey and Design LLP, October 2023)

Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Tree Protection Plan, Method Statement (C J Yardley Landscape Survey and Design LLP, October 2023)

### **REASONS FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE:**

This application has been referred to the Development Committee as requested by Cllr Ringer given the public interest in this proposal.

### **CONSULTEE COMMENTS**

#### **West Beckham Parish Council - Objects**

Further clarification requested as the boundary has changed from the previous application and now includes the verge to the edge of the Highway. This land is already in use for the Post Box, the council notice board, the seat for walkers and the Grit bin. The proposed boundary also covers part of The Loke which is the access to several houses and is a public right of way

It was indicated at an earlier presentation by Broadland Housing 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 especially in Sheringham Road. The houses should be rental only for tenants with local connections the aim being to re-vitalise the village

**NNDC Strategic Housing Officer - Supports application.** This site will provide five new high-quality, energy efficient and much needed affordable homes. 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 2 August 2023 there are 42 households on the Council's housing list with a local connection of whom 32 households have the strongest Bands A to C connection. There is therefore plenty of demand for the five proposed homes.

#### **Property Types**

The four two-bedroom bungalows are suitable for households of four persons e.g. a family with two children of the same sex. They also provide the flexibility for households with a need for ground floor accommodation. Likewise the one bedroom bungalow is suitable for all age groups with accommodation for a one or two person household.

### **NNDC Landscape Officer (Ecology and Landscape) - Comments**

Summary (full comments available on public site):

- Edge of settlement location and open nature of site, boundaries to the north and east need to be robust
- Concern over use of Renaissance Multi brick, other options should be used
- Bund and hedgerow and tree planting on northern boundary reluctantly acceptable but more tree planting particularly of stature should be specified
- More clarification required for boundary treatments, particularly defining the eastern extent of the open space
- Hedgehog holes are specified for the fencing which is appropriate and will promote ecological permeability through the site
- All other boundary treatments are appropriate, as are the Tegula Setts in Burnt Oak and Brindle and Buff flags as hard surface finishes
- Soft landscaping to the open space area to the south are appropriate
- Clarification required on the access visibility and loss of hedgerow on Sheringham Road
- External lighting appropriate, apart from plot 5 which should be adjusted

Subject to further clarification and amendments, conditions should be included with any approval covering the landscaping and ecology measures.

### **Environmental Health: Comments**

The land is not showing as potentially contaminated. There is no mention of an intention to install Air Source Heat Pumps. If this is intended; the make, model, noise data and exact location will be required and must be approved before installation

### **Norfolk County Council Highway Officer: Comments**

The C309 Sheringham Road forms a Junction to the north, with the A148 Holt Road, The A148 is a Principal Route and Corridor of Movement, which has a history of personal injury accidents (4 PIA's 2019-2022) and is subject to the national speed limit. Given that this is the route to the wider road network, consideration of any increases in traffic is required.

The proposed development of 5 dwellings would be considered to engender 30 daily movements using the nationally recognised TRiCs figure of 6 daily movements / dwelling.

The 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.

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 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 and you may wish to consider this point as well as the increased use of the A148 Junction, However, we recognise 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 Public Rights of Way Officer: Comments awaited** – Committee will be updated orally at the meeting.

## REPRESENTATIONS

18 **objections** received 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, lack of public transport or other transport options
- Loss of farmland
- Highway safety concerns, narrow road, speeds and volume of existing traffic, not the capacity for increase in vehicular movements or creation of a new access in the local road network and junctions, increased risk to road users, vehicular and pedestrians.
- The scheme will not bring community or economic benefits
- Previous public consultation undertaken at the site not reflective of the current application
- Insufficient consultation with the local community
- Inadequate local infrastructure to support new development
- Lack of employment in vicinity
- The site conflicts with the outcome of the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment which discounted the site for residential development on sustainability grounds
- Detriment to landscape character and views across the countryside
- Setting of precedent for further developments
- Uncharacteristic introduction of built form in the countryside, not in accordance with traditional prevailing form of development
- Design of properties not inkeeping with properties in the vicinity and of a standardised form
- Drainage and sewage concerns
- Insufficient room on site for parking and manoeuvring, increased parking on verges
- Loss of hedgerow to the front of the site and therefore wildlife and a natural part of the landscape
- Impact on ecology, bats, birds, newts
- Lack of electric charging points on the site
- Concerns over construction related traffic, parking and noise
- Impact on existing neighbouring amenity from loss of light and privacy, overlooking, noise and disturbances from use of the open space
- Query the extent of affordable housing need in the parish
- Detriment to landscape and local ecology, and loss of section of hedgerow
- 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 1: Spatial Strategy for North Norfolk  
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 (September 2023):**

Chapter 2: Achieving sustainable development  
Chapter 4: Decision-making  
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 Landscape Character**
- 8. Impact on Trees**
- 9. Impact on Ecology**
- 10. Drainage**
- 11. GIRAMS**
- 12. Environmental**
- 13. Other Matters**
- 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.

#### **5 Year Housing Land Supply**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires Local Planning Authorities to identify a five year supply of specific deliverable sites to meet housing needs. At the current time the Council is unable to demonstrate that it has 5 years' worth of deliverable sites.

Planning applications must therefore be considered in line with paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF which states that where relevant policies are considered out of date permission will be granted unless the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed, or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

## **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 other affordable schemes permitted / resolved to be approved under Policy HO 3 within 1km of the site (PF/23/1065).
- 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.

Compatibility concerns with Policy HO 3 have been raised through the public consultation process and are noted.

The application before Committee was running in tandem with another affordable housing scheme in West Beckham (PF/23/1065), which has since been received a resolution to approve by the Development Committee in September 2023 subject to finalising of the S106 Agreement (which remains to be completed at the time of writing). The application was for 5 affordable two storey dwellings on Church Road, approximately 730m (as the crow flies) to the southeast of this current application site or approximately 1,200m via Sheringham Road and Church Road. The supporting information across both applications clearly set out the applications were essentially a joint consideration, rather than accommodating all 10 dwellings on one site which was considered inappropriate at either site. It was considered more appropriate to split the dwellings across two smaller application sites. This was to mitigate the impact on the surroundings and wider landscape. Both sites combined do not exceed 10 units, would meet a proven local need and are located adjacent to a group of 10 more dwellings where the housing would be provided in perpetuity.

In summary, the proposal is considered to generally accord with the aspirations of Core Strategy Policy HO 3 and, whilst this would be the second affordable housing scheme within 1km of another (as the crow flies), the quantum of development across both schemes does not indicate overdevelopment with the village of West Beckham and instead will contribute to balanced communities in a rural area. 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 and it is therefore acceptable in principle in this regard.

## **3. Highway Safety**

Policy CT 5 requires development to provide safe and convenient access for all modes of transport, including access to the highway network. Policy CT 6 requires new development to have sufficient parking facilities. Paragraph 111 of the NPPF states that development should

only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe

The new vehicular access to the site would be from Sheringham Road, with a footway link to the open space provided at Back Lane. Sheringham Road is subject to a 30mph speed limit. Visibility splays for the new access would be in accordance with Manual for Streets, with visibility splays of 2.4m x 59m. There are accesses to two lanes in close proximity which serve a number of residential properties including to the south adjacent to the site (Back Lane) and opposite the site to the northwest serving Allotment Lane.

The proposed access road off Sheringham Road is to remain private and be constructed as a shared surface facility to accommodate pedestrian, cycle and vehicular traffic. The asphalt vehicular crossover would be constructed in accordance with Norfolk County Council's adoptable design specification. As shown on the Architect's proposed layout drawing, access to the site would be taken via a new priority T-junction with Sheringham Road to the west. Appropriate turning facilities are provided within the site so as to enable vehicles such as fire tenders 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 Sheringham Road.

There are no pedestrian footways in the vicinity and no formal footway is presented as part of the application proposal. 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. Additionally, comments raised regarding the junction to the A148 to the north are also noted. The NPPF (paragraph 111) sets out that development should only be refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or where the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. In this case, the highway officer has not recommended refusal under these criteria

In terms of vehicular parking there are 12 vehicle parking spaces proposed (two per dwelling) plus two visitor parking spaces. This complies with Core Strategy Policy requirements by ensuring sufficient parking is provided on site (providing slightly higher parking provision than the baseline in the Norfolk Parking Guidelines).

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 would 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 (by reason of the lack of safe and convenient access on foot, cycle and public transport) 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 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 one -bed (two person) dwelling (56 sqm)
- 4 x two-bed (four person) dwellings (3 x 70 and 1 x 72 sqm)

The housing mix would comply with Policy HO 1 and the bungalows provide flexibility for those with a need for ground floor accommodation.

The proposal provides a suitable mix of dwellings 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 HO 1.

## **5. Design, Layout, Scale and Massing**

The site layout has, in part, been influenced by the presence of the sewer in the southern part of the site, meaning development is restricted to the northern part. The scheme comprises a detached dwelling with carport and a terrace in an L shape configuration to the northern part of the site, to replicate the typology of single storey farm outbuildings in the district. All dwellings would be single storey to minimise the impact on the wider landscape, framing a courtyard arrangement to the front of the dwellings. The courtyard arrangement has been used in other Broadland Housing schemes in the district noting this layout supports social interaction. There would be an open space area to the south (also being used for surface water run-off).

The buildings have been set back from Back Lane to minimise the impact on existing houses and also to allow for an open landscaped space to serve as buffer with existing properties and retaining open views through the meadow towards the rest of the arable field beyond. The layout of the meadow and associated planting is considered suitable, tying together with the rural character of the design of the dwellings to the north. Private gardens are provided, of appropriate sizes with suitable boundary treatments. A communal bin storage for collection is proposed.

In terms of appearance, the proposed clustered bungalows are intended to give the form and appearance of converted farm buildings, with a similar design, form, scale and material palette of other such rural buildings in the countryside. The scheme proposes an appropriate mix of facing red brick, including different brick details to give texture and character to the buildings, and tiled roofs with timber posts on the carports and veranda’s. The brick types have been amended taking into account the comments from the landscape section to ensure compatible materials are used in this countryside location. Officer’s support the traditional design and appearance including the general palette of materials given the rural location. Minor amendments to the scheme have been sought which would relate mostly to the elevational treatment and detailing. Revised plans are currently being awaited from the agent. The extent of these minor alterations would be similar to those being sought Church Road site and would not significantly affect the layout or design of the scheme.

In terms of scale, the dwellings would have a height to the eaves of around 2.4m, with ridge heights of 5.3m-5.6m, with the lower ranges and veranda’s breaking up the scale and massing of the development.

The layout suggests that the dwellings are designed to be accessed primarily by people arriving by car. There is no existing pedestrian access along Sheringham Road, and none

proposed as part of the scheme. A new vehicular access is proposed from Sheringham Road to the west. The new access leads onto the courtyard mews, which then splits into the parking areas, with the surfacing materials considered appropriate, with patio along the terrace block connecting to the parking area to the east and north serving Plots 1-4, with Plot 5 detached to the south having its own parking spaces to the west. 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; the installation of solar photovoltaics; and designed to a high standard of thermal efficiency. The proposed dwellings aspire to achieve a water consumption rate of no more than 105 l/p/day to minimise water resource usage.

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 Chapter 12 of the NPPF.

## **6. Residential Amenity**

Officers consider that the proposed development would not adversely impact neighbouring amenity. The development would be well distanced from existing properties, with intervening features including roads and the proposed open space. The dwellings would be single storey, and proposed boundary treatments ensure overlooking concerns are mitigated. The open space would have limited features other than benches and landscaping, limiting noise potential.

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 have been provided and are considered appropriate to ensure privacy.

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 Chapter 12 of the NPPF.

## **7. Impact on Landscape Character**

The site lies within the Tributary Farmland Landscape Type (as defined in the North Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment (2021 SPD) (LCA). The stated Vision for this landscape character type (p. 221 of the LCA) is *'a well-managed and actively farmed rural landscape that invests in natural capital, creating and enhancing ecological networks and semi-natural habitats. New development is successfully integrated within the existing settlements where it reinforces traditional character and vernacular. The landscape retains a rural character with dark night skies'*.

This is an edge of settlement location with open arable fields extending north and east demarcated by intermittent hedged field boundaries. The main A148 tourist route is 600m north of the site and extends in a west-east direction. Prominent views of the site are gained by these road users and also by users of a public right of way (West Beckham FP3) which is 300m north and West Beckham FP2 which traverses the south boundary of the site along Back Lane which also serves neighbouring properties.

Given the proximity of these receptors and the lack of existing mature vegetation (apart from Hans Pits woodland copse to the east), the site boundaries to the north and east need to be robust and substantial to assist in embedding the new development into its open landscape setting.

As noted in the comments, ideally the built form would have been sited further south in the site by the existing built form but it is recognised the existing sewer running through the site is a significant constraint so the layout has been influenced by this (in addition to taking on board comments made during public consultations prior to the submission).

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 and trees along the western boundary and open views across from the north and south from roads and public rights of way.

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 would aid in assimilating the development into its landscape setting.

The northern boundary is proposed to be defined with a 500mm high, 2m wide bund with hedgerow planting and sporadic trees. The bund is an engineered feature, but on balance, with the landscaping and additional planting considered suitable as are the landscaping proposals for the open space to the south also accommodating the soakaway.

Minor amendments and clarifications have been made by the agent following the comments from the landscaping officer, positively incorporating the changes into the revised scheme. This includes further details on the boundary treatments, clarifying a simple post and wire fence to the south and east boundaries around the open space and inclusion of sporadic groupings of shrubs.

Lighting has been detailed to be kept to a minimum to avoid unnecessary light pollution and ecological impact, and, following a minor revision on one of the plots, is considered appropriate and can be conditioned to be in accordance with the submitted details.

There is a management plan setting out that the open space would be managed either by the Housing Association or ceded to a management company to maintain the areas in accordance with the submitted details (domestic gardens to be managed by property holders). The scheme would result in both a layout and landscape solution which is appropriate. It is considered that the proposal would broadly accord with the requirements of Core Strategy Policy EN 2 and NPPF Chapter 15 and would have an acceptable impact on the wider landscape character.

## **8. 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 noted some of the hedgerow would need to be removed to make way for the new access onto the site from Sheringham Road. The visibility has been shown to demonstrate this can be provided without further removals and comply with the highway visibility requirements. Additionally, there would be new replacement planting around the site including 110m of new mixed native hedging, together with native tree planting and wildflower / grasses planting which offsets this loss and provides enhancements. 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 Chapter 12 of the NPPF.

### **9. Impact on Ecology**

The application has been supported with a Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA). The content of this is considered acceptable, and the Landscape Officer raised no objections subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions requiring mitigation and enhancement measures for biodiversity as detailed in the PEA.

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal sets out the potentially significant effects include;

- Effects on nesting birds from clearance of the site during the bird nesting season;
- Loss of hedgerow along the western side;
- Runoff or accidental pollution effects on the pond to the south;
- Impacts on great crested newts if present within the pond to the south.

The Landscape Officer has raised no objections, subject to conditions. These include a Construction and Environment Management Plan to include details of working methods, access, exclusion zones, location of storage and a European Protected Species Licence (or statement from Natural England that it does not consider that the specified development would require a licence) in relation to the protection of Great Crested Newts. Additionally, the works would be carried out in accordance with the mitigation and enhancement measures in the supporting documentation, including the below;

Proposed ecological enhancements;

Hedgehog holes in fencing

1 no. Reptile Refugia

2 no. Swift boxes

4 no. Vivara pro swallow cups

2 no. Starling boxes

2 no. bat boxes

Bee banks

Creation of a wildflower meadow within the open space,

Native tree and hedge planting,

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.

### **10. Drainage**

A drainage strategy has been submitted with the application. This has concluded that the ground conditions within the site have been found to be granular in nature with good infiltration potential. The topography of the site shows it slopes southwards towards Back Lane, with levels to the northern boundary in the order of 84.50m AOD and those to the south at 83.00 AOD. In respect to the foul and surface water drainage strategy for the site, it is proposed that the site would connect to the existing foul water public sewer in Sheringham Road and use sustainable drainage systems to manage surface water drainage.

A sustainable approach to surface water run off has been set out. Water run off would be managed, with roof run-off from properties directed to a single soakaway located at the rear of plot 5. Private roads and parking spaces would have permeable surfaces for natural infiltration into the subsoil.

The site is within the catchment of the Runton Middlebrook Water Recycling Centre (WRC) and Anglian Water has confirmed, via pre-app discussions, that this currently has capacity to accommodate the development. Anglian Water records indicate that a foul water manhole is available in Sheringham Road along the site frontage where the foul water drainage would discharge into.

The Drainage Strategy also recognised concerns raised locally regarding flooding. The strategy refers to an Anglian Water flood report that the majority of the concerns had been caused by blockages and some odour complaints to which Anglian Water had responded and has advised 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.

## **11. 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 net new 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 Chapter 15 of the NPPF.

## **12. 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 Core Strategy Policy EN 13, and Chapter 15 of the Framework.

### **13. 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.

### **14. Conclusion and Planning Balance**

As set out, the Local Authority cannot currently demonstrate a 5 year housing supply, which is a material planning consideration.

Officers recognise that the proposal does not fully accord with Development Plan policy with deficiencies identified in relation to matters of sustainability. This weighs against the proposal. However, the Core Strategy and NPPF set out that planning authorities should support opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites that would provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs. Policy HO 3 sets out the criteria including the consideration of cumulative developments under this policy. There was informal dialogue between the Local Authority and the developers prior to the submission, as set out in the supporting documentation, including specifically splitting the rural exception site in West Beckham to two smaller sites with this site to be considered in conjunction with the previously considered scheme at Church Road

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. There would also be some modest economic benefits to the local economy during the construction phase and addition of dwellings which would result in some benefit (albeit limited) to addressing the general housing shortfall in the district.

Officers consider that the benefits of the proposed development considerably and demonstrably 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);**

2. **Securing of S106 Obligations for affordable housing, management of open space and meadow area, and the payment of £1,054.20 (Index linked) for GIRAMS mitigation;**
  - **The end of the consultation period and confirmation there are no objections from the Public Rights of Way team on the proposals 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**
  - **Implementation of landscaping**
  - **Management of landscaping (including maintenance)**
  - **Hedging heights**
  - **Retention of landscaping (10 years)**
  - **External materials (as submitted within the material schedule);**
  - **final window designs;**
  - **Lighting details;**
  - **Securing a Construction Environment Management Plan**
  - **European Protected Species Licence (GCN)**
  - **Securing ecological mitigation and enhancement measures**
  - **Accordance with arboricultural report**
  - **Securing appropriate site access**
  - **Access gradients**
  - **Highways PD restriction across access**
  - **Highways PD in visibility splays**
  - **Parking etc to be provided and retained**
  - **PD restrictions**
  - **Air source heat pump details**
  - **Drainage in accordance with approved details**
  - **Bin store to be built in accordance with plans, prior to first occupation**

**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.**