

December 2018



# PRE-APPLICATION DOCUMENT LAND OFF FIR COVERT ROAD, TAVERHAM







## INTRODUCTION

This document is prepared on behalf of M Scott Properties Ltd (Scott Properties), in support of a request for pre-application planning advice from Broadland District Council. This document, and supporting information submitted alongside it, provide the information described on the Council's website as necessary to facilitate pre-application discussions.

Scott Properties are seeking to secure full detailed planning permission for the development of 200 residential units, a 5 acre sports pitch extension, together with associated highways, drainage and landscaping works, on land off Fir Covert Road, Taverham.

## The Applicant

By way of background, Scott Properties is a family run, self-funded development company operating throughout East Anglia and the South East of England. The focus is on the delivery of high quality developments to complement and enhance existing communities. The company has a proven track record of delivery across a range of sectors, including residential, care and retail and leisure, and adopts a proactive approach to stakeholder engagement and public consultation.

The vision for this site is to create a mixed and sustainable community, with a range of house types to meet the varied needs of the local populace including families and older people. Scott Properties have developed a reputation for the delivery of lifelong homes, including bungalows, which are built and designed to a high standard.

The company has extensive knowledge of the local area having secured planning consent in early 2018 (ref:20171782) for a new supermarket and additional retail units on land off Fir Covert Road.



## SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

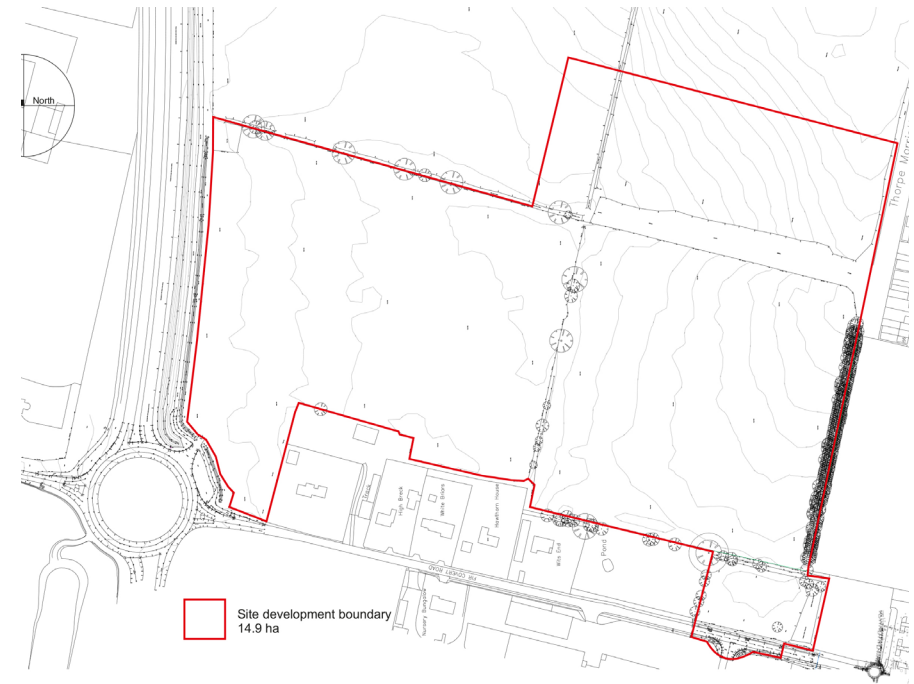
The site lies to the north of Taverham; immediately adjacent to the defined Settlement Boundary. The site, which is generally flat, extends to approximately 14.9 hectares and is currently used as arable farm land. The extent of the site is detailed on the plan.

To the north, the site is bounded by the recently constructed Norwich Distributor Road (NDR), now known as the Broadland Northway, which creates a natural boundary, with arable land beyond.

Fir Covert Road, along with Taverham Garden Centre and a number of residential properties are located to the west of the site. The area to the south of the site comprises playing fields associated with Taverham Village Hall and residential units. To the east is an area of arable farm land.

The vegetation on the site is limited, although there is a substantial tree belt along the site's southern boundary, providing screening from the adjacent residential development, with a further group of trees situated toward the site's eastern boundary. None of the trees on the site are subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO).

Taverham benefits from a variety of amenities including a pub, a supermarket, takeaways, petrol filling station and a garden centre. In addition, the site is within close proximity of the amenities provided within Thorpe Marriott and Drayton. Nightingale and Ghost Hill Infant schools are located in close proximity of the site, as are Taverham Junior and High Schools. A private school (Langley Preparatory School at Taverham Hall) is located nearby.



Site plan - 1:2000 @ A3

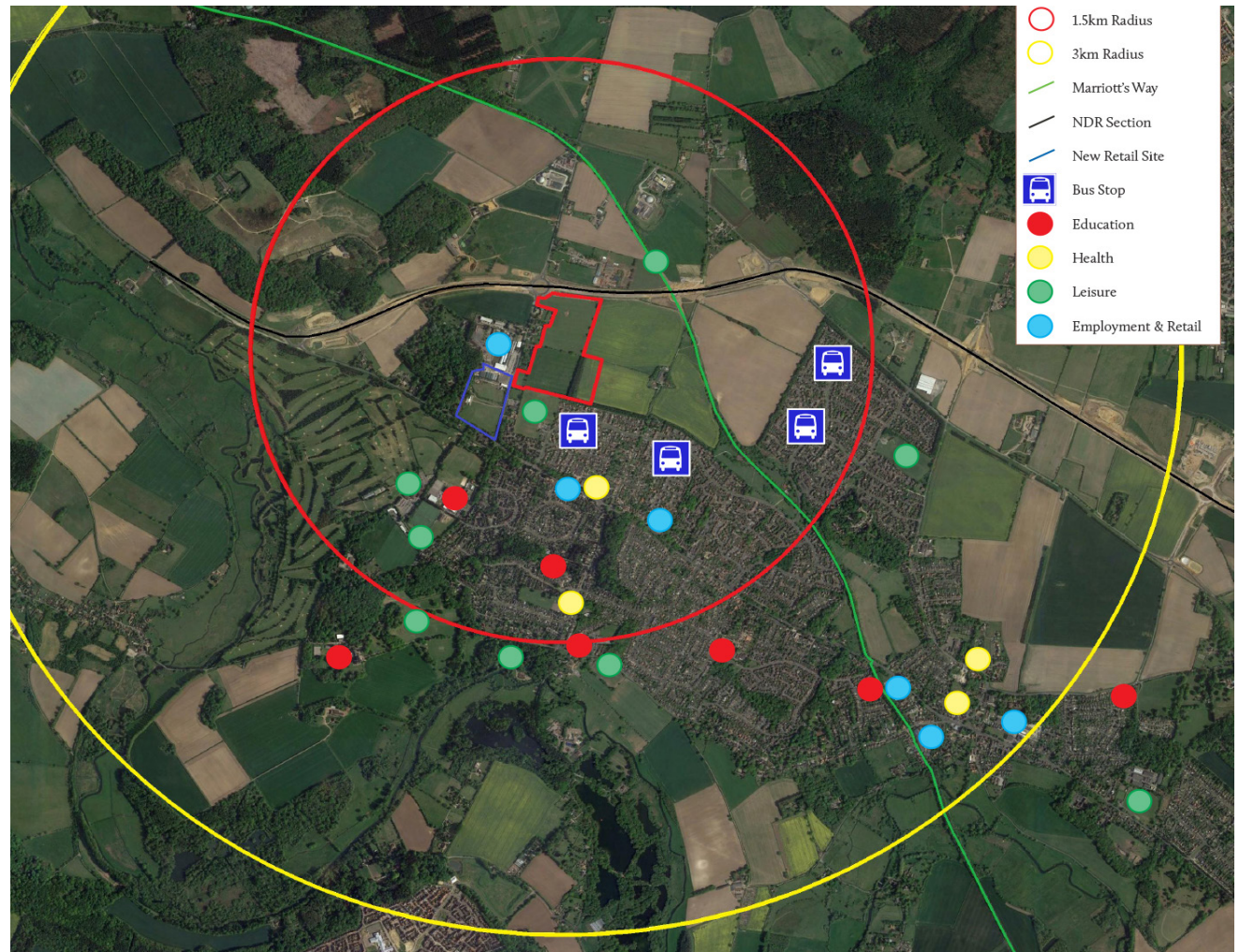


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**Land at Fir Covert Road, Taverham**

There is no formal vehicular access to the site. A spur from the Fir Covert Road roundabout on the Broadland Northway/ NDR provides informal access to the site. The site is in close proximity of a range of bus stops which provide regular services to Norwich and Fakenham.

There are no Listed Buildings on the site or other designated or non-designated heritage assets on the site. The closest Listed Buildings, which include the Parish Church of St Edmund (Grade 1), are approximately 1.5km from the site.

The site, in its entirety, falls within Flood Zone 1, indicating a low probability of flooding.



## PLANNING HISTORY

A search of Broadland District Council's online planning register has identified that there is no relevant planning history for this site. However, the table below outlines relevant outline planning applications which are all within close proximity to the site or directly relevant to the proposed development.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY FOR SURROUNDING CONTEXT:		
20172148	Land off Beech Avenue, Taverham Outline application for up to 93 dwellings, access and open space	Approved at 4 July 2018 committee – awaiting Section 106 to be agreed
20171782	Land off Fir Covert Road, Taverham – hybrid application – full for a new supermarket, outline for additional retail units, a public house and fast food outlet	Approved 12 February 2018
20171676	Wensum Valley Golf Club – full application - construction of new 72-bedroom hotel and ancillary works	Approved 27 February 2018
20170196	Former David Rice Hospital, Drayton High Road, Drayton – outline application - Erection of 29 Dwellings & Associated Access (Including 10 Affordable Dwellings)	Approved 20 July 2018
20161066	Land Adj. Hall Lane/School Road, Drayton – outline application - Development of up to 250 Homes, Allotments, Access, Public Open Space and Associated Infrastructure	Approved at 28 March 2018 committee - awaiting Section 106 to be agreed





## THE PROPOSAL

Scott Properties seek full planning permission for the development of 200 residential units, a 5-acre sports pitch extension, together with associated highways, drainage and landscaping works.

The proposed development can be split into two distinct elements. The first, located on the southern part of the site, comprises 100 bungalows. This will be developed by Scott Properties and will be designed to a high standard based around the lifelong homes concept that the company has successfully delivered in other locations in the East of England.

The second element of the scheme, located on the northern part of the site, will comprise 100 additional 'family housing' units. Whilst at this initial stage the mix of units has not been determined, the indicative layout plans submitted as part of this application demonstrates that the development is capable of providing a mix of 2, 3 and 4-bedroom units that will range in scale from 2 -3 storeys in height. It is envisaged that this element of the scheme will be brought forward by a residential partner; Scott Properties and the landowners are in discussions with a number of potential partners with a view to selecting one shortly. The detailed design of this part of the scheme will then be developed in more detail.

Together, these two elements will provide a mixed and sustainable community, providing a variety of choice, tailored to meet local needs.

The scheme also proposes a 5-acre extension to the existing playing fields, located to the south of the site and connected via a footpath to the existing facilities. This will provide a significant new area of formal recreation space adjacent to the existing facilities.



The proposed layout seeks to maximise the opportunities afforded by the existing mature planting belts within the site, to create key leisure and ecological spaces with good access pathways and expanded well landscaped corridors within which this mature planting can be set. Rather than turning its back on the planting belts, all development adjacent to these features will have positive frontages onto the landscaping, integrating it into the development in a positive way, and providing as many opportunities as possible for safe and accessible walking and cycling routes around and through the landscape. These new landscaped areas will also form the basis of a network of sustainable drainage solutions to service the new roads and hardstandings.

As well as retaining the existing mature trees and hedges, new planting is also proposed to enhance the existing landscape. Additional open space is provided throughout the site through a village green area at the site entrance on Fir Covert Road, and three contained park areas, which could contain local play areas as appropriate, as well as landscaped footpaths.

The development will be accessed by vehicles directly from Fir Covert Road by way of a new roundabout. Initial proposals for the roundabout have been prepared by Cannon Consulting Engineers and are submitted as part of this pre-application request. These proposals have already been subject to pre-application discussions with the Local Highway Authority.

In addition, as detailed on the site layout plan, the scheme will incorporate a number of pedestrian and cycle links, in order to ensure that the site is fully connected with the wider area and provides sustainable modes of transport. These links will provide access across the site, including a direct link to the Fir Covert Road / NDR roundabout.





## PLANNING POLICY

To inform the preparation of the initial proposals, a review of the Adopted Development Plan and material considerations has been undertaken. The following Section identifies key planning policies and guidance relating to the proposed development.

### The Adopted Development Plan

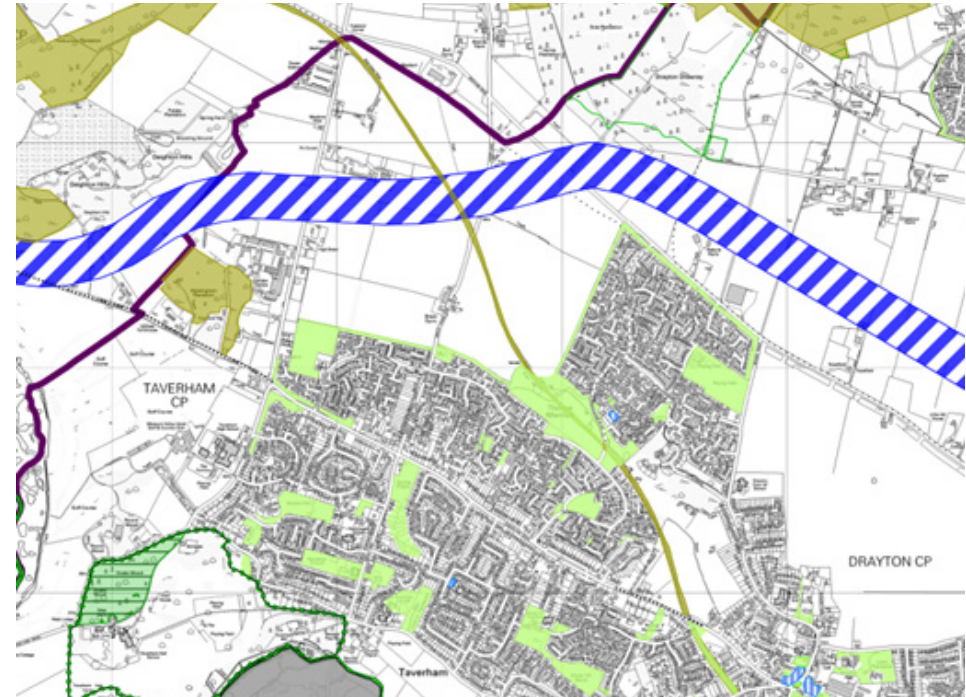
In accordance with Section 38(6), consideration has been given to the Adopted Development Plan for this site, which comprises:

- Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk (2011);
- Development Management Policies DPD (2015); and
- Site Allocations DPD (2016).

The site is not subject to a site-specific allocation in the Adopted Development Plan. The site is, as detailed on the Proposal Maps Extract below, located immediately adjacent to the Settlement Boundary.

Taverham is identified in the adopted Development Plan as a Fringe Parish in the Norwich Urban Area (NPA). The NPA is the focus for major growth and development. In Fringe Parishes, the adopted Development Plan seeks to identify land to contribute towards the smaller sites allowance of 2,000 units in the Broadland area during the period up to 2026.

Marriott's Way, which is located to the east of the site, is identified as a Locally Defined Area of Biodiversity / Geodiversity Importance.



### Material Considerations

Consideration has also been given to the following documents in preparing the proposed development:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2018)
- Parking Standards for Norfolk (2007)
- Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document SPD (2013)
- Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standards (2015)
- Recreational Provision in Residential Development Supplementary Planning Document SPD (2016)

## PLANNING ANALYSIS

The site lies immediately to the west of the defined Settlement Boundary of Taverham, a Fringe Parish within the Norwich Policy Area.

As detailed above, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications be determined in accordance with the Adopted Development Plan, unless material conditions indicate otherwise. The NPPF is a material consideration of significant weight in the determination of a planning application.

Policy GC2 of the Development Management Policies (2015) document outlines that development should be accommodated within the existing Settlement Boundary. The policy goes on to advise that development outside Settlement Boundaries will be permitted, where it does not result in any significant adverse impacts, and accords with a site-specific allocation and/or policy contained within the Adopted Development Plan. Whilst the proposed development does not accord with a site-specific allocation, it does comply with Policy GC1, which reiterates the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Policy GC1 states that the Council will take a positive approach to development proposals, which reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in paragraph 11 of the NPPF. It also states that the Council will work proactively with applicants to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. Where there are

no relevant policies, or relevant policies are out of date, the Council will grant permission unless the adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, or there are specific policies that indicate that development should be restricted.

At present, the relevant policies are out of date, as the Council is unable to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply as required by the NPPF. The 2017 Greater Norwich Area Housing Land Supply Assessment (Report 2016-2017) identified that the supply in the Norwich Policy Area equated to 4.61 years; a shortfall of 1,187 dwellings. Therefore, in accordance with paragraph 11 of the NPPF and Policy GC1 of the Adopted Development Plan, applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Notwithstanding the above, regardless of the 5-year land supply position, both Policy GC1 and the NPPF seek to support sustainable development. Therefore, if it can be demonstrated that the proposals represent sustainable development, and that there are no adverse impacts that outweigh the benefits, then the scheme should be supported.

In considering the sustainability of the proposals, and assessing the potential benefits and any possible adverse impacts, it is useful to evaluate the proposal against the three overarching objectives of the planning system, identified in paragraph 8 of the NPPF: economic, social and environmental. Whilst the NPPF is clear that these are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged, it is nonetheless a useful tool to enable consideration of whether the proposal does represent sustainable development.

## Economic Objective

*The economic objective of the planning system is to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity, and by coordinating the provision of infrastructure.*

In this regard, development of the site would assist in ensuring that there is sufficient supply of high quality, well-designed housing, available to support the planned economic growth of Norwich and the surrounding area. The proximity of the site to the Broadland Northway/NDR means that future residents will be very well-placed to access the strategic employment sites at Norwich International Airport and Broadland Gate, as well as opportunities within the City Centre.

The development will bring other economic benefits, in the short-term through construction opportunities, and in the longer-term through local spending, as well as s106/CIL receipts.

In relation to infrastructure, initial assessment work has been commissioned and will inform the proposals as they progress.

It is clear, therefore, that the proposed development would contribute to the economic objective of the planning system.



## Social Objective

*The social objective of the planning system is to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being.*

The proposed development will assist in meeting this objective in a number of important ways. First, the provision of 200 new homes, in an area where there is currently a shortfall in housing supply, will in itself be a significant social benefit. More significantly, the proposals for this site entail the provision of 100 bungalows. There is a significant need in the area for accommodation to better meet the requirements of an aging population. Broadland has a higher proportion of older people than the national average; a fact recognised in the Greater Norwich Local Plan's Growth Options document published earlier in 2018, which also acknowledges that, as a popular retirement area, Broadland is likely to see further growth in its older population. The central Norfolk Strategic Housing Market Assessment, 2017, indicates that currently, 38% of Broadland's population is over 55. This is predicted to rise to 44% by 2036. Discussions with Taverham Parish Council have also confirmed that there is an acute need for homes that are attractive to older people in the area. The knock-on-effect of providing a substantial number of homes for older people, will be to free up often under-occupied family housing, by enabling downsizing.



The proposed development would provide a mix of housing sizes, to meet local needs, including affordable housing. Scott Properties are keen to work with the Local Planning Authority to identify the appropriate mix and potential delivery mechanisms to ensure that the affordable housing offer best responds to local needs. This could, for instance, entail the creation of a Community Land Trust, or other alternative delivery vehicle.

In addition, the proposal includes 5 ha of playing fields, which will form an extension to the existing playing fields to the south. This would provide a significant community benefit.

The proposed layout has been designed to create a high quality and safe environment. The existing planting belts, which mark the historic field boundaries, have been used as an opportunity to retain and enhance them to provide key leisure and ecological spaces. All development adjacent to these areas is orientated to have positive frontages onto the landscaping, to maximise the opportunities for safe and accessible walking and cycling routes, and to ensure that the planting is not 'backlanded' but forms an integral part of the development.

The layout proposes a gap of 50-60m between the proposed dwellings and the Broadland Northway to assist with noise attenuation. If necessary, the existing bunding along the edge of the road can be augmented and/or supplemented with acoustic fencing.

As previously described, the site is close to a wide range of existing services and facilities within Taverham and Thorpe Marriott, including education (early years through to sixth form), healthcare, leisure and recreation, employment and retail. In addition, there is a good local bus network with

regular services to the surrounding villages as well as to Norwich City Centre.

The proposed development seeks to enhance existing formal open space provision, through a 5-acre extension to the existing sports pitches to the immediate south of the site. In addition, a network of green spaces and parks is proposed throughout the development, providing opportunities for local play areas should this be deemed necessary.

A safe new access point to the site via a roundabout on Fir Covert Road has been designed, and has been subject to pre-application discussions with the Local Highway Authority. This entrance will be landscaped as a pleasant green area, with small scale development behind new hedgerows to reflect the existing built form and massing on Fir Covert Road. An extensive network of walking and cycling routes will be provided throughout the development, including a link to the existing cycleway at the roundabout at the junction of Fir Covert Road and the Broadland Northway.

In light of the above, it is clear that the proposals would meet the social objective of the planning system.

## **Environmental Objective**

***The environmental objective defined in paragraph 8 of the NPPF, is to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.***

The proposed development will help achieve this objective in a number of ways. The site is not subject to any landscape, nature or heritage designations, and will have minimal impact on the natural, built or historic environment. It is located immediately adjacent to the settlement boundary, and represents a logical extension to the settlement, occupying the space between the edge of the modern development along Kingswood Avenue and the newly constructed Broadland Northway, which provides a natural boundary to the north. There are no known designated or un-designated heritage assets in the vicinity of the site; the closest Listed Buildings are some 1.5km away from the site.

There are a number of designated nature sites within 2km of the site, most notably the River Wensum which is both a SSSI and a SAC, as well as Marriott's Way County Wildlife Site to the east and Walsingham Plantation to the west. The scale of the proposed development, coupled with the provision within the site of a network of footpaths, should ensure that the development has no adverse impact on these sites through increased recreational pressure. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the site has been undertaken by Geosphere, which identifies that parts of the site might provide suitable habitat for a number of Protected Species, and recommends further species-specific survey work is undertaken at the appropriate times of year, to establish absence/presence. If any Protected Species are found to be present, then appropriate mitigation can be undertaken to ensure that there are no adverse impacts on biodiversity, and there are a number of opportunities to provide biodiversity enhancements through, for example, new planting.

The site is well contained within the landscape, and will have minimal visual impact. The bunding along the southern side of the Broadland Northway will minimise views from the north,



and the existing development along Fir Covert Road will perform the same function from the west. The existing tree belt which runs along the southern boundary will screen the development to a significant degree from the south, and the existing tree belt which runs north-south will screen some views from the east. Additional planting is proposed along the eastern site boundaries.

Development in this location, which is not particularly sensitive in terms of the natural, built and historic environment, will assist in protecting other, more sensitive locations, from development pressure.

The proposals make effective use of the land; the density of development (excluding the 5-acre playing field) would be approximately 15.5 dph. This is considered to represent an appropriate balance, given the edge-of-settlement location and the inclusion of a significant number of bungalows which are inevitably more 'space hungry'.

The site is located within Flood Zone 1, and is at low risk of flooding, including from surface water. A full Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy will be prepared to support the application, to ensure that surface water can be managed in an effective and sustainable way, on site. A low-carbon solution comprising SUDs is envisaged.

It is clear, therefore, that the proposed development would meet the environmental objective of the planning system.

## Delivery

Scott Properties have a proven track record of delivering housing across East Anglia and the South East of England, and their intention would be to commence work on site

immediately upon securing planning consent. It is envisaged that work would begin on the bungalows first, as Scott Properties intend to build these themselves through their sister company, Scott Residential. The remainder of the site would be developed by a residential partner. Scott Properties are in the process of selecting a preferred partner. A partner will be selected on the basis of, amongst other things, their ability to demonstrate a track record of delivery.

Initial technical work on highways and infrastructure has already been commissioned, and has confirmed that there are no technical constraints to delivery.

The site is suitable, viable and available and therefore, in accordance with the NPPF, entirely deliverable. It is envisaged that the 200 dwellings would be delivered within 4 years.

## Conclusion

The site is entirely suitable for residential development; it represents a logical extension to the settlement, within the

natural boundary formed by the Broadland Northway to the north. The proposal should be seen in the context of paragraph 72 of the NPPF, which recognises that the supply of large numbers of new homes can often be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns, provided that they are well located and designed, and are supported by sufficient and necessary infrastructure. The discussion above demonstrates that the proposed development would meet the three objectives of the planning system. The delivery of 200 new homes, 100 of which would be bungalows/almshouses aimed at the older population, in a highly sustainable location in easy reach of significant employment opportunities, services and facilities, would be of significant benefit. Through careful design and technical work, it can be ensured that there are no adverse impacts that would outweigh these significant benefits.

Regardless of the 5-year land supply position, the proposal represents sustainable development, and should, therefore, be supported.



## PLANNING APPLICATION SUPPORTING INFORMATION

We intend to submit a detailed application for development on the site to Broadland District Council. Based on a review of the Council's Validation Requirements, we have identified that in addition to national requirements, the following documents will need to be submitted as part of an application for the site:

- Design and Access Statement;
- Archaeological Assessment;
- Arboricultural Assessment;
- Contamination Desk Top Study;
- Energy Statement;
- Environmental Impact Assessment (Screening);
- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy;
- Heritage Statement;
- Landscape Assessment;
- Planning Obligations Heads of Terms;
- Planning Statement;
- Statement of Community Involvement;
- Transport Assessment;
- Travel Plan (potentially required) and
- Viability Assessment (if appropriate).

As part of this pre-application, we request that the above list is reviewed and confirmed, as necessary.

## INFORMATION SOUGHT FROM THE COUNCIL

We would be grateful for comments on the following:

- The principle of development;
- The indicative layout;
- The quantum and location of open spaces;
- Proposed access arrangements and highway infrastructure works;
- The potential impact on identified heritage assets;
- CIL/Section 106 requirements;
- The statutory consultees and third parties to engage with as part of the pre-application process; and
- Any reasons or issues which could result in permission for the proposed development being refused.

If, when commenting on the above, comments could be sought from relevant internal / external departments, such as highways, heritage and design, it would be greatly appreciated.





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