Application Numbers: S/2013/1376/NA & S/2013/1377/NA
Application expiry date: 7 November 2013
Parish: Outside of South Northamptonshire District
Case Officer: Suzanne Taylor
Applicant: Northampton Borough Council

Location:
Land south of Rowtree Road and West of Windingbrook Lane
Collingtree

Description:
Neighbouring authority consultation; Outline Application for the Northampton South Sustainable Urban Extension to comprise up to 1000 dwellings, a mixed use local centre, a site for a primary school, green infrastructure including formal and informal open space, reconfiguration and extension of Collingtree Park Golf Course, demolition of all existing buildings and structures within the site, new vehicular accesses off Windingbrook Lane and Rowtree Road, car parking, sustainable drainage systems (including flood risk betterment) and infrastructure (including highway improvements) all matters reserved except access.

AND

Neighbouring authority consultation; 380 dwellings served by a new access from Windingbrook Lane, and the re-configuration of part of the Collingtree Park Golf Course including a new temporary hole 17 and the demolition of all existing buildings and structures within the site, green infrastructure including formal and informal open space, car parking, sustainable drainage systems (including flood risk betterment) and infrastructure (including highway improvements).

RECOMMENDATION – That SNC raises no objections to these applications.

S/2013/1376/NA
WARD: Sites are within Northampton Borough (adjoin Harpole & Grange Ward)
WARD MEMBER: Cllr Mrs Ann Addison & Cllr Mrs Janet Eliot
REASON FOR Adjoining authority consultations on a major planning
1. APPLICATION SITE

1.1 The outline site comprises approximately 96 hectares of land and is located on the southern edge of Northampton Borough. The detailed application for 380 dwellings consists of approximately 27 hectares of the easternmost section of the overall site identified in the outline application. The site lies approximately 2.6 kilometres from Junction 15 of the M1 and is located 4.5 kilometres to the south of Northampton town centre. The A45 / London Road found to the east of the site provides access to the town centre.

1.2 To the north lies the residential neighbourhood of East Hunsbury and to the north-east is the settlement of Wootton. Collingtree Village lies south-east of the site. The application site is an edge of town location and lies within a residential context, with green infrastructure provided by Collingtree Park Golf Course and the Wootton Brook. The western boundary to the site is formed by agricultural field boundaries. The farmland to the west is severed by the ‘Northampton Loop’ of the West Coast Main Line railway. The southern boundary of the site is formed by the M1 motorway with access to the motorway via Junctions 15 and 15a.

1.3 The east and north of the site abut the residential roads of Windingbrook Road and Rowtree Road respectively. These roads form part of the Collingtree Park area. Part of Collingtree Park Golf Course lies within the application boundary.

2. CONSTRAINTS

2.1 The farmland within South Northants, to the south of the M1 and the application site, is subject to Policy EV8 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan – Important Local Gap.

3. PROPOSAL

3.1 The outline proposals for the whole site are for 1,000 dwellings and would amount to an average density of 33 dwellings per hectare.

3.2 An area of 0.6 hectares will be provided for local centre uses comprising:

- 450m² net convenience retail floorspace;
- 360m² of flexible commercial floorspace with the potential to accommodate further retail (use class A1), financial and professional services (use class A2), food and drink (use class A3) and non-residential institutions such as a dental practice (use class D2);
- A community facility measuring 725m² to accommodate a variety of community activities within meeting rooms (use class D1); and
- A proportionate amount of car parking.

3.3 The net developable area of the overall outline site is approximately 30.03 hectares once the extent of the golf course and open space requirements are taken into account. A 2.03 hectare site is provided to accommodate a 2 form entry primary school which will form part of the local centre at a centrally accessible location within
3.4 31% of the total site area is proposed for strategic open space (formal and informal open space).

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 None.

5. PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

5.1 None.

6. KEY ISSUES

6.1 Principle of development.
6.2 Visual impact on South Northamptonshire.
6.3 Highways and traffic impact on South Northamptonshire.

7. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

7.1 The development plan consists of the saved policies in the Northampton Local Plan (NLP). The East Midlands Regional Strategy (RSS8) has been revoked and is no longer a material planning consideration. The ‘saved’ policies of the NLP were adopted prior to 2004, and unless NBC can demonstrate a clear, robust and deliverable five-year supply of housing land, the Development Plan can no-longer be considered to contain up-to-date housing policies in accordance with the NPPF. It is also important to note that a five-year supply of housing land is required to be maintained on a ‘rolling’ basis.

7.2 Policy N5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (examination stage) identifies this site as Northampton South Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE). The JCS, as amended by the Proposed Changes, was submitted to the Secretary of State (SoS) for Examination on 31st December 2012. A SoS appointed Planning Inspector conducted a Public Examination (EiP), into the Plan from 16th April to 1st May 2013. The EiP is scheduled to sit for a further period in March 2014 (for 3 days) to hear further evidence about the housing numbers and assessment of major housing sites, and it seems that the JCS may not now become adopted before mid-2014.

7.3 Relevant national policy guidance is set out in the NPPF.

7.4 The area within South Northamptonshire, to the south of the application site is subject to Policy EV8: Important Local Gap, of the SNLP.

8. CONSULTATIONS

8.1 These have been undertaken by NBC. Comments will be made directly to them.
9. REPRESENTATIONS

9.1 These will be made directly to NBC as the determining authority. However, 3 emails have been received by SNC from residents of Northampton objecting to the applications on the following grounds:

- The proximity of the development to the M1 motorway would result in a poor living environment for future occupiers due to the health risks from air and noise pollution.
- Increased risk of flooding for existing residents in the locality (within Northampton).
- Increased traffic congestion in the locality (within Northampton).
- Prematurity; the JCS is still under examination and has not been adopted.
- Harmful impact on local wildlife.

9.2 The issues raised by these residents are matters for NBC, the determining authority, to address and do not impact upon the interests of SNC or our remit as a consultee.

10. OFFICER’S REPORT

10.1 PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT. The site is identified in the West Northants Joint Core Strategy (JCS) as Northampton South SUE. The SUE policies within the JCS have been supported by this Authority and therefore the principle of a residential development of circa 1000 dwellings, along with related facilities and infrastructure, on this site has been accepted.

10.2 Policy N5 of the Joint Core Strategy (Northampton South SUE) is set out below:

THE BOUNDARY OF THE NORTHAMPTON SOUTH SUSTAINABLE URBAN EXTENSION IS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP (FIGURE 5). THE DEVELOPMENT WILL MAKE PROVISION FOR:
- 1,000 DWELLINGS;
- CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS ONE PRIMARY SCHOOL TO 420 PLACES;
- A LOCAL CENTRE TO INCLUDE LOCAL RETAIL FACILITIES (INCLUDING A CONVENIENCE STORE NOT EXCEEDING 500 SQM TRADING FLOORSPACE), HEALTH CARE, SERVICES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES;
- AN INTEGRATED TRANSPORT NETWORK FOCUSED ON SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT MODES INCLUDING PUBLIC TRANSPORT, WALKING AND CYCLING WITH STRONG LINKS TO ADJOINING NEIGHBOURHOODS, EMPLOYMENT AREAS AND THE TOWN CENTRE;
- STRUCTURAL GREENSPACE AND WILDLIFE CORRIDORS AS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP (FIGURE 5);
- OPEN SPACE AND LEISURE PROVISION;
- ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE SITE AND REQUIRED MITIGATION;
- SURFACE WATER MANAGEMENT AND FLOOD ATTENUATION SCHEMES;
AND

• FLOOD MITIGATION FROM ALL SOURCES.

NECESSARY INFRASTRUCTURE IS REQUIRED TO BE PHASED ALONGSIDE THE DELIVERY OF THE DEVELOPMENT. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A MASTERPLAN.

10.2 The Northampton South SUE is situated between the existing urban edge of Northampton to the north and the M1 motorway to the south. The village of Collingtree and the residential area at Collingtree Park lie to the east of the site whilst the western edge is formed by strong field boundaries.

10.3 The allocated site includes the existing Collingtree Park Golf Club which will be reconfigured and retained as part of the proposal. Most of the remainder of the allocation is agricultural land under pasture and arable cultivation. Within the site the land slopes gently down from the south west to the flood plain of the Wootton Brook. In terms of landscape the site is well contained and is of relatively low landscape and visual sensitivity.

10.4 Properties in close proximity to the Wootton Brook currently experience problems associated with flooding during large storm events. Through the reconfiguration of the golf course (a compatible use within a flood plain area) the development of the SUE will provide a positive environmental impact to flood alleviation from the Wootton Brook on the surrounding area.

10.5 An area of the site is designated as a County Wildlife Site, which includes Wootton Brook and associated water bodies. The site contains a number of mature hedgerows and trees, together with areas of rough and wet grassland. These key habitat features, together with the protected species they support, should be preserved within the development.

10.6 Due to the proximity of the site to the M1 itself, Junction 15 of the M1 and the associated Air Quality Management Areas, mitigation measures will be required to address the issues of noise and air pollution.

10.7 There are no designated or known non-designated cultural heritage sites that are likely to place constraints on the development of the site. There are known remains of prehistoric and Roman date in the vicinity of Wootton Brook which indicates that there is a medium to high risk of archaeological remains being present in the site. Further assessment of the archaeological potential of the site will be required.

10.8 Policy N5 below details the required elements of development. A masterplan will be required to be submitted alongside any proposal to demonstrate how the land use elements positively respond to context, design issues, connectivity and sustainable planning requirements.

10.9 Officers therefore contend that there are no ‘in principle’ objections to the proposals. The proposals now being consulted on would make a significant contribution towards addressing the housing land supply shortfall in the Northampton Related Development Area (NRDA). It should be remembered that parts of the NRDA (excluding this SUE) lie within SNC’s administrative area. This SUE should therefore be supported as it is considered important for these and other sites within NBC’s administrative area to come forward to help ensure delivery of the housing requirement within the NRDA.
10.10 VISUAL IMPACT ON SOUTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE. The topography of the land is such that there are only very limited views of the site from South Northamptonshire. The M1 is situated in a cutting with large landscaped embankments either side and consequently there are very limited views of the site from this district. Officers are satisfied that the development would not result in any serious harm to the visual amenities of this district.

10.11 In arriving at this view Officers have noted that the majority of buildings on the site would be 2 and 2 and ½ storeys with occasional three storey units. 15m would be the maximum height for all buildings, including the primary school. It is also acknowledged that any views of the SUE would be seen against the backdrop of other existing residential development in Northampton.

10.12 HIGHWAYS AND TRAFFIC IMPACT ON SOUTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE. Officers do not consider that there would be any significant highway impacts upon this district as a result of the proposed accesses onto Windingbrook Lane and Rowtree Road, both of which are wholly within Northampton. NCC are the Highway Authority for the application and have the interests of both South Northants and Northampton Borough in mind in appraising this application. No comments had been made by the Highway Authority at the time of writing this report.

10.13 The Highways Agency have issued a holding objection for a period of 2 months (until the beginning of January 2014) to enable discussions about the required S106 contributions and the mechanism for its provision to facilitate improvements to the A45. These, however, are matters for NBC to resolve as the determining authority and would not have a significant impact upon this District.

11. CONCLUSIONS

11.1 In light of the above it is recommended that SNC raises no objections to the proposals on the basis that it would not cause any serious harm to this District, would contribute to the implementation of policies in the Joint Core Strategy and would deliver a significant proportion of the housing requirement in the NRDA.