
Planning Statement

Full Planning Application for the Development of
300 Dwellings on Land at Union Road, Onehouse,
Stowmarket

Planning Statement

Land at Union Road, Onehouse, Stowmarket



Contents

1.	Introduction	2
2.	Site and Surroundings	3
3.	Planning Policy Context	4
4.	Analysis	7
5.	Conclusions	9

Planning Statement

Land at Union Road, Onehouse, Stowmarket



Pre-Introduction note: This April 2016 'Abridged' version of the Planning Statement has been prepared for information purposes and is to be read alongside the draft Development Brief for the site dated March 2016. The site has 'reserve' site status and as such, it will be necessary for the future planning application for development of the site to assess the principle of the proposal and its timing within the context of this Development Plan status. It is not the purpose of the Development Brief to justify the principle of development in planning policy terms and the timing for this. In acknowledgement of this, it is the specific purpose of this 'abridged' version of the Planning Statement to allow readers of the Development Brief to understand the planning policy justification for development of the site and why this is being brought forward now. As such, this version of the Planning Statement deals only with those policies contained within the Development Plan and Government planning policy and guidance, which are relevant to this aspect of the justification for the proposal.

It is important to note that a final version of the Planning Statement is to be submitted as part of the future detailed planning application for the development. Preparation of the detailed planning application to be submitted remains in progress and will be supported by a full suite of technical documentation and information. The final version of the Planning Statement will therefore assess those finalised development proposals in light of all relevant planning policies contained within the Development Plan and also Government planning policy and guidance. Consequently, this abridged version of the Planning Statement will be added to. It may be the case that there will need to be some adaptation or revision of the text contained within this version, to account for any changed circumstances and further information that becomes available before submission. Nevertheless, it is expected that the broad thrust of the planning policy justification for the principle of development and the timing of delivery, will remain unchanged in its overall scope.

1. Introduction

1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application by Hopkins Homes for the development of 300 dwellings on land at Union Road, Onehouse, Stowmarket.

1.2. The plan led approach at section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 necessitates that development proposals are determined in accordance with the Statutory Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. As such, the purpose of this statement, is to assess and justify the proposed development within this planning policy context. In doing so, this statement is set out as follows:

- Section 2: Site and Surroundings
Description of the application site and surrounding area.
- Section 3: Planning Policy Context
Identification of relevant national and local policies.
- Section 4: Planning Appraisal
An assessment of the proposal within the context of the development plan and other material considerations.
- Section 5: Conclusions
Concluding assessment of the proposal.

2. Site and Surroundings

Location

- 2.1. The application site is located within the local authority area of Mid Suffolk District Council and partly within the local council areas of Stowmarket Town Council and Onehouse Parish Council. Geographically and physically, the site adjoins the existing western edge of Stowmarket.

The Application Site

- 2.2. The site extends to approximately 13 hectares in area and comprises of agricultural land. The site is bound by mature hedgerows and trees around its perimeter. The site is bisected by a mature hedgerow which runs from east to west across the centre of the site. In overall terms, the site slopes from north to south, down away from its northern boundary with Union Road to its southern boundary with Finborough Road.

Planning History

- 2.3. There is no planning history relating to the application site itself.
- 2.4. The recent planning history for land to the north of the site forming part of the Stowmarket 'North and North West' allocation site is of relevance to this proposal. Planning permission for 215 dwellings has been approved relating to land at the northern end of the allocation (application reference 2722/13). It is known that planning proposals for 585 dwellings with associated facilities will come forward within the remainder of the allocation, meaning that 800 dwellings are to be brought forward in total.

3. Planning Policy Context

3.1. The plan led approach at Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 necessitates that development proposals are determined in accordance with the Statutory Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. An important material consideration in the determination of planning applications is that of Government planning policy and guidance, which takes the form of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) respectively. The site lies within the local authority area of Mid Suffolk District Council. The parts of the Development Plan that are of principal relevance to this proposal are as follows:

- The Adopted Mid Suffolk Core Strategy 2008 Development Plan Document (the Core Strategy); and,
- The Stowmarket Area Action Plan 2013 Development Plan Document (the SAAP)

The Adopted Mid Suffolk Core Strategy 2008

3.2. The Core Strategy provides district-wide policies at the strategic level. The Core Strategy provides for the principle of the growth of Stowmarket to the north-west. This is illustrated by the Key Diagram to the Core Strategy.

The Stowmarket Area Action Plan 2013

3.3. Within the SAAP, as shown on Map 6.2 'Stowmarket North and North West', the site is identified as a 'Site to be considered for allocation at the first review of the SAAP'. It is the identification of the site as such, that can be considered to mean the site has status as a 'reserve' site. The identification of the site on Map 6.2 is reflected in Paragraph 6.58 of the SAAP, which states that:

"Map 6.2 indicates land between Union Road and Finborough Road which will be considered for future development at the first review of the SAAP".

3.4. The site lies immediately to the south of the Stowmarket 'North and North West' allocation, which is collectively known as 'Land around Chilton Leys'. In terms of this collective allocation, and the land at Union Road, Paragraph 6.67 states that:

"it is estimated that this collective area could yield up to 1,000 dwellings during the plan period with the potential for 200 additional dwellings at Union Road which is subject to the first review of the SAAP".

Mid Suffolk Development Plan Evidence Base

- 3.5. The evidence base for Mid Suffolk's Development Plan is also a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Of significance to this proposal is the Council's current Annual Monitoring Report, and the data contained therein, which sets out the Council's current position in terms of housing land supply. The Council's most recent AMR is for 2014-15 and is dated June 2015. Table 15 and paragraph 4.12.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 3.6. The NPPF was published in March 2012 and sets out the Governments' objectives for delivering sustainable development within a single concise document. The NPPF is a material consideration in the determination of all planning applications as confirmed by Paragraph 2, which states:

'Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in the preparation of local and neighborhood plans, and is a material consideration in planning decisions. Planning policies and decisions must reflect and where appropriate promote relevant EU obligations and statutory requirements.'

- 3.7. The Government has made it clear through the NPPF that the planning system should positively embrace well conceived development to deliver the economic growth necessary and the housing we need to create inclusive and mixed communities. The NPPF seeks to deliver sustainable development and this is a trend which runs through the entire framework. The NPPF endorses a presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in Paragraph 14, which states:

"At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking. ...

... For decision-taking this means: ...

Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, granting planning permission unless:

- *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; or*
- *Specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted".*

- 3.8. Against the background of paragraph 14, paragraph 49 requires that:

"Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites".

Planning Statement

Land at Union Road, Onehouse, Stowmarket



3.9. The requirement for local planning authorities to maintain a five year supply of housing land is set out at paragraph 47, which states that:

“To boost significantly the supply of housing, local planning authorities should: ...

- *Identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years worth of housing against their housing requirements ... ”.*

4. Analysis

- 4.1. In view of the planning policy context for the proposal and accounting for other material planning considerations, the following key matters are identified as being important to the determination of this planning application. An assessment of these considerations against the Development Plan and other material considerations is set out below.

The Principle of Development

- 4.2. The starting point for consideration of the principle of development are the policies of the Development Plan as they affect the site. In this regard, the site is identified by the SAAP 'to be considered for allocation at the first review of the SAAP'. As such, the Council has already accepted the principle of the site's development for housing, but in view of the site's 'reserve' status, it should then be a consideration of when the site should be brought forward.
- 4.3. In terms of the consideration of timing, the SAAP is clear that the site will be considered for future development at the first review of the SAAP. That point has not yet been reached. However, and in view that the principle of future development of the site has already been accepted, there are weighty considerations that exist, which are considered to justify the site's delivery now, rather than await the process for review of the SAAP, which could take a number of years to conclude.
- 4.4. These considerations are twofold. The first is that the Council is unable to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites. The Council accepts that this is the case as identified in its latest evidence about the current supply of housing land in the District, as set out identified within the 2014-15 AMR dated June 2015. As identified at Section 3, the Council's position is that it has 3.3 years of housing land supply.
- 4.5. In view that the principle of development of the site has been accepted, it is therefore considered that development of the site can viewed as being sustainable. Then, by virtue that the Council can only demonstrate a 3.3 year housing land supply, its housing policies must be considered to be out of date. It is therefore considered that the SAAP is out of date in the specific regard that the site will be considered for future development at the first review of the SAAP. As such, it is considered that on this basis alone that development of the site for housing should now be considered to be acceptable in principle and at this point in time.
- 4.6. The second consideration is that fewer dwellings will be brought forward within the Stowmarket 'North and North West' allocation than was anticipated by the SAAP. As is identified at Section 3, the SAAP anticipates that 1,000 dwellings will be brought forward within that allocation, with the opportunity to bring forward a further 200 dwellings at Union Road (the application site). As such the Council has accepted that 1,200 dwellings could be brought forward across the two sites.



- 4.7. However, as is also identified at Section 3, only 800 dwellings are planned to come forward within the Stowmarket 'North and North West' allocation, totalling a deficit of 200 dwellings against the 1,000 dwellings that were anticipated by the SAAP. As such, it is considered that this represents a significant material change in circumstance since the adoption of the SAAP that also justifies delivery of the Union Road site now. Turning to the amount of 300 dwellings that are proposed, when combined with the 800 dwellings that are expected to come forward to the north, this will amount to 1,100 dwellings, or 100 fewer than was anticipated by the SAAP to come forward across the two sites. As such, it is considered that there should be no question in principle as to the amount of development proposed, albeit that consideration of the site specific capacity of the site is required.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1. As is assessed at Section 4, it is concluded that housing development of the site is acceptable in principle. The current Development Plan sets the timing for this within the context of a review of the SAAP. However, there are weighty considerations that exist, which are considered to justify the site's delivery now, rather than await the process for review of the SAAP, which could take a number of years to conclude. Those considerations are the Council's failure to provide for a 5 year supply of housing land and the actual delivery of 200 fewer dwellings within the Stowmarket 'North and North West' allocation than was planned for by the SAAP. It is also therefore concluded that the Union Road site should be delivered now.