From: Matthew Neal

Sent: 12 September 2014 16:48

To: Alan Griffith

Subject: Wilmcote/Pathlow site allocations for the Neighbourhood Plan

Dear Mr Griffith,

After reading the report produced by David Holmes and following a visit to Wilmcote and Pathlow to view the 23 sites, I have now considered all the information and provide my analysis and recommendations as follows:-

Comments on Report by David Holmes:

I generally agree with the content of the report. However, the following comments are submitted for consideration:

Paragraph 1.2 - ‘…some 11 [units] can be treated as commitments…’ I attach some notes on this matter for your information. For the reasons specified, the number of dwellings which would count toward to the Core Strategy quantum of development based on recent planning permissions is 7, not 11.

Paragraph 2.2 – The Core Strategy includes Wilmcote as a Local Service Village, but does not specifically refer to Pathlow, since it is below the threshold of a LSV. The Core Strategy has not yet been submitted to the SoS. It is hoped that it will be sent by the end of this month.

Paragraph 2.4 – Wilmcote is a Category 2 LSV and it is expected that each settlement look to achieve the ‘upper end’ of the range of housing provision (i.e. 75 in the case of Wilmcote).

Paragraph 3.2 – Agree. This is the area covering sites 12-18 and site ‘B’ on my version of the location plan (attached for information).

Paragraph 3.4 – Final sentence – agree. This is the reason why I consider site 10 to be unacceptable, given its potential impact on the Conservation Area and the land associated with Mary Arden’s House.

Paragraph 3.5 – Whilst I acknowledge Peter Brett Associates’ comment on the possible ‘broad location’ of growth to the south of the village, I consider that in the short-term, it would be preferable to maintain the existing linear character of the village and utilise potential ‘in-fill’ plots first, before utilising large tracts of agricultural land.

Paragraph 4.3 – I agree with the filtering process for sites 1-4. However, I consider site 5 worthy of consideration.

Paragraph 4.4 – I agree that Pathlow should be discounted. The LSV is Wilmcote, not Pathlow. There are no facilities at Pathlow to support additional housing in this location, there is no physical/safe pedestrian link between Pathlow and Wilmcote.

Analysis of sites:

Para 5.1 – I agree with his comments on sites 1 to 4 in respect of access issues. Additionally, site 3 would be classified as ‘backland’ development (development of rear gardens) which, as well as being inherently difficult to secure, do not sit well with national or local plan policy in this regard. Additionally, it has come to light that land to the south of this cluster of sites (highlighted orange on the scanned plan) is a SSSI and this may have implications for developing sites within the proximity of this SSSI.

Para 5.2 – Site 5 – there is no analysis of this site in the report to help understand why it should not be considered. Whilst I agree there would be public views of the site from Aston Cantlow Road and distant views from a network of public footpaths to the north of the site, development in this location would not, if designed well, look out of place given the linear ‘ribbon’ type development along Aston Cantlow Road to the west on both sides of the road. I consider views in and out of the village would remain and as such I consider the site is worthy of consideration.

Site 6 – I agree that this site is worthy of consideration. I also consider the land associated with the caravan site should form part of the overall site, doubling the site and providing more options for development. I do not see how this area of land could be designated as ‘potential nature conservation value’ by WCC – the site visit showed rough mown grass with a number of small saplings.

Sites 7 and 8 – I agree that the re-development of both these sites are potentially feasible as they are both visually well self-contained and have access onto Aston Cantlow Road.

Site ‘A’ – I agree that this tract of land is too large given the scale of requirement for new housing for Wilmcote.

Para 5.3 – I consider that sites 9 and 10 are not preferable due to the potential impact on the Conservation Area and Mary Arden’s House, in respect of site 10 specifically.

Site 11 – I agree this site would not be appropriate for housing, given the detrimental impact on the Conservation Area and the setting of the listed buildings to the east of the site (including St. Andrew’s Church and the School). However, use of the land for school playing fields in lieu of site 6, given the site’s proximity to the school would appear, on the face of it, to be a potential and sensible option.

5.4 – Agree, with the exception that part of site 12 may be a possibility for a small number of dwellings (maximum of 3?). However, I consider this could be classified as a ‘reserve’ site.

Conclusions of report

Para 6.1 – I have not reached quite the same conclusions as Mr Holmes, but in the main, I agree with his recommendations. My conclusions are set out below.

Para 6.2 – I do not consider this land is necessary to provide the quantum of development necessary for the village and large development on this land without first looking at in-fill and smaller sites in the first instance would potentially cause more substantial harm to the local landscape.

Para 6.3 – I agree with the importance of awareness surrounding wider Green Belt issues.

Further comments:

It is noted that the majority of the proposed sites are ‘greenfield’ sites (except for Wilmcote Sports & Social Club – site 8, which would be classified as part brownfield and part greenfield). However, apart from the possible re-development of site 8, the tour of the village and a trawl of google maps appears to indicate there are very few remaining opportunities for re-development of brownfield/infill sites within the village. One potential site not included in this report, but may be a possible site worth considering is the garage site off Glebe Estate. This would be classified as a brownfield site and depending upon orientation and scale of build, may be appropriate for the erection of 2 or 3 dwellings.

Therefore, following analysis of the details as set out in the report and following my site visits, my conclusions are:-

Sites 1, 2, 3, 4, A, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, B, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 23 are not suitable for development. Site 11 would be suitable for use as playing field for the school (replacing land lost on site 6).

Sites 5, 6, 7, 8, 12 and the garage site off Glebe Estate would be potentially suitable for development, with the following (approximate) number of dwellings per site:

Site 5 12 dwellings

Site 6 30 dwellings

Site 7 5 dwellings

Site 8 25 dwellings

Garage Site 2 dwellings

Site 12\* 3 dwellings

This would provide an additional 77 dwellings including site 12 and 74 dwellings without. Site 12 has an asterisk since it would, in my opinion, be a ‘reserve’ site given its sensitive location.

If you add this this total to the 7 dwellings granted planning permission since 2011 and you would arrive at a total of between 81 and 84 dwellings for the plan period. As such, this would achieve the quantum of development required through the Core Strategy through the utilisation of sites close to the heart of the village, whilst looking to respect and protect the existing characteristics of the village.

In coming to these recommendations, regard has been taken to the 2012 Landscape Sensitivity Study of Local Service Villages. In terms of the sites considered here, site ‘A’ on my map is within zone Wi05 labelled as ‘medium’ sensitivity. All other earmarked sites on the periphery of Wilmcote are in various zones labelled as ‘high/medium’ sensitivity. Pathlow was not included within the study, since it is not classified as a Local Service Village. Whilst I acknowledge the large tract of virgin agricultural land to the south of the village of Wilmcote has been ranked as an area of less visual impact than the other zones, for the reasons given above, I consider the re-development of land within zone Wi05 before exhausting other ‘in-fill’ sites and sites for smaller numbers of dwellings in the first instance would be inappropriate in overall terms, when factoring in other landscape character assessments including an assessment of Green Belt openness, the existing and future ‘form’ of the settlement and the need to comply with national and local plan policy on matters of large-scale development on greenfield land.

This assessment has been included to provide a basic indication of potential harm to the landscape through developing or re-developing each site. This is the opinion of the author and does not fully analyse the more complex issues of appropriate/inappropriate development in the Green Belt or practicability of developing the site due to technical matters such as highways assess etc which would need to be assessed with other professional bodies to assess potential deliverability. It is merely information necessary to help ‘rank’ the sites assessed in terms of potential harm to new built form on the local landscape.

As well as scanned copies of the details to show how I have calculated 7 rather than 11 dwellings as ‘commitments’ and the map referred to above, I also attach notes providing basic details on site histories etc, for your information and records.

I hope this is of assistance. Should you have any questions relating to the content of this e-mail, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

Matthew.

Matthew Neal

Neighbourhood Planning Officer

Chief Executive’s Unit