

14/15/0008

MR J HUNT

**CHANGE OF USE OF LAND FOR THE SITING OF A MOBILE HOME ON LAND ADJOINING NORTH END FARM, NORTH END, CREECH ST MICHAEL**

Location: LAND ADJOINING NORTH END FARM, NORTH END, CREECH ST MICHAEL, TAUNTON, TA3 5ED

Grid Reference: 327471.126354 Full Planning Permission

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**RECOMMENDATION AND REASON(S)**

Recommended Decision: Refusal

The site lies in a countryside location, where it is the policy of the Local Planning Authority to resist new housing development unless it is demonstrated that the proposal serves an appropriate need, such as the need for affordable homes. Whilst the site adjoins the settlement limit, it is not considered that there are no other suitable sites within the rural centre itself, or that the need cannot be met by the affordable homes currently under construction within the village, or other affordable dwellings soon to be constructed in the adjacent Parish. The scheme therefore represents an unjustified dwelling outside of settlement limits that would set an undesirable precedent for future development. As such, the proposal is contrary to Policy DM2 (Development in the Countryside) of the Taunton Deane Core Strategy.

**RECOMMENDED CONDITION(S) (if applicable)**

Notes to Applicant

**PROPOSAL**

The site is an overgrown grass field at North End, just outside of the settlement boundary. There are currently two metal storage containers located within the site. The site lies on a significantly higher level than the road and is accessed via a steep concrete/hardcore track. To the west is North End Farm, a listed property, which lies on a lower level than the site, to the east is Highfield, a residential property on a similar level to the site. A linear line of dwellings lie opposite the site on a lower level.

This application seeks planning permission for the siting of a mobile home, in the form of a two bedroom log cabin in the north-west corner of the site. This is stated to be required for a person of retirement age, over 60 due to the lack of affordable retirement housing available within the village. Occupation would be by the

applicant, a retired person who lived at Highfield Farm until 2005 and has since lived in Taunton. The applicant has two brothers and an aunt living within the village and wishes to return. He would like a two bedroom dwelling with all accommodation on the ground floor.

## **CONSULTATION AND REPRESENTATION RESPONSES**

### **Consultees**

*CREECH ST MICHAEL PARISH COUNCIL* - Support – Wish to avoid a precedent but recognise site would provide an affordable accessible dwelling for aged local people (who have lived in the Parish for at least one year prior). A static caravan existed on site 20 years ago.

*SCC - TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENT GROUP* - Refer to standing advice

- Visibility splays of 2.4 x 43m in either direction, measured to the nearside carriageway edge.
- Pedestrian visibility splays of 2 x 2m to the rear of the footway.
- Provision of adequate drainage so that surface water does not drain from the site onto the highway or vice versa.
- The access should have a minimum width of 3m
- The access should be properly consolidated for the first 5m and must not exceed a gradient of 1 in 10 for the first 6m from the edge of the adopted highway.
- Vehicular entrance gates should be set back a minimum distance of 6m from the carriageway edge and should open inwards. Pedestrian gates should open inwards.
- On site turning space should be provided where the proposal derives access from a classified road.
- Turning will be required, independent of the necessary parking provision where an access is onto a classified road

*WESSEX WATER* - New water supply and waste water connections will be required from Wessex Water to serve this development. Suggest note regarding application forms guidance and further information.

*DRAINAGE ENGINEER* - No comments received

*HOUSING ENABLING* - Housing Enabling does not support this application. Any affordable home would require to be let through the choice based lettings system, Homefinder Somerset or in the case of low cost home ownership applicants vetted through the appropriate process and open to all local residents in housing need

There is a number of affordable homes of varying size and tenure currently being constructed within Creech St Michael in addition to existing affordable housing provision, including older persons accommodation.

## **Representations**

Five letters of objection on the grounds of:

- Land is green agricultural land, outside defined settlement limits for Creech, not to be built on.
- Lot of affordable housing being built, an unnecessary building.
- Steep access and no pedestrian access, obscured views onto busy, fast road. Access hazardous. Transport Development Group raised concerns in past.
- Future pedestrian access would require steep steps, not suitable for elderly person. No footpath access to site.
- Mobile home not in keeping with listed building next door.
- Precedent for further development on the site
- Will overlook surrounding properties, including North End Villa, North End Farm and 1-2 Elderberry Cottages.
- Will look unsightly and affect wildlife. Existing storage containers are an eyesore.
- Creech has been significantly increased in size with in excess of 250 new dwellings being built or already built.
- High voltage power lines crossing site, moving these would cause disturbance to residents and businesses.
- A lot of rubbish has been dumped/burned on the site.
- Plenty of static caravan sites nearby in Bathpool and Monkton Heathfield, which are more suited to this type of dwelling.
- Delivery of sections to site difficult due to steep access and turn into site.

## **PLANNING POLICIES**

DM2 - TD CORE STRATEGY - DEV,

## **LOCAL FINANCE CONSIDERATIONS**

The development of this site would result in payment to the Council of the New Homes Bonus.

### 1 Year Payment

Taunton Deane Borough Council (Lower Tier Authority) £1,079

Somerset County Council (Upper Tier Authority) £270

### 6 Year Payment

Taunton Deane Borough Council (Lower Tier Authority) £6,474

Somerset County Council (Upper Tier Authority) £1,619

## **DETERMINING ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS**

The site lies outside of any settlement limits and is therefore regarded in planning terms, as countryside, where there is a general presumption against residential development. The land has been promoted as part of the SHLAA for residential

development, but was not pursued as a favoured option for the following reason:

*Whilst this site is adjacent to the settlement, it is relatively poorly related to facilities, and integration into the community would be difficult to achieve. Given alternative potential housing sites around the village, this site is not considered suitable as a development extension.*

Outside of defined settlement limits, Policy DM2 applies. There is no provision for new residential development set out within this policy, with the exception of affordable housing (Part 6). Part 6 (a) makes provision for affordable housing adjoining settlement limits, provided no suitable site is available within the rural centre.

Due to the nature of the proposal, being an affordable home for a specific elderly resident, the Council's Housing Enabling Team were consulted to ascertain whether the scheme was considered to be an exception. The scheme did not however receive their support, on the basis that the dwelling was not being let/sold through the appropriate affordable housing systems and was not therefore available to all local residents in housing need, nor were potential occupiers to be checked as eligible. On this basis, the proposed dwelling is not considered to meet the criteria of Part 6.

Furthermore, Policy DM2 requires there to be no suitable sites within the rural centre. The village already has a range of existing affordable housing, including older persons accommodation. In addition, there is a number of affordable homes of varying size and tenure currently being constructed on two different sites within Creech St Michael, amounting to 10 units within the next few months and a further 14 early next year, along with a scheme in nearby Henlade, which would bring forward a further 26 affordable homes in Spring next year. There is therefore a significant choice of local affordable housing shortly becoming available both within Creech St Michael and the neighbouring Ruishton parish. It is acknowledged that these affordable homes may not be in the form of bungalows, however, this does not preclude adaptations being undertaken, as is regularly done, to suit the needs of elderly residents.

Taking the above into account, the proposed scheme represents a new dwelling, outside of settlement limits, on a site poorly related to facilities, where integration into the community would be difficult to achieve, as quoted from the SHLAA assessment. The proposed dwelling is not considered to satisfy the affordable housing criteria, as set out in Part 6 and there are other sites available within the rural centre, also concluded by the SHLAA assessment, including a significant amount of affordable homes shortly becoming available. The agent comments that future provision of affordable housing cannot meet current need, however as set out above, a proportion of these units are nearing completion and will be available within the next couple of months. This is considered a reasonable timescale to meet current need.

As such, the scheme represents a new dwelling, outside of settlement limits, for which there is not considered to be a defined need. It is not considered that the need for an affordable home cannot be met in any other way and granting of this proposal would set an undesirable precedent for future development.

The receipt of the New Homes Bonus is noted, however, it is considered that this matter carries very limited weight in this case.

**In preparing this report the Planning Officer has considered fully the implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.**

**CONTACT OFFICER: Mrs K Walker Tel: 01823 356468**