

Application No:	3/37/20/006
Parish	Watchet
Application Type	Reserved matters
Case Officer:	Jeremy Guise
Grid Ref	Easting: 308061 Northing: 142504
Applicant	Mr J Johnson
Proposal	Application for approval of reserved matters following Outline Application 3/37/17/020 for access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale with additional information on drainage strategy and levels for a residential development of up to 250 No. dwellings
Location	Liddymore Farm, Liddymore Lane, Williton, Watchet, TA23 0UA

Recommendation

Recommended decision: Grant

Recommended Conditions

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

- (A1) Drno 0408-PH1-101 Location Plan
- (A0) Drno 0408-PH1-102 Planning Layout
- (A0) Drno 0408-PH1-102-COL Planning Layout
- (A1) Drno 0408-PH1-103 Street Scenes
- (A0) Drno 0408-PH1-104-1 External Works layout
- (A0) Drno 0408-PH1-104-2 External Works layout
- (A0) Drno 0408-PH1-104-3 External Works layout
- (A0) Drno 0408-PH1-105 Vehicle Tracking Layout
- (A3) Drno 0408-PH1-106 External Detailing
- (A1) Drno 0408-PH1-107 Adoption Plan
- (A1) Drno 0408-PH1-108 Materials Layout
- (A1) Drno 0408-PH1-109 Garages
- (A1) Drno 0408-PH1-110 Management Plan
- (A1) Drno 0408-PH1-111 Storey Height Plan
- (A1) Drno 0408-PH1-112 Movement Strategy Plan
- (A1) Drno 0408-PH1-114 Refuse Plan

- (A3) DrNo 0408-PH1-200 Plans & elevations
- (A3) DrNo 0408-PH1-201 Plans & Elevations
- (A3) DrNo 0408-PH1-202 Plans & elevations
- (A3) DrNo 0408-PH1-203 Plans & Elevations

(A3) DrNo 0408-PH1-204 Plans & Elevations
(A3) DrNo 0408-PH1-205 Plans & Elevations
(A3) DrNo 0408-PH1-206 Plans & Elevations
(A3) DrNo 0408-PH1-207 Plans & Elevations
(A3) DrNo 0408-PH1-208 Plans & Elevations
(A3) DrNo 0408-PH1-209 Plans & Elevations
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(A0) Drno 788-11D - Ph 1 Landscape West
(A0) Drno 788-12D - Ph1 Landscape Central
(A0) Drno 788-13D - Ph1 Landscape East
(A1) Drno 8905-DR-001-P02 Phase 1 Drainage Layout
(A1) Drno 8905-GA-001-P03 Phase 1 Planning Levels
(A1) Drno 8905-RP-001-P02 Phase 1 Road Longsections

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

- 2 Prior to the construction of the buildings, samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and thereafter maintained as such.

Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of the area.

- 3 The following shall be integrated into or mounted up suitable trees or buildings:
 - a) Provisionally 15 bat bricks and 6 Schwegler 1FF bat boxes (to be confirmed);
 - b) A cluster of five Schwegler 1a swift bricks or similar built into the wall at least 60cm apart, at least 5m above ground level on the north facing elevation of 3 plots;
 - c) A bee brick built into the wall about 1 metre above ground level on the east or southeast elevation of the dwelling on 20 plots
 - d) Any new fencing must have accessible hedgehog holes, measuring 13cm x 13cm to allow the movement of hedgehogs into and out of the site;
 - e) Two log piles as a resting place for reptiles and or amphibians constructed. Plans showing the installed features will be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of first construction above ground level.

Reason: In accordance with Government policy for the enhancement of biodiversity within development as set out in paragraph 170(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework

- 4 No development hereby approved which shall interfere with or compromise the use of footpaths WL 28/20 and WL 28/21 shall take place until a path diversion order has been made and confirmed.

Reason: To ensure that all affected public rights of way are kept available for use and adequately dealt with in the new development.

- 5 No dwellings shall be commenced until details of the surface water drainage scheme flood water exceedance routes both on and off site have been provided. No part of the site must be allowed to flood during any storm up to and including the 1 in 30 event, flooding during storm events in excess of this including the 1 in 100yr (plus 40% allowance for climate change) must be controlled within the site boundary without being directed to the watercourse and directed towards designed exceedance routes demonstrated to prevent flooding or damage to properties. Events in excess of this must be controlled within designed exceedance routes demonstrated to prevent flooding or damage to properties

Reason: To ensure that the development is served by a satisfactory, sustainable system of surface water drainage throughout the lifetime of the

development, in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018) and the Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework

Informative notes to applicant

- 1 Development, insofar as it affects a right of way should not be started, and the right of way should be kept open for public use until the necessary (diversion/stopping up) Order has come into effect. Failure to comply with this request may result in the developer being prosecuted if the path is built on or otherwise interfered with.

Proposal

Reserved matters approval is sought for Phase 1, pursuant to the development of up to 250 dwellings at Liddymore Farm, Liddymore Lane, Watchet. In Phase 1 the applicants are seeking reserved matters approval for 75 dwellings (6x1bed [8%]; 18x2bed [24%]; 36x3 bed [48%] & 15x4bed [20%]). The development would comprise a mix of tenures with 47 (63%) market houses and 28 (37%) affordable houses (Mixture of rent and discounted market housing) on 4.5ha of the 11ha site.

The outline permission, ref. 3/37/17/020, has established the principle of residential development upon the land and the quantum of development – up to 250 dwellings – leaving details relating to access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale to be determined at this reserved matters stage.

Vehicular access to the site is shown off Liddymore Road, as per the outline approval. This then becomes the 'principal road' within the four tier road hierarchy intended for the development. A hierarchy which provides, in ascending order: principal route, village streets, lanes and mews style shared surfaces. The outline master plan shows that, eventually, it is intended that the principal route, will loop around a green, or village 'square', in the centre of the fully developed site, with village roads, lanes and mews accessed in ascending order off it. The loop route is to be completed in later phases. In this first phase, it is shown as a cul-de-sac with village roads and lanes off it.

The entrance to the development utilises the existing primary school access. Plans show the southern section of the school drive widened, with a raised table in blockwork to identify it as adopted as highway in the vicinity of the school - where a 20 mph speed limit applies. A 'T' junction with a driveway running north would provide the only vehicular access to the primary school. Staff, visitors and disabled people would have vehicular access beyond the gate to the school campus, including the new staff car park (12 spaces) proposed in the north west corner of the field, but access, beyond the gate, would otherwise be pedestrian only. The existing parking spaces, arranged perpendicular to the highway, are to be retained and their

number increased to 18. It is envisaged that the parking area will provide a drop off and collection point for parents.

The existing public rights of way, which cross the site laterally from east to west, are shown retained and augmented by new pedestrian links to surrounding estates.

A well-established hedge runs from the site entrance in Liddymore Road, in the north west, to Liddymore Lane in the south east. Currently it forms a field boundary between the smaller fields in the northern part of the site, adjacent to Cherry Tree Way, and the rising land which forms the larger part of the site to the south. The proposal retains the hedge and makes it the focus of a green swathe that runs through the centre of the site with just one break, where the eastern road runs through it. The swathe terminates in a larger area of green space at the eastern end, where it is intended to plant a small copse and create two attenuation ponds, to serve both this first phase of the development and future phases.

The housing in the first phase is shown distributed either side of the green swathe in three areas: a roughly 'square' shaped area, in the north west, adjacent to rear gardens in Grove Close; an area to the north, opposite rear gardens in Cherry Tree Way; and a smaller area, adjacent to the attenuation ponds, in the north east. In terms of character, this reflects the applicant's overall approach to residential density, which is to concentrate the higher density development (circa 36-42 dph) in the centre and western parts of the site and locate the lower density development (circa 30-35 dph) around the periphery, where it adjoins neighbouring residential properties.

Plans for the 'square' shaped area in the north-west show a perimeter block layout divided by a mews street in the centre. This provides for clear delineation between public and private space, with rear gardens backing onto rear gardens, and follows successful established layout principles. Houses on the northern side would face onto the green swathe and have south facing gardens. Those on eastern and southern boundaries would face outwards, where it is intended that they help to create new streets with houses on opposing sides being developed as part of later phases. The mews houses would have the intimacy of a shared surface space, reflecting the County Council's flexible approach to shared surfaces in its recently adopted revised 'Red Book'. On the western side, the rear gardens of the mews houses would back onto the footpath that currently separates the field from the rear gardens of houses in Grove Close. The existing boundary hedge would be kept and retaining walls added to manage the difference in levels. On the eastern side, the mews houses would form part of the perimeter block with rear gardens backing onto rear gardens. A group of four small bungalows are shown in the centre of the perimeter block, arranged in a small cul-de-sac. These are accessed from the principal road to the east.

The northern part of the site is lower density. It is shown as a row of detached and link detached houses backing onto the rear gardens of neighbouring large houses in Cherry Tree Way. Again rear gardens abut rear gardens and, in this case, are separated by a well-established boundary hedge circa 2.5m in height. Whilst the proposal is for two storey houses, the ridge heights have been kept low by providing the upper floors partially within the roof space (styled by the applicant as 1.5

storeys). Smaller semi-detached and mews style housing is also shown in this character area on the opposite side of the road.

The eastern end of the site is shown accommodating a 'set piece' corner block, a pumping station building and 5 large detached houses, some of which outlook onto the larger of the proposed attenuation ponds and provide a degree of passive surveillance over the pond and public walkway around it.

The proposal represents the first phase of a significant urban extension to Watchet. The houses have been designed to reflect local architecture referencing the older buildings in the town, predominantly the Georgian and cottage forms, with traditional pitched gable and hipped roofs in slate and profiled tiles. Details such as, porches, strategically placed chimneys, brick cills and lintels, dormer and bay window features have been added to reflect local vernacular. The proposed materials draw from a wide pallet found in the town, render, red sandstone and brick with roofs from slate and profiled tiles.

During the course of consideration, the applicant's architects and agents have worked closely, in an iterative process, with SWT urban design specialist, landscape consultant and planning officer to improve the detailed design of these area.

Like many developers, the applicant is proposing a 'fabric first approach' to sustainability, meaning high levels of insulation, energy efficiency and sustainable water consumption systems (water efficient taps, water efficient toilets, low output showers, flow restrictors to manage water pressure and water metres) as their main method of addressing issues of sustainability and climate change. This will be supplemented by the provision of cycle storage in garages and sheds where there is no garages, electric vehicle charging points in garages and the provision of water butts, where appropriate to harvest rainwater from roofs for garden use.

The reserved matters application is accompanied by a suite of supporting documents:-

- Design & Access Statement (Statement of Compliance)
- Geophysical Report (archaeology) - Prepared by SUMO Geo Physics Ltd.
- Geotechnical and Geo-Environmental Assessment - Prepared by South West Geotechnical Ltd
- Landscape & Ecology Management Plan - Prepared by Green Ecology
- Updated Ecological Impact Assessment - Prepared by Green Ecology
- Travel Plan - Prepared by LvW
- Flood Risk Assessment Update - Prepared by WSP

Site Description

The reserved matters application site, approximately 4.5ha., forms the northern part of a larger 11ha. development site, located on south eastern edge of Watchet. The larger site currently comprises a series of agricultural fields separated by mature hedges. The northern part, which forms this reserved matters application site for Phase 1 of the development, is relatively flat, but levels rise towards the south west where rolling hills and open countryside separate the site from the village of Williton, further to the south.

Two parallel public rights of way (PROW), ref. WL28/20 and ref. WL28/21, run from the bottom of Liddymore Road through a gate and over a stile into the site. WL28/20 runs in a south easterly direction through the site following the watercourse. Outside the site it branches into two: one branch turns southwards along Liddymore Lane to link up with Doniford Road, the other turns west, where it runs along the southern boundary of the larger development site before linking up with other footpaths (PROW ref. WL30/14 and WL28/23) to provide a pedestrian route to Danesfield Middle School and Williton. PROW WL28/21 runs through the northern part of the site, past Liddymore Farm Cottages, partly skirts Liddymore Farm, before eventually linking up with Alamein Road and Cassino Road at their junction with Doniford Road.

The site currently forms part of Liddymore Farm, whose buildings are located to the east and accessed from Liddymore Lane. Field accesses are located to the north west off Liddymore Road. The Community First School is located indirectly to the north of the site with vehicular access off Liddymore Road and car parking abutting the site. Established residential communities about the site to the north in Reed Close and Cherry Tree Way and in Risdon Road and Grove Close to the west.

It is worth noting that there is little vehicle connectivity between these roads. Risdon Road is accessed primarily off Woodlands Road, to the north-west, Reed Close off Liddymore Road to the north and Cherry tree Way off Liddymore Lane, via Normandy Avenue and Alamein Road, much further to the east. The centre of Williton is more accessible to vehicles from this location than the centre of Watchet.

The site straddles the boundary between Watchet Town Council and Williton Parish Council areas, with the majority of the site, especially the first Phase, located to the north and west in the town area and only the eastern extremity in the Parish.

The Henry Davey playing field is located to the east, close to the junction with Woodland Road. It contains a skate park and children's play equipment.

A small parade of shops containing convenience stores, is located along Liddymore Road, a short distance from the site.

Primary education is provided at St Peter's, Church of England first school; middle years at the Danesfield Church of England School; both in Williton; accessible and senior education is at the West Somerset College in Minehead.

Relevant Planning History

Ref. 3/37/17/020 – Outline planning application with all matters reserved for a residential development of up to 250 dwellings. Conditional approval subject, to a Section 106 legal agreement, granted 23/03/2020.

The Section 106 legal agreement made provision for:-

- An appropriate mix and tenure of affordable housing at a rate of 35% of the

- total number of dwellings provided.
- A financial contribution to Early Years education for 13 places at £14,175 each (£184,275).
 - Provision and maintenance of on-site play and open space (including Biodiversity off-set)
 - A financial contribution of £25,000 towards cycling provision, linking the site to Doniford Road to the east.

Consultation Responses

Watchet Town Council – Comments 04/08/2020

- Concern that no further Travel Plan has been submitted.
 - Concern that the 'T' Junction has been chosen as joint access to the site and the school.
 - It is important that a drop off point involves parking a vehicle and escorting a child into school.
 - Requires reassurance on road safety.
 - Questions the safety of the proposed pedestrian access without a new roundabout parents are likely to try and turn a car around resulting in congestion.
- The Town Council's Health and Safety Officer has examined the proposed access and found it wanting (report provided).

Williton Parish Council – Comments 06/08/2020

Object primarily on strategic traffic management plan in relation to the whole area, as there are currently several large development applications and all need to be looked at together to prepare a traffic management plan due to the increase that the developments will cause. Plans are needed to control secondary traffic, both Liddymore Road and Doniford Road are too narrow for construction traffic and would result in an increase in traffic flow. If passed, we would request timed access for construction traffic to site being after 10am and before 3pm, due to the close proximity to the school.

The site must be mindful about possible flooding issues and access roads must be properly maintained and kept clear. We also would like to raise concern regarding lack of parking.

Highways Development Control -

The proposal site, is accessed off the classified Liddymore Lane in Watchet. The application is for the approval of Reserved Matters including access. Outline consent was granted in 2017, where the Highway Authority did not object to the principle of the proposal where, in terms of capacity of the local highway network there weren't sufficient grounds for refusal that the proposal would have a severe impact on the local highway network with consideration of the NPPF.

With the above in mind, the following comments are with reference to the proposed access arrangement from the existing public highway, nearby school and internal layout of the proposed first phase of the consented outline site.

Access and school parking .

The Highway Authority are aware of the sensitive issue regarding school parking. There are currently 7 school vehicle parking spaces off Liddymore Road.

As part of this proposal, it would see the removal of these parking spaces and provision of a new, designated private school parking area at the north of the site, currently proposed to accommodate 12 vehicle parking spaces, closer to the school. However, there is scope to provide a larger level of vehicle parking in this area proposed.

It is important to note however, whilst this proposal as a whole would see a likely rise in pupils at the local school, given the close proximity of the site it is anticipated that associated residents of the proposal would walk to the school. Consent of this site as a whole will see a change in the nature of Liddymore Road and pedestrian and vehicle interaction where it is imperative that appropriate pedestrian access is provided.

To reiterate, it is expected that pedestrian traffic will increase as a result of the proposed new development and the additional footway linking the existing development to the south of Liddymore Road. It would appear from the drawings provided that 1.8m footways will be provided. It is recommended that the footways be increased to 2m, the minimum recommended width in the DfT's Inclusive Mobility.

Appropriate crossing areas, complete with tactile paving and dropped kerbs and appropriate visibility splays in line with a suitable design standard need to be provided on Liddymore Road (including the approach road to the school) to allow safe routes to the school and wider network from the proposed development.

It would appear from the information provided that the footway on the eastern side of Road 02 terminates prior to the access to the car park. It is recommended that this is extended northwards and that the access to the car park becomes a vehicle crossover. A continuous safe pedestrian access to the school needs to be demonstrated with consideration of likely desire lines.

The Highway Authority however, would not wish to adopt the approach road to the school as suggested the applicant. The Highway Authority would also not want larger vehicles reversing this approach road onto the access road that is proposed serve the Estate Road. Therefore, the applicant will need to clarify how this concern will be removed. Whilst the immediate approach road to the school will not be adopted as dedicated highway (with exception of the Bellmouth and associated visibility splays onto Liddymore Road) we have a duty of care for the safety for all pedestrians travelling to and from the school. Therefore, it is advised that the applicant converse with third parties (it is presumed the school) regarding how the proposed pedestrian areas will tie into the existing (and any future) proposed pedestrian accesses.

Carriageway cross section drawings for each chainage across the frontage of the site would need to be submitted to show appropriate features such as channel line levels, tops of kerbs, centre line of the carriageway etc. whilst encompassing the full width of the adopted highway. Longitudinal or contour drawings haven't been submitted. Suitable approach gradients for the access road to ensure surface water drains back into the site and not the highway whilst ensuring level sections of the carriageway to enable vehicles to pull out safely. Additional drawings would be required for surfacing, surface water drainage, highway lighting, kerb details and road markings to comply with design standards.

Estate Road

The applicant should be aware that it is likely that the internal layout will result in the laying out of a private street and as such under Sections 219 to 225 of the Highways Act 1980, will be subject to the Advance Payments Code

The main access tie in will need a safety overview and alignment may require change through the S38 process should the site be offered up for adoption. This principle also applies to all links to an extent.

The existing track called Liddymore Lane appears to have a link to this development but is not classed as Public Highway and should be restricted to pedestrian use for access to the PROW only.

It is noted that external works drawings have been submitted but none show tie in with Liddymore Road so comments are limited and details to be addressed at technical approval stage.

The annotation on the Movement Strategy Plan shows principle route movement into the blue line land. Other than drainage plan which indicates this is phase 2 there appears to be no other information. If this is to be a future development the annotation this needs to be removed from the current application plans.

There are two PROW affected by this development WL 28/20 and WL 28/21 the applicant will need to discuss details with the Public Rights Of Way Team.

Tracking plots where they utilise private areas for turning, an example being adjacent to plot 29 need to be removed.

The area shown on adoption plan by plot 22 serves no greater public benefit so should be removed, this will be addressed through technical process but as a layout item has been noted.

The shared surface areas with marked visitors spaces (such as vicinity plots 72-73) please note that informal parking is allowed but no dedicated spaces within shared surfaces. Annotations will to be removed in any formal submissions for technical approval.

The grass margins on the proposed adoption plan need to be removed during technical approval process.

Whilst the above comments are for this application, they do not and should not be taken as a full technical audit which would be covered under the relevant legal agreements.

Drainage

With reference to the Phase 1 Drainage Layout ref. 8905-DR-001 Rev. P2 in support of the application, there is no objection in principle to the surface water management strategy proposed as it relates to both the existing public highway and the proposed estate roads serving the development but would make the following observation. A surface water sewer or highway carrier drain should be indicated under or adjacent to Road 1 to act as the means to transfer surface water run-off collected by road gullies to the point of discharge.

Travel Plan _

The submitted supporting document is currently being assessed. Once completed our comments will be provided to the LPA.

Parking _

ZONE B 1 Bed 2 Bed 3 Bed 4 Bed Visitor TOTAL

SPS 1.5 2 2.5 3 0.2 -

Dwellings*

6 18 36 15 - 75

Proposed parking

12 31 80 66 12 201

Optimum parking

9 36 90 45 15 195

*Parking figures taken from 'Parking Matrix-Issue 1' drawing 0408-PH1-102

Detail of the above shows that the SPS optimum number of parking spaces for the nature of this phase of the development is 195 including visitor parking.

Based on the above, whilst the proposed parking area identifies with the Somerset Parking Strategy (SPS) there does appear to be an under provision of parking for the proposed 2 & 3 bedroom dwellings and a noticeable over provision of vehicle parking for the 4 bed dwellings proposed. It is advised that parking is revised to reflect a fairer balance of allocated, off road parking.

The SPS also sets the optimum provision for motorcycle, cycle parking and electric vehicle charging (EVC) points where access to 16-amp EVC points is to be provided for all residential dwellings in accordance with the SPS (e.g. EVC points within garages). Cycle parking needs to be at a rate of 1 space per bedroom. All spaces need to be safe, secure and sheltered. It is unclear whether this has been committed to for this application. It is advised that garages are designed and built to accommodate all cycle and vehicle parking spaces should no separate suitable cycle storage parking be provided for such dwellings.

As such the applicant will need to clarify their commitment to the above for all dwellings.

Conclusion

With the above in mind, prior to any decision being made it is advised by the Highway Authority that the applicant provide an update on the following information.

- Continuous, safe pedestrian access to and from the school from both the development proposed and the wider existing network with our above comments in mind.

- Clarify the approach road arrangement for all associated vehicles to the school with our above comments in mind.

- Confirm commitment to appropriate levels of cycle parking in line with the SPS and EVCs available to all dwellings.

- Revisit the proposed allocated parking arrangement.

Avon & Somerset Police –

Crime Statistics – reported for the area of this proposed development (within a 500metre radius of the grid reference during the period 01/07/2019- 30/06/2020 is as follows:-

Burglary – 2 offences (both residential burglary)

Theft – 1 offence

Violence against the person - 4 offences (incl. 1 assault ABH)

Total 7 offences

This is classified as a very low level of reported crime, ASB reports for the same area and period total 7, which is also very low level.

Design and Access Statement – the DAS at Section 10 headed 'Community Design and Access statement refers to the police approved 'Secure by Design' award scheme for designing out crime and lists the following areas in which these recommendations have been incorporated into the scheme :-

Layout of Roads and Footpaths ; communal Areas ; Dwelling Boundaries ; Layout and Orientation of Dwellings; Gable End Walls ; Rear access footpaths; Dwelling Identification; Climbing Aids car parking; Planting and Street Lighting.

This indicates to me that the applicant has taken into account crime prevention measures in the design of this scheme. I agree with the comments made and would make the following additional observations in respect of some of the above measures .

Layout of Roads & Footpaths –Vehicular and pedestrian routes appear to be visually open and direct and are likely to be well used enabling good residents' surveillance of the street. The use of physical or psychological features i.e. surface changes by colour or texture, marble strips and similar features within the development would help re-inforce defensible space giving the impression that the area is private and deterring unauthorised access.

Orientation of Dwellings – all the dwellings appear to overlook the street and public open spaces which allows neighbours to easily view their surroundings and also makes the potential criminal more vulnerable to detection . A proportion of the dwellings also appear to be 'back to back' which is also recommended , as this restricts unauthorised access to the rear of dwellings which is where the majority of burglaries occur.

Dwelling Boundaries –it is important that all boundaries between public and private space are clearly defined and it is desirable that delivering frontages are kept open to view to assist resident surveillance of the street and public areas, so walls, fences, hedges at the front of dwellings should be kept low , maximum height 1metre, to assist this. More vulnerable areas such as exposed side and rear gardens need more robust defensive measures such as walls, fences or hedges to a minimum height of 1.8 metres . Gates providing access to rear gardens should be the same height as adjacent fencing and lockable. The Planning layout drawing indicates that these recommendations will be complied with . Some dwellings back onto woodland or open fields and it is advisable to increase the height of side and rear fencing for these plots to 2 metres by the addition of a trellis topping.

Communal Areas – have the potential to generate crime, the fear of crime and ASB and should be designed to allow surveillance from nearby dwellings with safe routes for users to come and go. The central green corridor incorporating the road and footpaths appear to be fairly well overlooked, except the area around the Attenuation Ponds , Pump station and nearby woodland Orchard. However, as this is Phase 1, it appears surveillance of this area will be improved in a later phase. The central LEAP and other LAPs will presumably also follow in later phases.

Car Parking- appears to be a mix of on-plot garages and parking spaces, communal on-street parking places and two rear shared parking courtyards , the former being the recommended option . The communal on-street parking places appear to be small in number, close to and well overlooked from owners' homes which is also recommended . Rear parking courtyards are discouraged as they enable unlawful access to the rear of dwellings and parked and unattended vehicles.

Landscaping / Planting – should not impede opportunities for natural surveillance and must avoid potential hiding places . As a general rule , where good visibility is needed, shrubs should be selected which have a mature growth height of no more than 1 metre and trees should be of the open branched columnar variety devoid of foliage below 2 metres , so allowing 1 metre clear field of vision . IN this phase, this is particularly relevant in respect of the central green corridor and woodland areas around the pumping station and Attenuation Ponds.

Street Lighting – all street lighting for adopted highway and footpaths, private estate roads and footpaths and car parking areas should comply with

BS5489:2013.

Physical Security of Dwellings – in order to comply with **Approved Document Q: Security - Dwellings**, of Building Regulations, all external doorsets providing a means of access into a dwelling and ground floor or easily accessible windows and roof lights (incl. any communal and flat entrance doors) must be tested to PAS 24:2016 security standards or equivalent.

Secured by Design- if planning permission is granted, the applicant is aware of this scheme and is advised to refer to updated 'SBD Homes 2019' design guide available on secured by design website – www.securedbydesign.com which provides further comprehensive guidance regarding designing out crime and the physical security of dwellings.

SCC - Ecologist –

Condition 6 of the permission states:-

'The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until details of a strategy to protect wildlife has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The strategy shall be based on the advice of Green Ecology's submitted report, dated August 2017 and include:

- Details of protective measures to include method statements to avoid impacts on protected species during all stages of development;*
- Details of the timing of works to avoid periods of work when dormice, reptiles and nesting birds which could be harmed by disturbance*
- Measures for the retention and replacement and enhancement of places of rest for bats, birds and reptiles*
- A minimum of 2.12 hectares of long sward grassland and other habitat suitable to produce an abundance of moths will be created that is accessible to bat species*
- Details of lighting*
- A Landscape & Ecology Management Plan (LEMP) that includes:*
 - a) Description and evaluation of features to be managed.*
 - b) Ecological trends and constraints on site that might influence management.*
 - c) Aims and objectives of management.*
 - d) Appropriate management options for achieving aims and objectives.*
 - e) Prescriptions for management actions.*
 - f) Preparation of a work schedule (including an annual work plan capable of being rolled forward over a five-year period).*
 - g) Details of the body or organization responsible for implementation of the plan.*
 - h) On-going monitoring for barbastelle bats and remedial measures.*
- and Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP)*

Once approved the works shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and timing of the works unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and thereafter the resting places and agreed accesses for wildlife shall be permanently maintained. The development shall not be occupied until the scheme for the maintenance and provision of the new bat boxes, bird boxes and reptile hibernacula and related accesses have been fully implemented

The condition combines several elements, including non-specific elements, which is going to make it difficult to discharge. I have the following comments

Details of protective measures to include method statements to avoid impacts on protected species during all stages of development Table 2 outlines the avoidance

and mitigation measures to prevent Impacts on ecological features. However, these are not detailed method statements. This part of the condition has been confused with the CEMP element (see below)

Details of the timing of works to avoid periods of work when dormice, reptiles and nesting birds which could be harmed by disturbance Again this should be included in the CEMP

Measures for the retention and replacement and enhancement of places of rest for bats, birds and reptiles 5.9 of the Landscape and Ecology Management Plan, Green Ecology, June 2019 sets out the types of features to be installed. However, the installation is the concern of the developer's contractor not the subsequent landscape management company and there this should be in the CEMP (Construction and Environmental Management Plan) and shown on construction drawings. The locations of the enhancements are shown in Figure 1. However, it is unclear on which elevation of dwellings the boxes are to be installed on. Swift nest boxes should also be installed in clusters. The last element of the condition states. 'The development shall not be occupied until the scheme for the maintenance and provision of the new bat boxes, bird boxes and reptile hibernacula and related accesses have been fully implemented'. Therefore it will not be possible, at this stage, to discharge the condition until these features have been installed, which contradicts the opening statement of the condition. I would therefore apply the following condition in order to overcome this. A bee brick would contribute to the Somerset Pollinator Action Plan. Research shows that bees will live in the bricks and there is no risk associated with their installation as solitary bees do not live in hives or have a queen, and do not sting. The bricks have a solid back with the cavities placed on the outside wall. I am unable to access the ecological appraisal submitted with the planning application and am therefore uncertain whether the installation of bat boxes would benefit commoner species and the expense of rare ones. The condition:

The following shall be integrated into or mounted up suitable trees or buildings:

- a) Provisionally 15 bat bricks and 6 Schwegler 1FF bat boxes (to be confirmed)
- b) A cluster of five Schwegler 1a swift bricks or similar built into the wall at least 60cm apart, at least 5m above ground level on the north facing elevation of 3 plots
- c) A bee brick built into the wall about 1 metre above ground level on the east or southeast elevation of the dwelling on 20 plots
- d) Any new fencing must have accessible hedgehog holes, measuring 13cm x 13cm to allow the movement of hedgehogs into and out of the site
- e) Two log piles as a resting place for reptiles and or amphibians constructed

Plans showing the installed features will be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of first construction above ground level Reason: In accordance with Government policy for the enhancement of biodiversity within development as set out in paragraph 170(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework

A minimum of 2.12 hectares of long sward grassland and other habitat suitable to produce an abundance of moths will be created that is accessible to bat species This is a condition of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), which needed to

be applied to the permission in full in order to comply with the Habitats Regulations 2017. This stated 'A minimum of 2.12 hectares of long sward grassland and other habitat suitable to produce an abundance of moths will be created that is accessible to bat species. The locations, planting schedule and layout of the habitat creation / enhancement will be agreed with the local planning authority prior to work commencing on site'.

It appears from the schedule in that only 1.1ha of native species grassland is provided (Table 1 of the Landscape and Ecology Management Plan, Green Ecology, June 2019). There is also 0.055ha of woodland and the attenuation basin and an orchard (areas not given) if managed appropriately for bats, particularly barbastelle bats. I am also concerned that some parts of the provided is potentially isolated from bats by street lighting. Therefore, I have a holding objection on this element pending a plan showing how the 2.12ha would be delivered.

Details of lighting Nothing has been submitted except generic aims in the LEMP. This part cannot be discharged.

A Landscape & Ecology Management Plan (LEMP) 5.6 Does not mention barbastelle bats, for which the HRA was carried out. 5.8 This paragraph needs to be omitted as it is not in the control of the landscape contractor 5.9 should be in the CEMP. Figure 1 (not included in the LEMP) should additionally be included in the LEMP.

Table 3 Work programme and corresponding notes on Figure 1. Woodland Copse – Be kept dark, etc. This is not in the control of the landscape contractor and should be omitted. No provision for the removal of guards. Are they necessary and would it be more economic to just replace the trees if there is no threat from deer, etc.

Watercourse – to enable the life cycle of moths to complete at least 50% of the watercourse should not be mown per year.

Existing hedgerows - should not be cut in October/November when still bearing fruit Be kept dark, etc. This is not in the control of the landscape contractor and should be omitted. A' profile is unlikely to provide perches for horseshoe bats

New Native Hedgerows - No provision for the removal of guards. Are they necessary and would it be more economic to just replace the plants if there is no threat from deer, etc 'A' profile is unlikely to provide perches for horseshoe bats Be kept dark, etc. This is not in the control of the landscape contractor and should be omitted.

POS Grassland/Species rich – At least 60% of the grassland should be left unmown each year to enable moth species to complete their life cycle and the remainder once in October / November with a cut in March only if necessary.

What is a pernicious weed? Thistles, for example benefit moths

Trees – No provision for the removal of stakes

The Orchard

Monitoring – there is no mention of how barbastelle bats are to be monitored or remedial measures should adverse results occur.

Appendix 2 – Dormouse Mitigation Strategy needs to be included in the CEMP not the LEMP as this is relevant to the developer's contractor not the landscape contractor.

Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) Not provided. Therefore this element cannot be discharged.

Planting Schedule 788-13D (Bridge Design Associates) Native hedge mix - need to include *Rubus fruticosus*. The abundance of this species in hedgerows is linked to an abundance of moths, the predominant prey of barbastelle bats. Specification - Topsoil should not be used in areas of wildflower grassland / woodland planting as this would favour nitrogen loving plant species and reduce diversity of other species. It should also not be used in amenity area for the same reasons and would reduce the need to mow and hence maintenance costs. Where not possible topsoil can be inverted with sub soil.

Rights of Way Protection Officer -

Confirms that there are public rights of way (PROW) recorded on the Definitive Map that run through the site at the present time (public footpaths WL 28/20 and WL 28/21). Has no objections to the proposal, subject to inclusion of a condition and informative:

The current proposal will obstruct the footpaths WL 28/20 and WL 28/21. The proposal either needs to be revised to prevent any obstruction or a diversion order applied for. The applicant must apply to the Local Planning Authority for a diversion order.

The County Council do not object to the proposal subject to the applicant being informed that the grant of planning permission does not entitle them to obstruct a public right of way. A Grampian-style condition will be required in this respect with regard to timing. Recent case law supports the use of conditions in this way.

Landscape officer -

The lowest part of the site provides a central green 'spine' which appears to provide most of the green space within the overall development. However, I have several concerns: Considerable amount of hedgerow appears to be lost to the road layout which is the opposite to that agreed at the outline stage. The southern hedgerow, part of the next phase, has been lost completely when it should be used as a linking footpath/cycleway to access the central open spaces. The areas of open space are generally grassed areas with tree planting and path. They appear to be movement corridors rather than 'places' with distinctive characters. Given that the central areas will provide open space for the rest of the development I would like to see areas created for play, seating, gardens, focal points, exercise, glades as well as the corridors. There appeared to be no provision for play in this first phase and I could see no seating which for some people will be an important consideration if

their mobility is reduced. · The attenuation ponds appear to also be areas of tree and grass whereas they could be much more interesting if small amounts of water are retained and they become wildlife features and potentially like village ponds with seating areas so that people will have areas to relax and enjoy wildlife watching. Wildlife habitat could be a much stronger feature within the open spaces if more of the hedgerows are retained and linked to SuDS. · The paths appear to be designed for walkers but should also be designed, at least some of them, for cyclists. It is important that drop kerbs are put in at road junctions to ease passage for pushchairs, cyclists, wheelchairs and walkers. I would like to see an overlay showing how the green infrastructure of the open spaces is going to work. This would be different from the submitted movement strategy plan which concentrates mainly on roads. I'm not a highway engineer but I think if the school car parking/'drop off' area had an 'in-out' circulation with angled car parking spaces you could provide more spaces for the area without having the large area of central tarmac. It would then allow the space to be better landscaped. · Within the housing areas there are few opportunities for trees. We need provision for avenues and larger growing focal trees. The interface between the existing housing and the western boundary seems poorly considered and some of the properties and car parking areas look to be very close to the existing hedgerow, see plot plot 12. · It's a point of design detail but I think there are too many multi-stemmed trees throughout the development. I would prefer to see them in groups where they would have a more impact. I wasn't sure what the purpose of the woodland block/copse was for not having been involved in the outline stage but maybe an opportunity for a glade if designed differently.

I have other comments but I think if we can resolve the above issues it would be a big step forward. I hope that helps.

Somerset County Council - Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) -
Satisfied with the amended proposal subject to a condition.

Sport England -
No site specific comment – general comments about loss of and provision of sporting facilities

PLAY & OPEN SPACES -
West Somerset Local Plan POLICY CF1 requires the appropriate provision of formal sports facilities and/ or informal public amenity open-space/play-space as an integral part of new development.

The West Somerset Council Play Providers Audit (2008) found that there are distinct gaps in the amount of designated play spaces in West Somerset. The audit also highlighted that the overall quality of designated play spaces is only considered 'fair'.

The S106 Agreement dated 17 March 2020, Schedule 2 stipulates that prior to commencement of each phase of the development the developer must submit to the Council for approval the Open Space Specification for that phase of development which in the case of a LAP and/or LEAP shall include full specifications for play equipment. One LEAP and 2 LAPs must be provided on across all the phases of this development.

Whilst there is open space within the proposed site layout for Phase 1, an Open Space Plan has not yet been provided, therefore it is not clear if the Open Space in this phase of the development which includes woodland areas and natural green space for informal children's play is intended as a LAP (i.e. a small area of open space specifically designated and primarily laid out for very young children to play close to where they live within 1 minute walking time).

All areas of child play space (casual areas, LEAPS and NEAPS) must be located and designed so as not to cause noise problems to nearby dwellings, in accordance with relevant environmental health standards. Buffer zones, are likely to be needed. The areas of open space provided on this site are on the edges of the development and buffers are created by the use of tree planting.

As the public open space is to be provided as part of a development, conditions have been imposed in the S106 Planning Agreement requiring the developer to arrange for its future maintenance through a Management Company.

Representations Received

Four site notices have been posted and neighbours consulted about the application. This has resulted in 21 consultation responses: 17 objections and 4 set of comments on the application. Some letters have more than one signatures. Organisations commenting on the application are Knights Templar Church School, the Steam Coast Trail (Cycling charity) and Watchet Baptist Church.

General

Overwhelming for the area. The number of houses being envisaged for Watchet is now way out of proportion to the size of the town. Too many houses too soon and the town can in no way absorb the huge increase in population and traffic. Questions the need to build on a greenfield site when the old Paper Mill site is vacant. The Paper Mill site is a Brownfield site that should be developed in preference to Liddymore Farm. The site was not in the last local plan, but was added without the knowledge of those working within the planning department or local councillors. Questions its legality. Not followed the approved outline permission.

Town Infrastructure

The town has not got the infrastructure to cope with the amount of new homes that will be built on this site. The area has few jobs and limited resources - the medical centre, school will be stretched further (recruitment and retention are problematic). There are not enough jobs.

Traffic

Roads will be unable to cope with extra traffic. The volume of traffic directed to Liddymore Road will exceed its' capacity. Liddymore Road isn't wide enough to cope due to parked cars. Parking is displaced into side roads. Delivery and service vehicles frequently double par, causing obstruction.

There are 8 side roads and service access to schools and shops. Residents already have trouble parking or even getting their cars out of driveways, especially at school times. The layout threatens the safety of children and parents at the school. SCC Highways favoured a loop road to avoid cars having to turn around. Affects elderly

as well as school children. Sheltered housing in area requires 24/7 access.

Liddymore Road will become a dangerous bottleneck. Concerned about school traffic and parking displaced into Reed Close. Liddymore Lane is an obvious access point, as it would provide access to the A358 via the A39. Suggest access is provided to the rear of Cherry Tree to join up with Doniford Road side with just pedestrian access onto Liddymore Road.

Lack of active travel infrastructure to safely link the proposed site to Watchet and Wiliton. The bus services are irregular / practically non-existent, children have to walk to Danesfield School. The train line is a tourist attraction that does not run throughout the year.

Access from the north is via Liddymore Road which is constrained by parked cars and busy shops. Any increase in traffic increase in traffic to Liddymore Road without adding cycle lanes will reduce safety for cyclists. The small cycle route proposed leads to Liddymore Lane, a footpath. This leads to Doniford Road which has a 60mph road with no cycle lane, pavement or footpath Liddymore Lane needs to be re-designated to allow cycling, surface repairs and vegetation clearance and Doniford Road needs a segregated cycle path. Steep hills and narrow roads make cycling around Watchet difficult and dangerous.

Disputes comments in application Travel Plan. Lacks electric charging points for cars. A joined up approach is required to mitigate some of the negative environmental impact by enabling greener, active travel

Impact on neighbours

The proposal will intrude upon the privacy of houses in Cherry Tree Way. The proposed houses will have a clear view of our principle rooms. The developers have reneged on the sensitivity they showed initially towards properties in Cherry Tree Lane. The latest proposals far less sensitive. All habitable rooms will be overlooked. The proposal will have an adverse impact on existing home values.

Flooding & Suitability of the site

The site is very wet and unsuitable for development, owing to flooding. The drainage sewage system is inadequate

Miscellaneous

Questions the developers consultation process. At previous planning, meetings objections were not dealt with seriously and decisions passed and they pushed on regardless. The community should have more influence over the character of the development. There should be a dialogue between the developer and community in framing the Section 106. Asks who will pick up the maintenance costs for the play areas. The council should protect the human rights of local community who have voted them in rather than be accommodating the increased profits of developers.

The area has a superb community spirit which could be damaged unless change is approached with a deep sense of caution. The consideration of the proposal is having an adverse impact on residents physical and mental health. Will set a precedent making it difficult to object to similar proposals.

Amended Plans

Four further letters of representation have been received in response to consultation on the amended plans (as received 28/05/2021). They reiterate objections to the proposed access arrangements, risk of flooding and the added pressure that more houses will put on the town's infrastructure. One raises a specific criticism of the priority given to estate traffic over that to the school in the latest plans and suggest that it should be the other way round to slow traffic.

Planning Policy Context

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The development plan for the West Somerset planning area comprises the West Somerset Local Plan to 2032, retained saved policies of the West Somerset District Local Plan (2006) Somerset Minerals Local Plan (2015) and Somerset Waste Core Strategy (2013).

Relevant policies of the development plan are listed below.

West Somerset Local Plan to 2032

Policy SD1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development
Policy SC1 Hierarchy of settlements
Policy SC2 Housing Provision
Policy SC3 Appropriate mix of Housing types and tenure
Policy SC4 Affordable housing
Policy SC5 Self-containment of settlement
Policy WA1 Watchet Development
Policy EC1 Widening and strengthening the local economy
Policy TR1 Access to and from West Somerset
Policy TR2 Reducing reliance of the private car
Policy CF1 Maximising access to health, sport, recreation and cultural activities
Policy CF2 Flood Risk Management
Policy CC5 Water Efficiency
Policy NH1 Historic Environment
Policy NH3 Areas of High archaeological potential
Policy NH4 Archaeological sites of local significance
Policy NH6 Nature conservation and the protection and enhancement of biodiversity
Policy NH7 Green Infrastructure
Policy NH11 Bat Consultation Zone
Policy NH13 Securing High Standards of Design
Policy ID1 Infrastructure Delivery

Retained saved policies of the West Somerset Local Plan (2006)

TW/1 Trees & Woodland Protection
TW/2 Hedgerows
W/4 Water Resources
R/8 Allotments
R/12 Informal Recreation Facilities
T/8 Residential Car parking
T/9 Existing Footpaths
UN/2 Undergrounding of Service Lines & New Development

Affordable Housing SPD
Emerging Design Guide

Determining issues and considerations

Principle of residential Development

The proposal accords with the general principles of the West Somerset Local Plan to 2032 which, as set out in Policy SC1, Hierarchy of Settlements, is to concentrate the majority of new development in the settlements of Minehead/Alcombe, Watchet and Wilton.

Policy WA1, Watchet Development, is specifically relevant. It requires development proposals in the town to:-

- *support and strengthen the settlement's role as a local service and employment centre for the north eastern part of West Somerset district, particularly in terms of the range and quality of its services and facilities, and*
- *sustain and enhance the attractiveness of the historic character and heritage assets as a tourist destination, including the operation of the marina. Where appropriate, development proposals must also:*
- *contribute towards resolving the flood risk issues which affect the settlement,*
- *allow for potential realignment of the West Somerset railway which may be necessitated by coastal erosion,*
- *improve linkages between the town centre and the parts of the town to the south of the railway,*
- *provide additional allotments for the town, and;*
- *complement the provision of employment opportunities, services and facilities in neighbouring Wilton*

The site has been given outline planning permission for up to 250 dwellings under ref. 3/37/17/020. This application seeks reserved matters approval for the first Phase, comprising up to 70 dwellings on the northern part of the site closest to the southern edge of the town.

A number of objectors have again questioned the principle of building on these fields and locating new residential development in Watchet. They point out that future residents are likely to have to commute to work in Taunton, Bridgewater or further afield by car, via congested roads, that the infrastructure in the town (doctors, surgeries, school places) are limited and public transport poor. Some have reiterated that the site was not allocated in the adopted local plan, but was approved

in outline as a 'windfall' site, and suggested that the vacant Paper Mill, a 'Brownfield' site, should be developed first, or in preference to this greenfield site. Whatever the merits, or otherwise, of these strategic arguments, the principle of residential development upon this site has been established with the outline planning approval and cannot be revisited at this reserved matters stage.

Affordable Housing

The application proposes that 26 (37%) of the 70 dwellings in Phase 1 are affordable, split 60/40 between affordable rent and discounted market housing. This exceeds the requirements of Policy SC4 (Affordable Housing) of the West Somerset Local Plan to 2032.

Sustainability and flooding.

Policy CC2 (Flood Risk Management) of the adopted West Somerset Local Plan to 2032 states that:

Development proposals should be located so as to mitigate against, and to avoid increased flood risk elsewhere, whilst helping to provide for the development needs of the community in accordance with the flood risk management sequential test, and where appropriate, the application of the flood risk management exception test. Development must be designed to mitigate any adverse flooding impact which would arise from its implementation, and where possible should contribute towards the resolution of existing flooding issues.

The applicant's drainage consultant has engaged with the LLFA to design a drainage system that collects surface water run off in the attenuation ponds proposed in the north east corner of the site. This is the lowest part of the site, and is a natural collection point. The system has been designed to enable the later phases of the development (175), further to the south, to be added.

Design and appearance

Both the council and government place a significant emphasis on securing high standards of design, and the creation of attractive places to live and work. Government policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) particularly paras. 127, 128 and 130 which, respectively, support and advise Local Planning Authorities to reject poor design. Council policy is set out in Policy NH13 (Securing High Standards of Design) of the adopted West Somerset Local Plan to 2032, which states:-

New development will be expected to meet the highest standards of design. In order to achieve this, all proposals for new development (excluding small domestic applications and changes of use) should demonstrate that where appropriate:

- An analysis of the constraints and opportunities of the site and its surroundings have informed the principles of design and how the detailed design responds positively to its neighbours and the local context;*
- The proposal makes a positive contribution to the local environment and creates a place with a distinctive character;*
- The public realm has been designed to ensure that it is attractive, safe, accessible and well connected to its surroundings, including walking and cycling routes to and within the development, to encourage their use in the interests of public health;*

- *The landscape proposals have been developed to enhance both the natural and built environment and maximise the potential to improve local biodiversity;*
- *Measures to minimise carbon emissions and promote renewable energy and reduce impact on climate change form an integral part of the design solutions.*

The appearance of the buildings takes as its reference the existing cottages and Georgian buildings in the older part of the town. The vernacular style and materials of the proposal thus respond to local context. Of course, as a long established town, whose older parts have been developed over hundreds of years, it is not possible to recreate all the quirkiness of the older parts of Watchet in a new estate – modern building standards and requirements, particularly for parking, are different. However, Summerfield’s approach, as evidenced from completed development elsewhere, is attractive and popular with the public. It is considered that the care shown over design of the first phase, including the responsiveness of the applicant to the Council’s Design Specialist’s suggestions, establishes a high marker, for the development of the later phases.

The proposal utilises and enhances the existing Public Rights of Way (PROWs) that run through and around the site to promote pedestrian and cycle accessibility. There are good existing links to the primary school, the small parade of shops in Liddymore Road, and further afield the town centre to the north. The Henry Davey skate park and playground is also within easy walking distance to the north-west. PROW WL20/21, which runs through the site and on into Liddymore Lane, is enhanced to become an attractive pedestrian cycle route.

The fabric first approach and reduced /recycled water use measures proposed by the applicants, will minimise energy consumption whilst the provision of electric charge points in garages will help facilitate the change away from combustion engine use, reducing carbon emissions and improving air quality. Renewable energy features are not included.

Biodiversity and landscape impact

The applicant’s drainage consultant has engaged with the LLFA to design a drainage system collects surface water run off in the attenuation ponds proposed in the north-east corner of the site. This is the lowest part of the site, and a natural collection point. The system has been designed to enable the later phases of the development (175 units), further to the south, to be added.

Policy NH7, green Infrastructure of the West Somerset Local Plan to 2032, states that:-

The creation and enhancement of a green infrastructure network will be supported. Green infrastructure should be used to help protect and enhance the heritage assets of the area.

West Somerset District Local Plan saved Policy TW/2 Hedgerows requires applications to demonstrate that 'an allowance has been made for the retention and protection of existing hedgerows.

The existing landscape comprises improved grassland, which apart from the hedgerows, offers only limited biodiversity. The established hedgerows which divide

the site into fields, offer a home to some flora and fauna. They would for the most part be retained as a large swathe runs through the centre of Phase 1 as a feature of green infrastructure. However, some sections of hedge are shown removed to provide access. These would be compensated by some new hedgerows and a proposed new copse, to the rear (south) of Plots 65 -70, and the attenuation ponds and areas around them.

The retention and integration of the existing hedge into the landscaping, the addition of a small copse and the attenuation ponds along with the proposed native tree and shrub planting together with the addition of bird, bat and bee boxes to housing and small holes in fencing (hedgehog 'gates'), will ensure that the development will improve biodiversity.

A local area for play is shown provided within the proposed green swathe, at the north western end. It is intended to compliment this with a larger equipped play area in the later phases of the development.

Impact on the amenity of neighbouring property

The site occupies an edge of town location with established residential property on two sides: to the north and west. The development of houses in the open fields that adjoin the existing residential property will, inevitably, change their outlook and aspect. However, the proposed relationships are considered to be satisfactory.

The houses in Cherry Tree Way, which back onto the site, have large rear gardens and are separated from the proposed development by well-defined established hedges - the northern field boundaries. These vary in height but, for the most part, are in excess of 2.5m except in the north west corner, around the school entrance, where they are lower and more managed. These hedges both screen and separate existing houses from the proposed new houses. The housing proposed in this part of the site is also of a lower density than in the centre. Many of the ridge heights have been kept low with first floors integrated into the roof space (1.5 storey) and they are provided with reasonable sized rear gardens that back onto the field boundary.

The housing proposed opposite Grove Close is higher density than that in the north and the field boundary hedges are not as high. However, the relationship is also considered to be satisfactory. The development site is on lower land and part separated from the rear gardens of existing housing by a public footpath.

Impact upon the highway network and parking provision

Vehicular access to the site is proposed from Liddymore Road. This arrangement was agreed at the outline application stage, and is not before members for consideration at this reserved matters stage.

Currently the south eastern end of Liddymore Road extends into a semi private drive which leads to Knights Temple C of E / Methodist Community First school. Some parking is provided in a row of spaces perpendicular to the highway and other parking occurs on the roadside, which is not restricted. Creating a shared access for the school and 75 dwellings in this Phase 1 of the development (eventually rising to 250 dwellings when the development is complete) requires some changes to these

arrangements.

The school has indicated that it wishes to provide gates and restrict access to its' premises, limiting the use of the proposed new staff car park to staff, visitors and disabled users. The public road, beyond the school gates, therefore needs to provide access to the new residential estate, space for parents/guardians to park whilst delivering and collecting children and a safe pathway for children being escorted to the school. The latest proposed plans achieve this by providing a direct route to the new housing, increasing the number of perpendicular spaces ('drop off' spaces), which partly compensates for the loss of on-street parking and providing pathways and road crossing points along the route to the school.

The raised table, and use of block paving, will signal to motorists that they are in a 20mph zone around the school and that vehicles may be reversing into / out from the parking spaces. They are acceptable to the Highway Authority.

The road hierarchy proposed within the estate would, apart from the central mews street, lead to a series of cul-de-sacs with limited connectivity. However, this is the first phase of the development. The indicative planning layout for the subsequent phases shows the applicant's intention to link many of these cul-de-sacs to connected streets and roads. The proposal embeds the potential to achieve a connected road system, albeit from a single access point, as the estate is built out.

West Somerset District Local Plan saved policy T/8 Residential Car Parking (linked to appendix 4) sets out a maximum parking standard of 2 spaces per dwelling. Excluding the 30 spaces associated with the school (18 'drop off' spaces and 12 staff parking spaces), the application proposes to provide 159 spaces (156 allocated plus three visitor spaces). Since submission the parking arrangements within the proposed estate have been amended to reduce the overall number of spaces and to ensure that they are more evenly distributed across the dwelling sizes, with all dwellings having at least one allocated space. There is still a degree of concentration with more spaces provided for the larger dwellings. For example, the five large houses proposed for the north east corner each have 4 spaces, a double garage with two spaces in front. However, the extra spaces mostly result from a double garage and hardstanding in front arrangement, not untypical of houses of this size. The slight over-provision of parking proposed is not considered to justify an objection on highway grounds, given the continuing dependence of future residents on the private motor vehicle for the foreseeable future.

The existing public rights of way (PROW) which cross the site are retained and enhanced. They will continue to provide links to the town centre and surrounding area in compliance with saved policy T/9 (existing footpaths).

Conclusion

The principle of residential development of these fields has been established by the outline planning permission. This fixed the amount of development, at up to 250 dwellings, and the location of the vehicular access, off Liddymore Road. This reserved matters application, for the first phase of the development, demonstrates a high standard of design that responds positively to the site's existing features and local context. It is sensitive to its neighbours and integrates well with the existing

footpaths. Since submission, the applicant has amended the design of the scheme, refining what was already a good proposal into an excellent one. It is considered that the proposal, as amended, has the potential to deliver an attractive place to live, whilst setting a useful precedent for subsequent phases. As such it is recommended that conditional planning permission be granted.

In preparing this report the planning officer has considered fully the implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.

Contact Officer: Mr J. Guise



