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Affordable Housing Statement
For
Residential Development
At
77 Main Street
Newbold Verdon
Leicestershire

For

Mr and Mrs Gist

Proposal

The proposal is for outline planning permission for a residential development site at 77, Main Street, Newbold Verdon which has the potential to accommodate five dwelling units of mixed housing types, commensurate with local housing need.

The statement has been prepared in respect of the above proposal and as supplementary evidence to the application. The statement demonstrates that the scheme has been designed to incorporate affordable housing provision appropriate to local need.

The statement also justifies that the proposals are in line with Government development and housing strategies and has taken reference from the relevant National and Regional planning policy and the Hinckley and Bosworth Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2009).

Newbold Verdon

Newbold Verdon has a population that exceeds 1500 people. It is a microcosm of rural life consistent with its location. Identified as a Key Rural Centre the village is well equipped with an excellent travel system provided by a local bus service. The area also has excellent public amenities within walking distance, providing religious, educational, social and commercial activities for its residents and the surrounding villages.

The site is in a central village location that is currently under-used and could be developed to benefit the local community. Demolition of the bungalow on site will allow for a functional layout consistent with surrounding properties. The site has the potential to accommodate five dwelling units.

Local Authority Housing Targets

In order for the area to remain sustainable the council proposes to allocate land for the development of a minimum of 110 new homes in Newbold Verdon. The borough -wide target is to build a minimum of 2090 affordable houses by 2026.

Affordable housing is defined in PPS 3; "as housing that includes social rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market".

The lack of affordable housing in rural areas means that at least 480 affordable homes must be built in rural areas by 2026.

In order to achieve these targets the local authority has set minimum site size thresholds for incorporating affordable housing on all new developments in the Borough. This threshold is much lower than the national indicative.

Planning Policy Context

PPS 3 states; "that the national indicative minimum threshold for an affordable housing requirement is 15 dwellings. Local Authorities can set lower minimum thresholds, where it is considered viable and practicable, including rural areas."

Policy 15 of the Hinckley and Bosworth Local Development Framework Core Strategy outlines that a minimum of 2090 affordable homes will need to be provided within the Borough between 2006 and 2026. It states that 480 of those dwellings would need to be located in rural areas. To achieve this, the borough has set a minimum threshold of 40% affordable housing on sites of 4 dwellings or more, or 0.13ha or more.

Policy 15 states that; "For all sites, the tenure split will be 75% social rented and 25% intermediate housing. The target will be monitored regularly and may be revised to reflect changes in the housing market and local circumstances."

Policy 15 also states that the figures may be negotiated on a site by site basis taking into account; identified local need, existing provision, characteristics of the site and viability. In areas where there is already a high proportion of affordable housing, the council may agree to accept commuted sums in lieu of on site affordable housing".

Economic Viability

The site is centrally located and would provide a sustainable development commensurate with local housing need. The scheme is in its embryonic stage, as the proposal is for outline planning permission for a residential development of 5 dwelling units.

Consideration of the area and local housing need to provide a mix of housing types will enable the applicant to develop a sustainable scheme in line with local development strategies. The borough guidelines sets out the preference for 2 bedroom properties to accommodate small families, it also highlights the need to allow for future family growth, without increasing the demand for larger family housing.

The size and nature of the scheme is determined by the fundamental characteristics of the site. It is therefore essential that new developments respect the scale, form, mass and layout of the site and that density is considered throughout the design process.

Whilst the applicant is aware of the Borough's ultimate aim to meet affordable housing targets, it is considered that if 40% of the housing stock is made available for affordable housing, on a rural site of this size it is a very high percentage of the total and could ultimately have a negative affect on the viability of the project.

The national threshold is set at 20% on sites of 15 dwellings or more. Whilst the necessity of providing affordable housing in rural areas governs a much lower threshold, a site should be considered on its own merits in terms of the overall contribution it will make to the housing in the area. Therefore 20% would be a more economically viable option on a project of this size, and would still provide a valuable contribution to rural affordable housing.

Conclusion

The proposal incorporates affordable housing provision in line with national planning policy. The scheme has the scope to provide appropriate affordable accommodation within a rural area and create a mix of housing type in accordance with government and local development strategies and local housing need.

The scheme complies with PPS 3 and will provide; "high quality housing that is well designed and built to a high standard, create a mix of housing, both market and affordable, particularly in terms of tenure and price, to support a wide variety of households."

The affordable housing will integrate with the rest of the scheme, ensuring that it is in line with the Borough- wide guidelines and will be acceptable in terms of size, type and tenure. No contact has been made with any social registered landlord. The applicant is willing to discuss the relevant options further with the council.

Whilst the applicant is willing to work in unison with the local authority, in the current economic climate it is proposed that 20% of the housing stock on the site is still a valuable contribution to providing affordable housing in the area, without affecting the viability of the development.

As stated in Policy 15 of the core strategy; "the figures may be negotiated on a site by site basis taking into account, identified local need, existing provision, characteristics of the site and viability."

It is therefore proposed that the local authority take into consideration the size and viability of the site when determining the proportions of affordable housing to be sought from the proposed residential development.