

Design and Access/Planning Statement



Erection of 20 accommodation pods, 10 holiday lodges and a management building with associated internal access roads, parking, surface water balancing and landscaping, Inglenook Farm, Leicester

Road/Carrs Hill, Barwell

April 2023

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Introduction

The purpose of this statement is to set out the context for, and to explain the design principles behind, a proposal for the erection of 20 accommodation pods, 10 residential holiday lodges and ancillary development on land at Inglenook Farm, Leicester Road/Carrs Hill, Barwell.

Use/amount;
layout;
appearance;
landscaping;
scale; and
access

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) (Section 42) requires a design and access statement to accompany applications for planning permission of this scale.

Paragraph 126 of the National Planning Policy Framework advises that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what planning and development should achieve.

The framework of this statement follows the guidance set out in the CABE document entitled Design and access statements – how to write, read and use them. It is important to note that the DCLG Circular 01/06 Guidance on Changes to the Development Control System explains that the request for the access component of the statement relates only to access to the development and not to the internal aspects of individual buildings.

This Design and Access Statement assesses the physical and socio-economic context of the site, relevant planning policy, and then assesses the proposal under six headings:

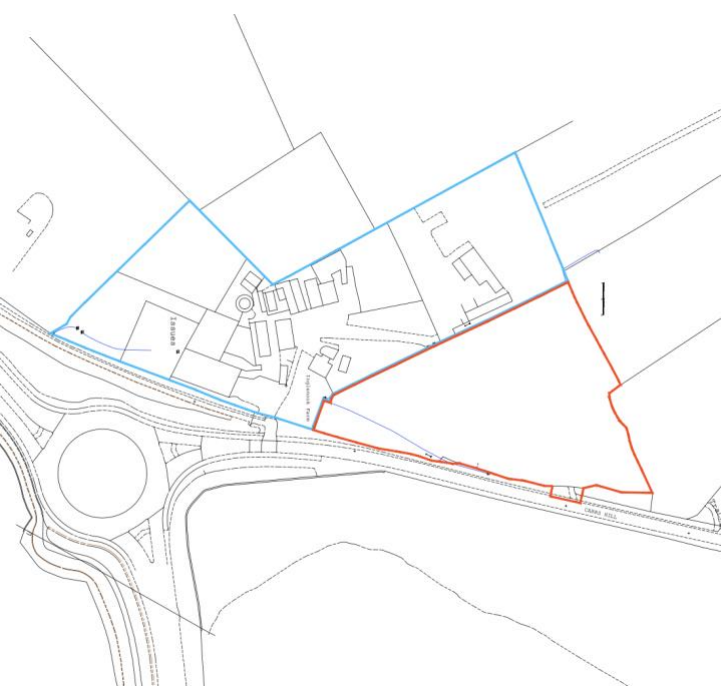
Physical Context

Location

The application site lies adjacent to Leicester Road/Carrs Hill, to the south east of Barwell less than a kilometre from the centre of the village. The site lies in a predominantly rural area characterised by agricultural and leisure uses. Inglenook Farm comprises a series of agricultural buildings, an existing house and an equestrian use. These buildings and uses utilise a separate access from Carrs Hill to the application site.

There is an existing public right of way to the north of the application site (off Leicester Road) which connects to two other footpaths which lead to the centre of Barwell.

The planning history of the wider Inglenook Farm site is detailed below (although the majority of the entries relate to land outside of the application site).



Location Plan

Physical Context

The site is accessed from Carrs Hill as indicated above.

The site extends to approximately 1.6 hectares and is triangular shaped. The site has an extensive frontage to Carrs Hill.

Site Description

As indicated above, the site comprises agricultural land which although located in a rural area, has an unused and somewhat neglected appearance. The site has extensive hedgerow and vegetation on the roadside boundary which it is intended to retain and improve. This would add to the biodiversity on the site.

Social Context

It is important to assess the affect that any development proposal will have on people in the locality and the formulation of the scheme has carefully considered the need to ensure that there is no adverse affect in terms of residential amenity or the character and appearance of the area. Other than the equestrian centre and the nearby uses at Inglenook Farm, the site has no near neighbours who could be significantly affected in terms of

residential amenity.

In terms of the affect of the development on the character and appearance of the area, currently neglected appearance of the site would be replaced by an attractive new accommodation pods and holiday lodges development including ancillary planting and the formation of a surface water balancing pond. The two existing ponds to the north of the site would be retained for angling for visitors staying on the site.

The social objective of achieving sustainable development is exemplified in the proposal in a number of ways. The proposal would provide opportunities for people to visit the site and exercise in an attractive environment as part of a healthier lifestyle. The scheme would also make an important social contribution for local residents by providing them with a local attraction for leisure and recreation. The design quality of the proposals also indicates the applicants' social commitment to the creation of a high quality built environment.

Economic Context

In terms of the economic objective, the proposed development would have a significant positive economic impact on the local economy with local residents and contractors providing services to the development. The development would result in the employment of a number of people to administer bookings, greet guests, clean and

Physical Context

maintain the properties and grounds together with companies who would carry out the development including suppliers and sub-contractors, the majority of which would likely be local to the area. The creation of a sustainable leisure development would benefit and sustain other businesses in the local area, for example, the pubs, restaurants, cafes and shops in Barwell, Earl Shilton and the wider area.

Environmental Context

The environmental objective is made up of a number of facets.

In terms of the environmental impact, the proposal would include attractive planted areas and respect and enhance the countryside location of the site. The overall site would be improved for visitors and local residents to enjoy and a net gain in biodiversity would be obtained. The conclusion reached is that the development would re-use this rural site for a beneficial purpose without giving rise to any adverse impacts.

Planning History

There is no planning history relating to the application site available on the Council's register, however, the adjoining land has a lawful use for a number of uses including agriculture, equestrian and retail. These uses are all served off an alternative access from Leicester Road.

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework ('The Framework') sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are to be applied. The framework advises that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, and this is made up of three dimensions:

- an economic objective i.e. contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy;
- a social objective i.e. supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities; and
- an environmental objective i.e. contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.

Paragraph 8 advises that the above roles are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways.

Paragraph 14 states that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and that this means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay. In this case, the proposal would fully accord with the relevant development plan policies and as it proposes sustainable development as defined in the Framework, planning permission should be granted.

Paragraphs 84 and 85 of the Framework relate to the rural economy and advise that planning policies and decisions should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas through both the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings, the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses and sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside. Sites that meet local business needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances, it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable.

National Planning Policy Framework

Section 12 of the Framework relates to achieving well designed places. Paragraph 126 advises that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve and that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. The guidance in paragraph 130 advises that planning (policies and) decisions should ensure that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, that they are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and landscaping and that they are sympathetic to local character and history while not preventing appropriate innovation or change. The proposal has been carefully designed with this guidance in mind. The submitted site layout and detailed lodge plans indicate how this has could be successfully achieved.

Development Plan Policies

The Development Plan for this site consists of the adopted Core Strategy for Hinckley and Bosworth Borough, the Site Allocations and Development Management Development Plan Document and the Area Action Plan (AAP) for Earl Shilton and Barwell. The AAP boundary includes both villages and the two respective sustainable urban extensions but omits the application site which is to the south of the AAP area boundary.

The following policies are considered the most relevant to the consideration of the application:

Hinckley and Bosworth Local Development Framework - Core Strategy (adopted December 2009)

The spatial strategy and policies for rural areas section of the Core Strategy advises that the focus of most new development will be in and around the Hinckley sub regional centre, however, the needs of rural settlements must also be taken into account.

The application site lies in an area identified on the Core Strategy Key Diagram as being within the Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge. The site is also identified as Strategic and Southern Green Infrastructure diagrams as Access and Recreation. Clearly, this designation is supportive for the proposals.

Policy 3 regarding the creation of a sustainable urban extension at Barwell of approximately 2500 homes relates to land to west of the application site and it not affected by the application proposals.

Policy 6 relates to the Green Wedge and advises that within this area, uses which provide appropriate recreational facilities within easy reach of urban residents and promote the positive management of land will be encouraged. A number of acceptable uses in the Green Wedge are listed, including, inter alia, recreation. Any land use or associated development should retain the function of the Green Wedge, retain and create green networks between the countryside and open spaces within the urban areas, retain and enhance public access to the Green Wedge (especially for recreation) and retain the visual appearance of the area. The proposals would adhere to these requirements by providing a further recreation opportunity within walking and cycling distance of Barwell and Earl Shilton. As indicated in the location section of this Statement, the site is well located for public rights of way that lead to the centre of the village. In terms of the affect of the development on the visual appearance of the area, this will be considered in subsequent sections of this Statement but overall it is felt that the scale and appearance of the accommodation pods and lodges would not be detrimental to the appearance of the area.

Development Plan Policies

Policy 23 relates to Tourism Development and advises that holiday accommodation (including, inter alia, holiday lodges) will be encouraged in suitable locations where a number of criteria are met. These include:

- the development supporting existing local community services and facilities.
- being of a design and scale which is appropriate to minimize impact and assimilate well with the character of the surrounding area (with acceptable landscaping);
- adding to local distinctiveness;
- complementing tourism themes of the Borough; and
- adding to the economic wellbeing of the area.

The application proposals have carefully considered the above criteria and it is felt that the scheme meets all of the above, as the development would add to the local economy, the use of services in Barwell (and nearby Earl Shilton) whilst being of an appropriate scale to remain in keeping with the area in terms of its landscape character.

Policy 24 aims to ensure that all urban development would meet Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) level 3 unless this would make it unviable. CSH is being 'phased out' for new developments and whilst the developer would seek to ensure reasonable energy efficiency is delivered, this may not equate to code level 3.

Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document, adopted July 2016

The following policies are considered the most relevant to the proposals:

Policy DM1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development reiterates the presumption provided in the Framework that applications that accord with the development plan should be approved.

Policy DM4 – Safeguarding the Countryside and Settlement Separation advises that the countryside will be safeguarded from unsustainable developments. Sustainable developments will include, inter alia, outdoor sport or recreation (and their ancillary buildings) and developments that significantly contribute to economic growth, job creation and/or rural diversification. In this case, it is clear that the proposals relate to outdoor recreation. The overall intention of the

Development Plan Policies

proposals is that it provides an opportunity to stay in the rural area (whilst being within walking and cycling distance of the services and facilities in nearby Barwell and Earl Shilton). The applicant is not aware of any available sites closer to the boundary of the village that could be utilized in compliance with criterion a) of policy DM4.

Policy DM4 contains further criteria that are required to be complied with in order to be considered in accordance with the policy. These include the need to ensure that the scheme does not have a significant adverse effect on the intrinsic value and landscape character of the countryside. No significant impact would result from this relatively small development of low accommodation pods, single storey lodges and a management building. The development would have no perceptible impact on the separation of settlements, sitting as it does, outside of the built confines of Barwell but a good distance away from Earl Shilton and Elmsthorpe.

The scheme would incorporate landscaping to a high standard and the scheme would not adversely affect the occupiers of neighbouring properties.

Policy DM6 – Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geological Interest.

This policy advises that development proposals must demonstrate how they conserve and enhance features of nature conservation and geological value. Major developments must deliver biodiversity gains and on site features should be retained, buffered and managed favourably to maintain their ecological value. This application is accompanied by an extended phase 1 habitat survey and a biodiversity impact assessment. Following its use for agriculture, the site's habitat value is relatively low, however, the vegetated areas on the periphery of the site would be retained and a number of biodiversity gains would be delivered as demonstrated in the survey and assessment.

Policy DM10 – Development and Design sets out a number of requirements for new built development to be considered acceptable. As indicated in previous sections of this statement, the proposed scheme would not have a significant adverse effect on privacy and amenity of nearby residents (criterion a). Furthermore, the occupiers of the accommodation pods and lodges would not be adversely affected by activities in the vicinity of the site.

Development Plan Policies

Further criteria in policy DM10 seek to ensure that the scale, mass, layout, design and materials of the development complements or enhances the character of the surrounding area. Compliance with this criterion is demonstrated by the submitted plans which show timber clad, single storey buildings with round roofs and pitched roofs which would echo the rural vernacular. Harsh materials would be avoided, and complementary landscaping would be implemented as part of any approval. A proportion of the lodges could provide electric vehicle charging as required by criterion g) of the policy. The scheme would include Sustainable Urban Drainage methods as required by criterion h) of policy DM10. Two attenuation basins are shown on the submitted plans.

Policy DM17 – Highways and Transportation advises that development proposals will be supported where they seek to make the most of public transport services, where there is convenient and safe access for walking and cycling to services and facilities, where they demonstrate that there is not a significant adverse impact on highway safety. The policy also notes that where appropriate, improvements will be required to be undertaken to the network to limit significant impacts (taking account of cost effectiveness).

The application is well located on the road into Barwell and the application is accompanied by a Highway Impact Statement which demonstrates that the proposals would not give rise to a significant number of vehicle movements and that no adverse impact on the local highway network would result.

Policy DM24 – Cultural and Tourism Facilities advises that the Council will seek to support the development of new cultural and tourism facilities provided they can be accessed by a range of sustainable transport modes. The submitted Highway Statement demonstrates that the site can be accessed via non-car modes following the initial journey to the site which would be likely to be by car (or taxi from Hinckley or Leicester train stations).

Development Plan Policies

Additional guidance/studies

Tourism Action Plan 2020-2025

Although predominantly focused on Leicester, the Plan advises that in 2018 the value of tourism in Leicester and Leicestershire was £1.88 billion. Over 23,000 jobs were created/safeguarded. Tourism is the fastest growing sector in the economy since 2010.

In the longer term, it will build the visitor offer including by reference to leisure and the natural environment.

The study identifies three target groups of visitors – those seeking heritage and culture, active families, and people looking for min-breaks. The proposals would appeal to all three of these groups.

Leicester & Leicestershire Economic Growth Strategy 2021-2030 Consultation Draft, June 2021

This consultation document from the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LEEP) sets out the LLEP's approach to overcoming the impacts of covid-19 and the challenges of the EU transition in terms of how future funding bids and resource prioritization will be carried out. In terms of the visitor economy, in the short term the LLEP will continue to deliver the Tourism Recovery Framework that has been developed by the Tourism Advisory Board.

Design Constraints and Opportunities

The application site is located in the countryside, outside of but relatively close to the services and facilities which are found within Barwell and Earl Shilton.

The major constraints to the development of the site are relatively few with the principal considerations being:

Ensuring that the layout and design of the development is compatible with this rural location.

Providing a restful and pleasant environment for visitors.

Providing a safe access to the site for residents, visitors and all highway and non-motorised transport users.

Ensuring that no loss of amenity to adjoining occupiers occurs as a result of the development.

In terms of its opportunities, it is considered that the site lies within easy walking and cycling distance of all the facilities required for a leisure break including shops, pubs/restaurants/cafes. Hinckley and Leicester contain a further range of leisure opportunities and cultural facilities for visitors and both of these centres have railway stations with good connections to Birmingham, Nottingham and London.

As such, it is considered that the development of this site offers an opportunity to provide a viable, attractive addition to the short term holiday accommodation offer in the Borough in a sustainable location.

The development proposed would have no adverse affect on any nearby residents and the layout has been designed to provide good separation between the pods and lodges to meet other legislation and ensure a quiet break for the occupiers.

The proposed development would greatly enhance the appearance of the site and the surrounding area.

Design Principles

The scheme has been formulated with the following design principles in mind:

- Be well Integrated into its surroundings;
- Located close to facilities and services and with good links to footpaths and bridleways for non-car modes of transport;
- Locally inspired and/or of a distinctive character;
- Enabling the retention of the best existing vegetation and enhancing the site's biodiversity;
- Providing safe access and plentiful car parking that is well integrated so that it does not dominate the site.

In addition to the above, as indicated in the Design Constraints section above, an important aim has been to ensure that the proposal provides a restful environment for visitors. The proposed accommodation pods and holiday lodges would be well insulated and noise would be mitigated internally by this and by the inclusion of well fitted windows and doors.

Site Use

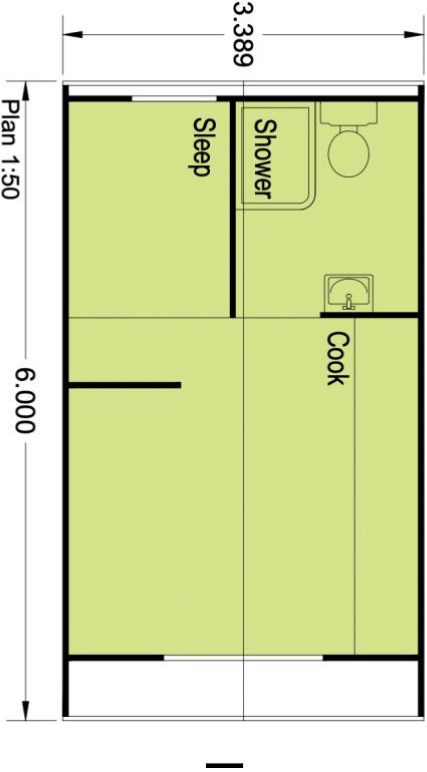
The proposal seeks full planning permission for the siting of 20 accommodation pods, the erection of 10 residential holiday lodges together with a single storey management building, internal access roads, parking, surface water balancing pond and landscaping for the development.

The use of the site for accommodation pods and holiday lodges is considered an appropriate use to apply for planning permission for given its rural surroundings and the policy context provided by policies 6 and 23 of the Core Strategy and policies DM4 and DM24 of the Site Allocations and Development Management DPD. As indicated earlier in this statement, the site has been vacant for some time following the cessation of the quarrying and landfill operations. The proposal therefore represents a sustainable use of a rural brownfield site which would give rise to direct employment and additional spend in the local economy. With that in mind, it is considered that a residential leisure use should now be favourably considered.

Amount of Development

The application proposes the following amount of development:

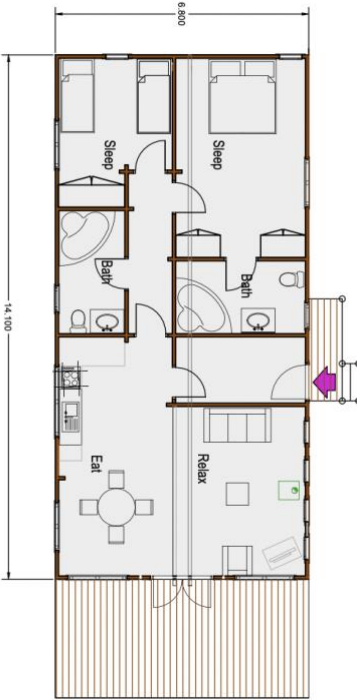
20 x one bedroom accommodation pods (approximately 20 square metres including the overhang to the front).



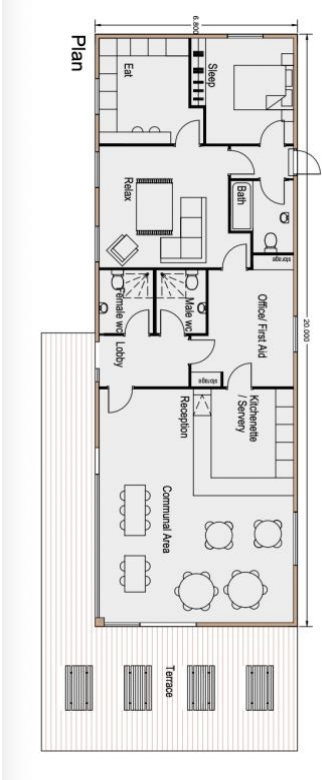
10 x two bedroom four person lodges approximately 96 square metres each.

Site Use

Amount of Development



A management building of approximately 136 square metres.



Layout

The proposed site layout has a specific design character which includes a distinctive loop road which the pods and lodges would be arranged around.

The layout is well structured with one main access point (from Carrs Hill).



Layout plan

The proposed layout has evolved as part of an iterative process once the important site constraints had been identified. The final scheme layout reflects a desire to ensure that the pod and lodge buildings do not dominate the site and an intention

Layout

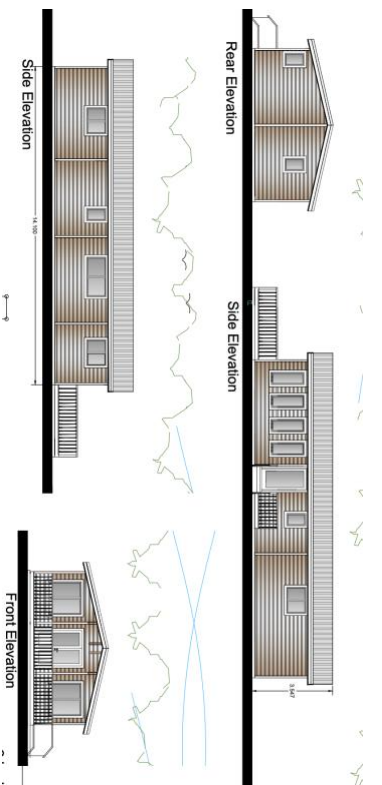
that vehicle parking be located discretely but close to the proposed pods and lodges.

The accessibility of the site will be primarily addressed in the Access section of this Statement, however, it is considered that the proposed layout promotes a clear definition of public and private realm areas whilst being mindful of the need to ensure that crime is prevented.

Appearance

In designing the scheme, the incorporation of rural vernacular features has been a fundamental principle. Details such as high pitched roofs and round roofs, timber cladding, timber doors and decking would be included in the design of the pods and lodges. It is considered that the inclusion of these features in a comparatively simple approach to form and elevational treatments would achieve a high quality environment reflecting the best aspects of similar building design found locally.

In relation to materials, timber cladding typical of the rural area, would be used, together with profiled metal cladding or tiles to reflect the site's surroundings.



Lodge building elevations

Landscaping

It is expected that the final details of landscaping would be the subject of a condition for subsequent approval, however, the incorporation of significant amounts of additional supplementary landscaping, both in terms of hard landscaping and planting, has been a guiding principle that has been used in drawing up the overall scheme details. The scheme includes new tree planting within the site to supplement any areas of the site that are not already well vegetated.

Although tarmacadam would be used for the main access road, different surface treatments, may be used on the parking/turning areas. It is intended that with careful conveyance of all areas of incidental space any maintenance and management issues associated with such areas would be able to be dealt with 'by design' rather than needing resolution by the occupiers.

Scale

As indicated under the Amount heading earlier, it is proposed to construct 20 accommodation pods, 10 single storey lodges together with a single storey management building.

The accommodation pods would have a maximum height of approximately 2.6 metres.

The proposed holiday lodges would have a ridge height of approximately 3.5 metres.

The proposed management building would have an approximate maximum ridge height of 3.6 metres.

Access around the development

The overall approach to vehicular access is firmly based on suppressing vehicle speeds and creating an environment that would be safe for pedestrians and cyclists in accordance with the guidance provided by Manual for Streets. A fundamental aim, in common with the approach taken by the Building for Life standard for residential schemes is that the highways do not dominate the layout. The use of the single loop road should ensure that vehicle speeds are kept below the aspirational limit of 20 mph.

In terms of non-car modes, it is considered that cyclists would be safe using the access road layout designed for the site and that access to/from Carrs Hill provides easy access to the facilities within Barwell and Earl Shilton which are within close proximity.

Sim
Similarly, it is considered that pedestrians can move freely and safely through the site.

Disabled people will not be segregated from any area of the site as the design process has been an inclusive one. All of the site would be accessible by disabled people and the overall site layout has been designed to allow full ease of movement for all disabled people including those with visual impairments.

Scale

As none of the buildings are designed to be public buildings, internal movement of the houses has not been assessed, however, all of the dwellings will comply with Part M of the Building Regulations.

Access for emergency services is available from the main site access and/or from the dedicated emergency access road within the development.

Access around the development

Conclusion

It is considered that this Statement demonstrates the design approach and evolution of this accommodation pod and holiday lodge development which it is intended would provide an attractive environment for all of the occupiers.

The main design principles of providing a distinctive design character and quality have been adhered to and all constraints to development have been fully assessed in the design process.

The visual impact of the scheme has been minimised and the resulting development would, it is considered, represent an attractive, well-designed new environment for occupiers and visitors which would enhance its surroundings.