

Report of the Head of Planning and City Regeneration

Planning Committee – 4 April 2017

PLANNING APPLICATION REFERENCE: 2013/0617

Residential development comprising 92 dwellings with associated access, drainage and public open space (outline)

Land South of Glebe Road, Loughor

1.0 Background

1.1 The application was reported to Planning Committee on the 10th November 2015 with a recommendation that planning permission be approved subject to conditions and subject to the applicant entering into a S106 Planning Obligation to provide:

- 19 units of affordable housing (AH) on the site;
- an education contribution of £100, 000
- a highways contribution of £92,100;
- Management plans for the future maintenance and management of the attenuation ponds and the maintenance, management and public access to the public open space and the play areas;

Members also resolved that a S106 management and monitoring fee shall be paid in accordance with the requirements of the Council's adopted SPG entitled "Planning Obligations" (2010).

1.2 With respect of the AH, it was resolved to provide the 19 units of affordable at 42% ACG, of social rented tenure and pepper potted throughout the site. The AH were required to include a range of DQR compliant house types. The design and specification of the affordable units were required to be of equivalent quality to those used in the Open Market Units.

1.3 A copy of the report to the Planning Committee and Action Sheet of the 10th November 2015 are attached as Appendix A and B respectively.

1.4. Since the Committee resolution to approve the proposal (subject to conditions and the signing of S106 Legal Agreement), the Council has received notification from the applicant's advisors of the challenges of meeting the affordable housing requirement detailed within the draft S106, whilst also safeguarding the viability of the scheme. In summary, the applicant is requesting that the AH requirement be revised, so that a lower level of AH is provided within the site. The applicant contends that unless a lower AH contribution is agreed, the scheme is not financially viable and therefore will not be delivered.

1.5 UDP Policy HC3 (Affordable Housing) highlights that where a demonstrable lack of affordable housing exists, the Council will seek to negotiate the inclusion of an appropriate element of affordable housing on suitable sites. The evidence base for this need is the Local Housing Market Assessment which assessed the dynamics of the housing market in Swansea and underpins the Council's Housing Strategy.

The affordable housing provisions has been subject to extensive negotiations which has now resulted in the revised proposed provision of 15% AH provided at 42% ACG with a 50/50 split between 2 and 3 bedroom accommodation.

- 1.6 The Council's Housing Service have been consulted throughout the negotiations and has confirmed that the provision of 15% social rented tenure affordable housing on site, with a mix of 2 & 3 bedroom houses with a 50/50 split, built to DQR standard is acceptable, subject to the properties being phased across the site in clusters.
- 1.7 Whilst it has been accepted that a lower level of AH is required to make the scheme financially viable and hence deliverable (at this point in time), it is prudent to note that market conditions could improve over the forthcoming years, which could alter matters relating to the financial viability of the scheme. Therefore, the lower level of AH is accepted at that point in time, subject to the proviso that the S106 includes a requirement that the viability of the scheme is reassessed during the submission of any reserved matters application and the level of AH being provided being amended in accordance with the reassessment.

2.0 Conclusion

- 2.1 The original report to Planning Committee on the 10th November 2015 recommended approval of the application. The scheme is still considered acceptable in planning terms and hence is again recommended for conditional approval. However, for the reasons set out above, the S106 requirements relating to AH are amended, subject to the use of a clause relating to the reassessment of the viability of the scheme at reserved matters stage. The other requirements of the S106 agreement remain unchanged.

3.0 Recommendation

- 3.1 The application be approved subject to the applicant entering into a S106 Planning Obligation to provide:
 - 15% of affordable housing on the site; comprising a 50/50 mix of 2 and 3 bedroom properties provided at 42% ACG
 - An education contribution of £100, 000
 - A highways contribution of £92,100;
 - Management plans for the future maintenance and management of the attenuation ponds and the maintenance, management and public access to the public open space and the play areas;
 - Monitoring fees shall be paid in accordance with the requirements of the Council's adopted SPG entitled "Planning Obligations" (2010).
 - A reassessment of the financial viability of the scheme upon the submission of any reserved matters application, and the level of AH provided being revised (where appropriate) in accordance with the results of the reassessment;

And in accordance with the conditions set out in the previously accepted recommendation (contained within the report attached as Appendix A).