Land South of Northampton Road, Bromham

Site Assessment

This site assessment for Land South of Northampton Road is based on the Site Selection Assessment Methodology (SSAM) of July 2020. A full suite of technical studies have been prepared which support this assessment including:

* Agricultural Land Classification Report
* Air Quality
* Arboricultural
* Ecology
* Flood Risk
* Ground Conditions
* Heritage
* Landscape and Visual
* Transport
* Utilities

This assessment is also supported by a Vision Document, prepared in October 2017. The Vision Document remains relevant to the on-going promotion and consideration of this site. Following the production of the Vision Document several iterations of the Illustrative Master Plans were prepared which evolved to respond to our understanding of the local circumstances identified through the Bromham Neighbourhood Plan and discussions with Bromham Parish Council. Rainier anticipate that the emerging master plan will continue to evolve through the plan making process and discussions with BBC Officers. The various iterations of the master plan demonstrate our commitment to working with the Council to deliver a suitable development of this sustainable and logical site.

| **Assessment questions – is the site** | **Assessment Criteria** | | |
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| **Air quality** – 1. Improve air quality | | | |
| 1a. Within or adjoining the urban area, a defined settlement policy area or built form of a settlement | ? | The site is adjoining Bromham which is defined as a key service centre. | |
| 1b. Accessible on foot to a food store? | ++ | The site is within 10 minutes’ walk of Budgens Supermarket. The centre of the site is located 10.5 minutes’ walk / 2.5 minutes cycle from the supermarket. Accordingly the site scores 8 out of 8 for this site assessment criteria. | |
| 1c. Accessible on foot to a primary school? | + | The east of the site is within a 10-minute walk of the Primary School; however all of the site is within ca 14 minute walk of the primary school. Accordingly the site scores 6 out of 8 for this site assessment criteria. This would increase to 8 out of 8 if land for a new 1 FE primary school is required to be provided on site. | |
| 1d. Accessible on foot or by bus to a major employer? | + | The site is within 10 minutes’ walk of a bus stop with a regular bus service which enables travel 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday. The bus stop located on Northampton Road to the east of the site is served by Route 41 which provides regular service (every half hour) to Bedford Town Centre / Railway Station (approximately 20 minute journey) and Northampton North Gate Bus Station (approximately 50 minute journey).  Development of this site also has the potential to facilitate reinstating additional bus routes. | |
| 1e. Outside, adjoining or within the air quality management area? | + | The site is not within or adjoining the air quality management area. | |
| **Biodiversity and green infrastructure** – 2. Protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity and habitats. | | | |
| 2a. Within or adjoining a site of nature conservation importance / within the impact risk zone of a SSSI / Natura 2000 site? | + | The site is not within or adjoining a site of nature conservation importance or the impact zone of a SSSI / Natura 2000 site. Whilst Hanger Wood SSSI is within the site’s potential zone of influence, given the absence of any easy public access from the site and the resilient nature of the habitats present within the SSSI, alongside the opportunity for the open space provision within the site there is not considered to be a risk that the SSSI would be affected by residential development of the site. | |
| 2b. In an area where protected species are known or likely to exist? | + | There are no known protected species present on site that would prevent residential development. Precautionary measures are recommended to minimise the risk of harm to breeding birds and reptiles during vegetation clearance. | |
| 2c. Potentially able to achieve a net gain in biodiversity? | + | Delivery of the site will achieve a biodiversity net gain of at least 10%. The site comprises an arable field and smaller grazed semi-improved grassland field with the field boundaries formed by a number of hedgerows. The arable habitat and grassland are low nature conservation value. The majority of hedgerow will be retained and buffered from the effect of development by their incorporation within green corridors. The area of woodland to the north western corner will be retained and enhanced with native tree and shrub planting.  Development of this site provides the opportunity to deliver biodiversity net gains throughout the site through native species tree, shrub/hedgerow and grassland in areas of open space delivered in green corridors across the site that will link with off-site habitats. This will provide opportunities for new foraging habitat, corridors of movement and places for rest or shelter for a wide range of faunal species. Further enhancements would include new bird and bat boxes, incorporating swift bricks on suitable buildings, hedgehog highways and seasonally wet aquatic habitats and attenuation features designed for the benefit of biodiversity. | |
| 2d. Able to link into the green infrastructure opportunity network? | 0 | The site is not within or adjoining the green infrastructure opportunity network.  As mentioned at assessment 2c above, development of this site provides the opportunity provide areas of open space delivered in green corridors across the site that will link with off-site habitats. | |
| **Climate change and energy** – 3. Reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and improve energy efficiency | | | |
| 3a. Proposing a renewable energy scheme or extra energy efficiency standards | + | Development of the site will deliver energy efficiency standards that go beyond current normal requirements.  Environmental Protection and Enhancement – Through a range of design measures development of this site will aim to protect and enhance the local environment, through:   * Design of homes to utilise sustainable materials and construction methods to reduce resource use and impacts on the environment; * Use of measures to reduce pollution during construction and operation including measures related to noise pollution, air quality and water pollution; * The development will be designed to minimise the impact of the development on the site habitats and wildlife as well as a range of mitigation and enhancement measures to achieve at least a 10% net gain in biodiversity; and * Measures to manage waste during both construction and occupation to reduce waste and maximise recycling.   Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change – The development will incorporate a range of measures to reduce carbon emissions, mitigating the effects of climate change, and adaptation measures to ensure the long term resilience of the development to the effects of climate change. Measures include:   * Homes designed in accordance with the energy hierarchy and a fabric first approach to reduce energy use and carbon emissions with homes achieving a 10% reduction in energy demand; * Installation of water efficient fittings to target water use of 110l/p/d, beyond the requirements of the Building Regulations; * Development of new homes in Flood Zone 1 and inclusion of a surface water management system including SuDS to manage the 1 in 100 annual probability plus 40% climate change rainfall event; and * Homes designed to minimise the risk of overheating taking into account the UKCP18 climate projections. | |
| 3b. Within or adjoining the urban area, a defined settlement policy area or the built form of a settlement? |  | See assessment at 1a above | |
| 3c. Accessible on foot to a food store? | ++ | See assessment at 1b above | |
| 3d. Accessible on foot to a primary school? | + | See assessment at 1c above |  |
| 3e. Accessible on foot or bus to a major employer? | + | See assessment at 1d above |  |
| **Cultural heritage and historic environment** – 4. Conserve, sustain and enhance the historic environment. | | | |
| 4a. Likely to impact on designated or non-designated heritage assets or their settings? | 0 | The proposal is unlikely to have a direct impact on any heritage assets.  Work has been carried out to assess the historic environment of the site and its wider environs, in order to identify any potential effects that development may have upon heritage assets. Assessment work has included desk-based research, site and settings inspection, use of LiDAR data and geophysical magnetometer survey.  No key heritage opportunities or constraints have been identified. The assessment and survey works have not identified a likelihood of archaeological remains in the site which would require preservation in situ, or otherwise constrain or influence design. As a condition of any approval of outline planning permission, however it is anticipated that further archaeological techniques may be utilised, including archaeological evaluation trenches (to examine further the boundary ditches identified in geophysical survey), and an archaeological watching brief. The scope and methodology of such works would normally be set out within a Written Scheme of Investigation and agreed with the archaeological advisor to the local planning authority.  Heritage assessment and survey work has concluded that development within the site would not result in any significant heritage effects, subject to appropriate mitigation. The site’s location, on the edge of the post-war development of Bromham, is in fact well-placed in order to avoid harm to the setting of designated heritage assets in the wider environs. | |
| **Employment, business, retail and tourism** – 5. Promote strong, sustained and balanced economic growth, stimulating job creation across a range of sectors. | | | |
| 5a. Likely to increase future economic and employment opportunities? | 0 | The proposal is not employment related.  It should be noted however that the proposed development will contribute to positive economic growth through construction and occupation, providing sustainable new homes, supporting the aims of the NPPF.  The economic benefits of construction are well known with considerable direct and indirect positive impacts resulting from new housing construction.  Further positive economic impacts of the proposed development resulting from the occupation of new homes and related increase in local population are noted as follows:   * The construction of up to 345 new homes will increase the population resulting in local benefits through the demand for goods and services; and * The increase in local population will also help support local facilities, groups and stores helping promote the vitality of Bromham. | |
| **Employment, business, retail and tourism** – 6. Promote vital and viable town centres. | | | |
| 6a. Proposing a main town centre use in, on the edge of or outside of a town centre? | 0 | Proposal does not include a town centre use. | |
| Heath and wellbeing – 7. Encourage and support physical activity. | | | |
| 7a. Within 400m of an existing open space or proposing open space within it? | + | The proposed development includes publicly accessible open space which will include an equipped children’s play area of at least 200 sqm. | |
| 7b. Within 800m of a sports facility or proposing a sports facility within it? | + | The proposed development includes a publicly accessible sports facility. | |
| **Landscape and townscape** – 8. Protect and enhance landscape and townscape character and the sense of place in settlements. | | | |
| 8a. Likely to have a significant adverse impact on the surrounding landscape? | 0 | The proposal is likely to have a neutral effect on the landscape. The Landscape and Visual Topic Paper supporting this call for sites submission concludes that despite the inevitable adverse effects of built development upon the local landscape character and on a limited number of visual receptors immediately adjacent to the site, it is considered that there would be no unacceptable adverse effects that should preclude the proposed development in landscape and visual terms. | |
| 8b. Within the existing settlement form? | + | The site adjoins Bromham which is a key service centre with a defined settlement policy area. Residential development is located to the immediate east and south eastern part of the site. The draft Bromham Neighbourhood Plan allocates the remaining land to the south of this site for residential development. The A428 is located within a cutting to the west of the site. The Northampton Road is located to the north of the site beyond which is a riding school, a cluster of houses and a small estate accessed via Chestnut Avenue.  Development of this site would provide a logical extension to Bromham. | |
| **Land, soil and water** – 9. Maximise development on previously developed land and avoid loss of high quality agricultural land. | | | |
| 9a. On previously developed land | X | The site is not previously developed land as defined in the NPPF. | |
| 9b. On best and most versatile agricultural land i.e. grade 1, 2 or 3a? | X | An agricultural land classification (ACL) review has been carried out for this site. A review of www.magic.gov.uk has identified that the Site was the subject of a detailed ALC survey which was carried out in October 1991 in accordance with the current MAFF ALC Guidelines.  The detailed ALC survey has determined that agricultural land across the Site comprises a mix of Subgrades 3a and 3b quality land. Although the Site comprises of some “best and most versatile agricultural land” at only 14.5 hectares grade 3a, this is not a sufficient quantity to be considered significant.  Furthermore as there is some Grade 2 land to the south (on the site allocated for development in the Bromham Neighbourhood Plan) the area proposed for development will involve some of the poorer quality land in the local area. Therefore the development of the Site for non-agricultural development is in accordance with policy advice set out in the Framework. | |
| **Land, soil and water** – 10. Protect the quality and quantity of water resources. | | | |
| 10a. Within a groundwater source protection zone? | + | The site is not located in a source protection zone. | |
| **Land, soil and water** – 11. Minimise flood risk | | | |
| At risk of flooding? | + | The site is within flood zone 1 (areas that have been shown to be at less than 0.1% chance of flooding in any year). | |
| **Population, housing and community** – 12. Promote good quality housing, ensuring an appropriate mix of house types and sizes | | | |
| 12a. Likely to provide a mix of housing, including affordable housing? | + | The site will provide a mix of housing and include policy compliant level of affordable housing. | |
| 12b. Able to address a particular housing need? | + | The site is capable of providing housing to meet an identified housing need such as housing suitable for the elderly. | |
| **Population, housing and community** – 13. Provide for residents’ needs and improve access to community services and facilities | | | |
| 13a Within 800m of a facility where cultural or social activities can be accessed? | + | The site is located within 800m of facilities where cultural or social actives can take place including Bromham Library and the Prince of Wales Public House. | |
| **Population, housing and community** – 14. Promote social cohesion, the prevention of crime and reduce the fear of crime. | | | |
| 14a. Likely to encourage social cohesion? | + | The site has the capacity to include a community facility. Rainier remain flexible to the use of a community facility which could take the form of either land for a 1 FE Primary School, or community hall with sports fields or land for a new medical facility. | |
| 14b. Likely to make the area safer? | + | The development will increase public surveillance along Northampton Road at the entrance to the village. | |
| **Transport** – 15. Reduce the need to travel and promote sustainable modes of transport | | | |
| 15a. Within or adjoining the urban area, a defined settlement policy area or the built form or a small settlement? |  | See assessment at 1a above |  |
| 15b. Accessible on foot to a food store? | ++ | See assessment at 1b above | |
| 15c. Accessible on foot to a primary school? | + | See assessment at 1c above | |
| 15d. Accessible on foot or bus to a major employer? | + | See assessment at 1d above | |
| 15e. Able to connect with the highway without constraint? | + | No access constraints. A detailed access drawing has been prepared and agreed with BBC Highways Team. | |
| 15f. Able to be developed without causing highway or junction capacity issues? | + | A detailed Transport Assessment has been prepared for this site and is summarised in the Transport Topic Paper provided with this call for sites submission. The Transport Assessment concludes that:   * The site is located in a suitable, accessible and sustainable location giving future residents the choice to travel by sustainable modes of travel. The proposals would see an enhancement to the local pedestrian and cycle network. * The impact of the development on the local highway network would be extremely low with drivers continuing to experience only minimal delay and queueing at junctions, hence no mitigation would be required at junctions. * Therefore, development of the site would be acceptable from a highways or transportation perspective. | |

**Constraints**

Important open spaces and views into and out of the settlement

The site is not located in an important village open space or urban space on the Local Plan Policies Map and is not subject to policies AD40 and AD43 of the Allocations and Designations Local Plan.

Contaminated land, hazards and pollution

There are no records of any contamination of the site and it is not near a hazardous site / pipleline and the development of the site is not likely to cause land/water pollution. This call for site submission is supported by a Technical Note regarding Ground Conditions prepared by Jubb Consulting Engineers.

Minerals and waste

The site does not include an active or former minerals or waste site, nor does it fall within a mineral safeguarding area. The land to the south of the site which is allocated for residential development in the Bromham Neighbourhood Plan is a former landfill site, however this does not have any impact or implications for the development of the site.

**Other considerations**

Education

Rainier has previously instructed specialist education consultants to assess the primary education need within Bromham. This identifies that BBC’s evidence-base for its assertion that a new 1FE primary school is required for every 500 new dwellings should not be relied upon. A more in-depth analysis into school provision, identifies that a new 1FE primary school would provide sufficient education infrastructure for circa 650 new dwellings, rather than the 500 dwellings noted within the Education Implications for Local Plan 2030 September 2018.

This figure should also include any spare capacity at the existing recently expanded 3 FE Bromham Primary School. Bedford Borough have previously suggested that the school has no spare capacity due to existing housing commitments. However, there is likely to be spare capacity at the expanded 3FE primary school. Rainier would welcome the opportunity to meet BBC education team to explore this matter.

The Bromham Neighbourhood Plan has identified that additional school capacity in Bromham will be delivered through expansion of the existing 3FE school to provide a fourth form of entry (4FE) primary school.

There may be capacity in the 3FE primary school to accommodate the proposed development of the site which needs to be explored further with BBC education team. If this is not the case, we consider that there would be capacity in a 4FE primary school to accommodate the delivery of 345 dwellings on the site. Again, if this is not the case, the site (land south of Northampton Road) has the capacity to provide sufficient land for a new 1 FE school. Accordingly, the site should be rated green regarding education.

Ability to deliver necessary infrastructure and services

The site has the capacity to deliver a range of community benefits. This would include publicly accessible open space with play areas and Rainier have confirmed their commitment to work with BBC and the local community to make land available on the site to deliver a community facility should there be a need; this could take the form of land for a new 1FE primary school if required, or a community hall, or medical facility with land for playing fields, or outdoor bowls.

**Overall Conclusion**

Contribution to strategy

The emerging local plan’s development strategy has not yet been identified, however, we strongly recommend that it includes new housing in key service centres such as Bromham. In accordance with the draft vision in the BBC emerging Local Plan development of the site would deliver well-planned growth avoiding areas of flood risk and support the creation of strong, safe and sustainable local communities in environments that facilitate healthy living.

The site was previously assessed by BBC for the previous local plan (Local Plan 2035 Consultation Paper of April 2017) and considered as part of a western expansion to the village as one of their preferred sites in Bromham. At that time the site was supported by the Parish Council as part of the western expansion of the village.

The site has also had the backing of the Parish Council to be identified as their reserve site in the Bromham Neighbourhood Plan. Whilst there is no reserve site policy in the Neighbourhood Plan, there is support locally that the site provides ‘the natural progression for future development in the village’.

Sustainability objectives

This assessment identifies that the site rates positively against the vast majority of relevant sustainability objectives. The site scores well in terms of accessibility being within acceptable walking distance of a food store, primary school, and bus stop served by a regular service. There are no known ecological constraints present on site that would prevent residential development and the proposed scheme would deliver a biodiversity net gain of at least 10%. Development of this site provides the opportunity provide areas of open space delivered in green corridors across the site that will link with off-site habitats. The development will deliver energy efficiency standards that go beyond current normal requirements, including a range of measures to reduce carbon emissions, mitigating the effects of climate change, and adaptation measures to ensure the long term resilience of the development to the effects of climate change. The proposal will include publicly accessible open space, children’s play areas and the opportunity for publicly accessible sports facilities.

The only matters which score poorly are previously developed land (as the is greenfield) and best and most versatile agricultural land (which affects most land in Bedford Borough). Otherwise the site scores very well in relation to sustainability objectives.

Accessibility

The site scores 8 of 8 in terms of accessibility to a food store being located within 10-minute walk; and 6 out of 8 for accessibility to a primary school, however the east of the site is within 10 minute walk (which would score 8 out of 8) however the majority of the site is within circa 14 minute walk. If necessary, the site could provide land for a 1 FE primary school, which would further improve/reduce the walking distance.

The site is also within 10-minute walk of a bus stop served by a regular service (every half hour) to Bedford Town Centre / Railway Station (approximately 20-minute journey) and Northampton North Gate Bus Station (approximately 50-minute journey).

Constraints

A full suite of technical studies has been prepared which support this assessment which confirms there are no constraints that would limit residential development of the site.

Other Considerations

As discussed above there may be capacity in the existing 3FE primary school in Bromham to accommodate the proposed development of the site which needs to be explored further with BBC education team. If this is not the case, we consider that there would be capacity in a 4FE primary school to accommodate the delivery of 345 dwellings on the site. Again, if this is not the case, the site (land south of Northampton Road) has the capacity to provide sufficient land for a new 1 FE school. Accordingly, the site should be rated green regarding education.

The site has the capacity to deliver a range of community benefits. This would include publicly accessible open space with play areas and Rainier have confirmed their commitment to work with BBC and the local community to make land available on the site to deliver a community facility should there be a need.

Settlement Character

The site adjoins Bromham which is a key service centre with a defined settlement policy area. Residential development is located to the immediate east and south eastern part of the site. The draft Bromham Neighbourhood Plan allocates the remaining land to the south of this site for residential development. The A428 is located within a cutting to the west of the site. The Northampton Road is located to the north of the site beyond which is a riding school, a cluster of houses and a small estate accessed via Chestnut Avenue.

Development of this site would provide a logical extension to Bromham.

Landscape

The proposal is likely to have a neutral effect on the landscape. The Landscape and Visual Topic Paper supporting this call for sites submission concludes that despite the inevitable adverse effects of built development upon the local landscape character and on a limited number of visual receptors immediately adjacent to the site, it is considered that there would be no unacceptable adverse effects that should preclude the proposed development in landscape and visual terms.

The Site is immediately available, in single ownership, and is able to deliver 345 dwellings plus land for community use comprising either a 1FE school or community facility and sports fields. This would make an important contribution to BBC’s housing land supply and will assist the function of Bromham as a village completing a logical and sustainable western expansion of Bromham. The Site is therefore commended to BBC for development.