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Residential and Commercial Planning : Planning Applications, Appeals and Enforcement

**LOCAL PLAN INITIAL DRAFT
(JULY 2017)**

**COMMENTS ON SITE NO LP0046:
GOOSEGATE FARM, HEATHY LANE, HOLMFIELD**

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THE SITE

The site is a parcel of land of approximately 0.3 hectares in a built up predominantly residential area within the Holmfield area of North Halifax.

It borders existing residential land to the north and east, with green belt land to the south and west.

In the Local Plan – Initial Draft, the site has been assessed as suitable for re-allocation from green belt to a new housing site, and the Council's Site Assessment Report (ref LP0046) summarises the reasoning behind this intended allocation.

CONSTRAINTS

In comments from the public on the consultation to the Initial Draft, constraints have been identified as – ecology, access, pressure on schools, flooding, necessity/deliverability, and flooding.

These points are addressed below.

CASE FOR ALLOCATION

Ecology

The owner of the land has commissioned an ecological appraisal of the site (which is attached to this report).

The appraisal advises that the site supports a small range of common, species-poor habitats typical of a residential site, where all of the habitats have been created and intensively managed by man, primarily for their visual amenity. The habitats are therefore considered to be of low ecological value and would not represent a constraint to future development.

It goes on to recommend the retention of boundary trees in any development due to their potential ecological value and also advises of low bat roost suitability within the site. There is a recommendation for ecological enhancement as part of any development.

There are therefore no ecological constraints to a housing allocation of the land.

Access

The Council's highway officer has assessed that the site can be suitably developed without any detriment to highway safety and that any issues of gradients and/or visibility can be resolved.

There are therefore no highway safety constraints to a housing allocation of the land.

Pressure on Schools

There are existing schools within walking distance of the site. If there are any capacity issues then the development would be expected to address this via planning obligation contributions appropriate to the scale of development that takes place.

Flooding

The site is in flood zone 1 so at the lowest risk of flooding. The Council's report does not identify any drainage related constraints to development.

Necessity/Deliverability

There is an evident need for development – the Council has to meet a 5 year housing supply and at present it is some way away from being able to achieve this with the current level being at 2 years. Sites such as this one in a built up location where there is existing infrastructure in place are appropriate for assisting in meeting the required level of housing.

Deliverability is a matter for consideration at the time that planning permission has been granted but there is no reason why a site such as this cannot be delivered when there are new housing developments taking place in the area.

SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

The site is adjacent to an existing residential area and there is a wide range of local services and community facilities in the general surroundings including local shops and recreational grounds, together with local schools all within acceptable walking distance. Halifax town centre is within easy reach via private car and public transport, where there are a wide range of facilities including retail and leisure, employment opportunities and links to other local and regional towns and cities via train and bus services.

It is considered that the site is in a sustainable location and would be suitable for residential development. This is confirmed by the Council's suggested allocation of the site

GREEN BELT CONSIDERATIONS

The NPPF identifies the five purposes of including land in the green belt:

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

The site has no impact in terms of 2, 3 and 5.

In terms of the potential impact on unrestricted sprawl the site would represent a natural expansion of the urban settlement and would retain defensible green belt boundaries beyond it, so there is no impact of unrestricted sprawl.

With regard to encroachment there is an inevitable effect of encroachment from any loss of green belt land. In this case however the effect is minor and the defensible boundaries as referred to above would minimise any impact.

As a potential housing allocation out of the green belt there is no significant impact from the proposed development of this site.

CONCLUSION

The site area is appropriate for allocation as a housing site. Constraints suggested in the responses to the Initial Draft consultation do not have any merit.

The site is in a highly sustainable location.

Roger Lee Planning Ltd