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Branch Chair
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Authority: Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council

Type of consultation: Planning application

Full details of application/consultation: R/2021/0986/FFM - residential development of 65 houses with associated access, open space, landscaping, parking and drainage infrastructure

At land at: off Trefoil Close and Meynell Avenue, Guisborough

Type of response: Objection

Date of Submission: 24th January 2022

All responses or queries relating to this submission should be directed to the Secretary for the Trustees at the contact details shown above on this frontispiece.

All CPRE North Yorkshire comments are prepared by the charity using professional planners whose research and recommendations form the basis of this response in line with national CPRE policies.

External planning consultant used in this response:



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Planning Context

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that an application should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise.

The National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') as updated, July 2021, sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF is, therefore, a material consideration which should be taken into account in determining this application.

The planning system should contribute to achieving sustainable development. The NPPF aims to deliver sustainable development through the implementation of its policies. Paragraph 11 states that for decision making this means:

- c) *'approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; [...]*

The Development Plan relevant to this application consists of the Redcar and Cleveland Local Plan 2015-2032 ('LP'). The LP is considered up to date by CPRENY, having been found sound by an Independent Inspector and adopted by the Council in May 2018, therefore, full weight can be afforded to the relevant policies within the development plan when determining this application, in line with paragraph 11 of the NPPF as set out above.

The applicant has submitted a major application for a residential development for 65 new dwellings and an area of open space. The site is within the development limits of Guisborough but was not allocated for residential development in the adopted LP. It is, therefore, a windfall application.

Policy SD3 sets out that proposals within Development limits will be supported subjecting to meeting other policies in the LP. Policy SD4 confirms that development will be permitted where it meets a number of criteria including (but not limited to) when it *'meets the requirements of the locational policy and accords with other LP policies and designations'*; *'will not result in the unacceptable loss or significant adverse impact on important open spaces or environmental, built or heritage assets which are considered important to the quality of the local environment.'* It goes on to state that all developments must be designed to a high standard setting a further list of criteria which would make it acceptable.

The Local Spatial Policy (LS3) for Guisborough confirms the settlement is in the 'rural communities' tier of the settlement hierarchy (policy SD2) and that the council will aim to *'enhance the role of Guisborough as the principal service centre and promote independent businesses including retail, leisure and tourism sectors, as well as a focus for new housing'* and *'develop new housing if an appropriate scale, with a mix of types and tenures, in suitable rural settlements'*.

The application site consists of an area of land within a central location in the settlement of Guisborough, bounded by housing to all sides. Hutton Beck runs through the centre of the site and the immediate boundary to which can flood; however, the applicant has not proposed any housing in these areas. There are no Public Rights of Way through the site but there are several informal accesses used by local residents for recreational purposes (e.g. dog walking). The site is not however designated as open space in the LP.

Whilst there does appear to be some policy support for the proposals, in that it is effectively 'white land' within the development limits of a sustainable rural settlement, the principal factors most prudent to the determination of the proposal seem to be whether there is a 'need' for the site to be developed and whether the impacts of the proposal are appropriate in that specific location.

Policy H1 of the LP confirms an annual housing requirement of 234 net additional dwellings over the plan period to 2032 (3978 in total). It goes on to state that it is expected that most of the requirement will be met through completions on existing sites and land allocations in the LP. The LP does not have a specific Windfall Policy although paragraph 6.31 highlights the fact that *'windfalls tend to exceed stock losses and there is an expectation that this trend will continue though out the plan period'*. The Council's most up to date 'Five Year Housing Supply Assessment' (August 2021) confirms that there is no shortage of supply at section 3.7 setting out 'it is therefore apparent that:

- *housing completions have heavily overachieved against the local plan minimum requirement, which is also reflected in the ongoing strong performance against the annual housing delivery test; and*
- *there is a substantial supply of ongoing commitments which, if augmented by prospective major permissions, would be sufficient to maintain a relatively high deliverable supply over and beyond the next five years.'*

Reading on within the document, the Council assert they have sufficient supply for well in excess of the entire plan period and certainly in excess of the 5-year requirement. As such, whilst windfall developments can help achieve local planning authority housing requirements, in this case there is no specific 'need' for a proposal of this scale. The 2020 Windfall Allowance Technical Paper assumes circa 45 windfall dwellings per annum (as a minimum), however, given the excessive over-supply demonstrated in the Council's evidence, CPRENY consider that whilst the site is within the development limits of a sustainable settlement, simply because it could be developed does not mean it should be in all circumstances. CPRENY are aware that Phase 2 of the allocated site at Galley Hill has been placed 'on hold' due to lack of sales, therefore, any promoted 'need' is considered questionable at present.

The site itself is one of the few large open spaces left within the settlement which is not developed. Whilst not designated as formal open space, the area is locally valued as is evident by the numerous objection responses on the Council's planning portal pages.

CPRENY are concerned that despite the reduction in units from the pre-application enquiry, the proposed 65 units is still a considerable amount for the site and could constitute over-development. The Council's own SHLAA considered the site (site reference 161a) for potential residential development, however, discounted the site believing *'there are alternative sites in Guisborough which are in more sustainable and less environmentally sensitive locations and are less physically and environmentally constrained.'* CPRENY are aware there is a considerable planning history for the site, most of which has consisted of applications for residential dwellings and open space, all for low-density executive housing, however, all have been refused, including at appeal. Latterly (2008) a proposal for 65-75 dwellings (across the proposed site and neighbouring site at Newstead Farm) and open space was refused. This proposal seeks to achieve a similar yield over a reduced site area and a higher site density. As such, CPRENY see no change in circumstances, especially considering the Council's current housing supply position, that should alter the outcome of this renewed proposal and consider the proposal to be contrary to LP policy H2(e) which requires housing proposals *'to achieve a density appropriate to the proposed housing type and mix which supports wider sustainability objectives'*. The policy is supported by text at paragraph 6.22 which states that there must be an appropriate balance between *'the character of the surrounding area including typical densities, the proposed type of development and housing mix and ensuring proposals are likely to be economically viable...'* This is also supported by the general development principles set out at Policy SD4(j).

The applicant proposes a new vehicular access be provided from Trefoil Close, running through the centre of the developable area eastwards. CPRENY are concerned that a future development to the east of the

proposed site could then be facilitated leading to further overdevelopment of the overall site. This is also raised as a possible second phase of development in the applicant's own Design and Access Statement and is not something that CPRENY would support.

In conclusion, CPRENY cannot support the proposal for 65 new dwellings in this location and therefore wish to register their objection. The Council's current (and future) housing land supply position does not warrant the need for additional windfall development in Guisborough which has already seen a significant proportion of the district's new builds located here. The proposed site is one of the few remaining natural open spaces left within the settlement and CPRENY consider development in this locally valued open space would not be appropriate at this scale. As such, CPRENY consider the proposal is contrary to the LP Policies SD4, H2(e) and LS3.

CPRENY reserve the right to comment further should additional information be submitted in support of the proposals.