

Growth & Infrastructure - Planning and Building Consultancy

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Your Ref:
Our Ref: PREA/18/00146
Contact: James Gilfillan
Telephone: 01202 633336
Date: 10/09/2018

Dear Ms J Lock-Smith

Proposal: Redevelopment of overall school site: Provision of a new 2FE primary school, two storey building and associated play in line with BB103. Remaining parts of the site to be allocated for residential and mixed-use development

Location: Hillbourne School And Nursery, Kitchener Crescent, Poole, BH17 7HX

I refer to your request for advice received and validated in this office on 24 August 2018 and the meeting held at the school on the 4th June 2018. I have visited the site and considered the proposed development having regard to the relevant policies, constraints and opportunities and I would advise:

The site is currently occupied by a school and nursery school/youth centre distributed throughout 4 distinct buildings. The buildings are predominately single storey, with elements of 2 storey. They are set in large grounds some of which is hard surfaced for parking, play grounds circulation space and the remaining largely grassed with some sports pitches marked out.

There is a row of large mature trees on a north-south axis dividing the playing fields and clusters of smaller ornamental trees and landscape across the site. The land around the buildings is predominately flat, but ground levels rise towards the west boundary.

The site is surrounded by residential properties, largely semi-detached houses in an estate layout, with a consistency in appearance, plot size and form.

Relevant Planning History

A variety of alterations to the school and grounds.

Relevant Planning Policy

The following are the most relevant adopted policies, however you should satisfy yourself that your scheme has regard to the entire development plan.

Poole Core Strategy Adopted 2009

PCS05	Broad Location for Residential Development
PCS06	Affordable Housing
PCS15	Access and Movement
PCS23	Local Distinctiveness
PCS25	Self reliant Communities
PCS26	Delivering Locally distinctive, self reliant places
PCS27	Safer Communities

Poole Site Specific Allocations & Development Management Policies DPD (Adopted April 2012)

DM01	Design
DM07	Accessibility & Safety
DM08	Demand Management
DM09	Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

However of significantly more relevance is the preparation of a new Local Plan to replace the Poole Core Strategy; Poole Site Specific Allocations & Development Management Policies DPD; Delivering Poole's Infrastructure DPD and saved policies of the 2004 Poole Local Plan First Alteration. The draft plan is currently undergoing examination in public and the Council awaits confirmation from the Planning Inspectorate on next steps. In accordance with NPPF para 216, policies in the Draft plan can be afforded some weight in decision making, depending upon the significance of any unresolved

objections.

Policy PP9 Urban Allocations outside the Town Centre.

Consultee Responses

Consultation with other Service Units of the Council has been done as part of this initial response, but the Local Planning Authority has not consulted external agencies, who may make representations on any subsequent planning application. Those comments may be material planning considerations and may affect the final recommendation.

I would suggest that you visit the Environment Agency, Natural England or any other third party organisation website to ascertain their views prior to the submission of a planning application.

Sport England would be a statutory consultee due to the scheme proposing development of playing fields. I am aware you have engaged with them directly however they would be a consultee on any application. I would take this opportunity to advise that the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) Direction 2009, directs the LPA to refer an application to the SoS, where Sport England have objected on a range of grounds, which are given. I would advise you to familiarise yourself with these 'tests' and see fit to support your application with such information to resolve or allow Sport England to properly assess the consequences of the scheme.

Recommendation

Having regard to the information submitted, my pre-application advice is as follows:

Whilst yet to be adopted, emerging Plan policy PP9 sets a framework for the principle of the proposed development, identifying the site, U16, as having the potential to deliver redevelopment and improvements to the existing school and a minimum of 40 homes.

I note this scheme proposes to demolish the existing school buildings, erect a new single school and erect between 103 and 120 residential units. The proposed policy does not include or pre-empt consideration of the loss of playing fields as it advocates a much smaller scheme, so whilst the principle of the scheme may have merit its wider implications may yet render the scale of the development unacceptable.

Setting aside the loss of playing fields, the principle of demolishing the existing 2 school buildings and erecting a new school in order to free up land for residential development has merit and significant social and environmental benefits.

Local adopted policies and National planning guidance advocate that LPA's take a positive, proactive approach to ensuring a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and future communities. The principle of a replacement school would be entirely consistent with this. I am not in a position to comment on the benefits or dis-benefits of the options for the internal layout and amount of floorspace required for a school to accommodate the number of pupils currently occupied on site and taking in to account the growth aspirations of the draft Poole Local Plan and population projections.

However by way of initial thoughts and opportunities for this part of the scheme I would advise that whilst the site is not immediately adjacent to the Local Centre in the Waterloo estate, the school will be a very active feature of the local community, therefore the building should be a focal point and make a positive statement in the community, it could readily be 2 storeys, should present positively to the road in a contemporary architectural vernacular commensurate with its educational role. It should be positioned and laid out in a manner that negates the need for overtly defensive and austere front boundary treatment and parking should not dominate the front of the site. Some plans indicate parking at the side of the school, which would be appropriate.

The scheme should encourage pupils and staff to use alternatives to the private car and maintaining the footpath link from Hillbourne Road would be positive, safe cycle and scooter storage and changing facilities for staff would also support sustainable travel.

Adopted and draft local planning policies can accept the loss of open space, including both hard and soft play space, where the replacement play space improves the quality or function of the space. In this case the provision of an all weather MUGA style court would provide improved quality, with potential for greater use, designing in arrangements for community access and use outside school use would contribute to the improved quality. However this would not necessarily satisfy the requirements

and expectations of Sport England, who's assessment is based on wider playing pitch strategy and provision across the Borough.

Retaining the nursery school would be positive and allow some rationalisation of space. In the event it can not be accommodated within the replacement school site, consideration should be given to provision of such a facility within the remaining land, in order to satisfy adopted policy PCS25. The loss of a community facility would be contrary to PCS25, but would ultimately be weighed up in the balance of the benefits and impacts of the scheme.

I note a pre-requisite of the scheme is to ensure continuity of service by the schools, the position of the replacement school would achieve this, an aspiration which is entirely reasonable, furthermore as referenced above the school should be positioned prominently to contribute positively to the community in which it is located. This then results in the two parcels of land on the north and south side of the site having the potential for residential development.

I can understand and accept the need to maintain the operation of the existing schools, however the position of the new school results in the creation of two cul-de-sac developments rather than a single residential development with a network of streets and routes through, that engages and integrates with the existing networks. Whilst that does not readily harm the character of the wider area, it doesn't deliver the best solution, design quality and place making that could be achieved by a single large plot.

Similarly the number of houses/units proposed is significantly above the draft policy. The numbers generated by the various options are not in themselves unacceptable, but do lead to the concerns raised below.

At this time the principal concerns with the proposals are the significant dominance of the roads and car based infrastructure. Whilst the scheme may provide sufficient parking spaces and manoeuvring space to meet adopted standards and dimensions, the layout of such long stretches of 'in front of house' car parking dominating the roadsides would not result in an attractive residential layout or desirable pedestrian environment.

Furthermore the road layout does not appear to 'down-scale' in to the scheme in order to shift away from being heavily trafficked roads to more intimate and narrower shared surfaces, to slow speeds and create places for people to live and play. This is highlighted at the point that the footpath from Hillbourne Road crosses the 'estate road' through plot 1, where a form of zebra crossing is marked on the road. At this point of the site, the vehicle speeds and design of the road should be such that such a dedicated pedestrian crossing is not required.

Where the front garden parking layout is proposed along Kitchener Crescent it would have a particularly negative impact on the experience of pupils on the pavements leading to and from the school. This is counter to the aspiration of creating attractive walking routes to school and is a worse environment than the pupils currently experience across the wider area. The parking should be within the curtilage in a manner that allows front boundary enclosure and a single width dropped kerb for each house or semi pair.

Junctions between the new roads serving the development should provide continuity of pavement for pedestrian priority as part of a raised table traffic calming layout across Kitchener Crescent (or other form of traffic calming designed in to reduce vehicle speeds in the area) and the junction. The existing traffic calming build outs could be removed to avoid conflict with driveways.

There is no expectation that traffic volumes and flows from the development would cause problems for the existing highway capacity. Peak school drop off and pick up would largely be as existing, with no significant loss in the availability of on street parking for parents who do travel by car.

Only the layout of the site has been provided at this time. The design of the properties could readily relate to the simple design of the existing surrounding houses, however I expect that in most cases the proposed houses would not be viewed in a streetscene with the existing houses and the scheme could adopt its own architectural style.

I will assume that the houses are 2 storey, but would not rule out 3 storey town houses should that be the intent. Subject to their location and position a larger block of flats/sheltered accommodation could be delivered to contribute to maintaining unit numbers.

Based on the options it appears that the amenity and privacy of existing neighbours can be readily

preserved.

The LPA's Senior Arboricultural Officer advises that removal of the trees advocated by options 1.1 and 2.1 is unacceptable. They are an important line of mature trees, from both an arboricultural and ecological point of view and contribute to the appearance of the area, provide a back drop to the site and are not realistically compensated for in the planting proposals shown on the options. Furthermore I'd be concerned over the long term sustainability of the building-tree relationship indicated by options 1.1 and 2.1 between the houses and trees along the west boundary. At this time we'd strongly encourage you to adapt the layout to retain the trees in a manner indicated by option 3

Option 3, or any revisions, would benefit from enclosure at the end of the road through the site (Plot 1), such as placing the flats to the south of their position indicated by option 3.

All of the layout options leave small odd shaped areas throughout the site, indicated as being landscaped, however I would be concerned about future maintenance and the potential negative consequence for the appearance of the area if no body takes ownership for them. Whilst some informal on site amenity space would be positive the scheme should seek to design out the small areas, which could contribute to freeing up space to alleviate the dominance of car parking.

In many cases the tree planting proposals appear highly aspirational given the hard surfaces around the trees shown. Trees should be included in the design and layout of the site and would contribute to the character being created in different sections, but they need to be realistic with space to grow and appropriate root zones.

Attached to this letter are the comments of the Urban Design Officer, who has gone in to more detail on the layout and offered an indicative layout that could form the basis for revisions to the layout.

The scale of the proposals should make a contribution towards the provision of affordable housing. Your scheme would need to be supported by a Viability Assessment to demonstrate what if any contributions it can sustain. I acknowledge that the intent is for the housing scheme to support the delivery of the school, however there is no planning policy to support this arrangement so the scenarios of policy compliance and deliverability would need to be demonstrated.

Being new builds it should be readily possible to deliver energy efficient and sustainable development. Adopted policies would require 20% of the schemes energy needs to be achieved by on site renewable sources. I acknowledge that historically decisions on proposals for new schools have applied crude BREEAM requirements, however these have often be found unwieldy and inappropriate for the nature of the project. Any application should include details of the intentions for delivering an energy efficient and sustainable school, akin to the aspirations of the BREEAM process, but deliverable and specific to the opportunities this project presents.

Contributions

Mitigation in respect of the impact of the proposed development on recreational facilities, transport infrastructure (SEDTCs) and infrastructure projects to protect SSSI Dorset Heathlands is provided for by Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule which was adopted by the Council on 18th September 2012.

As such if your proposed developments were submitted, and subsequently approved, in accordance with CIL Regulation 28 (1) the Adopted Charging Schedule, the schemes would be CIL liable will be required to pay CIL in accordance with rates set out in the Council's Charging Schedule instead of (and not in addition to) Planning obligations secured through S106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 towards infrastructure that would have been required prior to introduction of the Borough's CIL will now be delivered through CIL. I can advise that the rate imposed is currently £75/metre² (with a deduction taken for the existing floor space of the buildings on site, if applicable). Further details on CIL can be found on our website at:

<http://www.poole.gov.uk/hidden/alpha-testing-area-gis/copyof%20community-infrastructure-levycommunity-infrastructure-levy/>

The site is **beyond 400 metres of Heathland SSSI, but within 5km** and as such, the proposal additional net increase in dwellings may be acceptable subject to appropriate mitigation of impact upon heathlands. The contribution will be taken from all qualifying residential development to fund Strategic Access Management and Monitoring as part of the Dorset Heathland Planning Framework, the overarching strategy for managing the adverse effects of development upon the internationally

important Dorset Heathlands. The charge is based on the cost of delivering SAMM in Poole and is £375 per additional house or £255 per additional flat. Your proposal is qualifying residential development which requires such a contribution and would be payable either through a Unilateral Undertaking or Section 111 agreement. This contribution will must be secured prior to any favourable decision being given. Further information on the contribution can be found on our website at:

<http://www.poole.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/planning/ldp/supplementary-planning-documents/dors-et-heathland-planning-framework/>

Conclusions

The emerging Poole Local Plan includes a policy supporting the principle of the use of the site for residential development. Irrespective of that policy the principle of the scheme has significant social benefits, by providing a large number of family homes and a new school and significant environmental benefits of delivering such development in the existing urban area and the benefits its design could make for the character and appearance of the area. Minor economic benefits would exist during construction.

However the options presented at this time do not deliver design solutions that could be supported, advice and guidance is given herein and we would be keen to meet with you to discuss alternatives prior to any application or public consultation exercise being undertaken. The absolute numbers may have to be reduced in order to achieve an acceptable design and layout.

The views of Sport England regarding the development on the existing sports pitches, could materially alter the acceptability of the scheme. Whilst it would be for the decision maker to apply weight to any objection of Sport England, any outstanding objection could require referral to the Secretary of State for their review, which would have implications for the decision making timescale.

These views are based upon my own professional opinion and given without prejudice to any decision that the Local Planning Authority may make should an application be submitted. The applicant is advised that whilst a detailed desk top study has been carried out regarding the proposed development and its implications, the case officer has not had opportunity to notify neighbouring residents or visit their properties to fully assess the impact of the development. Should an application be submitted, then through the consideration of that application further issues may come to light, which are unknown at this stage, and may if considered material require additional modification to the proposals or if necessary refusal of the application if changes are not made. Should your client wish to enter into further pre-application discussions, then 'stage 2' of the charging structure will be implemented, charging your client at £66 per officer, per 30 minutes or part thereof. This stage is at the discretion of the case officer and should not be seen as a right.

Yours faithfully

James Gilfillan
Senior Planning Officer

Hillbourne

Prea/18/00146 - Urban Design Officer advice.

I have reviewed the plans for the Hillbourne site. Three options have been presented. The design quality proposed on all three options is hugely disappointing and in my view is not acceptable. The positive elements of the design thinking done at the feasibility stage has been lost, being replaced with over regimented and formulaic approach which would fail to deliver good design and place making.

Within the emerging Local Plan the site is allocated for a school with a minimum of 40 units on any surplus land. There are a number of other policies within the emerging Local Plan which are also relevant including PP8 Type and mix of housing delivery, PP26 Design, PP24 Open space, PP33 Transport Strategy and PP34 A safe, connected and accessible transport network. While the 40 figure within the Local Plan is a minimum and there is scope to increase this where high quality design solutions are proposed. The options provide the replacement school and between 103 and 120 units but the additional units are not provided in way that meets the requirements of other policies of the Plan.

Plot 2

In all the options the proposals for plot 2 on the west of the site are the same, creating a cul de sac of 35 units. The layout shows a series of semi detached houses and, with the exception of 2 houses, all the parking shown off street to the front of the units. This results in a highly car dominated environment with a lack of landscaping in the streetscene. There are also two large turning heads and on street parking located on street right at the entrance to the site. The provision of parking dominates the streets and will result in an unattractive environment. The parking in Kitchener Crescent will result in a number of vehicle movements across the pavement on the route to school and will again create in a frontage dominated by hard standing.

A greater mix of on street and on plot parking is required to create a more quality and pedestrian focused public realm. Policy PP34 of the emerging Local Plan specifically states that developments should maximise sustainable forms of travel and contribute positively to the creation of attractive, safe and accessible place with safe, convenient pedestrian and cycling routes. Policy PP26 Design also set out that development should provide an attractive public realm that prioritises the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport uses before private cars. The proposed layout fails these policy requirements. Guidance in national standards such as Building for Life highlights that 'over reliance on in front of plot parking tend create over wide streets dominated by parked cars'. This unfortunately been the approach to this site. The layout needs to provide a greater mix of parking types and consideration needs to be given to the creation of a home zone environment which minimises the dominance of the road.

The feasibility options were more successful in minimising the road dominance through more on plot parking provision, see plan below.



Plot 1

Option 1.1

Option 1.1 creates a series of cul de sacs with development across the whole site. The trees, a prominent and attractive feature of the site are removed. Emerging policy PP26 (b) sets out that development should respond to the natural features of the site and does not result in the loss of trees that make a significant contribution, either individually or cumulatively to the character of the area. The loss of trees from a purely design perspective is not considered to be a suitable response to the site.

In any event the cul de sac layout combined with the prevalence of front of plot parking fails to create an acceptable layout. The front of plot parking creates a highlight road dominated layout and where on plot parking is proposed this is so tight it does not appear to be practical for end users. The cul de sac arrangement result in a series of turning heads adding to the road dominated nature of the scheme. Emerging Policy PP26 (f) sets out that development should provide a well connected network of streets, the over reliance on the cul de sac form fails to achieve this. Again the feasibility options were much more successful in addressing these short comings.

Any proposal needs to retain the trees on site and provide a better connected network of streets. Consideration needs to be given to a home zone approach to the streets created. In addition, the emerging Local Plan set out that strategic sites should provide open space on site (strategic sites being those over 40 dwellings), this also needs to be factored into a revised layout.

Option 2.1

The layout proposed in option 2.1 is essentially the same as in option 1.1 but includes a block of flats. The block of flats provides a greater mix of typologies but does not resolve any of the fundamental design concerns with loss of trees, the car dominated nature of the scheme, the unattractive streetscape environment and lack

of open space.

Option 3

Option 3 is more successful in so much the trees in the north of this part of the site are retained and some open space is provided. The open space is however not well overlooked and interspersed with random parking in a turning head. Some of the blocks created present blank, inactive edges to streets resulting in a parts of the cul de sac layout being poorly overlooked. One long straight road is created along with a range of inefficient cul de sacs. As with the other layout for this proportion of the site the roads are completely car dominated, with a series of front parking areas and impractical on plot parking layouts.

Other issues

No information is provided regarding the mix of units set out on site and I assume this is a 100% affordable housing scheme. Emerging Policy PP8 sets out that for schemes of 11 or more homes housing proposals should aim to include a type and mix of housing that considers the needs set out in the SHMA, including self build and custom housing. As part of any submission some information regarding the mix of unit types and the justification for it would be beneficial. In addition, the council has a statutory duty to provide self build plots and has a self build register that sets out demand for self build within Poole. Given the Council involvement with this site including an element of self build to fulfil our statutory duties would seem logical.

I've had a quick look at revising option 3 for Hillbourne, see attached. Its just a quick effort and I have not spent a lot of time on it but essentially on plot 2 it shows the impact of introducing some on plot parking on the left hand side, this would increase the distance to the existing properties and improve the street environment. I think there is some further work to do in relation to the properties on Kitchener Crescent. On plot 1 I have moved the flats over to terminate the view up the road, created a connected grid layout, amended the Kitchener Crescent frontage and tried to address some of the road dominance issues. Again this is by no means the finished article and there would be lots of other variations but it starts to demonstrates how relatively simple improvements can be made. These changes have resulted in the loss of 2 units on plot 2 and an increase in five units on plot 1 so the total number remains unaffected by the change and may increase.

I hope this helps to illustrates that there is scope to greatly improve the design without compromising the total number of units.

