

PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

Case Officer: Gemma Bristow
North

Parish: Okehampton Hamlets **Ward:** Okehampton

Application No: 00713/2015

Agent/Applicant:

PCL Planning
1 St Floor
3 Silverdown Office Park
Fair Oak Close
Clyst Honiton, Exeter
EX5 2UX

Applicant:

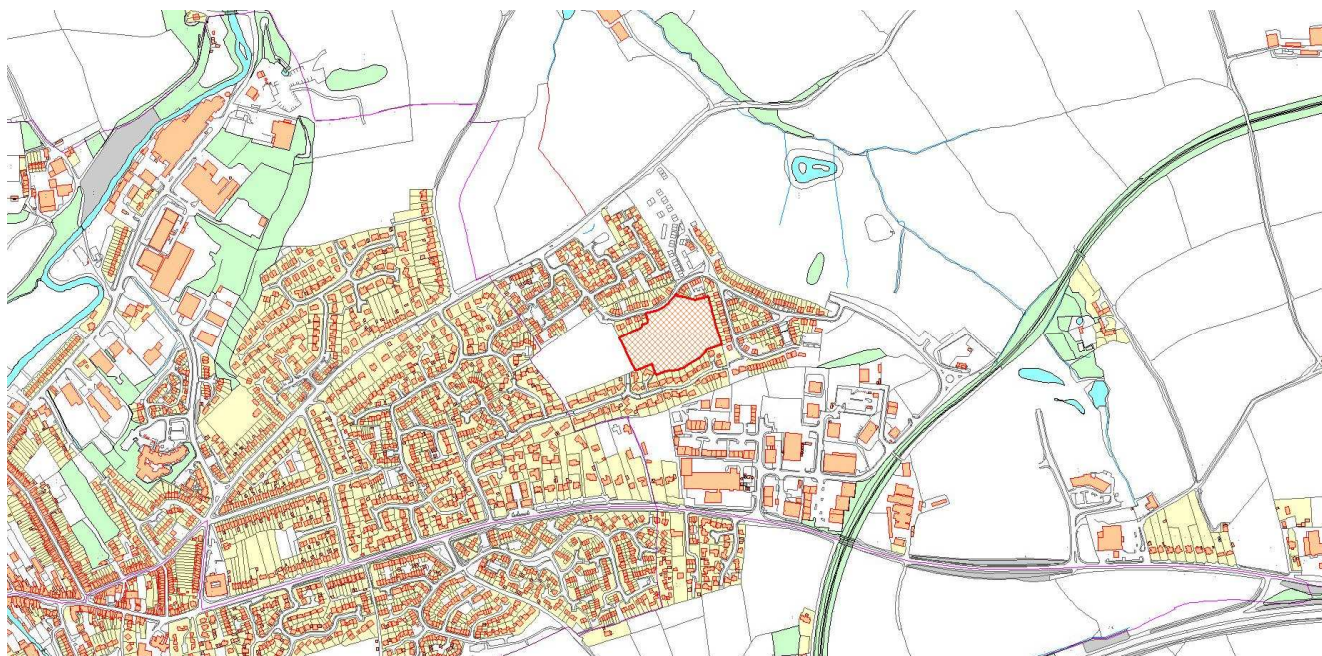
Linden Homes South West
C/O Agent

Site Address: Meldon Fields, Hameldown Road, Okehampton, Okehampton, Devon, EX20 1UB

Development: Re-plan and plot substitution of western portion of development site (Meldon Fields Phase 3B) to allow for the erection of 73 dwellings and associated works. Part of larger site ref: 02477/2012

Reason for presenting to Committee

The Ward Councillors have expressed concern with respect to the increase in density of the site, the permeability in relation to the spine road and the general appearance of the housing proposed. It has therefore been requested that the application is presented to Committee for a decision.



Recommendation:
Conditional approval

Conditions

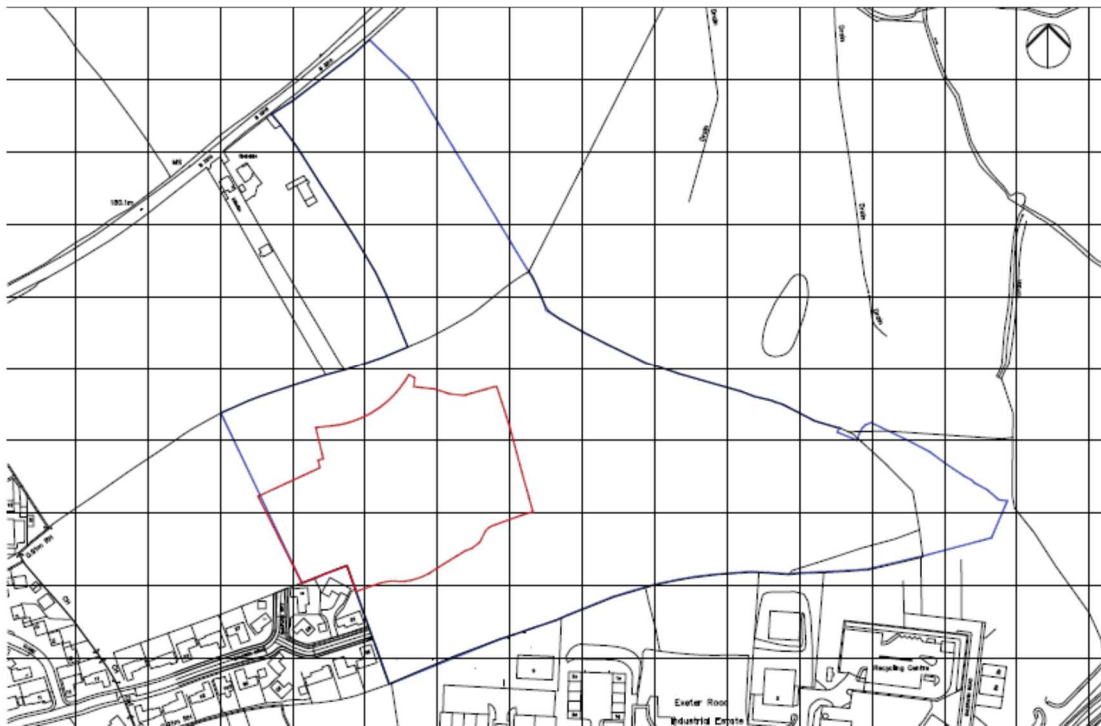
- Time limit
- Accord with plans
- Construction management plan
- Foul water disposal plans
- Adherence to and replanting landscaping plan
- Ecology
- Contamination
- Remediation
- Unexpected contamination
- Surface Water drainage
- Details and materials of elevations, including windows, doors, gutting.

Key issues for consideration:

Whether the variation to the approved scheme is acceptable

Site Description:

The site is located to the East of Okehampton in the H5 allocated site. It is located centrally within the wider site approved by planning ref: 02477/2012: see below. It is noted that the majority of the surrounding site has now been implemented.



The Proposal:

Re-plan and plot substitution of western portion of development site (Meldon Fields Phase 3B) to allow for the erection of 73 dwellings and associated works. Part of larger site ref: 02477/2012.

73 dwellings are proposed (9 more than previously approved) including 12 affordable units (3 more than previously approved) and providing 127 parking spaces are proposed.

Unit mix (including affordable units)

	1 -bed	2-bed	3-bed	4 bed	Total
Previous approval	0	17	34	13	64
Current application	6	20	29	18	73

Affordable unit mix

	1 -bed	2-bed	3-bed	Total
Previous approval	0	4	5	9 (14%)
Current application	3	7	2	12 (16%)

*Previously 70/30 social rented to shared equity, but 50/50 split now proposed.

Layout and design

The housing will follow the same road layout as previously approved with the exception of a change to one turning head on the east of the site. This has been amended from a hammer head road end to a cul-de-sac with a turning area, and the housing on the south side would form a terrace of semi-detached properties compared to the two detached properties within larger plots. The housing would comprise a mix of detached and semi-detached houses, some with adjoining garages. In addition, there would be several plots with garages below a first floor flat and at the entrance to this site would be a three-storey block of nine 1 and 2-bedroom flats.

External works and planting

There would be a mix of boundary treatments including hedging, rendered dwarf and 1.8m high walls and railings. A planting scheme of shrubs and trees is also proposed.

Materials

The houses would be primarily rendered with 17 to have brick front elevations and the block of flats at the entrance and two further houses would be fully brick. The internal roads would be primarily block paved with pavements and parking areas in tarmac.

Supporting documents submitted with the application include:

- Planning statement
- Design and access statement
- Noise Assessment
- Ground Investigation
- Ecology Addendum
- Archaeology Report

Consultations:

- County Highways Authority: There are no objections to the proposed revisions from a highway point of view but the applicant is advised that the proposed alterations to the adoptable road layout will require a revision to the Section 38 road adoption agreement and it is also not acceptable to have bin store doors opening over the highway (as shown in some locations on the plan).
- Parish Council: Neutral view however the house colours should be varied from those currently under construction, i.e. they not be white, as the houses are very unsightly from Crediton Road. They also wish the Link Road issues between the different developer sites across the original school site (linking this development site to the original Persimmon site) be resolved and the link completed as a matter of priority.

- Okehampton Town Council: Any further comments will be reported during the committee meeting.
- Environment Agency: No comment.
- Police: Comments on the design and layout of the scheme:
 - All gates that lead to rear gardens must be lockable from both sides to ensure rear gardens are secure at all times. The gates must be of the same height and level of security as the adjoining boundary treatment (1.8m)
 - The rear access for plot 46 should be clearly defined from plot 47.
 - It appears from the plans that plots 56 to 58 will share a rear garden? It is recommended that the space is divided up and each dwelling is provided with their own outdoor space to prevent the potential for conflict and angst over its use, for example maintenance, pets, parties, barbecues, toys, garden furniture etc.
 - Plots 59 & 62 would benefit from a buffer to protect the lower aspect of the elevations and the side boundary treatments this may also make it feel less enclosed. Ideally one of the elevations should have a first floor non obscured window to enable some surveillance opportunity over the access.
 - External bin stores should be sited in such a way that they cannot be used as climbing aids to commit crime and should be secure to prevent bins being removed and used as climbing aids or the contents used to start fires.
 - Care will need to be taken with regard to landscaped boundary treatments (where applicable). Individuals have varying levels of commitment with regard to maintenance which can result in inconsistent levels of growth and care resulting in unsightly street scenes and conflict with neighbours.
 - The back to back gardens where applicable are a good design feature in preventing easy access to rear of gardens.
 - Where is parking for 95 & 96? Parking should be allocated to prevent conflict over use.
 - The cul-de-sac layout for the development is a key feature in designing out crime (as long as they are not linked to poorly located and designed footpaths) as they create self policing communities. Residents are more aware of strangers in the area and those with criminal intent are less likely to venture there in fear of standing out or being seen.
 - All doors and windows should meet PAS 24 2012 standard as a minimum level of security.
 - All rear and accessible side boundaries must be 1.8m high (minimum requirement). Where is felt more surveillance is required a .3m trellis topping on a 1.5m solid boundary treatment could be used.
- Drainage: Low risk of flooding, however details of the surface water drainage management and maintenance arrangements must be provided and agreed with the LPA.
- DCC Education: In line with the s106 policy, we are not seeking a contribution for nine of the dwellings as they are only one bedroom properties. Therefore, a development of 64 (2+ bedrooms) is expected to generate 16 primary pupils, which means a contribution of £213,270.00 (16 x £13,329.50) is sought and the contribution will be used towards the provision of additional primary education facilities for those living in the development. As identified, a new primary school will be required in Okehampton and therefore a contribution towards land is also sought at £44,800.00. The secondary school within the development area is Okehampton College. A development of 64 (2+ bedrooms) dwellings is expected to generate 9.6 secondary aged pupils. There are 28 spare forecasted places at Okehampton College. However, there are currently 525 homes on the SP22 allocated site remaining, within the catchment area of the college. Therefore proportioning out spare capacity between the remaining allocation (525) and this proposed development (64) means each dwelling is entitled to 0.047 pupils worth of the remaining spare capacity at Okehampton College ($28/589 = 0.047$). Therefore, we are requesting 6.6 secondary pupil places $64 \times 0.047 = 3$ and $9.6 - 3 = 6.6$. 6.6 secondary places multiplied by the secondary school extension rate of £18,241.00 means the Education Authority is requesting £120,390.00 towards secondary education. Total education contribution is requested of £378,460.00.

Representations:

1 objection from 14 Summering Close:

- Loss of privacy
- Overbearing impact due to size, height and position
- Loss of daylight/sunlight
- Harm health of the Devon hedge at the rear of no.14 Summering Close
- Originally the adjacent house would have been built on an angle

Relevant Planning History

13354/2009/OKE	Outline application for residential development including means of access
02210/2011	Variation of conditions attached to outline application 13354/2009/OKE (residential development) to include allowance for phasing of the development and construction of link road to alternative boundary position.
02477/2012	Application for 308 residential units including 35% affordable dwellings
02537/2012	Discharge of Conditions 1-17 on application 02210/2011 for residential development including means of access
00469/2013	Variation of condition number 8 of planning permission number 02210/2011 to allow for alternative surface water drainage scheme

ANALYSIS

This application relates to a wider application area that gained outline approval in 2009 and reserve matters in 2012. This application relates to the central section of the wider development area that was previously approved for 64 dwellings. The current proposal includes 9 additional dwellings compared to that previously approved on this site. These additional units would be located on the eastern side of the site (2 further houses), the south-western corner (1 additional house) and within the block of flats at the entrance to the site (comprising 9 units in place of 3 houses).

Density and Unit mix

The previous density on this section of site was 37 units per hectare, and this would increase to 42 u/ha with the current application. Policy SP6 of the Core Strategy states that density should be the highest possible whilst ensuring an attractive living environment and safeguarding neighbour amenity, but developments at less than 30 u/ha will generally be resisted. The increase in density also needs to be considered in relation to the wider site area which also has a density of 37 u/ha, and as such the increase of 9 units would only increase the density to 38 u/ha which is not considered significant. It should also be noted that the current proposal includes 5 additional four-bedroom market houses as well as 3 additional one-bedroom market flats. The proposed density is therefore considered acceptable given an appropriate unit mix would be provided on an acceptable layout.

Layout and design

The principle of development and the majority of the layout has already been agreed by outline consent and reserve matters application. The applicant states that subsequent to detail engineered design it has been necessary to change the design of the housing types and position on the site but within the approved road and pedestrian layout (with the exception of one turning-head to a cul-de-sac road). Due to the level change across the site (close to 13m fall) the approved layout solution had addressed the change in level between the streets through the use of split level units, battered slopes between garden boundaries and small steps within gardens. The applicant has stated this has been found to be problematic and a different approach by amending the site levels has been used in this new design layout to avoid the use of split-level units.

The cul-de-sac arrangement/level changes are responsible for the change in house types on the eastern portion of the site. As a result of the changes the area in question is no longer able to accommodate the two larger plots previously envisaged on this part of the site (please see the amenity section below for further comment on these changes).

In terms of the overall design approach the previous approval and surrounding development largely dictates this. The applicant states the height of buildings has been designed to complement the existing development and the proposed buildings are designed with a simple palette of materials reflecting the local vernacular. The new three-storey block of nine flats (in place of three houses) is considered acceptable given its position at the entrance to the site and the rising ground level to the south/rear. It is also noted that three-storey elements were approved within the wider site.

While the Member concerns regarding the colour of the rendered houses is noted, the finish treatment of the surrounding housing has been constructed as approved and the finish of the current proposal reflects what has already been approved on this section of the site. It is noted that limited details have been submitted of the detailed materials of the houses, so it is recommended that these details are reserved by condition. It is therefore officer's opinion that the proposed design and finish of the proposed housing is acceptable and would tie into the surrounding housing.

Affordable Housing

The current application proposes 12 affordable units which equals 16% affordable housing, which is higher than the 14% affordable previously approved across this section of the wider site.

The affordable housing on the wider site previously allowed 70% of the accommodation provided to be rented accommodation, 30% of this was to provide shared ownership accommodation. The new application which has been submitted amends this mix to 50% rented and 50% shared ownership. This is due to the changes in government funding. Housing Associations are now only able to 'bid' for HCA funding on shared ownership properties, therefore, the rented accommodation has to be provided through their own reserves.

The mix which has now been proposed is welcomed by officers as it will accommodate various needs on both the rented and help to buy SW registers. These are likely to be for single people of various ages in the one bed rented properties and families in the 2 and 3 bed rented and shared ownership properties. This will also provide choices to our residents for those that are able to look at shared ownership and the amount of equity share that they can afford. Officers are pleased to see this mix which did not accommodate single people previously, this is also our highest need along with 2 bedrooms on the Devon Home Choice register, particularly as people are being encouraged to downsize due to the bedroom tax implications.

It is noted that in discussion with Aster (the social housing provider) the one-bedroom flats as originally proposed were below their minimum floorspace requirement of 45sq.m. The layout of the block of nine flats was subsequently amended to increase the size of the affordable one-bedroom units.

Residential amenity

In terms of amenity, as the housing broadly follows the layout previously agreed by the Council the impact has been considered and found to be acceptable. However, an objection was received from a neighbour to the east of the site opposite the section of the application that has the more significant amendments to the previous approval in terms of the layout of housing. The amended scheme would bring the proposed housing closer to the site boundary (and therefore the rear garden of the objector) than was previously agreed. However, in response to officer and resident concerns the application was amended and the proposed house pulled away from the site boundary to allow a 15m separation. Given the proposed house would not include any windows within the side elevation and its separation it is not considered to result in significant loss of privacy, light or form an overbearing impact on the adjoining residents on Summering Close.

Permeability of the site

The access to the site has been agreed by the previous permissions and this application does not seek to make any amendments to this. However, Members have raised concerns on the completion of the spine road that currently runs through the wider site, across the northern edge of the current

application and ends on the western boundary of the wider site, with the intention of extending up through the adjoining land to connect to Crediton Road via the adjoining Persimmons site. While the Persimmons section of the H4 spine road appears to be complete and the applicant Linden Homes have also built the spine road up to their site boundary, the remaining gap between these sections of road falls outside of Linden landownership. It is noted that condition 4 attached to the outline consent, that was later varied, states:

‘The spine road through the site shall be provided to the boundary of the site in accordance with a timescale or phasing which shall be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of the development.’

It is therefore officers understanding that the applicant has complied with this condition by constructing the link road to their site boundary. It unfortunately remains out of their control to ensure this route is opened up through the Persimmons site.

Any further update on the issues preventing opening the spine road up will be reported at the committee meeting.

Conclusion

The principles of the proposal have been agreed by the previous outline and reserve matters consents on the wider site. In terms of density, the increase of 9 additional units across this section of the site is considered acceptable and would still be broadly in line with policy. The amended layout and small changes to the design of the proposed housing is considered acceptable and is not considered to result in harm to adjoining neighbours amenity. The increase in percentage of affordable housing units, and inclusion of one-bedroom flats, is supported. The proposal is considered acceptable and recommended for approval subject to conditions and completion of the S106.

This application has been considered in accordance with Section 38 of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Planning Policy

NPPF

West Devon Borough Council Core Strategy 2011

SP1 – Sustainable Development

SP2 – Decentralised and Renewable Low Carbon energy to Supply New Developments

SP3 – Renewable Energy

SP4 – Infrastructure Provision

SP5 – Spatial Strategy

SP6 – Density of Housing Development

SP7 – Strategic Distribution of Housing

SP8 – Inclusive Communities

SP9 – Meeting Housing Needs

SP13 – Community Services and Facilities

SP14 – Accessibility Planning

SP15 – Traffic Management

SP16 – Safer Communities

SP17 – Landscape Character

SP19 – Biodiversity

SP20 – Promoting High Quality Design

SP21 – Flooding

SP22 – Okehampton

West Devon Borough Council Local Plan Review 2005(as amended 2011)

H26 – Open Space Provision in New Residential Developments

T1 – Walking and Cycling

T2 – Pedestrian and Cyclist Safety

T3 – Protection of Existing Footways, Cycleways and Bridleways

T4 - Footpath Links to Okehampton Town Centre

T5 – Public Transport

T8 – Car Parking

T9 – The Highway Network

PS2 – Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems

PS3 – Sewage Disposal

PS4 – Private Water Supply

Considerations under Human Rights Act 1998 and Equalities Act 2010

The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and Equalities Act 2010 have been taken into account in reaching the recommendation contained in this report.