Site Delivery Statement

Furnace Lane, Nether Heyford

Submitted by Persimmon Homes Midlands

November 2018
1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This document has been prepared by Persimmon Homes Midlands to promote Land at Furnace Lane, Nether Heyford. Its purpose is to provide an overview of the site’s planning merits and deliverability. It will be demonstrated how the site can be brought forward to deliver a high quality residential scheme in a location sustainably accessible to a variety of local facilities including regular bus services to and from Northampton.

1.2 Nether Heyford is proposed in Policy SS1 of the Part 2 Local Plan as a Secondary Service Village (A). Category A Secondary Service Villages are described in paragraph 3.2.5 of the supporting text as “more sustainable by virtue of the services and facilities on offer.” While Persimmon Homes in its representations to the consultation has objected to the settlement hierarchy and the methodology used to formulate it, Nether Heyford’s proposed classification illustrates the village’s robust sustainability credentials and therefore its ability to accommodate proportionate new growth.

1.3 Persimmon’s land interest at Nether Heyford comprises two contiguous parcels lying to the south of the village which can be delivered either together or in part. Cumulatively the site comprises some 6.2ha with Parcel 1 comprising 2.2ha and Parcel 2 comprising a further 4ha. Access is achieved from Furnace Lane.

1.4 The subject site currently comprises arable farmland which slopes gently upwards to the southwest and abuts the existing built envelope of the village to the north. The site is not subject to any absolute constraints such as Green Belt or flood zones and is not subject to nor proposed for any landscape or ecological designations. There are no designated heritage assets on the site or in reasonable proximity of the site.
2.0 SUSTAINABILITY & SPATIAL LOGIC

2.1 The objective of the South Northamptonshire Part 2 Local Plan is to deliver the general strategy identified in the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2014 (WNJCS 2014). The Council’s position is that the rural housing requirement identified in the WNJCS 2014 has already been satisfied through existing commitments and that therefore no additional allocations for residential development are proposed in the Part 2 Local Plan.

2.2 The most recent monitoring evidence from the Northampton Related Development Area (NRDA) indicates a housing land supply well below what it should be. It is clear that the release of additional sites through the Part 2 Local Plan will contribute towards easing the shortfall in the NRDA. By virtue of the WNJCS’s spatial strategy which aims to focus significant growth around Northampton, bringing forward suitable and sustainably-located sites in villages both close to and with good connections to Northampton should be seriously considered as a way of boosting housing land supply NRDA.

2.3 For reasons explained in Persimmon’s main representations to the Regulation 19 draft of the Part 2 Local Plan, we believe that such an approach would be consistent with the WNJCS 2014. Policy S4 of the WNJCS 2014 states that outside the NRDA additional development to meet Northampton’s needs will be supported provided that it meets the vision, objectives and policies of the WNJCS.

2.4 The WNJCS vision set out on pages 19 and 20 envisages the West Northants rural areas as supporting a “network of vibrant communities” and the villages retaining “their local distinctiveness and character, providing affordable homes for local people...” The WNJCS objectives set out, among other things, the need to reduce the need to travel and the need to shorten travel distances (Objective 3) and providing a range of housing in sustainable locations to ensure that all residents have access to a home that they can afford and that
limited development in the rural areas should be provided for to meet local needs and to support local services.

2.5 For the reasons set out below, it is our contention that bringing forward the land at Furnace Lane, Nether Heyford for a high quality residential scheme will meet both the objectives and the vision of the WNJCS as well as contributing to boosting housing delivery in and around Northampton.

2.6 Nether Heyford benefits from the D3 bus service operated by Stagecoach which runs between Northampton and Daventry on an hourly frequency from Monday to Saturday and two hourly on a Sunday. The journey time into the centre of Northampton is approximately 30 minutes. The nearest bus stop is on Hillside Road approximately 0.3 miles from the subject site or a 5 minute walk. The subject site is linked to the bus stop along with other services in the village by a contiguous footway suitable for pedestrian travel. A bus timetable is included in Appendix 1.

2.7 The settlement and the subject site are therefore well-linked to Northampton by sustainable means of travel. This is a very important sustainability credential of Nether Heyford given that census data demonstrates that there is a greater outflow from South Northamptonshire to Northampton than to any other higher order settlement. This can be expected to be even more pronounced with Nether Heyford given that the settlement is just 7 miles from the centre of Northampton, a major employment and service centre.
2.8 It is noted that the Council intends to submit the Part 2 Local Plan under the transitional arrangements so the soundness of the plan will be assessed against the NPPF 2012.

2.9 Paragraph 55 of the NPPF 2012 sets out that in order to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. It also gives the example of services and facilities in larger settlements supporting new development in smaller settlements. The relationship between Northampton and Nether Heyford is a case in point.

2.10 Given the interdependency between the two settlements it is easily justifiable to bring forward development in Nether Heyford which, in addition to relying on the services and facilities present in the village, can also rely on the village’s public transport links to Northampton.

2.11 In addition to its public transport links, Nether Heyford benefits from a full range of services and facilities which are easily accessible via foot and cycle to the subject site including a primary school, general store, post office, recreational facilities, pre-school, community facilities, and allotments. Referring to the accompanying Transport Appraisal by ADC Infrastructure (Appendix 2), all of Nether Heyford and the services and facilities therein are within walking distance of the subject site which as mentioned above is linked to them by the existing footway network.

2.12 For the reasons set out it is considered that allocation of the site can be fully supported by both the WNJCS and the principles of sustainable development by virtue of the presence of a good level of services and facilities in Nether Heyford itself and its public transport links and physical proximity to Northampton. By virtue of the village’s proximity and functional dependence on Northampton as illustrated by commuting patterns among other things,
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bring forward this site in Nether Heyford through the Part 2 Local Plan can help to alleviate the significant shortfall of housing land in the NRDA.

3.0 LANDSCAPE & VISUAL

3.1 Appendix 3 contains a landscape and visual impact report by Pegasus. The analysis within the report finds that development of the site would only affect limited local views and not result in any material change to the character of the wider landscape. The subject site would adjoin an existing, high density pattern of existing residential development and the built envelope of the settlement to the north east.

3.2 To the south/south east the site is contained by new planting which can be expected to mature over time and provide a sense of visual containment to the land from the arable fields beyond. Nonetheless beyond this boundary to the south west lies existing built development associated with Furnace Marina along with sporadic residential development lining Furnace Lane.

3.3 The site is not subject to any statutory, national, or local landscape designations nor is it proposed for any. The site falls outside of any existing or proposed Special Landscape Areas and comprises an unremarkable, arable field which has more of a visual affinity with the built-up area than with the surrounding landscape.
3.4 Appendix 4 to this report comprises a preliminary illustrative site layout which demonstrates how the site could be delivered in an appropriate manner providing sufficient integration into the existing landscape and townscape. The illustrative layout shows how an active frontage could be provided to Furnace Lane creating an attractive approach to the village.

3.5 The overall density of the scheme achieves efficient use of land and mimics the overall pattern of development to the north. Provision has also been made for appropriate permeability providing pedestrian links to the south west and east thereby reinforcing beneficial use of the countryside as well as appropriate integration with the settlement. The scheme also incorporates well-landscaped edges to soften the effects of the built form and to provide an appropriate treatment to the surrounding countryside.

4.0 HERITAGE

4.1 There are no designated heritage assets within or nearby the site. The nearest listed building is located some 345m to the north east. Due to intervening built form between the subject site and this heritage asset, it is clear that no adverse impact from development of the site would arise.

4.2 A desk-based heritage assessment has been undertaken which has considered any implications arising for development of the subject site. This report confirms that there are no nationally designated heritage assets within or directly adjoining the subject site and that the site has low archaeological potential for most historical periods. While there is the potential for remains of medieval date, these are likely restricted only to a limited part of the site and this can be dealt with through a suitably worded planning condition at the application stage.

5.0 ECOLOGY

5.1 To support proposals for development of the site an Ecological Assessment was undertaken which included an extended Phase 1 survey. The ecology work found that there are no statutory or non-statutory designated sites of nature conservation interest within the site. The site lies within an SSSI impact risk zone. However, it is separated from the SSSI by
existing agricultural land and roads, lying approximately 0.9km away. As a result of this there would be no adverse impacts to the SSSI resulting from the development of the site.

5.2 The site’s hedgerows offer some limited bat foraging opportunities but there are more extensive and better quality opportunities available within the wider area. The majority of trees located within the hedgerows are immature and do not support bat roosting.

5.3 There is similarly no evidence of badger activity on the site. The site also has limited potential for reptiles and avoidance and mitigation measures can be incorporated and secured by planning condition on any permission granted. The ecology report makes a number of further recommendations to safeguard protected species and to achieve ecological enhancements to the site in order to facilitate a net gain in biodiversity in line with national policy. These measures can also be secured by suitably-worded condition following the submission of a planning application.

6.0 FLOODING & DRAINAGE

6.1 A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been undertaken on the site by BWB. This demonstrates that the subject site is not at any significant flood risk subject to mitigation nor would development of the site increase flood risk elsewhere. The site lies entirely within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at low probability of flooding. There would clearly be no adverse impacts in this regard and delivery of the site for residential development would comply with the relevant national policies.

7.0 HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT

7.1 In order to support the proposals a Transport Appraisal has been carried out which considers the impacts of development on the subject site. This work demonstrates that the subject site is accessible by all modes of transport and is therefore well-located for residential development. There are a number of services and facilities within realistic walking distance to the site and sufficient pedestrian infrastructure. There are good opportunities for cycle travel and Nether Heyford is served by a regular bus service to and from Northampton the stop for which is also within suitable walking distance of the site.
7.2 Sufficient visibility can be achieved to deliver a safe access off Furnace Lane and enhancements provided to existing infrastructure, including new footways on the southern side of Furnace Lane. While any planning application can be accompanied by Transport Statement, the Transport Appraisal’s review of traffic generation shows that the proposals for the site would not materially increase vehicle movements and therefore cause no adverse impact on highway safety or capacity.

8.0 BENEFITS OF THE DEVELOPMENT

8.1 Delivery of the site would be accompanied by a number of benefits, including the provision of affordable homes. As discussed in Persimmon’s main representations, the South Northamptonshire rural area has a severe quantitative deficiency of affordable homes with sizable under-delivery against the WNJCS target reported each monitoring year. Without allocating suitable sites for development through the Part 2 Local Plan, it is very unlikely that the affordable housing targets in the WNJCS will be met in the remainder of the plan period.

8.2 Land at Furnace Lane Nether Heyford can contribute towards the affordable housing targets identified in the WNJCS, delivering new market and affordable homes in a sustainable location. Given Nether Heyford’s proximity to and connections with Northampton, delivery of new market and affordable homes in Nether Heyford can also help to alleviate the housing land supply shortfall in the NRDA. This would be consistent with the aims and objectives of the WNJCS.

8.3 Land at Furnace Lane remains both developable and fully deliverable within five years. Upon adoption of the Part 2 Local Plan allocating the site for development, a full planning application could be lodged, planning permission secured, pre-commencement conditions discharged, and a material start made within the space of 1.5 to 2 years.
8.4 Upon commencement, completions would be in the region of 50 dwellings per year meaning that the site will be fully built out within one to two years of commencement, depending on the quantum of development.

8.5 As a major national housebuilder, Persimmon can deliver the site rapidly without the need for any onward sale of the land. Thus the site can contribute to recovering the shortfall of housing land in the NRDA and the affordable housing shortfall in South Northamptonshire early on.

8.6 The economic benefits of housebuilding are well documented and in the case of Land at Furnace Lane are summarised in Figure 6. In addition, new residents in the village can help to support the vitality of settlement and support local services and facilities, ensuring that these remain viable and ensuring the future sustainability of the settlement.

8.7 Environmentally there would be some loss of open agricultural land to provide new homes. However, the site is well contained by existing natural features and adjoins a consolidated pattern of high density residential development. The site’s relationship with the services and facilities in Nether Heyford mean that these can be readily accessed via sustainable modes of travel as can opportunities for public transport in the form of a regular bus service to Northampton. This will reduce reliance on the private car, providing a net sustainability benefit along with the wider benefits of new residents and new homes.

8.8 Overall it is clear that the site is deliverable for a high quality scheme comprising much-needed new homes. The technical evidence demonstrates that this can be achieved without creating any materially adverse impacts and in a manner that would be consistent with the aims and objectives of the WNJCS.
LIST OF APPENDICES

- **Appendix 1** – Bus Time Table (D3)
- **Appendix 2** – Transport Appraisal
- **Appendix 3** – Landscape Report
- **Appendix 4** – Illustrative Site Layout
- **Appendix 5** – Ecological Assessment
- **Appendix 6** – Flood Risk Assessment
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