

**East Cambridgeshire District Council  
Local Plan Examination**

**Evolution Town Planning Representing the  
Banks and Butler Families –  
Matter Statement - Matter 16**

**September 2018**



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**E363.C1.Rep05b**

## 1.0 Matter 16: Proposed Allocations Medium Villages

### SWB.H1 Land off Heath Road and Quarry Lane

1.1 This matter statement has been prepared by Evolution Town Planning Ltd on behalf of the landowners of the site allocation who are the Banks and Butler families. They both support the allocation of the site for housing. The development is likely to come forward via a Community Land Trust. These representations are supported by a Concept Plan that will be refined further with the Community Land Trust.

#### **a) What is the background to the site allocation? How was it identified and which options were considered?**

1.2 Swaffham Bulbeck is a village centred on its recreation ground around which a number of facilities are located. The village facilities include the primary school, pub, shop, recreation ground and a number of employment sites. The Local Plan defines Swaffham Bulbeck as a medium village. This is described as: *“a village of population normally over 600 and which includes some, but not all, of the services and facilities that are characteristic of a Large Village. A critical determinant is the presence of a primary school in the village, which will likely push a village with a population of less than 600 up into this category.”* This classification in the Local Plan makes the village suitable for housing allocations although the village has many of the facilities that would make it appropriate for classification as a large village in the Local Plan hierarchy.

1.3 The proposed allocation is very well related to the existing built up area with development all around, and is centrally located in the village, and very close to its shop and facilities. This makes the site an ideal one for development. The site has housing or commercial premises on all sides except for the northwest where there is a boundary with the village cemetery. The site is well positioned to provide new housing because any new development will be visually integrated into the existing built up area and sustainably located close to all the village facilities. The allocated site has no landscape or land use designations.

- 1.4 The site, which is currently poor grazing, and low grade agricultural land, is free from constraints to development. There are residential properties around the site and any development will need to ensure that existing residential amenity is protected. There are no listed buildings on or directly adjacent to the site though there are several in the immediate area. The nearest listed building is the grade 2 Hillside Cottage which is on the opposite side of Heath Road to the allocation site. The small part of the western boundary of the site is adjacent to but not inside the Conservation Area. The development of the site can be designed with a scale, layout, appearance and density that respects village character.
- 1.5 Swaffham Bulbeck is a settlement with around 400 homes. It saw housing growth during the last decade with the extension to Vicarage Close being of a scale commensurate to this proposal. The allocation of site SWB.H1 represents modest growth of the village and provides the benefit of affordable housing, open space and the potential of an extension of the village cemetery. On a District scale the scheme's capability for early delivery can contribute to the Council's five year housing land supply. The site is the most logical one for development in the village due to its location, sustainability and lack of constraints.

**b) How have the wider transport implications of the proposed development been considered?**

- 1.6 The scale of the development does not give rise to any wider transport implications. A safe vehicular access can be provided. There are bus services to Cambridge and the surrounding area which stop next to the site. Due to the site's central location the detailed design can create links for pedestrians and cyclists to services and facilities in the village.

**c) What is the scale type/mix of uses proposed? d) What is the basis for this and is it justified?**

- 1.7 The proposal at this stage is sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of the village for example the final number of homes will be in part dictated by the Community Land Trust's needs, for example affordable housing. The proposal is to provide a significant area of amenity space which in part could provide for an extension to the village cemetery. There is currently insufficient parking for the village shop and the site has the potential to provide additional car parking close to the shop.
- 1.8 We attach an indicative Concept Plan. Vehicular access is proposed from Heath Road, which provides the opportunity to improve the entrance junction into the village. The amenity space has been located to preserve views from Heath Road to the cemetery and the village's playing fields beyond. To meet local housing needs a range of house types can be provided, from 1 to 5 bed homes, comprising, flats, detached, semi-detached, terraced homes and bungalows. The housing layout, vehicular accesses and open space are all shown indicatively on the attached plan.
- 1.9 The layout of the proposal retains the view through the site to the centre of the village. From Heath Road views will be available across the amenity space to the cemetery and the centre of the village. The layout of the homes has been designed to respect the residential amenity of existing homes, with landscaping between existing and proposed homes. The affordable housing is biased towards the smaller properties that are now required because of the government's policy to free up larger affordable homes by moving people from under occupied homes to smaller homes and to meet an identified local need.
- 1.10 It is envisaged that the development will come forward as a Community Land Trust scheme and its design will be progressed in conjunction with the Trust.

**e) What is the current planning status of the site in terms of planning applications, planning permissions and completions/construction?**

- 1.11 The site does not have the benefit of planning permission. Pre application investigations are underway, and the design process has started. These are being undertaken with the village's Community Land Trust.

**f) What are the benefits that the proposed development would bring?**

- 1.12 The allocation will bring the benefit of a mix of market and affordable housing that will meet local needs in a sustainable location. The site can provide a new village car park and a cemetery extension.

**g) How does the site relate to nearby uses?**

- 1.13 See the response to C above. The site is surrounded by residential and commercial uses so relates very well to nearby land uses.

**h) What are the potential adverse impacts of developing the sites, including to heritage assets? How could they be mitigated?**

- 1.14 There are no listed buildings next to the application site. The nearest listed building is the grade 2 Hillside Cottage which is on the opposite side of Heath Road to the allocation site. The setting of this cottage is protected by the road between the allocation and the cottage and the change in levels between the site and the cottage. The Swaffham Bulbeck Conservation Area is to the west of the site. While a small part of the site is on the boundary of the Conservation Area the whole site lies outside the area and a development designed to be in character with the village can protect the setting of the Conservation Area. The other potential impacts are on residential amenity and as the Concept Plan shows this can be mitigated and there is a road between the allocation site and most of the nearby homes which will reduce the impact of development on them. 19 homes have been approved to the south east of the allocation site demonstrating that the local area is capable of accommodating new housing. As the Concept Plan shows impacts on residential amenity can be mitigated by the use of open space, gardens and by extending surrounding gardens. Discussions are underway with some

neighbours to extend their gardens as part of the proposal.

**i) How is the site affected by flood risk? How has this been taken into account in allocating the site? How have the sequential and, if necessary, exception tests been applied?**

1.15 The site is not affected by flood risk and is in Environment Agency Flood Zone 1.

**j) What are the infrastructure requirements/ costs and are there physical or other constraints to development? How would these be addressed and are they directly related to, necessary and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development?**

1.16 There are no infrastructure requirements/costs that would constrain the delivery of the development.

**k) In particular is there an issue with waste water treatment capacity and how would any issues be resolved?**

1.17 There are no waste water issues to be addressed.

**l) Is the site realistically viable and deliverable?**

1.18 The landowners consider that the site is deliverable and viable. The site is:

- Available - The site is available for development now, and both landowners are committed to developing the site as soon as possible.
- A Suitable Location for Development Now - The site offers a suitable and highly sustainable location (being very close to the village's services and facilities) for development now. Our conclusion is that the site is excellently related to the built up area of the village and its facilities. It is in a settlement where the principle of housing growth is accepted in local planning policy. We do not consider that there are

any constraints to development that cannot be overcome. The proposal in the November 2017 Submission Local Plan to allocate the site for housing supports this view.

- Deliverable within Five Years and Viable - The size of the site and the lack of constraints to development mean that the site can be delivered now and is viable for the development proposed.

**m) What is the expected timescale and rate of development and is this realistic?**

- 1.19 It is expected that a planning application would be submitted within 6 months and development would start within 18 months.

**n) Is the boundary of the site appropriate? Is there any justification for amending the boundary?**

- 1.20 There is no requirement from the landowners to amend the boundary.

**o) Are the detailed policy requirements clear and unambiguous, effective, justified and consistent with national policy? Is it appropriate to defer within the policy to the '*principles established by consented schemes...*'?**

- 1.21 The policy contains a number of "*considerations/requirements.*" We address these in turn.

- 1.22 A concept plan is required by the policy and can be prepared and submitted as part of a planning application. It is anticipated that a development of this size would come forward in one planning application so can be supported by a concept plan.

- 1.23 The policy requires an urban design solution which creates a series of small groups of homes with each group having a "*significantly different style/layout so as to create the perception of a natural evolution of the settlement.*" A

maximum of 8 dwellings are proposed per group. This aim is supported however there should be flexibility in the policy to allow the detailed design process to inform the size of the groups and the layout. This would best allow the development to respond to the shape of the site and the characteristics of the area around different parts of the site. It is also difficult to have each group of dwellings “*significantly*” different in style and layout. The policy seeks to have the vehicular access taken off Quarry Lane although a main access off Heath Road affords the opportunity to improve existing access arrangements into the village. The possibilities for significant layout differences across a small site will be challenging and therefore we propose that the word “*significantly*” is removed from the second bullet point of the policy and that the reference to a maximum of 8 dwellings in a group is removed to allow flexibility at the design stage in order for the architect to design a development that is appropriate for the site. This change will ensure that the policy is sound by being the most appropriate flexible strategy for the site. This change will ensure that the proposal is justified by being the most appropriate strategy when considered against the alternative of the current policy.

- 1.24 The policy proposes “*a maximum of 38 dwellings in total.*” The number of homes should be decided by a design led approach. It is unusual for a planning policy to state a maximum figure. Policy Swaffham Bulbeck 3 Allocation Sites provides “*indicative number dwellings*”. To allow flexibility we propose that point (d) should state that: “*the site will deliver around 45 homes. More homes could be delivered to meet already identified local needs.*” This would allow some flexibility in the delivery of the policy as required by the soundness tests and will ensure that the policy is based on an appropriate strategy and evidence. There are other needs of the village, identified above, which could be addressed in whole or in part by this scheme. Flexibility in the number of new homes proposed could assist in delivering other needs for the village. This change will ensure that the proposal is justified by being the most appropriate strategy when considered against the alternatives, and positively prepared to meet development requirements.

- 1.25 It is considered that point (e) is acceptable. The point requires design to be used to minimise the impact on adjoining properties and to provide links to other parts of the village. This can be achieved by the appropriate design of the new homes and the layout of open space.
- 1.26 Point (f) requires the vehicular access to be taken via Quarry Lane to the south of the site with consideration of *“improvements to wider highways issues.”* This should be amended to allow access of Heath Road as well.
- 1.27 Points (g) and (h) are acceptable. These require the provision of significant landscaping and open space which is shown on the accompanying Concept Plan Sketch Scheme and a contribution to a pedestrian crossing across Green Bank Road.

**p) Is the terminology used within the relevant site specific policy consistent and clear, for example, ‘concept plan’?**

- 1.28 We have no comments on this issue.

200m	100m	50m	0	1:2500
100m	50m	25m	0	1:1250
40m	20m	10m	0	1:500
12m	8m	4m	0	1:200
8m	4m	2m	0	1:100
4m	2m	1m	0	1:50



200m	100m	50m	0	1:2500
100m	50m	25m	0	1:1250
40m	20m	10m	0	1:500
12m	8m	4m	0	1:200
8m	4m	2m	0	1:100
4m	2m	1m	0	1:50

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 Do not scale. Only figured dimensions to be worked to. Any discrepancies are to be reported to Parc Design Solutions Ltd.

site  
**Proposed New Homes**  
**SWAFFHAM BULBECK, CAMBS.**  
 drawing title  
**Location Plan**

drawn SC	checked SC
scale 1:1000 @A 2	date August 2017
drawing number 014 - 044 - 012	revision P1

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