

Land South of Gilda Terrace and North of Fitch Way

Ref 18/01065

APPLICANTS STATEMENT

The applicant acknowledges that this scheme conflicts with the development plan policies RLP 2 and CS5 which together establish development boundaries and strictly control development outside of them. This should not be a surprise – the development boundaries did not plan for anything like the level of housing provision which national policy now requires and this Council endorses.

Despite the Policy conflict, the applicant says that material considerations indicate otherwise such that planning permission should be granted in this case.

The Council cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites and so the presumption in favour of sustainable development under paragraph 11 d) of the NPPF applies. This means that permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

It is inevitable that there would be some adverse impacts for a scheme of 120 dwellings in this location but the whole point of the “tilt” in the balance is that the inevitably harmful effects of development do not stop development which is needed from taking place unless there really is a very good – an overriding - reason for doing so.

The recommended reason for refusal is based on the officer’s view that harm to the countryside and landscape is such that permission should not be granted. The applicant disagrees.

The Councils independent review of the LVIA at most highlighted some differences in opinion between the findings on the visual effects of the development and magnitude of change to the landscape character but not to such a degree as to tip the balance in favour of a refusal.

The applicant also does not accept that the development would lead to Braintree and Rayne coalescing in either actual or perceived terms. The proposed development would not result in any significant effect or harm in terms of actual or perceived coalescence when travelling

between Braintree and Rayne on the Rayne Road - by far the largest proportion of people travelling between the two settlements would do so along the Rayne Road. Here there would be neither actual coalescence nor any real difference in the ability to distinguish between Rayne from Braintree. The concerns over coalescence is a weak point.

The benefits of granting permission would be considerable. 120 new homes -36 of which would be affordable homes, would be a very good thing whether or not the Council has a 5 year housing land supply.

Further, the 5YHLS calculation is a floor not a ceiling to housing delivery and, in line with the Government's objective of '*build build build*' significant weight should be accorded to housing provision within the five-year period. It is certainly wrong to suggest that such housing is "unnecessary". The contribution of the proposed development to housing need is a substantial benefit to which significant weight should be given.

In conclusion:

- The proposal is in a sustainable and appropriate location for development.
- There are no objections from any statutory consultees on any technical matters.
- There is significant betterment for the public due to enhanced and legal access to The Flitchway, and more importantly new permissive rights of way around adjacent fields for walking – a very significant benefit.
- The site will provide much needed market and affordable homes.
- The Council is struggling with housing land supply and currently is deficient in terms of a 5 year supply and this scheme will greatly assist in addressing the shortfall.

On the basis of the above and in line with the Government's 'build, build, build' agenda there is no planning reason not to grant permission for this scheme.

Acorn Braintree Ltd

Applicant

1st September 2020.