

PRB Deepcut and affordable housing provision	Portfolio	Regulatory
	Ward(s) Affected:	Deepcut & Borough wide

Purpose

To seek Member approval for the level of affordable housing to be delivered from Phase 4a of the PRB site under hybrid planning permission ref: 12/0546 (as amended), prior to the submission of the relevant reserved matters application(s).

Background

- 1 The Committee Report for planning application 12/0546 to Full Council on 17 July 2013 advised that the hybrid application submission made provision for 420 dwellings or 35% (of the total 1,200) to be delivered as affordable housing. This complied with Policy CP4 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012 (CSDMP 2012).
- 2 Member debate during that meeting resulted in planning condition 9 being imposed on the decision notice so that the exact number of affordable dwellings would be agreed by the Planning Applications Committee as part of reserved matters applications. Condition 9 states:

The first reserved matters application for each phase shall include an Affordable Housing Strategy for that phase which shall include:

- *the number and percentage of affordable housing units to be provided in that phase*
- *details of the type and tenure of the affordable housing units*
- *a plan identifying the location of the affordable units within the development and their tenure*

Each phase of development shall thereafter be implemented in accordance with the approved strategy unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

- 3 The matter is also addressed in the Section 106 agreement.
- 4 At the Planning Applications Committee meeting on 12 January 2017 Members were advised that a submission made under the cover of condition 9 had been refused. That submission sought to provide 10% or 120 units of affordable housing. The resulting 120 dwellings were proposed to be located in two locations on the site with 100 of these located in the Alma Character area.
- 5 Members were asked to approve the Design Codes for the first phase of residential development on 12 January 2017. These documents

along with the approved phasing plan made provision for the Alma character area (also known as the Northern Parcel) to deliver between 125-155 dwellings and Brunswick Woods (also known as the Southern Parcel) between 200–235 dwellings.

- 6 On 9 February 2017 Members of the Planning Applications Committee were asked to agree the level of affordable housing provision to come forward from the Alma and Brunswick Woods Character Area's. The developer team sought agreement on a 35% policy compliant provision for those parcels. It was noted at that time that viability may reduce the site wide provision of affordable housing however agreement had not yet been reached on this. Members agreed the proposal and following this a reserved matters permission was granted for the 215 unit scheme currently being built out by Cala Homes on the Brunswick Woods Character Area (17/0871). An application has recently been submitted by Bovis Homes for the Alma Character Area (18/1027 – invalid at the time of writing). The reserved matters permission granted to Cala secured 35% affordable as agreed and the Bovis application as submitted is also compliant with this agreement.
- 7 Discussions on the wider site provision have been on going and most recently a submission for between 13 and 18% site wide provision was withdrawn after the Council's retained Viability Consultant advised that a number of assumptions in the submitted viability documents were not robust.

Current position

- 8 A number of meetings have been held between the respective parties since and an approach been agreed. This is likely to set a minimum baseline figure each residential parcel will deliver and will also allow for this to be reviewed by reviewing past parcel delivery and where possible securing betterment or overage on future parcels. Such an approach will ensure a baseline delivery from each parcel and allow for overage or betterment in the event the housing market improves. This is however a complex model and agreement on the baseline or minimum figure to be delivered has not yet been reached.
- 9 An application for the further partial discharge of condition 9 of 12/0546 has been received. This relates to parcel 4a. The application seeks to agree a nil (0%) level of affordable housing from this parcel. The parcel is small and will deliver around 30 residential dwellings. It is located west of the spine road and bounded to the remaining boundaries by the Village Green / Formal Park, and the proposed site of the public house.
- 10 The reason for the submission is given as there being challenges and inefficiencies for Registered Social Landlords in managing small clusters. Officers do not accept that this is in itself reason to permit a nil provision of affordable housing and note that a number of small or

windfall sites make suitable on-site provision with the affordable units being attractive to registered providers. The current submission in relation to parcel 4a also advises that a nil provision on this parcel will not impact on the viability exercise to determine the on-site provision from the remaining parcels or on the agreement in place for 35% from the Cala approval or the submitted Bovis application.

- 11 If this approach is agreed the affordable provision from Cala at 35% of 215 units (75 units) and that currently proposed by Bovis Homes at 35% of 131 (46) and a nil provision as proposed for 4a would give rise to potentially 376 units of which 121 are affordable and would result in circa 32% affordable housing provision across the 3 parcels. Given the recognition that 35% site wide provision may not be possible on viability grounds it is not considered this is unacceptable. Moreover even if the viability of the site is found to be able to sustain 35% affordable housing delivery site wide it is considered the provision of 10 or 11 units which would have been due to be delivered as affordable housing from this parcel could be absorbed across the remaining 824 units to be delivered across the remaining residential parcels and the balance of the 1,200 residential units agreed under 12/546.
- 12 There is the concern that in agreeing this approach the wider site submission may lose momentum, particularly as the bulk of the 824 units to be delivered from remaining land parcels are located behind the wire and, the MOD decant of the site remains fluid. The wider applicant team have been asked to comment on this and advise that Phase 4b and 4c are for sale currently, with a target completion of September 2019. It is further stated that the proposed AH provision at this time for those parcels is 35%+. In addition work is on-going to prepare a Design Code and a reserved matters application for the Formal Park, and, Phase 4d / Sports Hub / Care Home / Allotments area is also targeted for this year.
- 13 The wider applicant team also state that detailed design of the loop road is to start soon and this is to be submitted as soon as possible so work can commence as soon as the site is decanted such that access to residential parcels behind the wire can be provided. The decant of the site from behind the wire is however key to delivery of the remaining parts of the site and in this regard the applicant team advise the completion of Worthy Down Camp is progressing well and decant from PRB should be substantially complete by Q3 of 2021. All reserved matter applications for PRB should be submitted prior to April 2024.
- 14 Of additional concern is that a non-policy compliant affordable submission could be repeated on other parcels on the site, or indeed on other sites in the Borough. In this regard the concern is not that the scheme does not deliver 35% affordable but rather that the request to under provide against the Policy target (in this case 35%) is not evidenced by any form of viability submission. This is a major concern

the developer team has been asked to address. The attached letter dated 1st Feb has been provided. This reiterates the stated non-prejudicial nature of the submission and notes that the wording of the condition allows for a phase by phase agreement on affordable provision. It is not however considered this goes to heart of addressing this concern. This said the site is rather unique in both planning and strategic terms and other sites are unlikely to have similarly worded conditions. With this in mind while Officers recommend that this detail to comply submission be supported it is considered appropriate that any approval on this basis be subject to a caveat explaining that any future non-compliant affordable housing submission will not be treated as valid unless it is supported by a viability assessment, and, such a submission will not be agreed unless that viability assessment is found to be robust.

Resource Implications

15 None.

Recommendation

16 The Planning Applications Committee is advised to RESOLVE that

- (i) the land parcel 4a deliver nil (0%) affordable housing, but the decision letter be caveated to make clear this agreement relates solely to parcel 4a as identified on the attached plan, is limited to the delivery of up to 30 units from that parcel; and
- (ii) any future affordable housing submissions proposing less than 35% from any parcel on the site must be supported by a detailed and robust viability statement and be subject to approval by the Planning Applications Committee.

Annexes: Supporting statement and application details.

Background Papers: None

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