

**Houghton Regis Town Council  
Planning Committee  
29<sup>th</sup> April 2019 at 7.30pm**

Present: Councillors: J Carroll Chairman  
M Kennedy  
Mrs T McMahon  
C Slough  
K Wattingham Substitute  
T Welch

Officers: Debbie Marsh Corporate Services Manager  
Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services

Public: 0

Apologies: Councillors: D Abbott  
Ms S Thorne

Also present: Councillor: Mrs S Goodchild Central Bedfordshire Council

**9877 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies were received from Councillor D Abbott and Councillor Ms S Thorn (substituted by Councillor K Wattingham).

**9878 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None.

**9879 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**9880 PLANNING MATTERS**

**(a) The following planning applications were considered:**

***Non - Delegated***

CB/19/00571/FULL Convert existing dwelling to 4-bedroom property and creation of independent Studio flat.  
82 Churchfield Road, LU5 5HW  
For: Ms A Karanja

**Comments:** Houghton Regis Town Council objects on the grounds of:

- Plans are unclear
- Possible HMO usage
- Lack of parking
- Out of Keeping
- Fire Service have not been consulted
- No pre-advice taken

CB/19/01218/RM

Erection of 625 dwellings in parcels 6A & 6B with associated public open spaces following Outline Planning Permission CB/15/0297/OUT  
Parcels 6A & 6B Land West of Bidwell Houghton Regis North site 2  
For: Taylor Wimpey

**Comments: Houghton Regis Town Council would like to make the following observations and comments:**

#### The Application

The outline applicant approved in November in 2015 was for up to 1,850 homes, roads, landscaping recreation and open space, two schools, employment and a local centre. The site extends westwards from Bedford Road, from the new A5 dual carriageway southwards to the edge of the former Chalk Quarry Nature Reserve.

The current details show 625 homes (approx. 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the total) between Thorn Road and the A5 dual carriageway, west of Bedford Road. These details do not include the schools, employment, local centre aspects of the overall scheme.

In addition to house and flat details the Reserved Matters also cover boundary treatment, materials, parking and refuse arrangements.

NB the outline approval was granted 2 years after the Framework for the whole HRN proposal was agreed by Central Beds.

Previously, in response to the outline scheme the Town Council had concerns over highways issues and connections onto Bedford Road, allotment provision, open space / recreation provision, cemetery / burial provision, the layout of the community / changing facilities in relation to the school, and the Town Council's position of having open space transferred to it in future. A Groundwater Audit report was also sent to CBC as part of the exploration for future cemetery provision.

### Recommendation

It is recommended that the Town Council welcomes the details in the Reserved Matters and raises no overall objections.

The Town Council may wish to comment on

- the level of parking provision and the layout particularly in relation to the areas adjoining the flats where some occupiers may be a little distant from their homes (e.g. with shopping, etc)
- the lack of details on dwellings which are suitable for people with access and mobility issues,
- the poor level of boundary landscaping where the parcels face onto the adjoining open space, particularly where public footpaths are intended,
- the lack of detail of access routes for pedestrians and cyclists, children, parents with pushchairs, etc to nearby facilities – schools, local centre, recreation areas etc.
- the issue of affordability – whether these will be accessible to local families in terms of either the financial levels or housing waiting-lists, and key-workers.

The Reserved Matters application covers Parcels 6A and 6B here. The application relates to 625 dwellings, a mix of dwellings in varying sizes and flats, in 14 types. The area is situated between Thorn Road and the dual carriageway, and between Thorn Springs and Bidwell Spinney.

(NB application CB/19/00883/RM shows details for a further 255 dwellings on parcels 4A and 4B further south in HRN2.)

### Brief Description

The general layout of 6A and 6B follows that of the approved Masterplan with three main access points onto Thorn Road, a looping distributor road within the site serving smaller residential access roads and groups of dwellings. An area of public open space with a large play area is located at the centre of the 'loop'.

The details with this application do not show links to the proposed footpaths and cycleways, which enable residents to access facilities such as the schools and local centre.

Plans and elevations have been submitted for the various house types, with a simple palette of materials – red and buff brickwork, some render, red and grey roofing and timber weather boarding, broadly reflecting the materials in the older cottages in Bidwell.

The mix of dwellings is 473 houses plus a mix of 88 flats and 64 affordable flats. A tenure plan shows the affordable and shared ownership units located mostly to the north and eastern side of the site. They are mixed in with ownership and rental dwellings to avoid a simple concentration in one position.

#### Annex A: Initial Comments by Houghton Regis Town Council

**Framework:** The proposals need to be set out more clearly to show how they reflect the Framework scheme for the area, especially with regard to landscaping and non-vehicular access arrangements. Each Reserved Matters application needs to show how each 'parcel' relates to the broader landscaping proposals for HRN - the pieces within a jigsaw - to achieve an integrated whole.

**Landscaping** - tree- planting around the edges of the site appears to be very low density. With the layout and densities shown it will take many years for the landscaping to mature. It would be preferable to use a combination of retained existing trees\* and hedgerows where possible, introduction of a variety of tree sizes as part of the new landscaping, and denser planting patterns with provisions for later thinning. The tree species mix should be native species appropriate to the area and soil type.

As well as the proposed grassed areas, native woodland flower species should be introduced so that when established, the landscaping reflects the habitat and ecosystems of the former copses and field edges.

Planting adjoining the rear of properties, which back onto the landscaped areas / public paths, should have spiky species (rose, briars, fruiting brambles, etc) to deter intruders.

*\*The degree of tree and hedgerow removal which has taken place along the roadside is alarming - mature trees and hedgerows especially should be retained - using TPO provisions, where they could add to the appearance of the new area and preserve wildlife habitats and ecosystems until the new landscaping has had time to become established.*

**Parking provisions** - appears to be inadequate, requires confirmation that the number of spaces meets Central Beds parking standards for residents and visitors

**Layout** - generally no objections. The plans for the parcels need to highlight how the layout relates to the network of foot and cycle paths to facilitate non-car access to shops, schools, recreation etc. Existing rights of way in the area should be highlighted and the connections from the new development made clear

**Appearance:** The buildings and cottages in Bidwell and Thorn exhibit a generally plain design for rural brick-built dwellings, with however interest and detailing is created in the brick detailing around the windows, eaves, chimneys, lintels etc. The proposed house-types could be easily adapted to

