

Tabled Update for Planning Working Group Item – Land at Belgrave Road, Halfway, Kent, ME12 3EE (Planning Ref: 19/501921/FULL)

Members will have noted the tabled update dated 6th November 2019, circulated prior to this application being reported to the Planning Committee meeting on 7th November 2019. This referred to a proposed amendment to the wording of a number of conditions which I recommend that Members agree to. In addition, as set out in the verbal update given at the meeting on 7th November 2019, I am seeking delegated authority to tighten up the affordable housing condition (28) to ensure it meets the Council's requirements for such housing. Further to this, a second tabled update was circulated on 3rd December 2019 (as this item was originally intended to be discussed at the 5th December 2019 meeting). This clarified the matter of the proposed route for construction vehicles from Queenborough Road and set out the further consultation responses received.

Since the above referenced updates were circulated, Officer's have been contacted by the Lower Medway Internal Drainage Board (LMIDB) in respect of the performance of a drainage culvert / stream which sits outside, but close to the northern boundary of the site. As a result of this, Officers have considered it prudent to investigate the matter further so that all the facts are known prior to reporting this application back to the planning committee. As such, I can confirm that the LMIDB have been out to inspect both the off site stream and the piped section. They have found that there is a build up of silt and fly tipping (garden waste, tree cuttings, rubble etc.) which has reduced the capacity of the mouth of the pipe.

Having said the above, the drainage details provided with the application, including the Flood Risk Assessment have demonstrated that the run off rate from the development would be no greater than the greenfield run off rate which currently occurs. As such, the development, if it was to be approved would not worsen this situation, or increase the risk of flooding. In addition, the drainage channel is off site and under the control of the LMIDB. It is important to note that the LMIDB and the Lead Local Flood Authority (KCC) do not raise an objection to the application subject to the relevant drainage conditions in the report. Separately, the developer will be required to obtain Land Drainage Consent from the LMIDB and as a result would need to satisfy these requirements outside of the planning process.

Further to the above, the agent has sought to clarify matters on this subject and has commented as follows:

"Keepmoat Homes is aware of an issue with an off-site drainage course within the vicinity of the application site and understand that the Lower Medway Internal Drainage Board (LMIDB), who is responsible for the course, is managing a resolution following a recent investigation. Following extensive consultation with the LMIDB and other statutory consultees a detailed drainage strategy has been designed for the scheme. The strategy includes a significant amount of on-site surface water storage, and treatment, with discharge at a controlled rate to the existing LMIDB culvert which will be protected by a headwall grille, providing a betterment to the site's current drainage position which has no controlled discharge and no headwall grille. The strategy is approved by the LLFA, subject to condition, and is approved in principal by the LMIDB. Should planning permission be granted, formal approval from the LMIDB will be sought."

Since the tabled update dated 3rd December 2019 was circulated, which set out the additional neighbour responses received, there has been a further neighbour letter. This seeks clarification on the LMIDB issues which have been set out above.

Finally, it was noted in the 3rd December 2019 tabled update that the proposed properties had been marketed on an online platform. Although this tabled update confirmed that this was not a material planning consideration, the agent has also sought to clarify this as follows:

“Keepmoat Homes acknowledges the premature release of marketing information for the site. This was due to a communication error between Keepmoat Homes and a third-party following the original Planning Committee date which was deferred. On behalf of our client Keepmoat Homes, we would like to apologise for this error and confirm as a responsible housebuilder that under no circumstances was this predicated as a ‘done deal’ and this was a genuine mistake. The marketing information was immediately removed and we trust that this clarifies the matter”.

As a result, I remain of the view that the proposal is in compliance with the Local Plan allocation for the site and believe that the application should be approved.

PG – 17/12/2019