

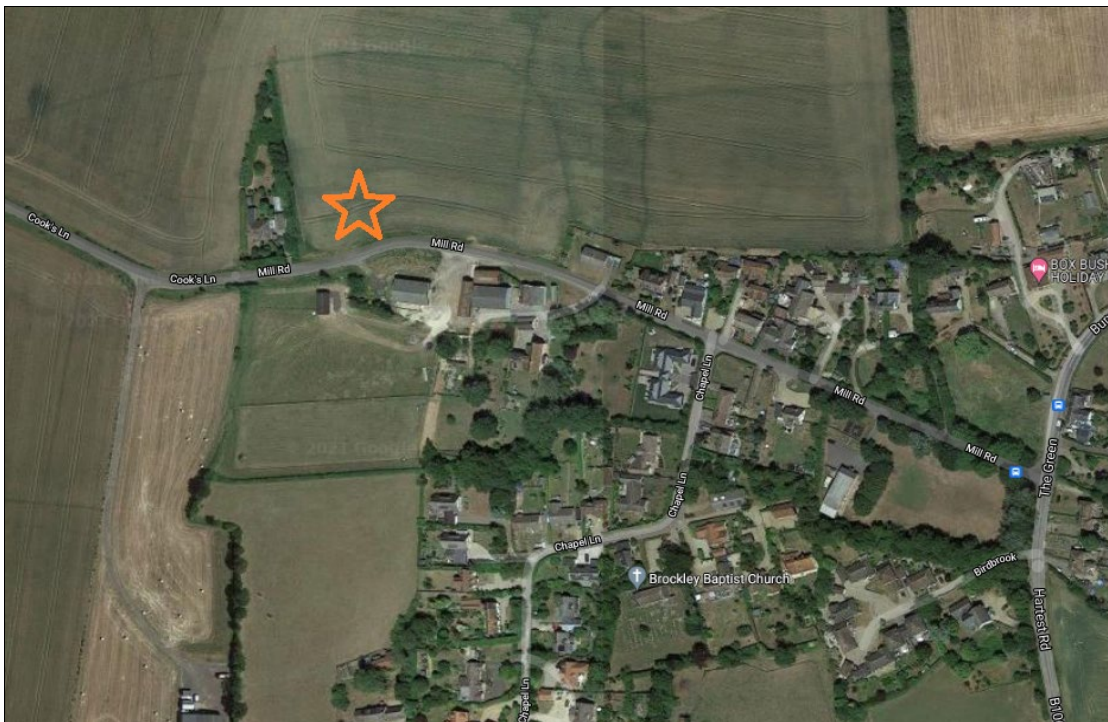
Erection of new single-storey dwelling –  
Land North of Mill Road, Brockley, Suffolk, IP29 4AT  
Modece Architects

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# PLANNING STATEMENT

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This statement is prepared in support of an application for the erection of a new detached dwelling on land known as “Land North of Mill Road, Brockley, Suffolk, IP29 4AT”.
- 1.2 It will consider the planning policy position and provide an overview of the relevant material considerations relating to the proposed development.
- 1.3 The extract below shows the location of the site relative to nearby development.



- 1.4 The application follows a previously withdrawn proposal for two detached dwellings made under application reference DC/19/2130/FUL.
- 1.5 This Planning Statement should be read alongside the Design and Access Statement which also accompanies this proposal.

## **2.0 The Site**

- 2.1 The submitted Design and Access Statement provides an overview of the site, its history and the applicants' connection to it. Photographs are provided of the site and its current condition.
- 2.2 The applicants rely on the commentary within the Design and Access Statement to set the context to the site and its surroundings.

## **3.0 The Proposal**

- 3.1 The Design and Access Statement provides a detailed assessment of the evolution of the proposal such as to provide a robust assessment of the proposal. Please refer to the Design and Access Statement for further detail.

## **4.0 Planning Policy**

- 4.1 The revised National Planning Policy Framework was published in February 2019. It sets out the Government's planning policy and is a material consideration when determining planning applications.
- 4.2 The NPPF is supported by the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), which assists applicants and decision makers in interpretation the NPPF.
- 4.3 On 1 April 2019 Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council were replaced by a single Authority, West Suffolk Council. The development plans for the previous local planning authorities were carried forward to the new Council by Regulation. The Development Plans remain in place for the new West Suffolk Council and, with the exception of the Joint Development Management Policies document (which had been adopted by both Councils), set out policies for defined geographical areas within the new authority. It is

therefore necessary to determine this application with reference to policies set out in the plans produced by the now dissolved St Edmundsbury Borough Council.

4.4 The following policies of the Joint Development Management Policies Document, the St Edmundsbury Core Strategy and the Council's "Rural Vision 2031" document are relevant to the consideration of this application:

- Policy DM1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy DM2 - Creating Places Development Principles and Local Distinctiveness
- Policy DM5 - Development in the Countryside
- Policy DM6 - Flooding and Sustainable Drainage
- Policy DM12 - Mitigation, Enhancement, Management and Monitoring of Biodiversity
- Policy DM22 - Residential Design
- Policy DM27 - Housing in the Countryside
- Policy DM46 - Parking Standards
- Policy CS3 - Design and Local Distinctiveness
- Vision Policy RV1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

4.5 The relevance and consideration of planning policies to this proposal will be considered in the 'Planning Considerations' section of this statement which follows.

## 5.0 Relevant Planning History

5.1 As detailed above, an application was made on this land in 2019 for a pair of dwellings, but this was withdrawn prior to determination.

5.2 It should be noted that there are other decisions/permission relating to new dwellings in the locality of the site, and these will be referred to wherever relevant.

## 6.0 Planning Considerations

6.1 Paragraph 10 of the Revised NPPF states *“So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development”*.

6.2 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF sets out three objectives for achieving sustainable development:

*“a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*

*b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and*

*c) an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy”*.

6.3 The presumption in favour of sustainable development is set out in paragraph 11 of the NPPF, which identifies that planning permission should be granted for proposals which accord with the development plan and that development should only be refused where;

*“i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*

*ii. 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”.*

6.4 Paragraphs 77 and 78 set out the approach to rural housing, respectively stating that;

*“(77) In rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs”, and;*

*“(78) To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby”.*

6.5 Paragraph 79 states that;

*“Planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more of the following circumstances apply:*

*a) there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;*

*b) the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets;*

*c) the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting*

*d) the development would involve the subdivision of an existing residential dwelling; or*

*e) the design is of exceptional quality, in that it:*

*- is truly outstanding or innovative, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and*

*- would significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area”.*

6.6 A recent High Court judgment (dated 15th November 2017) has shed light on the correct interpretation of the NPPF when it comes to determining whether a development is isolated. It related to a case at Wethersfield in the nearby district of Braintree. The following is a concise summary taken from the Planning Resource website (note that reference to paragraph 55 should now be read as paragraph 79):-

*“Developer Granville Developments had been refused planning permission to build the new homes off Lower Green Road, Blackmore End, Wethersfield, but successfully appealed to a planning inspector who granted consent in February this year.*

*He found that, even on the most favourable interpretation, the area's deliverable sites for new housing fell well below the five-year supply required by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).*

*The development would not cause material harm to the character and appearance of the area and, although it was not within an established settlement boundary, there were a number of houses nearby and the bungalows could not be viewed as isolated dwellings in the countryside.*

*In challenging the inspector's decision, Braintree District Council argued that he had wrongly interpreted the NPPF. Given the paucity of services and amenities in the area, residents of the bungalows would be required to rely heavily on their cars and the new dwellings would clearly be isolated, it argued.*

*Mrs Justice Lang noted that the word isolated is not defined in the NPPF. However, in dismissing the council's appeal, she found that the council's interpretation was too restrictive.*

*She noted that there were existing dwellings to the north and south of the development site - which was originally home to agricultural buildings that had been demolished. There was also a home to the west, on the other side of a road.*

*In his decision, the inspector had also justifiably focused on the economic benefits of the scheme in providing work for local builders and the likelihood that two new households would give their custom to local businesses.”*

6.7 Specifically Mrs. Justice Lang concluded (paras.28 and 29):

*“28. NPPF 55 cannot be read as a policy against development in settlements without facilities and services since it expressly recognises that development in a small village may enhance and maintain services in a neighbouring village, as people travel to use them. The PPG advises that “all settlements can play a role in delivering sustainable development in rural areas”, cross-referencing to NPPF 55, “and so blanket policies restricting housing development in some settlements and preventing other settlements from expanding should be avoided...”. Moreover, in rural areas, where public transport is limited, people may have to travel by car to a village or town to access services. NPPF 17 penultimate bullet point identifies as a core planning principle to “actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable”. But as the PPG states, NPPF 29 and 34 recognise that the general policy in favour of locating development where travel is minimised, and use of public transport is maximised, has to be sufficiently flexible to take account of the differences between urban and rural areas. The scale of the proposed development may also be a relevant factor when considering transport and accessibility. As Mr Dagg rightly pointed out, the policy in NPPF 17 in favour of focusing development in locations which are or can be made sustainable applies in particular to “significant development”.*

*29. For these reasons, I agree with the Defendants that the Claimant was seeking to add an impermissible gloss to NPPF 55 in order to give it a meaning not found in its wording and not justified by its context.”*

6.8 The decision of Mrs Justice Lang was the subject of reference to the Court of Appeal by Braintree District Council, and Lord Justice Lindblom (on 28th March 2018) upheld the



decision. Therefore, it follows that if the development is not isolated in the ordinary meaning of the word, paragraph 79 of the NPPF is not engaged

6.9 In this instance, the site lies in a group of properties set within a wider cluster of dwellings that form part of the village of Brockley. It is bordered to the east, south and west by residential development and gives easy access to regular bus services to Bury St Edmunds and Clare due to the proximity of stops at the junction of Mill Road to the east. As such, given the site's positive relationship with the existing residential properties, this cannot be considered to be isolated in the normal understanding of the meaning of this term. For these reasons, it can also be concluded that the site is not isolated and the special circumstances required to be demonstrated by paragraph 79 of the NPPF are not engaged in this case.

6.10 On 1<sup>st</sup> February 2018, an application for the erection of *"2no. dwellings with associated vehicular access and copse area"* on Land North Of Willow Tree Farm, Mill Road, Brockley, was presented to the Council's Development Control Committee. The representation made to the committee by the Planning Officer recommended refusal of the application for the following reasons;

*"The proposal sits on the edge of a cluster of dwellings, extending into the countryside. It is outside a continuous built frontage in a prominent location. The proposal would represent an urbanising and visually intrusive development continuing the built form further into the countryside of an otherwise open and undeveloped site of an overt and intrinsic rural character, and which provides views across the wider landscape. It would therefore fail to accord with policies DM2, DM5 and DM27 and result in an urbanising effect on the rural character of the area in an unsustainable location, contrary also to the provisions of the NPPF and DM22 in relation to securing good design".*

6.11 However, the application was subsequently approved by the members of the committee, with the minutes of that meeting recording that;

*“This application was referred to the Development Control Committee following consideration by the Delegation Panel. The matter had been referred to the Delegation Panel at the request of Councillor Peter Stevens (Ward Member: Cavendish) and because the Parish Council had no objection to the proposal, which was contrary to the Officer recommendation of refusal, for the reason set out in Paragraph 35 of Report No DEV/SE/18/006.*

*The Planning Officer drew attention to the plan within ‘late papers’ that had been circulated in connection with the application, as a result of the version included within the agenda having been printed incompletely.*

*The Officer also highlighted Paragraph 32 of the report in which it explained the position with regard to a neighbouring approved application site that fell partly within the remit of Babergh District Council.*

*Speaker: Mr Dean Pearce (agent) spoke in support of the application*

*Councillor Peter Stevens spoke in support of the scheme and proposed that the application be approved, contrary to the Officer recommendation of refusal. This was duly seconded by Councillor David Roach.*

*The motion for approval was verbally supported by a number of other Members, in light of which the Case Officer read out a number of conditions that would be applied to the application if approved.*

*The Service Manager (Planning – Development) explained that whilst the proposed development did not accord with Policy DM27, Members clearly considered that it was a sensitive and modest development which would contribute to the Council’s housing supply. In this case Officers, therefore, did not consider a risk assessment to be necessary. She also advised the Committee that there had been a number of recent appeal decisions made in relation to Policy DM27 and she would look to arrange a Member seminar on this topic in the near future.*

*Upon being put to the vote, and with 13 voting for the motion and with 1 against, it was resolved that*

Decision

*Planning permission be **GRANTED, CONTRARY TO THE OFFICER RECOMMENDATION OF REFUSAL...***

6.12 The development that was the subject of that proposal is that which lies immediately to the east of this site. This decision is, therefore, highly relevant to the consideration of this proposal.

6.13 Indeed, in exploring why the Planning Officer considered that that proposal would not comply with policy DM27, the committee report identified that;

*“The proposal is sited on the end of, but also some way detached from, a cluster, and well outside of an otherwise continuous built frontage. There is an individual dwelling to the west of the site, but this is some distance from the main bulk of the village and is notably small scale and otherwise well screened. It is considered therefore that this an ‘isolated’ dwelling, physically distinct from the main cluster of Brockley. There is also a significant and otherwise open gap between the end of the proposed development and that isolated dwelling, markedly pronounced by the inclusion of the proposed woodland copse”.*

6.14 It is clear that in the case of the current proposal, that position cannot be applied here. The new dwelling would be sited between existing properties and adjacent to other residential development. It would infill a gap in precisely the way that policy DM27 envisages.

6.15 The comments made in the committee minutes are equally applicable to the current proposal, particularly given that this relates to the same grouping of properties. Whilst it is understood that the assessment of this site will need to be made on its merits, the applicant considers

that there are sound reasons to consider that this proposal complies with policy DM27 in light of the following assessment.

6.16 Policy DM27 states;

*“Proposals for new dwellings will be permitted in the countryside subject to satisfying the following criteria:*

*a. the development is within a closely knit ‘cluster’ of 10 or more existing dwellings adjacent to or fronting an existing highway;*

*b. the scale of development consists of infilling a small undeveloped plot by one dwelling or a pair of semi detached dwellings commensurate with the scale and character of existing dwellings within an otherwise continuous built up frontage.*

*Permission will not be granted where a proposal harms or undermines a visually important gap that contributes to the character and distinctiveness of the rural scene, or where development would have an adverse impact on the environment or highway safety.*

*Note: A small undeveloped plot is one which could be filled by one detached or a pair of semi-detached dwellings where the plot sizes and spacing between dwellings is similar to adjacent properties and thereby respects the rural character and street scene of the locality”.*

6.17 Taking the criteria within DM27 in turn, the site clearly falls within a closely knit ‘cluster’ of 10 or more dwellings adjacent to and fronting and existing highway. The proposal also provides for the delivery of a single dwelling on a small undeveloped plot commensurate with the scale and character of existing dwellings within an otherwise continuous built up frontage. As such, not only does this proposal comply with policy DM27, but it would also be acceptable for the very same reasons that the adjacent site was found to be by the committee in 2018. These are important material considerations that weigh in favour of this proposal.

- 6.18 Attention turns, therefore, to the physical impacts of the proposal relative to the rural setting of the site, the environment and highway safety.

Design and Layout

- 6.19 Policies DM2 and DM22 provide the Council's expectations with regards to design and layout, with policy DM22 setting out specific criteria against which this proposal can be considered.
- 6.20 The application is made in detailed form and demonstrates that a high quality dwelling will be delivered that responds appropriately to a robust assessment of the site and surroundings. Further validation of this position is made through the Design and Access Statement that accompanies the proposal.
- 6.21 The submitted layout demonstrates that a dwelling and all of the associated infrastructure required to support it (including garden space, parking space, turning areas and access drive) can be readily accommodated on the site and that this would not give rise to conflict with the pattern of development in the locality.
- 6.22 Paragraph 127 of the NPPF provides further design expectations for new development, requiring planning policies and decisions to ensure that developments;

*“a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*

*b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*

*c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*

*d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*

*e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*

*f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience”.*

- 6.23 The proposed dwelling is an attractive single storey property that will sit comfortably on its site. It is respectful of the character and scale of adjacent development, and has been designed to compliment the combination of new and traditional properties that are characteristic of this area. The proposal is, therefore, fully respectful of the provisions of policies DM2 and DM22 along with the expectations of paragraph 127.

#### Highway Safety and Parking

- 6.24 Sufficient space is available on site to accommodate the entirety of the parking and manoeuvring needs of a dwelling on this site, meaning that vehicles can enter and exit the site in forward gear and in a safe manner.
- 6.25 The new access is sensitively sited and would enable safe and suitable access onto the site from this lightly trafficked road. The proposal would therefore be in accordance with paragraph 108 of the NPPF

#### Flood Risk and Drainage

- 6.26 The site lies outside the designated Flood Zones 2 and 3 and suitable drainage can be designed to ensure that the development does not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

- 6.27 Whilst there is some historic evidence of surface water flooding on the western edge of the site, as per the image below, the dwelling and access have been designed to be clear of this and thereby present a dwelling that is safe from any risks of flooding.
- 6.28 As with the newly constructed properties adjacent to the site, the site is capable of delivering adequate surface and waste water drainage.

#### Land Contamination

- 6.29 The application is supported by the Council's Land Contamination Questionnaire and an Environmental Report which demonstrates that the development is not at risk from land contamination.

#### Heritage Impacts

- 6.30 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on local planning authorities to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their settings (Sections 16 and 66).
- 6.31 Section 16 of the NPPF sets out the Government's position on the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Paragraph 189 of the NPPF requires applicants to describe the impact of proposals on the significance of any heritage asset to a level of detail proportionate to the assets' importance. As set out above, this should be no more than is sufficient to understand the potential of that impact on the significance. Paragraph 190 requires local planning authorities to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

6.32 Paragraph 192 sets out that in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

6.33 Paragraph 193 of the NPPF apports great weight to a designated asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. The NPPF highlights that significance can be harmed or lost through physical change and any harm requires clear and convincing justification.

6.34 Paragraphs 195 and 196 address how local planning authorities should deal with situations where the assessment of impacts has identified harm to a heritage asset.

6.35 Willowtree Farmhouse lies to the south-east of the site, beyond adjacent properties/buildings. The proposed dwelling would have no direct relationship with the listed building, being separated by other property and where the setting of the farmhouse has already been altered by the development opposite. There is nothing to suggest that the appropriately designed single-storey dwelling on this site would have a harmful impact on the significance or setting of this listed building.

6.34 For these reasons, the proposal is found to accord with chapter 16 of the NPPF as a whole.

#### Housing Need

6.35 The West Suffolk Housing Strategy 2018 sets out the Council's "*vision for improvement in the quality and delivery of housing to meet local needs, not just now, but for decades to come*".



6.36 In terms of rural housing, it identifies that;

*“Approximately 43% of West Suffolk’s population live outside of the major towns. The provision of rural housing is therefore vital for the creation and maintenance of sustainable communities.*

*Outside the five main settlements in West Suffolk, house prices for all property types are well above the West Suffolk median at £284,363, compared to the median of £247,741 for the five main settlements. In addition, the availability of affordable properties for rent in rural areas is much lower than in our towns. The NPPF 2018 also introduces entry-level exception sites to support development of sites suitable for first time buyers.*

*In order to address these issues we will:*

- 1. Identify potential barriers and develop ways to accelerate delivery on sites which are currently allocated in our local plans, through the commissioning of a Housing Delivery Plan.*
- 2. Through the creation of a new West Suffolk local plan, identify sufficient land to meet our current and future housing needs to give certainty for residents and developers.*
- 3. Identify solutions to respond to specific housing needs such as first-time buyers, key workers, affordable housing, selfbuild, Co-Housing, Community Land Trusts and specialist housing”.*

6.37 It goes on to recognise that;

*“West Suffolk’s total population is expected to increase by 10% by 2039, compared with 11% across England. The growth in population for those residents aged 75 and over is expected to be much larger. For residents in West Suffolk aged 75 and over we are expecting to see 84% growth with resident numbers rising from 16,600 to 30,600. The growth of this age group across England is expected to be 76%”.*

6.38 There does not appear to be local level housing needs information available for the village of Brockley. As such, the information contained in the Housing Strategy appears to be the best indicator of local housing need in the area. The proposal provides for a single storey dwelling that would be suitable for a family home, a home for older persons or for a person/persons who require single level accommodation due to health needs. The dwelling will be inherently accessible and designed for flexible living across a wide span of the community.

6.39 The proposal would, therefore, address a local need.

#### Accessibility

6.40 Whilst Brockley does not have a range of facilities and services in the village, the site is just a short distance from the bus stops at the junction of Mill Road. The bus service provides regular services to Bury St Edmunds and Clare. The site would, therefore, offer easy access to the use of public transport straight into major settlements.

#### Sustainable Development

6.41 From an economic aspect, the construction of a new dwelling would provide much needed jobs for local people, and there would be a modest economic benefit from the purchase of materials also. Occupants of the property would contribute to the local economy through the purchase of goods, their employment and involvement in community activity. It is, therefore, considered that the economic objective of sustainable development is met by this proposal.

6.42 The social aspects of new housing are embedded in the NPPF which states that *“supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being”*.

- 6.43 The location of this site has already been considered in the sections of this statement addressing the matter of isolation and accessibility. It has been found that the site is in an accessible location that would offer some opportunity for travel by alternative methods of transport. As such, the site would give future occupants the potential to travel via a variety of transport methods, thereby not providing a development that is entirely reliant on the car as its main mode of travel.
- 6.44 The addition of a new dwelling, in a location where future occupants could readily engage in village life, would support the social objectives of sustainable development and demonstrate social inclusion.
- 6.45 Furthermore, the delivery of this new dwelling would help to provide the supply of housing required by the NPPF and, therefore, it is considered that the proposal meets the social objective of sustainable development. Furthermore, the proposal's contribution to the Council's housing supply should not be underestimated. The applicants intend to carry out the development in a short timescale should permission be granted. In this regard, the site should be considered deliverable in the terms set out in the NPPF and should thereby be afforded further weight in terms of its sustainability credentials.
- 6.46 With regards to the environmental elements of the proposal, the proposed dwelling would be built to current Building Regulations standards which embed positive measures to reduce carbon emissions and energy usage. The proposal would also offer opportunities to provide an environmentally sustainable development through the incorporation of renewable energy provision (including air source heat pumps), and would be constructed utilising water efficient taps, showers and toilets, and energy efficient white goods. Electric car charging provision would be included with any detailed submission.
- 6.47 Biodiversity improvements can be offered which will actively encourage biodiversity on the land, including log piles, swift bricks and bird boxes. This will be supported by new native landscape planting, with the hedging/trees currently on site being retained and reinforced

where necessary. With this in mind, the proposal is considered to offer environmental gains that would support the environmental objective of sustainable development.

6.48 As such, it is felt that the proposal demonstrates a cohesive approach to sustainability that complies with the NPPF and is in line with the way in which the dimensions of sustainable development are applied by Planning Inspectors and the Planning Officers alike. Consideration is now given to other material considerations that will affect the assessment of this proposal.

## **7.0 Planning Balance**

7.1 As identified through the course of this statement, there are a number of issues which the LPA will need to balance in reaching a decision on this proposal. This section of this statement seeks to work through these matters and balance them in a manner that is consistent with how both Planning Inspectors and the Council's Planning Officers have carried out the balancing exercise in respect of recent applications that bring about similar considerations.

7.2 In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The consideration is, therefore, whether the development accords with the development plan and, if not, whether there are material considerations that would indicate a decision should be taken contrary to the development plan.

7.3 The development plan includes the Joint Development Management Policies Document, the St Edmundsbury Core Strategy and the Council's "Rural Vision 2031" document. In light of this application relating to a proposal for new housing, an important consideration in determining this application is that recent consideration of a site in proximity to this one found policy DM27 applicable whereby the same principles can be applied here.

- 7.4 The proposal has been assessed against the three objectives of sustainable development. In respect of the economic strand, the applicant recognises that there would be modest benefits from the construction of the new dwelling and from the contribution made by future occupants into the local economy. However modest that may be, the proposal is economically sustainable.
- 7.5 In terms of the social dimension, the NPPF recognises the contribution made by the delivery of housing and the vitality of rural communities to the social aspect of sustainability. The site is located in an accessible location and, in the absence of any social detriment, the proposal must be considered to be socially sustainable. Indeed, the proposal offers the opportunity to agree a scale and size of dwelling on the site that would meet local needs.
- 7.6 The matter of environmental sustainability is, as is often the case in rural areas, more complex. The PPG recognises that there is a need to take a flexible approach to considering the potential for sustainable transport modes in rural areas and the site has been found to be well located in terms of the facilities and services that nearby centres have to offer. In this regard, and in the absence of any recognisable detriment to matters such as heritage assets, land contamination, biodiversity or flood risk, the proposal is found to be environmentally sustainable also.
- 7.7 This is particularly the case when the environmental benefits of the scheme are considered. These include;
- The use of renewable technologies would facilitate a low-carbon development;
  - The construction of the dwelling would include significant insulation and energy efficient white goods, and would include water efficient showers and toilets;
  - The introduction of ecological enhancements is proposed on the site.
- 7.8 These benefits are considered to go a significant way to offsetting any limited environmental harm that may be considered to occur. As such, any harm would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the scheme, where the delivery of three new dwellings

to the market, including much needed single storey accommodation, would contribute to the districts housing supply. As such, the balancing of the main issues would result in a conclusion that the proposal is sustainable and, therefore, there would be a presumption in favour of it.

- 7.9 For all of these reasons, the proposal is found to be a sustainable development and should, thereby, be supported.