

14th November 2023

Planning Department
Tewkesbury Borough Council
Council Offices
Gloucester Road
Tewkesbury
GL20 5TT

Dear Sir or Madam

Permission in Principle application for the erection of up to 2 dwellings at Lynfield Farm, Leckhampton Lane, Shurdington, Cheltenham, GL51 4XP

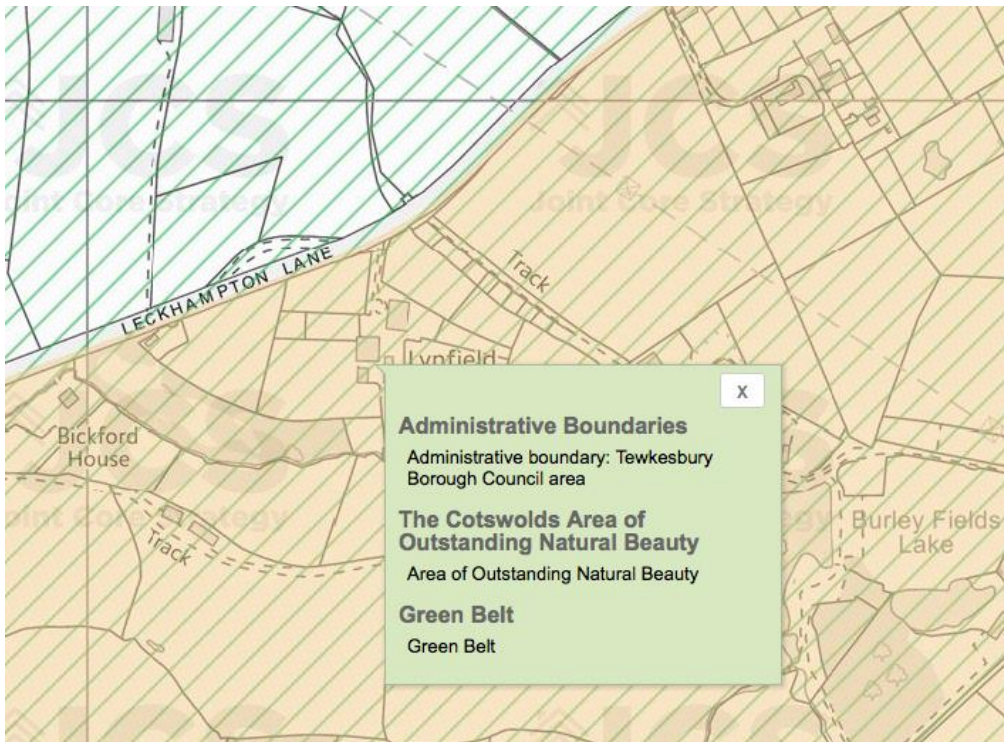
Please find enclosed a permission in principle application form and associated information in relation to the above-mentioned site. The following documents accompany the application:

- Completed Permission in Principle application forms;
- This covering letter; and
- Site location plan.

We are submitting this application with a view to confirming that the proposals are acceptable in principle, taking into account policy and other material considerations. The application fee of £804 will follow once an application reference is received.

Site Context and Proposed Development

The site is located along Leckhampton Lane and is within the Green Belt and Cotswolds National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)), as shown on the proposals map. The site itself has access directly via Leckhampton Lane. It has excellent visibility in both directions and is used by the various units currently occupying the site (see below).



JCS Proposals map extract

Lynfield Farm comprises a recently constructed dwelling house along with a number of other buildings and structures (mainly used for storage and low-key business purposes). It is these non-residential buildings to which this application relates. The original, larger dwelling previously known as Lynfield Farm (now called Lynfield House) is now within separate ownership.

The buildings are 'brownfield' and are rented out mostly for storage, with some other 'hobby' type business uses, such as metal polishing; all covering approximately 540 square metres.



Images of the existing buildings to be replaced, showing their height, scale, form and lack of architectural merit.

Permission in principle was first granted in February 2021 for up to 2 dwellings. LPA ref. 20/01011/PIP refer. This has now expired as an application for Technical Details Consent was never submitted.

Permission in Principle

The permission in principle route to obtaining permission came into force on the 1st of June 2018 and aims to provide a fast-track route through the planning process in order to speed up housing delivery. The Planning Practice Guidance relating to permission in principle describes this consent route as an alternative way of obtaining planning permission for housing-led development which separates the consideration of matters of principle for proposed development from the technical detail. The permission in principle consent route (for applications) has two stages.

The first stage (permission in principle as per this application) establishes whether a site is suitable in principle; and the second (technical details consent) stage is when the detailed development proposals are assessed.

A decision on whether to grant permission to a site following a valid permission in principle application must be made in accordance with relevant policies in the development plan unless there are material considerations which indicate otherwise, such as the NPPF. The scope of permission in principle is limited to location, land use and amount of development. Issues relevant to these 'in principle' matters should be considered at the permission in principle stage. Other matters are to be considered later at the technical details consent stage.

It is worth noting that local authorities cannot list the information they require for applications for permission in principle in the same way they can for applications for full planning permission. The timescale for the determination of a permission in principle application is 5 weeks from the day the local authority receives a valid application.

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

This section looks at the principle of housing development at this location taking into account the Green Belt designation.

JCS Policy SP1 establishes the housing requirement for Tewkesbury Borough up to 2031 (as well as for Gloucester City and Cheltenham Borough). The policy requires that at least 9,899 new homes needed for Tewkesbury will be provided both within its administrative area and within cross-boundary urban extensions into the Green Belt to the northwest and west of the Cheltenham.

Policy SD5 of the Joint Core Strategy reiterates that development within the Green Belt that is in conformity with national Green Belt policy contained within the NPPF is acceptable. Criterion 1 of Policy SD5 simply states:

To ensure the Green Belt continues to serve its key functions, it will be protected from harmful development. Within its boundaries, development will be restricted to those limited types of development which are deemed appropriate by the NPPF, unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated. That is: 'whether very special circumstances exist to outweigh the harm automatically caused to the Green Belt by virtue of the development being inappropriate and any other harm actually caused'

Policy GRB4 of the Tewkesbury Borough Plan states *inter alia*:

2. The following forms of development are not inappropriate providing they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with its purposes:
 - a) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land;

National Green Belt policy is contained within Section 13 of the NPPF. Paragraph 147 makes it clear that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 149 goes on to state that LPAs should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in Green Belt but lists a number of exceptions.

Criterion g) is relevant to the consideration of this proposal. It states:

- g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:
 - not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or
 - not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.

The application site constitutes previously developed land. This proposal represents the 'complete redevelopment' of this land and the proposal will be designed in due course (to be clarified at the technical details stage) not to have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development. In principle therefore the development is in accordance with relevant national and local policy.

The existing buildings have a footprint of 540 sqm. The proposed new dwellings will be similar, depending on their design and layout. The height, scale, design and associated impacts of the new dwellings will be dealt with during the second 'technical details stage'.

National planning policy is firmly in favour of the effective re-use of previously developed land such as the application site. Paragraph 119 of the NPPF states "*Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes...*"; and criterion d) of paragraph 120 states "*Planning policies and decisions should: promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained...*".

Making best use of previously developed land, such as this site, reduces the need for greenfield development and the site is an appropriate location for new housing development given the policy set out above.

Paragraph 69 of the NPPF is also relevant in this regard, with emphasis placed on the important contribution small and medium sized housing sites can make to local housing requirements and are often built out relatively quickly. As such, Councils are encouraged to support the development of windfall sites, "*giving great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes*".

Alongside the fact the proposed development is entirely acceptable in policy terms, Tewkesbury Borough Council are unable to demonstrate a 5-year supply of housing. This simply places even more weight in support of the proposed development.

Conclusion

Based on the justification set out here, we trust this application for permission in principle will be granted. The development is compliant with the adopted plan policies, and important material considerations in the NPPF, and should therefore be granted without delay.

Please contact me if you require any further information at any stage of the application process; and I ask that we are advised if officers have any intention of doing anything other than approving this application under delegated authority.

Yours faithfully

Becky Brown MRTPI