

Design and Access Statement (incorporating Utility, Affordable and Planning Statement)

Proposal: Outline Planning Application for up to 37 Dwellings at land adjacent to former Poultry Farm, Fen Road, Ruskington, NG34 9TH

For: Stonegate Farmers Ltd

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1.0 Executive Summary:

- This proposal is to agree the principle of development for an affordable housing development of up to 37 dwellings on land immediately on the edge of Ruskington.
- The Affordable Housing need has been confirmed by a Housing Needs Survey undertaken by Arc 4 Consulting in September and October 2023.
- The proposal has been subject to a pre-application advice discussion with North Kesteven Housing and Planning Officers.
- The scheme uses an existing vehicular access, provides surface water attenuation, does not affect any existing trees and features biodiversity enhancement opportunities.

2.0 Location:

- Ruskington is located 5km north of Sleaford in Lincolnshire.
- The site is located on the North-East edge of Ruskington on Fen Road.
- The site is located 300m along Fen Road to the east of the railway bridge.
- The site entrance is located virtually opposite the western entrance to the Hillside Estate.

3.0 The Site as Existing:

- The site is currently in a field which was part of a former poultry farm.
- The Poultry Units now have prior approval Permissions (23/0807/PND and 22/1649/PAR) to convert the two buildings into residential and light commercial use respectively.
- The area to which the application relates lies between the two poultry houses and a watercourse, with a light commercial development immediately to the west.
- The land on the southern side of Fen Road is residential use and also contains a playground and kick about area.
- The land immediately north of the site is in agricultural use.

4.0 Proposed Use:

- The site lies just outside the current village boundary which borders the west and south of the application area. Therefore, in planning terms, the site lies in 'Open Countryside', however, the site does not present an opportunity to 'round off' the existing settlement.

- As the site does lie outside the village boundary, any development needs to be in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework, Policy 78, which required LPAs to 'support housing developments that reflect local needs. Local planning authorities should support opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites that will provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs, and consider whether allowing some market housing on these sites would help to facilitate this.'
- The site design proposes an indicative layout featuring a mix of 1 Bed Apartments, 2 Bed Houses and a smaller number of 3 Bed Houses to respond to the results of the recent Housing Needs Survey by Arc 4 (Which is included elsewhere in this application).
- The predominant house type is 2 Bed (17^{NO}) which could be configured to provide either 2 double rooms or one larger bedroom and a home office to form a one bed unit. We have also included 10 No 1 Bed apartments and 10 No 3 Bed family homes. Therefore, 73% of the development will be either 1 or 2 bed units, which responds to the proven need for smaller units in the Arc 4 Housing Needs Survey.

5.0 Site Design:

- 5.1
- The site design is set by the various constraints on the site, and the need to adhere to North Kesteven Council's requirements for Bio Diversity Net Gain.
 - A principal design driver is the desire not to affect any hedgerows and to work alongside the existing characteristics of the site.
 - A constraints drawing is provided within the application to show how the development area has been formed to work around trees, hedgerows and the location of buildings to the East, South and West.
 - The existing access to Fen Road is used, which allows a site spine road to work its way through the development area with houses either side.
 - An area of Bio Diversity Habitat creation, including a pond (partly for water attenuation) is located alongside Fen Road to offer visual amenity to the residents and wider community.
 - The layout has been designed to allow for Fire Engine and Refuse Vehicle Turning Heads.
 - The houses are designed to respect local vernacular, and the indicative house types use local details and materials.

6.0 Planning Statement

The following National and Local Policies are relevant to this application:

6.1 Relevant National Policies:

- NPPF 60** To support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.

Response: The proposal meets a proven housing need (See Arc 4 Housing needs survey) (HNS).

NPPF 61 To determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance – unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach which also reflects current and future demographic trends and market signals. In addition to the local housing need figure, any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should also be taken into account in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for.

Response: NKDC requested that the applicant should undertake a Housing Needs Survey of the Ruskington Parish to establish the local need prior to proceeding with the site design. The Housing Needs Survey has shown that there is a sizable need for housing in the local area.

NPPF 62 Within this context, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes).

Response: This has been done in the Housing Needs Survey.

NPPF 63 Where a need for affordable housing is identified, planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required, and expect it to be met on-site unless:
a) off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution in lieu can be robustly justified; and b) the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities.

Response: The scheme responds directly to an identified and specific need.

NPPF 72 Local planning authorities should support the development of entry-level exception sites, suitable for first time buyers (or those looking to rent their first home), unless the need for such homes is already being met within the authority's area. These sites should be on land which is not already allocated for housing and should: a) comprise of entry-level homes that offer one or more types of affordable housing as defined in Annex 2 of this Framework; and b) be adjacent to existing settlements, proportionate in size to them, not compromise the protection given to areas or assets of particular importance in this Framework³⁶, and comply with any local design policies and standards.

Response: This is also considered in the Housing Needs Survey and there is a proven need.

NPPF 78 In rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs. Local planning authorities should support opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites that will provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs, and consider whether allowing some market housing on these sites would help to facilitate this.

Response: This is the key policy to this application. The proposal responds directly to a local need and delivers a rural exception site.

- NPPF 79** 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.
- Response: The site lies on the edge of an established sustainable settlement, with a choice of shops (supermarkets, bakery, butchers etc.), Public transport (railway station and bus services) schools (Primary (x2) and secondary) and also has businesses operating from the village. Ruskington is categorised as a 'Large Village' in the local plan.*

6.2 **Relevant Local Policies:**

The following Policies are in the adapted Central Lincolnshire Local Plan:

- S1** The Spatial Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy The spatial strategy will focus on delivering sustainable growth for Central Lincolnshire that meets the needs for homes and jobs, regenerates places and communities, and supports necessary improvements to facilities, services and infrastructure. Development should create strong, sustainable, cohesive and inclusive communities, making the most effective use of previously developed land and enabling a larger number of people to access jobs, services and facilities locally. Development should provide the scale and mix of housing types and a range of new job opportunities that will meet the identified needs of Central Lincolnshire in order to secure balanced communities. Decisions on investment in services and facilities, and on the location and scale of development, will be assisted by the Central Lincolnshire Settlement Hierarchy. The hierarchy is as follows:

4. Large Villages Large villages are defined as those with 750 or more dwellings at 1 April 2018. To maintain and enhance their role as large villages which provide housing, employment, retail, and key services and facilities for the local area, the following settlements will be a focus for accommodating an appropriate level of growth via sites allocated in this plan. Beyond site allocations made in this plan or any applicable neighbourhood plan, development will be limited to that which accords with Policy S4: Housing Development in or Adjacent to Villages or other policies relating to non-residential development in this plan as relevant.

Bardney,
Heighington,
Scotter, Billingham, Keelby, Skellingthorpe, Bracebridge, Heath, Metheringham, Waddington, Branston, Navenby, Washingborough, Cherry, Willingham, Nettleham, Welton, Dunholme, **Ruskington**, Witham, St Hughs, Heckington, Saxilby

Response: Ruskington is named as a 'Large Village' in the Local Plan.

- S4** Housing Development in or Adjacent to Villages 1. Large, Medium and Small Villages, as defined in the Settlement Hierarchy in Policy S1, will experience limited growth to support their role and function through allocated sites of 10 or more dwellings in the

Local Plan, sites allocated in neighbourhood plans, or on unallocated sites in appropriate locations* within the developed footprint** of the village that are typically: • up to 10 dwellings in Large Villages and Medium Villages; and • up to 5 dwellings in Small Villages. Proposals on unallocated sites not meeting these criteria will not generally be supported unless there are clear material planning considerations that indicate otherwise. 2. Residential development proposals for unallocated sites within the size thresholds set out in part 1 of this policy and within the developed footprint of the village will only be supported where it would: a) preserve or enhance the settlement's character and appearance; b) not significantly harm the character and appearance of the surrounding countryside or the rural setting of the village; and c) be consistent with other policies in the development plan. 3. Proposals for residential development on unallocated land immediately adjacent to the developed footprint will only be supported where this is: a) a First Homes exception site in accordance with the NPPF and provided it is outside of the Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and not within a location that is subject of a Designated Rural Area as defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF; or b) exclusively for a rural affordable housing exception site. Any proposals for First Homes exceptions sites or rural affordable housing exception sites will also be subject to the requirements of Policy S22. The consideration of proportionality of a proposal for a First Home exceptions site will be considered on a site basis informed by consideration of the impact on landscape, village character and the historic environment, topography, overall built footprint, visual impact, and intensity of use of the site. Evidence supporting the planning application will need to robustly examine and illustrate why the proposal is proportionate in size to the existing settlement. Whilst not a cap, it is unlikely that a proposal that would result in an increase in the overall area of the developed footprint of the village, or an increase in dwelling numbers, of more than 5% would be considered proportionate, and potentially considerably less (especially if any exception sites have already been provided or planned for at that settlement).

Response: This is the most relevant local policy. The proposal accords with the requirements of policy S4.3, items a) and b).

6.3 **Other Technical Policies:**

S7 Reducing Energy Consumption:

The houses will all be designed to be EPC 'A' rated.

S11 Embodied Carbon:

Whilst the detail of the houses is not required at this stage, it is expected that lower carbon methods of construction (e.g. timber frame or SIPs) can be considered.

S12 Water Efficiency and Sustainable Water Management:

A buffer / attenuation pond is included to store water prior to release at greenfield run-off rates into the adjacent watercourse.

S18 Electric Vehicle Charging:

This is covered as part of Part S and is no longer a planning issue.

S20 Resilient and Adaptable Design:

This is covered by Part O of the Building Regulations. The houses are all designed to meet the M4(2) requirements of the building regulations for accessible and adaptable homes.

S21 Flood Risk:

The site is in flood zone 1, and the design of the water storage system means that run-off rates are not increased by the development.

S22 Affordable Housing:

The scheme is for 100% Affordable Housing to meet a proven need.

7.0 Other Technical Considerations:

7.1 Highways / Access:

- The site already benefits from an established access onto Fen Road.
- The site lies within a 30mph zone entrance.
- Visibility is over 250m to the east and over 150m to the west.
- Fen Road is a 2-lane carriageway with footways on both sides up to the edge of the site. (The footway on the north side of the road only goes about half way down the length of the site, but could easily be extended up to the site entrance.)
- The verge is wider than the 'x axis' requirements for visibility.

7.2 Biodiversity (BNG):

- A large area of BNG is included in the site layout.
- The pond also assists with BNG.

7.3 Ecology:

- An ecology report for the site is included in this application.

7.4 Trees:

- No trees are affected by this proposal.

7.5 Sustainable Location:

Ruskington is a Large Village in the Local Plan. The site is located within the following distances ('as the crow flies' from the centre of the site).

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------|
| • Playground | 120m |
| • Pub | 400m |
| • Shop (Co-Op) | 525m |
| • Pharmacy | 525m |
| • Primary School | 960m + 480m |
| • Secondary School | 850m |
| • Railway Station | 721m |
| • Bus Stop | 670m |
| • Church | 670m |

7.6 Flood Risk / Storm Drainage:

- A Flood Strategy is included as a separate document (Appendix to the Flood Risk Assessment). However, all the surface water from the houses and roads is collected in an attenuation pond, which then drains to the adjacent watercourse at greenfield run-off rate.
- The site is in Flood Zone 1.
- The watercourse is **not** designated as a major river, but is shown on the EA rivers map.

7.7 Utilities:

The site is connected to the following services:

- Electricity: Supply in the Poultry Buildings.
- Water: Supply in the Poultry Buildings.
- Foul Drainage: Main drains in Fen Road.
- Internet / Telecoms: Available on Fen Road.

8.0 **Pre-Application Advice:**

- A Pre-Application meeting took place on Teams on 2nd February 2023 with Andrew Willerton and Steve Watson from NKDL. The outcome was that development could be considered if a Housing Needs Survey proved there was a need for Affordable Housing.
- We also approached the Parish Council on 24/05/2023 for any housing needs information they had, but in the end, it became obvious that a new full Housing Needs Survey of the parish was required.

9.0 **Affordable Housing Statement:**

- A Housing Needs Survey (HNS) by Arc 4 is included as a separate document to this application.
- The HNS shows that there is a large need for affordable homes in the parish, particularly for 1 and some 2 Bed Units, with some family homes.
- The scheme has therefore been designed to respond to this need with 73% of the units being smaller 1 or 2 Bed Units.
- The suggested Mix and Tenure is for discussion with the Council, and is based on our interpretation of the Housing Needs Survey.
- We have therefore proposed a near 50 / 50 split for Affordable Sale and Affordable Rental, and this has been factored into the mix and tenure on the application forms, with the rentals favouring the smaller units. We have not added any starter homes at this stage, but are willing to do so if requested by the LPA.

10.0 **Summary:**

- The proposal provides Affordable Housing on the edge of a 'Large Village' with a full range of local services.
- The level and type of housing proposed accords with a recent Housing Needs Survey of the parish.
- The proposed scheme meets the technical requirements of the Local Plan, but the details will need to be agreed at Reserved Matters Stage.

11.0 Photographs:



11.1 – View towards the site entrance.



11.2 View to the west #1



11.3 – View to the west #2