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Sent: 23 May 2024 14:52:41 UTC+01:00
To: "Nicola.Pettifer" <Nicola.Pettifer@horsham.gov.uk>; "Adrian.Smith" <Adrian.Smith@horsham.gov.uk>
Cc: "Dominic Taylor" <dominic.taylor@savills.com>
Subject: Land West of Ashington - Water Neutrality. DC/23/0406

Dear Nicola and Adrian.

We have recently updated Nicola on the positive amendments we are proposing to make to the above planning application – to address the concerns of the Parish Council. This includes locating two pitches alongside each other. Whilst we can't do everything sought by the Parish Council, we hope it is a well-received amendment. We are finalising plans and will be submitting these to you formally in early June.

However, in the event the proposed development is found to be acceptable and able to be taken to Planning Committee on that basis, we still need to address Water Neutrality. We would like to agree an approach with you, that we feel works from a legislation point of view, and also with regard to recent appeal decisions dealing with the issue.

The following text below is for your consideration. Can we schedule a short Teams meeting to discuss in June?

This note is provided to set out the available water neutrality solutions to enable the determination of the planning application at Church Lane, Ashington (Ref: DC/23/0406). Following the recent allowed appeal decisions at Broadbridge Farm (Ref: DC/22/1052) and Storrington (Ref: DC/21/2086), we are seeking similar Grampian style conditions for the Ashington planning application by demonstrating that certainty that a water neutrality solution can be delivered post grant of permission by discharging a suitably worded planning condition.

On this basis, Bellway have three possible water neutrality solutions and these are outlined below. A Grampian style condition will enable both Bellway and where necessary, a third party, the sufficient comfort that the development is supported and can come forwards with one of the solutions. Without this condition and comfort, the significant amounts of money required for these solutions cannot be allocated and therefore, the delivery of much needed housing, including affordable, is being unnecessarily stifled.

Option 1

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As officers will likely be aware, Bellway Homes currently have a live application at the former Mushrooms Farm in Thakeham (Ref: DC/24/002). The submitted application documents (Water Neutrality Report dated 23 Feb 2024) make it clear that the development has significant mains water credits (248 homes or units worth) which can be released should the Mushrooms Farm development come forwards using the on-site borehole which has capacity for up to 600 units.

As Bellway Homes have control over this, this is considered to provide sufficient comfort that credits can be transferred from the Mushrooms Farm to Ashington to enable the discharge of any Grampian condition.

Option 2

- Notwithstanding the above, Bellway are also in dialog with a number of parties regarding purchasing credits from a third party. These credits are available now and subject to a positive decision (including signed s106 and decision notice), Bellway have the necessary funds available to purchase these and discharge the relevant Grampian condition to enable the commencement of development.

Option 3

- Further to the above, the Local Authority are progressing with their emerging Local Plan which is predicated on a strategic water neutrality offsetting scheme. Horsham are evidently confident enough in its ability to offset new housing to enable a new local plan and therefore, a Grampian condition which could enable Bellway to utilise this subject to timings also seems fair and reasonable. Given that the site has an allocation for housing in an adopted Neighbourhood Plan we would suggest that this site is likely to be prioritised as and when the solution comes forward.

In summary, there are a number of solutions available and with the necessary comfort from the Council that the development is supported through a positive decision and Grampian condition, the development will be able to commence and the delivery of much needed housing, including policy complaint levels of affordable, can be competed.

In order to protect their position and keep the scheme viable, Bellway would only be able to confirm where the credits are coming from on resolution / grant of planning permission. This is why options are needed, as Bellway would not be able to spend the money to secure the Credits before planning permission is granted.

I hope the above is clear, but do let me know if you have any questions.

Regards
Rob

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