

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
PLANNING APPLICATION FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ON
BEHALF OF BARRATT HOMES AT THE FORMER PONTEFRACT ROAD
PRIMARY SCHOOL, PONTEFRACT ROAD,
CUDWORTH, BARNSELY

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This planning application has been prepared on behalf of Barratt Homes for the redevelopment of Pontefract Road Primary School, Pontefract Road, Cudworth. The application is in full and is accompanied by the following documents:
- Design and Access Statement
 - Phase 1 and 2 Site Investigation Reports
 - Affordable Housing Assessment
- 1.2 This Planning Support Statement and the above accompanying documents should be read in conjunction with the planning application drawings which are listed in the Design and Access Statement.
- 1.3 This application seeks the redevelopment of the former Pontefract Road Primary School site which was deemed inadequate to meet current education standards by a review of education accommodation by the Council. Through the PFI contract a new school site has been constructed to the west of the application site and is known as Cherry Dale Primary School. The new school site is located close to the existing premises, and provides the facilities and accommodation needed to meet modern day educational requirements. The staff and pupils took occupation of the new premises in 2007, and the application site was sold to the applicant in July 2007.
- 1.4 Prior to the sale of the site pre-application discussions were held with the Council to identify the key issues pertinent to the redevelopment of the site. Within this context a general agreement was reached regarding new planning principles for developing the site for housing purposes. Following these discussions amendments have been made to the proposed layout and configuration of the proposed residential units to reflect the Council's comments.

SECTION 2: DESCRIPTION OF SITE, SURROUNDINGS AND PROPOSALS

- 2.1 A detailed description of the site and surroundings is enclosed within the Design and Access Statement, however, for completeness, a summary of the site context is set out below:

Site and Surroundings

- 2.2 The application site is located within Cudworth, which lies approximately 5 miles to the north east of Barnsley Town Centre. A variety of shops and local facilities lie to the south of the application site and is the focal point for a range of bus services. The nearest bus stop is on the opposite side of Pontefract Road and provides access to regular services into Barnsley and nearby towns. The former Pontefract Road Primary School has been relocated on a nearby site and is now known as Cherry Dale Primary School.
- 2.3 The site is bounded by residential properties to the north, south and west. Pontefract Road forms the western boundary and is a key transport link to Barnsley. The existing residential properties closest to the site on Pontefract Road and School Street are of traditional construction and terraced. Directly west of the application site, on the opposite side of Pontefract Road is a relatively new housing development consisting of terraced properties and apartments. The properties on Royston Road to the west are predominantly semi detached traditionally built houses.
- 2.4 Within the site itself, the main buildings are located on the eastern side with the remaining area being hard surfaced for use as playground and car parking, although there is a small garden area in the north western corner. The buildings are primarily Victorian in style. It is intended to demolish these buildings shortly as they are at risk of vandalism and therefore pose a health and safety risk. The frontage onto Pontefract Road is defined by mature trees, low brick wall and railings. Vehicular access to the school is currently from Royston Road.

Proposals

- 2.5 As the application drawings demonstrate, it is proposed to provide a total of 41 residential units to be provided by a mix of apartments and houses. The majority of the properties have been sited so that they face onto the surrounding streets, namely Pontefract Road, School Street and Royston Road. Two apartments are shown within the central area of the site and will provide natural surveillance of two car parking courts and garaging areas, which will be located off a private drive from Pontefract road.
- 2.6 The scheme proposes a variety of dwelling sizes including:
- 2 x 1 bed apartments
 - 1 x 2 bed apartments
 - 7 x 2 bed terrace houses
 - 21 x 3 bed terrace/detached/semi-detached houses
 - 10 x 4 bed terrace/semi-detached houses
- 2.7 The proposal equates to a density of 58 dwellings per hectare. A variety of heights and designs are proposed to provide visual interest and to reflect the character of the surrounding area including 2 and 2½ storey properties. To reflect the character of the surrounding area it is proposed to site the majority of the new properties so that they front onto the surrounding roads. This reinforces the local building lines and character. Careful consideration has been given to protecting the amenities of existing residents and ensuring an appropriate level of amenity is achieved for new residents. Two of the apartment buildings allow vehicles to pass underneath to parking courts and garages. This arrangement not only provides a defined private space it also provides reasonable level of natural surveillance to these parking areas. The siting of a further apartment above some garages maximises security. All properties will have designated garages and/or car parking spaces.
- 2.8 The siting of the properties has taken into account the existing mature vegetation which is located on the Pontefract Road boundary as well as the existing electricity substation which is located in the south western corner of the site. To reflect the character of the site and surroundings, it is proposed to install 900 millimetre high railings along the Pontefract Road frontage.

- 2.9 It is proposed, subject to negotiations, to make financial contributions towards the overall loss of green space on the site and towards the improvement of local public open space areas. It is understood that there is no requirement for education contributions in this instance. It is not proposed to provide any affordable housing, as outlined in the enclosed Affordable Housing Assessment.

SECTION 3: CASE IN SUPPORT OF THE APPLICATION

- 3.1 The Planning and Compensation Act 2004 Section 38 (6) requires that where a proposal meets the requirements of the relevant Statutory Development Plan, and there are no other material considerations to indicate otherwise, planning permission should be granted. With this in mind consideration will be given to the relevant development plan policies and other material considerations to demonstrate that planning permission should be granted in this instance. Section 3 will consider the relevant planning policy back ground with particular reference to the Development Plan.

Planning Policy

National Guidance

- 3.2 National planning policy guidance relevant to the site includes: PPS1 (Delivering Sustainable Development); and PPS3 (Housing).

PPS1 (Delivering Sustainable Development)

- 3.3 PPS1 sets out the Government's objectives for delivering sustainable development. Specifically it advises that:

"Planning should facilitate and promote sustainable and inclusive patterns of urban and rural development by:

- **Making suitable land available for development in line with economic, social and environmental objectives to improve peoples quality of life;**
- **Contributing to sustainable economic development;**
- **Protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, the quality and character of the countryside, and existing communities;**
- **Ensuring high quality development through good and inclusive design and the efficient use of resources; and,**
- **Ensuring that development supports existing communities and contributes to the creation of safe, sustainable, liveable and mixed communities with good access to jobs and key services for all members of the community."**

3.4 The proposals for the redevelopment of Pontefract Road Primary School complies with the requirements in PPS1, in that it maximises the redevelopment of this brownfield site. The site is well located for the replacement school site on Shaw Lane and the main town centre which lies due south on Pontefract Road, approximately 100 metres. Pontefract Road is a key transport route with public transport connections into Barnsley and other settlements. Furthermore, the scheme will ensure a high quality residential environment is created which respects the existing site constraints including the mature trees and the proximity of existing residential properties.

3.5 PPS1 also places great emphasis on the need to ensure good design that provides "attractive, useable, durable, and adaptable places." In particular, Paragraph 35 of PPS1 advises that good design should:

- **"Address the connections between people and places by considering the needs of people to access jobs and key services;**
- **Be integrated into the existing urban form and the natural and built environments;**
- **Be an integral part of the processes for ensuring successful, safe and inclusive villages, towns and cities;**
- **Create an environment where everyone can access and benefit from the full range of opportunities available to all members of society; and**
- **Consider the direct and indirect impacts on the natural environment."**

3.6 The proposed scheme complies with the above advice in that it provides housing in an established residential area where there is access to services and facilities including the relocated Cudworth Primary School. Furthermore, Pontefract Road is a key public transport route into Barnsley centre and Cudworth town centre. Careful consideration has been given during the design process to ensure that the scheme integrates into the existing urban form and respects the character of the area in density, form, massing and design terms. Consideration has also been given to the retention of the existing trees wherever possible. A number of poor quality specimens with no amenity value will be removed from the central part of the site. Whilst the trees on the eastern boundary are to be retained, indeed the siting of the

properties facing onto Pontefract Road has been revised to reflect the presence of these trees.

- 3.7 Paragraph 38 of PPS1 advises authorities to ensure that the design policies within their development plan avoids unnecessary prescription or detail and should concentrate on guiding the overall scale, density, massing, height, layout, landscape and access of new development in relation to neighbouring buildings and the local area more generally. Furthermore, local planning authorities should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness, particularly where this is supported by clear planning policies or supplementary planning documents on design.
- 3.8 The application proposals comply with the overall design objectives in PPS1 by creating a place with its own distinctiveness whilst respecting the surrounding area's character. Further information on how this is achieved, is provided in the accompanying Design and Access Statement.

PPS3 (Housing)

- 3.9 The key objectives of this PPS are: to achieve sustainable development; a visionary and strategic approach; market responsiveness; collaborative working; an evidence based policy approach; outcome and delivery of focus.
- 3.10 PPS3 also places great emphasis on good design as a way of achieving high quality new housing which contributes to the creation of sustainable and mixed communities. This advice reflects that within PPS1.
- 3.11 It also requires a mix of housing to be achieved on site in terms of tenure, price and mix of household (i.e. families with children, single person households and older people). The appropriate mix of market and affordable housing is also required.
- 3.12 The policy statement also requires new housing to be provided in suitable locations, particularly those which offer a range of community facilities and provide good access to jobs, services and infrastructure. Such sites should also ensure the efficient

use of land, existing infrastructure and available public and private investment. Development should be focused toward previously developed land, particularly those sites which are vacant or derelict and in urban areas (Paragraph 44).

3.13 In terms of the appropriate density for new residential development, PPS3 advises that local authorities may wish to set out a range of densities across the area, rather than providing one density range, although consideration should be given to the national indicative minimum of 30 dwellings per hectare.

3.14 PPS3 also requires local authorities to plan, monitor and manage the supply of land for housing. In particular local authorities are advised to ensure a continuous delivery of housing for at least fifteen years, of which the first five years of supply must be on specific deliverable sites.

3.15 Paragraph 69 of PPS3 requires local authorities to have regard to:

- Achieving high quality housing.
- Ensuring development achieves a good mix of housing affecting the accommodation requirements of specific groups, in particular, families and older people.
- The suitability of the site for housing, including environmental sustainability.
- Using land effectively and efficiently.
- Ensuring new proposed development is in line with planning for housing objectives, affecting the need and demand for housing and the spatial strategy for the area and does not undermine wider policy objectives.

3.16 The application responds to the requirement in PPS3 for using high quality design to contribute to creating a mixed community, specifically, it is proposed to provide a mix of apartments and houses on the site having regard to the existing street pattern. The site is well located to existing facilities and services with good public transport connections to the town centre. Furthermore, it is proposed to construct 41 units on a site area of 0.7 hectares which equates to a density of 58 dwellings per hectare, which fully accords with the advice within PPS3.

Regional Policy

Yorkshire and Humber RSS

- 3.17 The adopted RSS Selected Review (2004) sets out the development strategy for the region and places the main focus for development within the principal urban areas which includes Sheffield and Leeds.
- 3.18 The RSS requires Barnsley to provide 810 units gross per annum with a brown field target of 49%. This document also requires all authorities within the region to use the sequential approach when allocating sites, as set out in Policy H2 of the RSS as follows:
1. Previously developed land within urban areas.
 2. Other infill within urban areas.
 3. Extensions to main urban areas where land is accessible to services and jobs and public transport with priority for reusing brown field sites and before extensions to market and coalville towns where it is accessible to services and jobs via public transport.
 4. Other development that supports the RSS objectives.
- 3.19 The application complies with the overall development strategy to locate development on brown field sites within urban areas and, therefore, lies within the first priority as set out on this sequential approach above.

Emerging Regional Plan

- 3.20 The Yorkshire and Humber Regional Plan was the subject of an Examination in Public during the autumn of 2006. The Panel Report was subsequently released in March 2007. The panel sought clarification on the role of Barnsley as a sub-regional centre, and also recognised that it was within the sphere of influence of both Sheffield and Leeds. In terms of housing provision, the panel recommended that the level of housing should be as follows:
- 2004-2011 - 840 units per annum
 - 2011-2016 - 1015 units per annum
 - 2016-2021 - 1015 units per annum

Local Policy

Unitary Development Plan

- 3.21 The policies within the Barnsley Unitary Development Plan (UDP) have been saved under the new planning procedures until the adoption of the new Local Development Framework. The UDP allocates the application site as 'community use', and therefore Policy CF2 is pertinent to the consideration of this scheme and reads as follows:

"Development will not be permitted which would lead to the loss of existing community facilities. Where an existing community use ceases, and no alternative community use can be found, other uses will be considered with regard to:

- a) The amount of open space in the area measured against the standard set out in Policy GS36;**
 - b) Compatibility with adjoining land uses, such as the likely impact on residential amenity;**
 - c) Access to the site, car parking and the likely impact on highway safety."**
- 3.22 It is confirmed that the Pontefract Road Primary School has relocated to new premises and is now known as Cherry Dale Primary School. The existing community use has not, therefore, been lost from the wider area as a new school premises has been constructed. However, it is acknowledged that a community use will be lost from the application site itself as a result of the current proposals. Policy CF2 indicates that planning permission will be granted for alternative uses where "no alternative community use can be found." During pre-application discussions with the Council the following advice was received in relation to compliance with Policy CF2:

"In accordance with Unitary Development Plan Policy CF2 and alternative community use for the Pontefract Road... site should be considered in the first instance.

The Council has undertaken an exercise to address this issue prior to the sale of the site at auction. This exercise has demonstrated that, with the exception of the green space requirements included within the Conditions of Sale, the land and buildings at the Pontefract Road... sites are not required for any other community use.

Therefore subject to the provision of open space as required, UDP policy CF2 has been adequately addressed and other uses for the site will be considered."

- 3.23 It is therefore considered that the redevelopment of the site will not conflict with the policy requirements of Policy CF2 regarding the loss of the community facility. It is therefore appropriate to consider criteria a, b and c of the policy to ensure compliance.
- 3.24 In terms of criterion (a) within Policy CF2, it is understood that the Council's green space strategy has identified that a proportion of this school site has functioned as urban green space in the past. However, the Council acknowledges that due to the size of the site and in order to secure the redevelopment of the site, it is not appropriate to include an area of green space within any redevelopment proposals. A financial contribution towards the improvement of nearby urban greenspace is appropriate. It is therefore considered that the scheme complies with criterion (a) of Policy CF2.
- 3.25 It is considered that the proposed residential use of the site is compatible with the surrounding land uses which are residential in nature, and therefore criterion (b) of Policy CF2 is complied with. The scheme gives full regard to the need to protect residential amenity of the existing residents particularly those immediately adjacent to the site on Pontefract Road, School Street and Royston Road.
- 3.26 Access to the site will be primarily from Pontefract Road, with a secondary access on Royston Road. This approach has been agreed with the Council's Highway Department prior to the formal submission of the application, and it is understood that it meets their requirements for safe access. The level of proposed car parking has also been agreed with the Council's Highways Department and complies with the standards as set out in the adopted UDP.
- 3.27 In terms of the Council's affordable housing policy, the relevant approach is provided by Policy H7, which reads as follows:

"Proposals for residential development must provide affordable homes:

- a) There is a local need for them;**
- b) The proposal provides 25 or more homes, or is on a site of 0.6 hectares or more in area, and is within a town or village of more than 3,000 people.**

The number of affordable homes to be provided must be at least 15% of the total number of homes proposed. The types of affordable homes to be provided must be those for which there is a local need.

The developer must show that arrangements have been made and put in place to keep the new homes affordable.

Where necessary, we will ask for a planning obligation to secure these requirements."

3.28 An affordable housing assessment is enclosed with this submission, and sets out the applicant's case that there is currently no affordable housing need within Barnsley, and therefore this application does not propose any affordable housing provision.

3.29 In addition to any green space requirements that may be associated to Policy CF2 above, Policy H6 explicitly deals with a requirement for open space as part of any new residential scheme. This policy reads as follows:

"All developments which comprise or include the provision of 20 or more new dwelling units shall incorporate, as an integral part of the development, a minimum of 15% of the gross site area as open space of a type appropriate to the character of the site, its location and the layout and nature of the new housing thereon and the adjoining land uses."

3.30 Following advice from the Council, it is understood that due to site constraints, a financial contribution is required towards the improvement of nearby open space areas. Subject to negotiations, the applicants therefore propose to make a financial contribution on this basis.

- 3.31 Paragraph 7.12 of the adopted UDP identifies a potential requirement for financial contributions towards education provision. The Council's Education Department has confirmed that due to the current school provision within the area, there is currently no requirement for an education contribution in this instance.

Local Development Framework

- 3.32 Whilst this document will eventually replace the adopted UDP, it is still in the process of being formulated and therefore it is not pertinent to the consideration of this application.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- 3.33 Barnsley Council has produced numerous Planning Advice Notes (PAN) and Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) which supplement the policies within the adopted UDP. The most pertinent PAN to the consideration of the application is the document entitled PAN30 - Sequential Approach to Determine in Planning Applications for Residential Development. This document sets out that sites which are over 0.4 hectares and on brownfield land within the Barnsley Urban area and the Dearne Valley Development Zone (DVDZ) are not required to undertake a sequential test. The site is brownfield land within the DVDZ, therefore a sequential test is not required.

- 3.34 Also relevant to the proposals is the advice within Supplementary Planning Guidance 2: The Design and Layout of New Housing. Whilst this document is a little out of date in that it refers to PPG1 and PPG3, the general advice is contained within the SPG is of pertinence. The SPG emphasises the need for good quality design based on the objectives of providing: character; continuity; quality of public realm; ease of movement; the durability and diversity. Details of how the scheme meets these objectives is set out in the Design and Access Statement.

- 3.35 Consideration has also been given to the other relevant advice notes, in particular SPG20 (Open Space Provision on New Housing Developments), PAN33 (Education Payments) and PAN34 (Affordable Housing). SPG20 supplements the Policy approach provided by Policy H6 in UDP. In particular, it confirms that a financial contribution may be appropriate where it is not desirable to provide such provision on site due to

constraints. The SPG also provides details of the level of financial contribution required. It is proposed to provide a financial contribution towards open space, this approach therefore complies with this advice note. The Council's Education Department has confirmed that no contribution is required towards the provision of school places in the area. With regards to PAN34, the accompanying affordable housing assessment confirms that no affordable housing provision is justified in this instance.

Green Space Strategy

- 3.36 The Council is preparing a green space strategy which identifies the approach to green space within the district. The Council has produced the document entitled "Part 1: Our Strategy" document which sets out the Council's visions and aims for green space, as well as the standards for each type of green space. The Council is currently preparing an assessment of the quantity, accessibility and quality of the green spaces in each town and village in this borough, and the priorities for green space in the settlements. This document will be known as "Barnsley's Green Space: In Your Neighbourhood".
- 3.37 It is understood that the Council considers that a large part of the application site (i.e. playground) has functioned as green space in the past. In accordance with the Council's green space policies within the UDP and the objectives within the green space strategy, it is proposed to provide a financial contribution towards the improvement of nearby green space. This approach has been agreed with the Council during the pre-application stage.

SECTION 4: OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

School Relocation

- 4.1 The Council undertook a survey of its education provision with particular reference to the current standard of accommodation, and determined that the site on Pontefract Road provided inadequate playing field and internal accommodation to meet modern day educational requirements. The Council subsequently entered into a PFI agreement to provide a new school which is now known as Cherry Dale Primary School, which provides the appropriate accommodation as well as open space. The pupils and teachers from the school were relocated to the new premises in July 2007. The Council no longer requires the site for educational purposes or any other Council activity, it is therefore surplus to their requirements. No community use has come forward for the site and therefore to prevent the site from becoming derelict and disused, it is proposed to redevelop it for housing purposes.

Trees

- 4.2 There are a number of trees within the site and on the boundary with Pontefract Road, following pre-application discussions with the Council it was agreed that the trees within the site itself could be lost as they were not of sufficient amenity value to warrant retention. However, the trees along the boundary with Pontefract Road were considered to have amenity benefit and are therefore proposed to be retained. The properties fronting onto Pontefract Road have been sited so that they are an appropriate distance from these trees, and will therefore protect them in the long term. It will be necessary to do some pruning to the trees to ensure they are safe and healthy, however this will be limited to necessary work only. Particular care will be taken when demolishing the low brick wall on Pontefract Road to ensure there is no damage to the trees.

Affordable Housing

- 4.3 The application is accompanied by an Affordable Housing Assessment which considers the current housing market needs and supply within the Barnsley area. This report confirms that, at present, the housing that is available within the borough, particularly in the vicinity of the site, falls within the definition of affordability as set out in the PAN and the Council's own UDP policy. The report

therefore concludes that there is no requirement for affordable housing in this instance.

Flood Risk

- 4.4 A Flood Risk Assessment has not been prepared for this site as it falls beneath the site area thresholds set out in PPS25. However, it is acknowledged that the vast majority of the site is covered by buildings and hardstanding. The redevelopment proposals will replace a large proportion of the impermeable surfacing with gardens and landscaping, which will assist with surface water management.

SECTION 5: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 It is considered that the redevelopment of this brownfield site within the urban area of Barnsley, complies with the Council's housing and community use policies within the saved UDP. The Regional Spatial Strategy as adopted sets out the level of housing provision for the Barnsley area, and it is likely that in the future this requirement will increase. The provision of new dwellings on this former school site will therefore assist Barnsley Council in maintaining a five year deliverable supply of housing in accordance with PPS3.
- 5.2 Subject to negotiations, it is proposed to provide financial contributions towards the loss of green space on the site and also towards the improvement of nearby open space given the increase in residents associated to the development. It is understood that no education payment is required due to the existing education provision in the area.
- 5.3 It is therefore concluded that this scheme complies with the relevant development plan policies and the other material considerations also indicate that planning permission should be granted.