

## **Bowsall Developments Ltd and Housing 21 Land At Waverley Nursery, Barton Road, Wisbech**

### **Frequently Asked Questions – Pre-Application Public Consultation**

#### **1. What is the purpose of this consultation?**

Hourigan Planning (Chartered Town Planners) is preparing a full planning application on behalf of joint applicants Bowsall Developments Ltd and Housing 21 for the provision of 42 affordable homes on land at Waverley Nursery on Barton Road, Wisbech, Fenland.

We have been instructed to notify neighbouring homes and businesses, and other interested parties such as County Councillors, Ward Councillors and Wisbech Town Council that a planning application is currently being prepared for the residential redevelopment of the site.

Feedback received from this current consultation will inform the final details of the planning application and it gives us an opportunity to consult on the emerging proposals before finalising a scheme and submitting a formal planning application to Fenland District Council.

#### **2. When will you be submitting the planning application?**

We plan to submit the planning application to the Council following the consultation period and once we have had a chance to consider all comments received.

We expect to submit the planning application in March 2025.

#### **3. What is the proposed scheme?**

The proposals include the construction of 42 new homes as shown in the DRAFT Proposed Site Layout. All of the homes would be affordable homes and would be managed by Housing 21.

Housing 21 are an experienced not for profit provider of retirement living and extra care for people over the age of 55 operating in 240 local authority areas across England. Housing 21's roots lie with the Royal British Legion (RBL), which in 1921 began to house disabled ex-servicemen and widows and, later, older ex-servicemen and women. In 1993, the housing association split from the RBL, creating Housing 21, and being committed to providing a modern and forward-looking 21st century service, striving for continuous improvement and innovation. Housing 21 already has a presence in the Fenland district, having recently acquired Somers Court in Wisbech which is an extra care facility comprising of 38 no. units.

More information on Housing 21 can be found here: <https://www.housing21.org.uk/>

Further details on the scheme are as follows:

- A total of 42 no. residential single storey dwellings in the form of bungalows with a mix comprising 35 1 bed bungalows and 7 2 bed bungalows.
- The bungalows would be occupied on a 100% social rent basis and all residents would be aged 55 or older.
- A manager's office is also proposed – refer to Plot 6 on the DRAFT Proposed Site Layout. This building would provide space for the on-site manager to perform their daily managerial work in supporting the residents with their tenancy needs. The office would also provide an internal communal space and kitchen facilities so that residents can meet, the purpose being to encourage a community spirit and to prevent isolation which is prevalent amongst older persons.
- Six of the homes would meet Building Regulation standard M4(3), which means that these homes would be wheelchair accessible and adaptable.
- Each 2-bed dwelling would be provided with 2 car parking spaces, and each 1-bed dwelling would have 1 car parking space. The proposals also include 10 visitor spaces with 7 of those positioned next to the manager's office.
- Cycle parking could be provided by way of a secure shed within the private gardens of the new homes.
- Vehicular access to the site would be taken from Barton Road in a similar position to the current access point, with a pedestrian footpath / cyclepath link being provided onto Magazine Lane to the south.
- Pedestrian crossing points are to be provided on Barton Road and Magazine Lane to improve access for pedestrians.
- Boundary hedgerows and trees are to be retained wherever possible, and dwellings would be positioned an appropriate distance from them so as to ensure root protection zones are not disturbed.
- Surface water drainage would be provided via a piped system which would connect into a 'swale' positioned along the western boundary of the site. The function of the swale would be to control the flow rate of surface water as it is discharged into the existing drainage system. The water contained within the swale would discharge to the existing watercourse which is located in land under the Applicants control in the north west corner of the site.
- Foul drainage would be dealt with by connecting into the existing mains foul sewer on Barton Road / Magazine Land, subject to consent.
- At this stage the external appearance of the dwellings has not been finalised, but the appearance of the new homes will fit in with the local vernacular.

#### **4. Why are you proposing this development?**

The National Planning Policy Framework (revised in December 2024) seeks to ensure that the planning system delivers a flexible, responsive supply of housing development land to meet objectively assessed housing needs.

Fenland is part of the Cambridgeshire Housing Market. The Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (2013) identified an overall housing need for Fenland of 12,000 dwellings for the 2011 to 2031 period. Greater Cambridge's evidence base identifies an affordable housing need for Fenland of 5,814 dwellings for the same period (291 per annum on average rounded). Table 7 of the Council's latest Monitoring Report 2022 – 2023 (February 2024) details affordable housing completions. This Monitoring Report notes a total of 296 affordable housing completions (gross) over the last 5 monitoring years (from 2018-19 to 2022-23). Over the same period the Greater Cambridge evidence suggests a need for 1,455 dwellings (291 x 5) so there was an accumulated shortfall of circa 1,159 affordable dwellings to 31 March 2023.

The site is in a sustainable location and the new homes would integrate into the existing community in this part of Wisbech. The need for affordable housing in the District is acute and the proposed development will make a significant and positive contribution to the Council's affordable housing supply by delivering 42 high quality homes which would be accessible to people over the age of 55 who cannot afford traditional open market housing. Housing 21 is a well-known Registered Provider in Fenland at the forefront of delivering homes which meet local needs.

#### **5. What about providing green space and biodiversity?**

The Environment Act 2021 requires development proposals to deliver a statutory 10% net gain in biodiversity following a mitigation hierarchy which is focused on avoiding ecological harm.

In terms of onsite initiatives, the proposals would include native species planting throughout and the Applicants would look to include additional biodiversity measures within the fabric of the built form such as bee bricks, swift bricks, bat and bird boxes, and mammal holes (in the base of fencing) where appropriate within the scheme design. The introduction of the swale also offers the opportunity to encourage biodiversity to form an integrate part of the soft landscaping and thereby making not only a positive contribution to the natural environment, but also creating a nurturing and natural space to the benefit to the future residents' wellbeing.

The full planning application will be accompanied by a Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment as well as necessary ecology surveys and assessments and a report on Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

#### **6. How have you come up with the design?**

The proposed scheme layout has been influenced by a number of site-specific opportunities and constraints, including the following:

- Retaining existing areas of significant boundary hedgerows and street trees.
- Single storey properties sat at an elevated floor level at Grove Park to the west and the need to respect their privacy and amenity.
- Swale / Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) feature along the western boundary.
- The need to allow for drainage easement along the eastern boundary.

- Providing good pedestrian connectivity through the site.
- Avoiding pressure to a Beech tree which is subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) which fronts Barton Road.
- Providing good quality private amenity space for each individual property.

## **7. What will be done about the impact of 42 new dwellings on local social infrastructure such as doctors and dentists?**

As the development is providing affordable homes only, in accordance with the Council's planning policies there will be no additional requirement to make any other contributions to infrastructure in the local area. The proposals aim to deliver a significant positive benefit to the local community by making a substantial contribution to the Council's acute need for more affordable homes.

## **8. What about disturbance whilst the scheme is built?**

The Council can control how the scheme is delivered by way of a planning condition imposed in any planning permission granted. This could for example regulate delivery and construction times so as to avoid any disturbance to local residents.

## **9. How can I get involved?**

All of the consultation material can be found online at our website:

[www.houriganplanning.com/consultations](http://www.houriganplanning.com/consultations)

There are a number of ways to comment on the draft proposals:

**By email:** [hello@houriganplanning.com](mailto:hello@houriganplanning.com) using "Barton Road Consultation" as the email subject line.

**By Post:** Barton Road Consultation, Hourigan Planning, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor Chancery Place, 50 Brown Street, Manchester, M2 2JG.

**Consultation Period Closes: The 2-week period of consultation will close at midnight on Friday 21 February 2025.**

Please note: Comments received will be summarised and addressed in a Statement of Community Involvement to be submitted with the planning application. No personal details will be published. The local community will also have a further opportunity to comment on the scheme once a formal planning application is lodged with the Council.