



North Warwickshire
Borough Council

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Pre-Application Enquiry

Application Ref: PRE/2025/0021

Case Officer: Amelia Bow
Direct Dial: 01827 719418

Date: 12 March 2025

Site Address: Land South Of Warton Recreation Ground, Orton Road, Warton, (Grid Ref: Easting 427989.67, Northing 303287.7)

Description of Development: Screening Opinion for a residential led development of up to 110 dwellings including the provision of public open space and associated infrastructure and landscaping

Applicant: - Evolve Planning on behalf of Richborough Ltd

Dear Neil,

I refer to your pre application enquiry that was received by this Authority on 4 February 2025 for the development of land south of Warton Recreation ground for approximately 110 dwellings. The EIA Screening Request has been dealt with in a separate letter, but it does touch upon some of the issues of the site therefore you are advised to read the two letters in conjunction with each other.

Principle of Development

The first and key consideration is Local Plan Policy LP2 (Settlement Hierarchy) which sets out the distribution of development in accordance with the Borough's settlement hierarchy. In this instance, it is the Warton Development Boundary.

Warton is identified as a Category 4 Other Settlement in LP2. LP2 states that development within development boundaries will be supported in principle. Development directly adjacent to a development boundary may also be acceptable, provided development is *proportionate*. It goes on to say that all development will be considered on its merits and will cater for windfall housing developments, usually on sites of no more than 10 units. The policy does state 'usually' which does allow for flexibility where the provision of more than 10 units would be justified.

In this instance, the red line boundary is not directly adjacent to the Warton Development boundary on any of the sides of the development. The site is directly adjacent to the Bellway 'Cornfields' development on the eastern edge. However, given the development would not be directly adjacent to the development boundary, it would be regarded as expansion of Warton into the open countryside, which would be a disproportionate addition and not favourable. Development of the site would result in an appendage to the development boundary of what is a fairly linear settlement. The development would therefore be at odds with this and would have the biggest impact from a landscape point of view.

It is therefore necessary to assess the application against the 'tests' set out in the policy and other material considerations. The point I want to convey is that a strong case will need to be made in a planning

application for expansion of development beyond the Warton development boundary south eastwards, as this may not be viewed favourably.

My above comments have been made in light of the appeal at land adjacent to Curlew Close (APP/R3705/W/22/3312660) for 28 dwellings which was dismissed. It was concluded that the development would be at odds with the spatial strategy in the Development Plan and would result in a significant expansion on the outskirts of a small village. Given the context of this site with regards to the location, my concern is that the site would not be viewed favourably in this regard. There are several relevant policies to be assessed in the determination of the application and it will be necessary to establish whether there is significant and demonstrable harm caused to them, if they are to outweigh the general approach set out in LP2. As I have set out above, I therefore consider that you would need to provide greater justification for the location and in particular, for expanding built form south eastwards.

Landscape and Character

From discussions we have already had, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment it to be submitted with the application and we have had a dialogue with your technical team undertaking the assessment as to where the visual points should be.

Warton, generally, can be described as nucleated, though there is a distinct linear form with the majority of built development located along the frontage to Austrey Road with a number of cul-de-sacs coming off on each side. The application site is within the No Mans Heath to Warton - Lowlands Landscape Character Area. This describes a mixed open agricultural landscape with a scattering of small red brick nucleated hill-top villages of which Warton is an example. The Assessment identifies the need to conserve and strengthen the rural character and dispersed settlement pattern and recommends that new developments should reinforce the existing settlement pattern of the existing villages.

The likely view would be that the proposal would introduce an appendage of new built development and would increase the intensity of built form, at odds with the general linear pattern set out above.

Affordable Housing Need

The proposal is providing 40% affordable housing. The Local Planning Authority would expect to see a tenure mix of approximately 85% affordable rent and 15% intermediate tenure, in accordance with LP9. It is therefore positive that there will be 84% affordable rent (which is 37 homes) and 16% intermediate homes (which is 7 homes). We have already had correspondence from Paul Roberts at North Warwickshire Borough Council regarding the housing mix which you have already seen. The waiting list indicates that 1 bed dwellings are still the highest requirement. You provided an updated revision to the housing mix which included 8 1-bedroom dwellings. No further comments have been received to date from Housing. There may continue to be a push for smaller affordable dwellings. You are advised to submit an affordable housing statement with the application.

Local Plan Policy LP7 (Housing Development) does also seek for the provision of specialist housing, and it will be sought in all major developments and relative to evidence of need. As such, consideration should be given to homes for those with mobility issues and homes for older people, including bungalows. The provision of housing will need to be backed up with strong evidence.

Open Space Requirements

The site area is approximately 5.7ha. with 110 dwellings proposed, this provides a housing density of 19.3dph. The lower density does allow for significant areas of open space to be included around the perimeter, and particularly to the southwest. Justification for this lower density should be provided in light of LP7 which requires development of at least 30 dwellings per hectare. The arrangement of open space will be an important consideration. An application should ensure there would not be a hard edge to the edge of the settlement, therefore, the open space to the southwest is positive.

North Warwickshire's Open Space Recreation and Sport Supplementary Planning Document sets out that contribution for a development of 110 dwellings would be required to provide a Local Area for Play and a Locally Equipped Area for Play. A contribution would also be sought for a MUGA/Skate Park or towards enhancing existing facilities particularly for youth provision. There is no on-site provision of a play area within the site however, it is acknowledged that there is an existing play area and recreation ground to the northeast, which the development could provide contributions to in lieu of meeting the on-site requirement.

Parking Space Requirements and Access

North Warwickshire's Local Parking Standards requires 1 space per 1 bedroom dwelling and 2 spaces for 2+ dwellings. There should also be the addition of 0.5 visitor spaces. The vision document does say that parking would be provide as a minimum of 2 car parking spaces for all dwellings in line with current parking standards. As long as visitor spaces is also taken into account, it is likely that parking provision will be policy compliant.

It would be through consultation with Warwickshire Council Council's Highways Authority that it would be determined whether the parking layout would be acceptable or not. For example, consideration of the visibility splays for cars existing driveways, ensuring driveways do not conflict with the swept path of larger vehicles such as refuse trucks, the gradients of driveways and avoiding tandem parking. We have not consulted with the Highways Authority as part of this pre-application request, therefore you are advised to seek separate advice from the Highways Authority. More information can be found here

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/developer-contributions/guidance-applicable-planning-applications/1>

The proposals indicates that the access into the site will be taken via the Bellway Cornfields development and will utilise their current access point off Barn End Road. This would result in one access point for around 210 dwellings. This may be the upper limit with regards to how many dwellings can be served by one access point. Again, you are advised to contact the Highways Authority separately regarding this matter. Multiple access points may help to provide more permeable development and increase connectivity. Nonetheless, new access will require a Road Safety Audit hence the importance of ongoing dialogue with the Highways Authority.

Biodiversity

WCC's Ecologist have reviewed the proposals as part of the EIA Screening Request and have provided some initial comments in relation to the proposals. Please also review the EIA Screening letter.

There are no statutory or non-statutory sites of nature conservation interest, or Priority Habitats on, or adjacent to, the application site. Warwickshire Biological Records Centre holds a number of protected and notable species records within the local area of the site including bats, badger, slow-worm, grass snake and common toad. The site lies within the SSSI Impact Risk Zone (Defra MAGIC map) for the type of development proposed and Natural England would be consulted on the proposed development. It is understood that badger mitigation was a requirement for the adjacent Bellway Cornfields residential development to the east. The proposals could have an impact on a badger sett, and a badger survey will be required prior to determination to inform mitigation, as appropriate.

The application will need to demonstrate 10% net gain to biodiversity as a result of the proposals in line with the Environment Act (2021). Visually, the retention of the hedge line adjacent to the Orton Road and Church Road boundaries are a must for the scheme both from a bio-diversity point of view but also visually, to provide a soft-edge to the settlement.

Archaeology

I have discussed the archaeological matters with John Robinson johnrobinson@warwickshire.gov.uk as part of the EIA Screening Request. The proposed development is located within an area of significant archaeological potential. Finds including a pottery assemblage and animal bones recovered during clearance of land approximately 800m to the north of the proposed development indicates a possible Roman settlement at this location (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record ref. MWA220). A complex of cropmark features (MWA6728) located approximately 350m to the north of the proposed development area have been recorded from aerial photographs. A range of finds an features (MWA5760) dating to the Mesolithic (MWA5761, MWA5762), Neolithic MWA5763), Bronze Age (MWA5764) and Iron Age (MWA5765) were recorded during archaeological fieldwork undertaken at Kisses' Barn, approximately 900m to the south of the proposed scheme. Metal detecting across the surrounding fields has resulted in the recovery of a range of metalwork objects ranging in date from the Early Bronze Age, Roman, medieval and post-medieval periods. There is therefore a potential for this site to contain archaeological remains dating from the prehistoric, Roman, medieval and later periods, the significance of any such remains, if present, is not understood.

In order to be able to understand the archaeological implications of the proposed scheme the results from an agreed programme of evaluative archaeological fieldwork should be included with the information accompanying the planning application. This will allow for an informed planning decision to be made. John would envisage the evaluative fieldwork as comprising a geophysical survey and trial trenching. The scope of

the trial trenching will be informed by the results from the geophysics. You may wish to contact John separately.

Flood Risk

The site is located within Flood Zone 1. However, there is anecdotal evidence of surface water flooding along Church Lane (heading north eastwards from the site), particularly in adverse weather. LP33 (Water and Flood Risk Management) of the Local Plan states that water runoff from new development must be no more than natural greenfield runoff rates and developments should hold this water back on the development site through high quality Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDS), reducing pollution and flood risk to nearby watercourses. Given the anecdotal evidence along Church Lane, the LPA would want to see that discussions have taken place with the Local Lead Flood Authority.

S106 Obligations

At this stage we have not consulted with statutory consultees and therefore, I am not able to provide an exacting figure for what S106 Contributions may be required. A review of previous applications in the area, including the refused application at Curlew Close, indicate that contributions could be requested for the following:

- North Warwickshire Borough Council Leisure and Community Development- contributions toward enhancing the existing recreational ground and play area to the northeast.
- Public health- contributions for the provision of additional health care facilities which could include the Polesworth and Dordon Group Practice and/or the George Eliot NHS Trust.
- Warwickshire County Council Education- contributions towards the provision of early years and secondary education, particularly for Nethersole C of E Primary School (Warton) and Polesworth Secondary School. In determining school provisions and capacity figures, deliberation will be given to the number of potential pupils the site will create particularly in relation to the figures that will be generated at the allocated housing site H4 (Polesworth and Dordon). H4 is to provide a new two form entry primary school and will provide a financial contribution to existing school provisions in the area.
- Warwickshire County Council Library provision.
- The County Council may require a contribution to maintain public rights of way which fall fully or partly within a 1.5-mile radius of the site.

The County Council requires a monitoring fee for the monitoring and administration of County Council obligations, due upon signing of the agreement.

Please note, the above are indicative and not all may be requested for development on this site and at this stage, I would not be able to provide you with exact amounts. I would direct you to Warwickshire County Council's Infrastructure and Sustainable Communities Team (01926 738802). The NHS Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care Board is the contact for health matters.

Submission Requirements

As previously set out to you, the following would be expected to be submitted with a subsequent planning application.

- Application Form
- Relevant fees
- Ecology Surveys (Ecological Appraisal and any further reports it recommends)
- Phase 1 Contamination Report/ Desk Top Study
- Archaeological evaluative work
- Agricultural Land Classification Report (given the Grade 2 Classification)
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment
- Transport Assessment, Travel Plan and any associated access plans
- Drainage Assessment/Sustainable Drainage Statement
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
- Design and Access Statement
- Illustrative Masterplan and any indicative layouts and elevations (where appropriate)
- Affordable House Statement
- Draft Heads of Terms
- Planning Statement

- Site Location Plan
- Noise Impact Assessment
- Biodiversity Net Gain Metric

Local Plan Review

I understand that you are intending to submit a planning application at the end of March. However, North Warwickshire Borough Council is undertaking a Local Plan Review. There is a Call for Sites currently open, with the absolute deadline for sites being 31st March 2025. You may want to consider promoting the land through the call for sites as an alternative option. You would need to consider the impact on timescales for this as it is a much longer process, but it may be beneficial in light of the above.

Conclusion

The primary concern with the proposed development is the expansion of built development beyond the Warton Development Boundary and south westwards into the open countryside creating an appendage to the built form which is not proportionate in this location. This would not be in keeping with the settlement pattern of Warton, particularly in this part of the village where development is linear. The development would introduce a depth to the built form which would be harmful to the landscape and character of the area.

The opinions in this pre-application response have been formed based on the information you have provided, secondary sources of information, a meeting and, without undertaking a site visit or undertaking public consultation. The Case Officer for a future application will have to take into account any comments received during public consultation which may influence the scheme.

Any policies or guidance referred to above can be viewed on the Council's planning website at www.northwarks.gov.uk/planning.

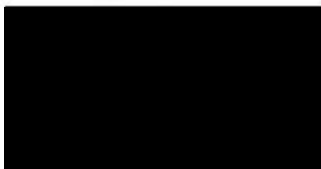
Please note that the Council encourages the submission of applications by email planningcontrol@northwarks.gov.uk or on line, via the Planning Portal's Planning Application Service at www.planningportal.gov.uk. Please note that there is no transaction fee payable if you submit your application directly to the Council but if you choose to submit via the Planning Portal a transaction fee will be charged for most submissions. Alternatively, you can print copies of application forms from the Council's website www.northwarks.gov.uk/planning and submit them in person or by post.

You can find details of fees payable and further information about what you will need to submit with your application at www.northwarks.gov.uk/planning. The Council accepts electronic payment for application fees via telephone.

This letter does not constitute a Certificate of Lawfulness of Proposed Development.

I hope that the above is of assistance to you but please appreciate that my views are informal and without prejudice to the outcome of any subsequent planning applications.

Yours sincerely



Amelia Bow
Planning Control Assistant
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www.northwarks.gov.uk/privacy