

REPORT TO PLANNING AND
HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE
21 MAY 2013

PLANNING AND DESIGN BRIEF - FORMER ABBEYDALE GRANGE
SCHOOL, BANNERDALE CENTRE AND PARK SITES

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 A Planning and Design Brief has been prepared by Sheffield City Council Planning Service as part of the Asset Enhancement Programme funded by the Local Growth Fund. It has been prepared to guide development and to provide a level of commercial certainty.
- 1.2 This report informs Members about the outcome of public consultation on the draft Brief and seeks formal adoption of the final version of the Brief as a material consideration in determining planning applications for the site.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The site is located within Sheffield's Nether Edge ward between Carter Knowle Road and Abbeydale Road. It is approximately 2 miles south west of the city centre.
- 2.2 Abbeydale Grange School closed in 2010 and it is now a cleared site. The Bannerdale Centre is planned to be de-commissioned and demolished in the near future. A block of ancient woodland exists in the centre of the site and the parkland is popular for organised football as well as for informal recreation. The whole site is owned by Sheffield City Council.
- 2.2 The gross area of the site is 21.97 hectares. The developable area is represented by two housing allocations shown on the Sheffield Local Plan Proposals Map (Pre-submission 2013). The Abbeydale School Site is 2.44 hectares (0.34 of which should be open space to form a buffer to the ancient woodland), and the Bannerdale and Park Site is 14.89 hectares, 12.98 of which is Open Space and 1.91 is developable land for housing. The developable area totals 4.35 hectares. The rest the wider site is open space and woodland. The housing allocations will contribute to the city's need for new housing land.

3.0 SCOPE AND ROLE OF THE PLANNING BRIEF

- 3.1 The Planning and Design Brief describes current land use and planning policies affecting the site and sets out the key design principles to be followed. The Brief defines suitable developable areas, scale and heights and promotes sustainable design.

- 3.2 The adopted Brief will be used as guidance during discussions with developers about the future of the site, and regarded as a material consideration when determining planning applications for the sites.
- 4.0 CONSULTATION
- 4.1 There has been extensive community involvement from the outset. Public consultation was held in November 2011 and July 2012 consisting of workshops and drop in sessions (with extensive leaflet drops) to discuss some ideas for development on the sites.
- 4.2 Public consultation on the draft Brief was held from 20 February to 3 April 2013. Members of South and South West Community Assemblies were briefed on the 24th January and 7th February respectively, and invited to the drop-in sessions.
- 4.3 The public consultation on the Brief was undertaken in two main ways:
- (i) Two public drop in sessions; and
 - (ii) A mailshot was sent out to existing contacts via email.
- 4.4 The Brief was available on the Council's website and in the local library for people to read at home and send in comments.
- 4.5 A summary of all the consultation comments received and officers' responses is attached at Appendix 1 to this report. The key comments are summarised below:
- Objections to Option 2a, which proposed the development of the western end of the parkland instead of developing the Bannerdale Centre site.
 - Safeguard the open space fronting Abbeydale Road because it is highly valued by the local community following the planting of 400+ trees to establish an environmental buffer along Abbeydale Road.
 - Objections to the developable area of the Abbeydale School Site because it is larger than the area shown on the Unitary Development Plan and on the draft Proposals Map (2010) of the Sheffield Local Plan.
 - Concern about the potential for 3-4 storeys at the Abbeydale School Site causing overlooking and loss of privacy.
 - Objections to the suggested density range of 40-60 dwellings per hectare at the Abbeydale School Site because higher densities will have a greater impact on air quality.
 - Desire to retain part of the Bannerdale Centre for community use.
 - For the Abbeydale School Site, there were requests for more information about the requirement to cap the number of vehicle movements arising from a housing scheme at the number that occurred at the school.

5.0 PROPOSED PLANNING BRIEF

- 5.1 The Brief describes the implications of current planning policies affecting the site. It describes the site's context and character, opportunities and constraints, and proposes preferred areas for development and design principles in an Urban Design Framework (Fig. 13 in the Brief).
- 5.2 Three key amendments to the Brief are proposed in the light of the comments received during the public consultation:
- (i) Remove Option 2a: the amenity of the Open Space – the appearance, character and ambience of its landscape – will be detrimentally affected by the siting of development at the western end of the site.
 - (ii) Safeguard the Open Space Area fronting Abbeydale Road as shown on the emerging Local Plan Proposals Map (2013). This would also lower the need for a key corner building at the junction of Hastings Road and Abbeydale Road.
 - (iii) National air quality standards are already breached in the area so any proposal should aim to have a neutral impact on local air quality. The Brief, therefore, should make stronger reference to this issue and the requirement for mitigation measures.
- 5.3 We have also provided more information in the Brief about the requirement to cap the number of vehicle movements arising from a housing scheme at the number that occurred at the school (Appendix 4 of the Brief).
- 5.4 Reasons for not making certain changes to the Brief:
- *Objections to the developable area of the Abbeydale School:* The area that can be designated Open Space should be confined to the areas outside the site's perimeter fence which has public access (definition under CS47). The UDP Housing Area boundary, designated in 1998 and is out of date, does not follow features on the ground and has been updated in the Local Plan Proposals Map (Pre-submission 2013). Nevertheless, the site allocation (P00518, Pre-submission Proposals Map, 2013) requires a 15m buffer zone to the ancient woodland along the northern boundary of the site. This will create 0.48 hectares of new Open Space to form part of the site.
 - *Objections to 3-4 storeys on the Abbeydale School Site:* 3-4 storeys is in accordance with the height of the former school but it is subject to maintaining light and privacy to existing and proposed neighbouring buildings and being in scale and character with the area.
 - *Objections to the suggested density range of 40-60 dwellings per hectare:* The location of the Abbeydale School Site on a high

frequency bus route on Abbeydale Road suggests a density range of 40 to 60 dwellings per hectare (Core Strategy policy CS26). We cannot use this policy to require lower densities for reasons of air quality because a lower density may not necessarily result in fewer vehicle movements (and thus a lesser impact on air quality). However, CS66 will require a Traffic Assessment and Air Quality Impact Assessment to suggest a range of measures to reduce the number of vehicle movements arising from a scheme and limit the impact on local air quality.

- *Desire to retain part of the Bannerdale Centre for community use:* A full consideration of local community spaces should be undertaken by the Council as landowner. There are known to be community spaces in the local area so it is expected that the need to retain the Bannerdale Centre will not outweigh the city's need for housing land.

The principle of development

- 5.5 The developable area is limited to 4.35 hectares of the 21.97 hectares and it is proposed that the Abbeydale School Site and the Bannerdale Centre Site are the two options for development.
- 5.6 The two sites will contribute to the city's need for new housing land, as required by Core Strategy policy CS22, and are represented in the Sheffield Local Plan as sites P00518 and P00525 (Council approved April 2013).
- 5.7 Alternative areas of development outside these two options are limited by the presence of the ancient woodland and the area of recently planted trees fronting Abbeydale Road. The Brief also advises that the removal of the option 2a to develop the western end of the site would detrimentally affect the amenity of the open space. However, should a future applicant wish to develop on some of the open spaces instead of the Abbeydale School Site and the existing Bannerdale Centre (by way of a land swap) then it must have a compelling rationale through showing how:
1. The open space can be replaced within the site both in terms of quantity and quality, including the seamless use of any sports pitches; and
 2. good design (the siting, layout, external appearance and landscaping of the development and its relationship with the open space) can be best achieved.

Urban Design

- 5.8 Development on both sites should optimise the value of the attractive landscape setting through incorporating mature landscape features, maximising long views, enabling secure access into the park and enabling natural surveillance.

- 5.9 Development of the Abbeydale School Site should positively address the surrounding streets and have attractive frontages onto Abbeydale Road and Hastings Road.

Highways and Access

- 5.10 The number of vehicle movements arising from a housing scheme on the Abbeydale School Site should not exceed the number of vehicle movements that occurred at the school. The school's average attendance in the last three years was 594. Based on a rounded figure of 600 pupils we have estimated the maximum number of vehicle movements that would have occurred at the school which will be used as the benchmark for a housing scheme. Full details are included at Appendix 4 of the Brief.
- 5.11 Under the sale of the land, and formalised in a planning condition, public footpaths from Hastings Road to the woodland and across the playing fields should be incorporated in accordance with advice from the Public Rights of Way Officer.
- 5.12 The amount of highway within the Bannerdale and Park Site should be minimised; any roads to access the Bannerdale Centre development site or public car parking must be designed to be as un-obtrusive within the park as possible.

Green Environment and Ecology

- 5.13 In order to protect the integrity of the ancient woodland and associated species a 15 metre landscape buffer should be provided from the woodland canopy to the edge of development. The area to the north of the woodland on the Bannerdale and Park Site should also be considered carefully as it has particular importance; the landscape has remained undisturbed since at least the 19th century, probably much earlier.
- 5.14 Mature trees, copses and hedgerows should be retained wherever possible and, any which are lost, replaced. Fig. 10 Opportunities and Constraints in the Brief shows the approximate location of mature trees and woodlands.

Sustainability and Climate Change

- 5.15 The Brief encourages, and in some cases requires, a range of sustainability measures under CS64 and CS65. A minimum level of Code for Sustainable Homes level 3 is required, and 10% of a scheme's predicted energy needs should come from renewable/low carbon sources. Early pre-application discussions should be undertaken to discuss the feasibility and sustainable design and construction of green roofs and sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS).

6.0 FUTURE PLANNING APPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Future applications for planning permission received within the Birley Community College site will be expected to consider the requirements of the Brief.

7.0 ECONOMIC BENEFITS

- 7.1 The Brief will help meet the city's need for new housing and support jobs and growth.

8.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 8.1 There are no equal opportunity implications arising from this report.

9.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

10.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The Brief requires a high standard of environmental sustainability for any new build and refurbishment.

11.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Any development proposals for new pedestrian and vehicular routes will have to address issues of public safety as part of the planning application.

12.0 HUMAN RIGHTS

- 12.1 There are no specific human rights implications arising out of this report.

13.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 13.1 Approve and adopt the Brief as a material consideration in determining planning applications within the Former Abbeydale Grange School, Bannerdale Centre and Park Sites.
- 13.2 Approve the Brief to inform development proposals for the site.

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