

**GFA/19883/3-D – Bloor Homes Ltd**  
**Construction of 52 houses and 16 flats (Phase 1)**  
**Folly Park, Park Road, Faringdon, SN7 7BP**

**1.0 The Proposal**

- 1.1 This reserved matters application is for the first phase of residential development on the allocated mixed development site at Folly Park in Faringdon. The proposal is for 68 dwellings served via the improved vehicular access from Park Road. Of the total, 30 would be affordable dwellings (a ratio of 44%). Extracts from the application drawings are in **Appendix 1**.
- 1.2 The housing mix would be as follows:-
- Private sector houses – 3x2-bed, 18x3-bed, 11x4-bed and 3x5-bed
  - Private sector flats – 1x1-bed and 2x2-bed
  - Affordable houses – 14x2-bed
  - Affordable flats – 2x1-bed and 14x2-bed
- 1.3 At the outline stage the applicants proposed three basic “character areas” for the Folly Park housing development, which were devised following a contextual analysis of Faringdon. The first phase is part of the higher density core area, of which the main element is the central spine road. The design of the housing is drawn from elements seen in the historic core of Faringdon. There is a significant slope across the site, and the proposed roads and buildings reflect this. The density of the proposal is approximately 52 dwellings per hectare.
- 1.4 The application is being brought to Committee because it is part of a significant housing allocation in the adopted Local Plan. In addition, given the worsening economic climate, the applicants have requested that the application be brought as early as possible to Committee to help ensure the delivery of Phase 1 and the associated Section 106 contributions.

**2.0 Planning History**

- 2.1 Outline planning permission was granted on 17 April 2008 for the construction of 400 dwellings, 1 hectare of commercial development and the change of use of land for recreational purposes (ref GFA/19883-X). The application for the new access road from Park Road was permitted on 7 May 2008.

**3.0 Planning Policies**

- 3.1 Policies H4, E3 and L13 of the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan confirm the allocation of the site for housing, employment and leisure development. The following policies are also relevant to this application:-
- DC1 – promotes high quality, inclusive design, taking account of local distinctiveness and character
  - DC5 – access, traffic and highway safety
  - DC6 – landscaping
  - DC9 – impact on adjoining residents

#### 4.0 **Consultations**

- 4.1 Faringdon Town Council has no objection to the application but has made comments about access to the leisure facilities (see **Appendix 2**).
- 4.2 Local Residents – any comments received will be reported at the Meeting.
- 4.3 County Engineer had not commented at the time of writing the report but it is anticipated that he will raise no objections subject to conditions.
- 4.4 Consultant Architect and Architects Advisory Panel – support the proposal subject to minor changes (see **Appendix 3**).
- 4.5 Crime Prevention Design Advisor raises no objections subject to some minor design changes to window positions on one of the proposed houses
- 4.6 Deputy Director (Housing) – no objection to the location and mix of the proposed affordable housing
- 4.7 Principal Drainage Engineer – no objection subject to conditions.

#### 5.0 **Officer Comments**

- 5.1 There are considered to be four main issues –
- Design and layout
  - Affordable housing
  - Impact on adjoining residents
  - Access and parking issues
- 5.2 With regard to the first issue, the layout of the housing has been dictated to a large degree by the diagonal line of the central spine road across the site. Two minor circulatory roads run to the north and south of the central road to provide permeable connections with the central road. The main road and the southern minor road are on a significant gradient. In this regard, the proposed layout and road types can be equated to the relationship of London Street (as main road) to the Church Street/Swan Lane circulatory route in the town centre. An entrance “square” is proposed to mark the entrance to the housing area.
- 5.3 Three dimensional massing drawings of the scheme are to be submitted by the applicants to help Members make an assessment of the quality of the proposed townscape. The design of the housing has been drawn from the contextual analysis of the town, particularly the design, massing and relationship of buildings in the residential parts of the town centre. The design and composition of the buildings on the central street has been praised by the Consultant Architect and Architects’ Advisory Panel. Some reservations have been expressed about the design of some of the housing on the minor streets, and some of the proposed external materials. These are the subject of further discussion with the applicants. An update on this will be reported at the Meeting.
- 5.4 The design of the main street includes provision for on-street parking with complementary tree planting in the highway. This has emerged from pre-application discussions with the County Council, and experience of completed higher-density

housing schemes elsewhere, where the clear desire of residents to park outside the front of the house has been evident. Officers consider that the provision of tree planting will significantly soften the visual impact of parked cars in the street.

- 5.5 Overall, the design and layout are considered to be of high quality.
- 5.6 On the second issue, affordable housing, and the applicants make the following arguments in support of the location of the affordable housing –
- The proposal represents only 17% of the total amount of housing for the whole site - it is the first phase of a large site and it is important to appreciate the proposed spread of affordable housing across the whole site. To help understand this, a drawing of the proposed spread across the whole housing site will be submitted and circulated to Members before the Meeting
  - There are significant constraints imposed by the shape and gradient of the Phase 1 site, the geometry of the proposed central street, and the desire to achieve a particular design and mass of the buildings on the main street. Combined with the operational need of the Social Landlord, to achieve manageable groups of affordable units and their associated parking, these make the south-east corner of the Phase 1 site the only suitable location for affordable housing.
- 5.7 The Deputy Director (Housing) has assessed the proposal in light of this and considers the proposed location and mix of affordable units to be acceptable.
- 5.8 Regarding the impact on neighbours, the site adjoins existing housing only in the north-west corner. Only two houses adjoin the site, No 23 and No 25 Rawdon Close. The closest proposed houses that could cause harmful overlooking of the neighbours' rear gardens are Plots 9 and 10. The rear walls of the proposed houses on Plots 9 and 10 are set at least 23 metres from the adjoining dwellings, which exceeds the Council's minimum distance of 21 metres to ensure privacy. In addition, given the distances involved, there is considered to be no harm from either overshadowing or over-dominance.
- 5.9 The final issue is access and parking. The main street and the minor circulatory streets have been designed in consultation with the County Engineer, with the intention that they be adopted highway. The applicants have set parking ratios to a relatively high level for an urban area in light of the fact that Faringdon has a limited range of local shops and has limited public transport connections to the nearest major service centres. The proposed on-street parking areas are part of this parking strategy. The parking ratios were still under consideration by the County Engineer at the time of writing the report and an update on this issue will be reported to the Meeting.
- 6.0 **Recommendation**
- 6.1 *Subject to the progress made on the outstanding issues, it is recommended that authority to approve the reserved matters is delegated to the Deputy Director (Planning & Community Strategy) in consultation with the Chair, Vice-Chair and Local Members, subject to conditions, including external materials, architectural detailing, highway surface materials, landscaping, and parking.*