

To: Housing (Housing And Env Health) Date: 26th January 2024
From: Southern Team Tel: 01264 368803

PLANNING APPLICATION CONSULTATION

Please complete and return to the case officer by **16 February 2024**

If no response is received by this date it will be taken that you have no comments to make.

Case Officer: Sarah Barter
Application No: 24/00174/OUTS
Proposal: Outline planning application for demolition of existing buildings and erection of up to 270 dwellings, including affordable housing, with land for the potential future expansion of Halterworth Primary School, public open space, structural planting and landscaping, sustainable drainage system (SuDS) and vehicular access points. All matters reserved except for means of access
Location: Land At Halterworth Lane, Halterworth Lane, Romsey, ROMSEY TOWN
TPO: Yes/No
Conservation Area: Yes/No **Listed Building** Yes/No
Development Type: Largescale Major Dwellings

Case Officer Comments:

Response on application as submitted

No Objection **Comment** **Objection**
(subject to conditions) (specify planning reasons for refusal)

Conditions/Reasons for refusal:

I refer to the above application. The application is for 270 residential dwellings.

The site has been identified as being outside of the settlement boundary and therefore in the countryside. The application documents submitted do not propose a COM8 (Rural Exception Site) or COM9 (Community Led Housing) site and therefore is contrary to policy.

The documents submitted will be processed as a COM7 site.

Policy COM7

If this site is considered as a COM7 site then the Revised Local Plan and the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document, classes Romsey as an Un-Designated Rural Area and therefore, under Revised Local Plan (RLP) Policy COM7: Affordable Housing applies: -

The Council will negotiate on housing sites: -

15 or more dwellings (or sites of 0.5ha or more) for up to 40% of dwellings to be affordable.

Therefore, based upon the 270 new homes the affordable housing dwellings required to satisfy COM7 will be 108.

The Planning and Affordable Housing statement para 5.4.3 confirms provision of 108 affordable homes.

First homes

On the 24th of May 2021 a Written Ministerial Statement and Planning Policy Guidance document were published, setting out further details around the government's introduction of First Homes. As part of that guidance, it was confirmed under certain circumstances that First Homes will form part of the affordable housing mix on new developments with effect from 28th June 2021.

First Homes are intended to be homes available to buy with a minimum discount of 30% below their full market value. Local authorities will have the ability to prioritise these homes for local people and / or key workers, as required locally. Crucially, these homes will be subject to restrictions which ensure that the homes retain their discount in perpetuity (subject to certain specific exclusions) – they will need to be sold on to other eligible purchasers at a discounted price, ensuring communities continue to benefit from these affordable homes for generations to come. First Homes (at first sale) cannot be sold at a price which exceeds £250,000 after discount.

However, Test Valley BC have recently been seeking further clarity from Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) regarding the implementation of the First Homes policy, and it has now been confirmed that it is **not a mandatory requirement** to include First Homes as part of the affordable housing mix until Test Valley Borough Councils Local Plan has been updated. Therefore, in the meantime the Council will adopt a flexible approach to the inclusion of First Homes where an applicant wishes to include them in a planning proposal.

Housing need

I am providing the latest Housing Needs figures from Hampshire Home Choice, showing applicants registered for rented accommodation:

As of 1 February 2024, **2,459** households are registered on Test Valley Borough Council's Housing Register.

Housing Need in Test Valley by assessed bedroom need:

Assessed bed need	Total
1 Bed	1373
2 Bed	536
3 Bed	415
4+ Bed	135
Total	2459

Of which Housing Need in Romsey:

Assessed bed need	Total
1 Bed	311
2 Bed	135
3 Bed	114
4+ Bed	28
Total	588

Help to Buy were previously the zone agent appointed by government to hold details of applicants interested in Affordable Home Ownership products. Help to Buy has now ceased (31st March 2023) and at present we have no data available from this date to confirm data for Shared Ownership interest.

I can provide data up until 31st March 2023 for shared ownership interest, of which I provide below:

Romsey by required bedrooms as of 31 March 2023:

Beds required	Total
1 Bed	42
2 Bed	162
3 Bed	74
4+ Bed	10
Total	288

Test Valley Borough wide by required bedrooms as of 31 March 2023:

Beds required	Total
1 Bed	171
2 Bed	609
3 Bed	304
4+ Bed	24
Total	1108

Preferred Mix – if the application was to progress under policy COM7:

The Planning and Affordable housing statement provided makes no reference to First Homes and therefore I assume First Homes will not be provided. The statement goes on to say that the tenure split to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority. Therefore, my indicative mix required is listed below, and the dwellings will need to be provided on a nil subsidy basis:

The total affordable dwellings = 108

The revised local plan policy COM7 requires a tenure split of 70% affordable/social rent and 30% shared ownership:

Tenure	Numbers required
Affordable/Social Rent	76

Shared Ownership	32
TOTAL	108

I am aware that there is a high demand for 1 bedroom accommodation (rented) within the borough, but through natural move on of families on the housing register, a percentage of 1-bedroom flats are freed up in natural course. Also, following discussions with various Affordable Housing Providers (AHP), and seeking their opinion on 1 bed flats, there was a unanimous concern over the management of 1 beds and therefore I have taken this information into account when detailing the indicative % mix below:

Bedrooms	Dwellings	Persons	% required	Number dwellings required
Affordable/Social Rented (76)				
1 bed	Flat/House/Bungalow	2 persons	25%	19
2 bed	Flat/House/Bungalow **	4 persons	35%	27
3 bed	House	5/6 persons	30%	23
4 bed	House	7/8 persons	10%	7
Total rented				76
Shared Ownership (32)				
1 bed	Flat/House	2 persons	20%	6
2 bed	Flat/House	4 persons	40%	13
3 bed	House	5/6 persons	30%	10
4 bed	House	7/8 persons	10%	3
Total shared ownership				32

**** of which approx. 50% should be flats and 50% should be houses/Bungalows, subject to further negotiation**

With the above mix, this would generate:

23% = 1 beds
37% = 2 beds
30% = 3 beds
10% = 4 beds

Further discussions to agree the split of dwellings for each tenure will be required.

Based upon the high values within the development area and a large number of low-income households on the Council's Housing Register it will be preferable for some of the 1, 3 & 4 bedroom rented dwellings to be delivered as social rented homes in order to ensure that the rents are affordable.

As part of our Housing Strategy 2020 – 2025, we wish to identify opportunities on new development sites to deliver a small proportion of bungalows that could be suitable for people who are downsizing from family sized affordable homes in Test Valley, and I would welcome discussions around the provision of bungalows.

All 2-bedroom accommodation regardless of flats or houses wherever possible must be for a 4-person household, and we actively encourage 3 bedroom homes that are suitable for up to 6 persons (i.e a mix of 3 bedroom 5 and 6 person homes). However, in general, all affordable dwellings should offer maximum occupancy levels.

Depending on the number of flats provided, then there may be issues over mixed tenure blocks (depending on proposed numbers within a block) when it comes to the management and services charges. Therefore, the flats need to be distributed across the site and in small blocks and not in a high-density block.

Also, flats over Garages (FOG's) are only acceptable if the garage/parking space is allocated to the same household as living in the flat above.

Standards and Design

In order to be acceptable for the inclusion in the Homes England Affordable Housing Programme, all affordable dwellings unit sizes shall be no more than 15% below or 30% above the Nationally Described Space Standards

The RLP, COM7 (para 5.109) also states that the affordable housing should be designed and integrated within the provision of market housing to ensure the creation of mixed and inclusive communities. This can be achieved by the use of materials, housing styles and dispersing affordable housing throughout the development.

The Affordable Housing SPD requires the affordable housing units to be dispersed throughout the development, and in any event not in groups of more than 10 dwellings on any one part of the site unless otherwise agreed by the Council in writing. On large schemes, affordable housing units should not be located adjoining future affordable schemes within the future phases to avoid concentrating large numbers in a single location.

On developments of 10 or more affordable homes the Council would aim to achieve at least 10% of Affordable/Social rent homes to be delivered as adaptable homes that can meet the changing needs of occupants built to Building Regulations Part M4 (Category 2) revised edition 2015 or successor regulations. Where category 2 dwellings are to be provided the Council will review the housing needs and negotiate with yourselves over the provision of level access showers where there is a demonstrable need. Based upon 76 affordable/social rented dwellings the provision required would be 7 affordable homes built to Building Regulations Part M4 (Category 2).

Within the proportion of 10% there is likely to be a demonstrable need for a wheelchair adapted home(s), the home(s) should be constructed in accordance with Building Regulations Part M4 (Category 3) revised edition 2015 or successor regulations as Wheelchair Accessible M4(3)(2)(b) and secured in the Legal agreement. **At present we have a need for 3 x 4-bedroom houses with a separate living space downstairs that could be used as a bedroom. These dwellings must also provide (make provision) for a ground floor wet room. Drawings to this specification would need to be provided and these dwellings secured in the S106 legal agreement.**

Development of adaptable/adapted homes contributes to the aims of the Councils Housing Strategy and will be encouraged in light of up-to-date evidence of need on the Housing Register.

- Wheelchair standard is Approved Document M: Access to and Use of Buildings Volume 1: dwellings Category 3: Wheelchair User Dwellings.
- Lifetime Home Standard is Approved Document M: Access to and Use of Buildings Volume 1: dwellings Category 2: Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings.

Delivery of Affordable Housing Units

The Rented & shared ownership dwellings should be delivered through an Affordable Housing Provider (AHP) approved by the Council. All dwellings are to be fully integrated within the development and indistinguishable from the market units.

It is recommended that the applicant makes contact with Affordable Housing Providers as soon as possible in order to obtain an indication of transfer prices that can be expected for the rented and shared ownership units. A list of AHPs who work in partnership with Test Valley Borough Council can be provided on request.

Romsey is not within the Designated Protected Area which is covered by Housing Shared Ownership Leases (exclusion from Leasehold Reform Act 1967) (England) Regulations 2009 (Statutory Instrument 2009/2097 and 2009/2098), therefore there are no restrictions.

Nominations:

The Local Authority would have 100% nomination rights to the affordable dwellings, secured through a S106 Agreement.

Enabling fees

An enabling fee will be charged for each affordable unit (rented and shared ownership). This charge was approved by Cabinet July 2015 and can be found listed in Test Valley's publicised fees and charges schedule. It has also been agreed with the Council's preferred AHPs. The charge is to be passed onto the selected AHP for payment, and the unit amount will depend on the date of signed contract with a selected AHP. The current fee for 2023/2024 is £274.40 per unit.

Conclusion:

I am happy to support this Outline application, based upon the evidence of need as demonstrated above. The housing mix, tenure and wheelchair dwellings would need to be secured within the S106 legal agreement with a view to agreeing the layout/drawings at Reserved Matters submission.

I am happy to enter into further discussions with the applicant to discuss the housing mix should they wish to vary from the mix I have requested above.

Other comments:

Consultee Name: Clare Jenkins
Date of reply: 1st February 2024