
NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

4th December 2019

Planning Committee

Locality	Three Towns
Reference	19/00523/PPM
Application Registered	24th July 2019
Decision Due	24th November 2019
Ward	Saltcoats And Stevenston

Recommendation	Approved subject to Conditions
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Location	Site To West Of Mayfield Farm Mayfield Road Stevenston Ayrshire
Applicant	Persimmon Homes Fao Mr Kevin Murphy
Proposal	Residential development comprising of 392 dwellings (comprising 368 houses and 24 flats) to include associated roads, paths, open space and landscaping

1. Description

Planning permission is sought for a major residential development on an area of agricultural land at Mayfield Farm between Stevenston and Saltcoats. The site lies to the north of Priest Hill View/Gooding Crescent, Stevenston; east of Ailsa Road/Middlepart Crescent/Fleck Avenue, Saltcoats; to the north of A378 High Road/Mayfield Filling Station and south of James Reid School, Saltcoats.

The ground slopes uphill from south to north, extends to some 14.22 hectares and is currently used as sheep grazing land by Mayfield Farm. It is proposed to erect a total of 392 dwellings, consisting of 368 houses and 24 flats.

The proposed houses would all have two storeys and would consist of a mix of terraced, semi-detached and detached designs. A full breakdown of house types is illustrated on the submitted site plan. The 24 flats would be developed as four storey blocks each containing 12 flats.

The proposed development includes all associated access roads, footpaths, open spaces, children's play facilities, public utilities infrastructure and a sustainable drainage system (SuDS) in the form of a large detention basin. Landscaping is proposed on open spaces

throughout the site. The development would include remediation works for former coal workings below the ground as well as the capping of several abandoned mine entries and an airshaft.

The first three phases of 273 houses and the 24 flats would connect onto the proposed access from High Road, immediately west of Mayfield Filling Station. The street layout would take the form of a series of interconnected street blocks, based on the principles of Designing Streets. The first three phases would be served off a single access point from the existing public road network. Houses would be orientated to face onto their associated street, in most cases, and would provide front in-curtilage parking with garden ground to front (where space is available) and private garden ground to the rear. Visitor parking would be provided throughout the site. The 2 blocks of flats would each have an associated car park for residents and visitors, as well as some landscaped communal garden space.

The (indicative) final phase of 95 houses would be accessed from Ivanhoe Drive. The option to connect through the James Reid School site (once it has closed) has also been noted on the site plan as a future potential link. The indicative layout for this final phase would have a similar interconnected street block system with pedestrian links and an emergency vehicle access to the first three phases.

A total of 17 house designs have been included in the development, providing a variety of sizes and configurations. The house designs are already widely used in other developments by the applicant both locally and elsewhere. The flats would each have 2 bedrooms and would be sited with adequate separation distance from the nearest housing in order to protect privacy and sunlight/daylight. One of the flatted blocks would be positioned at the main access into the development adjacent to High Road to create a 'gateway' for the development; the other would be sited just north of the greenfield land to the north of the Tesco supermarket. As a result of their siting, both blocks of flats would have an open outlook. Discussions have taken place with the applicant to modify the colour and texture of the external finishes so that the Mayfield development relates well to the surrounding residential areas.

As noted above, the site slopes uphill from south to north. The level difference from south to north is 15.3m (32.2m AOD at High Road, and 47.6m AOD at the site boundary with James Reid School). This equates to a gradient of 3% across the site, with localised variations due to undulations in the land. The level difference from west to east is around 1m, with the ground marginally higher at the eastern side (where there is a telecoms mast) in comparison with the west (near to Fleck Avenue). The ground level near to the proposed SuDS pond, at the south east corner of the site, is around 40m AOD.

The site is identified in the Local Development Plan (adopted November 2019) as an Additional Housing Allocation.

The proposal is classed as major development in terms of The Town and Country Planning (Hierarchy of Developments) (Scotland) Regulations 2009. A pre-application consultation (PAC) was required and a PAC notice was received 20th June 2018 (ref. 18/00577/PREAPM).

The proposal was screened in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017. The Council, as Planning Authority, adopted the screening opinion that given the nature, scale and location

of the proposed development, an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) would not be required.

In support of the application the following documents have been submitted:

PAC report

The PAC report notes the publicity measures undertaken and a public event was held on 23rd August 2018. The report notes there were 25 attendees at the event. Comments raised include; access should not be taken from the Barratt development (Priesthill View/Gooding Crescent), with some concern over access from Fleck Avenue; a request was made for bungalows and smaller homes; the development should provide its own recreation facilities, views from existing houses should be maintained and pedestrian access links should be provided; concerns were raised about drainage, especially because of previous drainage issues nearby. The PAC report outlines applicant's response to the matters which were raised.

Design and Access Statement

The document appraises the site in terms of landscape, linkages, and the wider settlement character. It then goes on to outline the principles behind the proposed design of the site, drawing on the above characteristics and public consultation. It sets out the details of the layout and proposed house types with information on each type. The document summarises the qualities of a successful place, taking account of national planning policies on Designing Places and Designing Streets.

Health Impact Assessment: Sustainable Location Statement

The focus of this document is on active travel links from the site to the surrounding area. Commentary is provided on the range of local facilities which can be easily reached from the site on foot or other modes of transport. The report considers that, despite being on the edge of the built-up area, the site is within easy range of a wide range of local services, including schools, that are close enough to encourage residents to walk or cycle, thus supporting a healthier lifestyle.

Flood Risk Statement and Drainage Strategy Report

This four-part document considers current greenfield drainage conditions and provides a strategy which considers the risk of flooding from all sources. The report concludes that the site is not at risk of coastal or fluvial (watercourse) flooding. Localised undulations currently contribute to some rainfall gathering in parts of the site, which would be resolved by the construction of a formal system of drainage and SuDS features. A SuDS detention pond has been proposed to attenuate surface water flows in excess of site discharge limits. The report concludes that, by implementing the recommendations it contains, the proposed development would not be at risk of flooding, would not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere, and that the development can be drained in a sustainable manner.

Ecological Assessment

The report was prepared following a Phase 1 Habitat Survey. The report notes that the site consisted of improved grassland used for cattle and sheep grazing. There are no trees on the site and only some hedgerows provide some relief. The hedgerows were regarded in the assessment as 'defunct' and the grassland has no plant diversity. The proposed development, through the landscaping and SuDS works, may offer some potential for increasing biodiversity on the site.

Site Investigation

The report and its 16 appendices set out potential contamination risks from historical land uses and ground conditions. No toxic contamination was recorded in any of the samples analysed. The main issue raised in the site investigations was the presence of shallow mine workings. These areas of the site are potentially unstable and would require remediation through drilling and pressure grouting before the development takes place. Two mine shafts, two adits and an air shaft were identified on a mine abandonment plan. Stabilisation would be required in order to remove the risk of surface instability. A revised site plan was received on 9th October 2019 which shows the mineshaft and adit locations left undeveloped and retained as open space. The only invasive plant identified on the site was cotoneaster, adjacent to the northern boundary. This common garden plant can become invasive, but only if left unmaintained and undisturbed. All surface vegetation would be removed as part of the proposed site clearance and preparation works.

Transport Assessment

This report considers the potential trip generation and distribution characteristics of the development. The report considers that the development would be accessible by sustainable transport, with bus routes near to the site and a railway station within 1 mile. The development would be within walking distance of the existing public transport network and would have footpath links to the surrounding area. The site can be safely accessed by private vehicles and would not compromise the safety or efficiencies of existing road users. With regard to the final phase of development, Area 4, the precise access arrangements remain to be agreed and would make use of land owned by North Ayrshire Council. Any traffic calming measures required for the adjacent street network would be addressed as part of the Road Construction Consent (RCC) process which would follow the planning stage.

Energy Statement

This report considers heat and power sources and whether the development could be served by a district heat network. There are currently no heat sources in the locality which could provide a relatively low density housing development on this scale with heat. As such, a district heating network is not considered to be feasible. However, each house would be highly insulated and would have double glazing. Orientation of the housing is also designed to take advantage of solar gain, with sufficient windows to provide adequate levels of daylight inside each house or flat. Each dwelling would be provided with a high efficiency gas boiler. All of the houses would be provided with solar PV panels.

The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 states that when determining planning applications regard shall be had to the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations.

The relevant policies of the Local Development Plan (LDP), adopted November 2019, are as follows:

Strategic Policy 1: Spatial Strategy - the Towns and Villages Objective;
Strategic Policy 2: Placemaking;
Policy 1: New Homes and Maintaining an Effective Housing Land Supply;
Policy 22: Water Environment Quality;
Policy 23: Flood Risk Management;
Policy 27: Sustainable Transport and Active Travel and
Policy 31: Future Proofing for Heat Networks

2. Consultations and Representations

Neighbour notification was carried out and the application was advertised in a local newspaper in accordance with statutory procedures. A total of 77 neighbours were notified. In response, 9 objections and 2 representations were received. The matters raised are summarised as follows:

1. Overlooking, loss of sunlight/daylight and loss of boundary hedge with neighbouring residential properties at Ailsa Road

Response: There would be a 14m separation distance between corner of the nearest house on Ailsa Road and the gable end of a terraced block within the development. The gable elevation of the terraced house near the boundary would have one side small window at the stairhead landing which would not result in unacceptable overlooking. A 1.8m boundary fence would be provided on the edge of the development, and it is noted that existing field hedgerows have already been removed in various places. Clarification on the future of all hedgerows on the site would be sought through condition.

2. Overlooking of gardens at Priest Hill View.

Response: In places, the ground levels on the site are higher where it adjoins the existing housing on Priest Hill View. The level difference is up to 2 metres. However, there is an existing buffer strip of trees to the north of Priest Hill View, which is presently at an immature stage in its growth. Trees are at varying heights, with the highest currently being equivalent to the height of a single storey building. However, only six houses in the proposed development would back on to Priest Hill View, with a minimum of 24m separation distance between the rear elevations of existing housing and the rear of the proposed housing, which is considered adequate. The intervening corridor of trees and proposed boundary treatments within the development would also filter any views between the houses. The gable elevation of the nearest terraced block to the site boundary in relation to the rear elevation of the closest house on Priest Hill View would be around 18m. The gable of this terrace would have one side small window at the stairhead landing, which would present no significant adverse impact on privacy.

3. Reassurance is sought that the detention basin would not be subject to flooding and that water would not become stagnant.

Response: Detention basins of this type have been widely used in Scotland for the past 20 years. The water level would change due to seasonal variations in rainfall. Provision has been made in the drainage design to ensure that the detention pond does not overtop. The developer has confirmed that "the basin will be at a level that accommodates flooding on site up to the 200 year event, and due to the depth will have additional banking at a higher level." The regular inflow and outflow of water would ensure that the pond does not become stagnant. Water in the pond would be drained to the public sewer or, in the event of a flood event, to the Quarrel Burn.

4. Siting of proposed terraced housing and flats to northwest of Priest Hill View

Response: One of the proposed flatted blocks has been relocated further away from Priest Hill View, increasing the separation distance to approximately 100m. The gable of the nearest terraced block to the objector's property would be around 30m.

5. 4 storey flats would be out of place and would be an eyesore for the surrounding area. The flats should be replaced with houses

Response: Not agreed. Whilst four storey flats are not a feature of the existing townscape in this part of Saltcoats or Stevenston, it is considered that there would be adequate separation between these two blocks and existing housing in the locality. The flats would provide opportunities for smaller households at locations close to the southern edge of the site nearest to local services without adversely impacting on the amenity of existing or proposed housing. The flats would also provide an element of distinctiveness within the development.

6. Traffic volumes on High Road would increase as a result of the development.

Response: The transport statement demonstrates that High Road could accommodate the additional traffic generated by the proposed development without undue impact on the safety and efficiency of the route.

7. The development would have too many houses and they would be "crammed in".

Response: Not agreed. Taking account of open space provision, the density would be 28 houses per hectare, which is considered acceptable and comparable with the density of the existing housing to the west of the site. See Analysis.

Consultations

NAC Education - no objections. The site is within the catchment for both Mayfield and Glencairn primary schools, as well as St Anthony's Primary and St John's Primary, which are located in Saltcoats and Stevenston, respectively. A roll projection was undertaken. Based on the development taking place over a ten year period (as provided by the applicant), the local primary schools have capacity to accommodate the projected increase in pupil numbers which the development may result in. The local secondary and ASN schools would also have sufficient capacity.

Response: Noted. The proposed development would cater for a wide range of households, including single people and retired couples as well as families. In addition, the housing would be built over a number of years. As such, no requirement has been identified for a financial contribution to any of the local schools.

SEPA - No objections. Advice has been provided in relation to flood risk, foul drainage, surface water drainage, and request that consideration is given to district heating, low or zero carbon heating networks as part of the development. SEPA also advise that consultation should be undertaken with the Council's Flood Protection Officer and SEPA in relation to the management of drainage impacts from all sources, including rainfall, watercourses and waste water.

Response: As noted above, a number of technical studies and assessments have been undertaken by specialist consultants on behalf of the applicant. The outcome of these

studies has informed the drainage strategy and design in order to ensure that the proposed development can be satisfactorily drained in accordance with SuDS principles and waste water connected into the public sewer. The studies conclude that "the development site is at little or no risk of fluvial [watercourse] flooding due to a combination of the plan distance and vertical separation from the flood source". Consultation has been undertaken with the relevant bodies who have no objection to the proposal on flooding and drainage grounds.

With regard to district heating, low or zero carbon heating networks, the applicant has prepared an energy statement. Whilst this rules out a district heating network on the grounds of cost and viability, the proposed development would ensure that a high standard of insulation is provided for each dwelling through a 'fabric first' approach. In addition, each dwelling would have a high efficiency gas boiler fitted with flue gas recovery alongside smart/interactive controllers. In addition, solar PV panels would be fitted to each house as standard. Whilst the above measures would mean that heat sources for the homes would still largely rely on a carbon based fuel source (i.e. natural gas), the fabric first measures adopted in the proposal would help reduce consumption. In addition, the provision of solar panels would help to reduce reliance on electricity sourced from the national grid (which supplies electricity from a variety of both renewable and non-renewable sources). Given that each house would have, on average, 4 solar panels, this would mean that almost 1500 solar panels would be provided within the development. As such, the use of solar energy means that the application has taken into account low carbon energy sources, albeit not from a system primarily designed for heating purposes.

The applicant has also stated that, due to the potential for new climate emergency legislation over the lifespan of the construction phase of the development:

"Future legislation that may affect the Mayfield's development could see the incorporation of a combination of low carbon heat sources and/or renewables such as:

- Waste Water Heat Recovery*
- Flue Gas Heat Recovery*
- Hydrogen Gas Boilers*
- Electrical Boilers*
- Ground Source Heat Pumps*
- Air Source Heat Pumps*
- PV diverters moving energy to hot water cylinders when hot water is required, and the PV is generating*
- MVHR Mechanical ventilation with heat recovery*

Persimmon Homes are proactively reviewing all of the above technologies and have several test bed developments where some of the above technologies have already been incorporated into designs and construction specifications. This experience will enable us to assess the technology in terms of Primary Energy consumption, CO2 emissions, savings to our customers energy bills and capital cost to us as a developer."

NAC Flooding Officer – in terms of the initial submission, notes the lack of supporting information on the following:

- i. Priesthill Culvert - identification and mitigation of impacts arising from the development;
- ii. SuDS pond overflow device and details of a flow path;

- iii. The provision of separate land drainage systems for area of known ponding/flooding in three identified locations;
- iv. Revisions to flood risk and drainage strategy to incorporate all comments/issues raised by flooding officer.

It is recommended by the flooding officer that the comments raised in the consultation response are addressed in a revised Flood Risk & Drainage Strategy with the outcomes and findings shown on a revised issue of the drawings.

Response: The matters raised were sent to the applicant for comment, and a comprehensive response was received to address the queries raised. A condition could be attached to ensure the findings of the submitted/updated flooding and drainage studies are implemented during the final design stages for the drainage system, certified on behalf of the developer by an appropriately qualified person and submitted for the written approval of the Council as planning authority.

Scottish Water - No objections. However, the response does not confirm that the proposed development can currently be serviced. Advice has been provided in relation to the following:

Water: A strategic water impact assessment has been carried out for this site and the developer should continue to engage with Scottish Water as they will be responsible for contributing to the network mitigation required to support the site.

Foul: A strategic drainage impact assessment is scheduled to be carried out for this site. The developer should continue to engage with Scottish Water as they may be responsible for contributing to any network mitigation required to support the site. The applicant should be aware that Scottish Water is unable to reserve capacity at our water and/or waste water treatment works for their proposed development. Once a formal connection application is submitted to Scottish Water after full planning permission has been granted, Scottish Water will review the availability of capacity at that time and advise the applicant accordingly. Finally, the development proposals impact on existing Scottish Water assets. The applicant should be aware that any conflict with assets identified may be subject to restrictions on proximity of construction.

Response: Noted. The applicant has been in regular dialogue with Scottish Water with respect to all matters relating to water supply and waste water infrastructure to serve the proposed development.

The Coal Authority - Historic mining records indicate that there are abandoned mineworkings below the site, as well as mine entries. Initial objections raised by the Coal Authority have been withdrawn and resolved through amendments to the site layout and commentary relating to further intrusive investigations of ground conditions. The exact form and extent of intrusive site investigations need to be agreed with the Permitting Section of The Coal Authority as part of the applicant's permit application. These intrusive site investigations should be prepared and conducted by a suitably competent person and findings used to inform an appropriate scheme of remedial measures. In addition, it would be prudent if consideration was also afforded to the risk posed by mine gas to the application site and proposed development. A condition is recommended to secure the recommendations of the Coal Authority.

Response: Noted. A condition could be attached to address the matters raised by the Coal Authority.

West of Scotland Archaeology Service - The application site is situated in an area of recognised archaeological potential on the Ayrshire coastal plain and is large in scale so the potential for significant unrecorded sub-surface archaeological deposits remains an issue. In this case, because it is unlikely that any buried remains surviving the past agricultural use of the land would be so well preserved that they would warrant preservation in situ, it is unnecessary to request prior archaeological evaluation for the current planning application. In these circumstances, the West of Scotland Archaeology Service would instead advise the Council to consider attaching an archaeological condition. Such a condition would be implemented as a staged process, the first stage of which will be an intrusive archaeological evaluation of an 8% sample of the undisturbed parts of the application area to illuminate the possibilities for buried remains surviving on site. This will serve to investigate the nature and significance of any surviving buried archaeology. It will involve hiring a professional archaeologist to undertake the evaluation and to excavate a series of trenches to be agreed. The relevant levels can then be inspected by the archaeologist retained by the developer to identify any in situ archaeology. Any such discoveries will have to be excavated before their destruction by construction through a staged series of further works, including further full excavation and any post excavation analyses and publication, as required.

Response: Noted. A condition could be attached to address the matters raised by the Archaeology Service.

NAC Active Travel and Transport - no objections subject to conditions relating to the access arrangements for Area 4 (originally proposed via Fleck Avenue, but subsequently amended). There are also some issues that will require to be addressed at construction consent stage. These will generally relate to:

1. Materials used for surfacing with a desire to reduce the length of block paving;
2. Potential using materials to highlight the changes in street types via transition zones (for example lengths of block paving or different surfacing);
3. Where vehicles can pass each other on the "shared" narrow streets;
4. Need to ensure there is a continuous service strip.

Response: Throughout the planning process, discussion has taken place on a collaborative basis between the planning authority, roads authority and applicant on the submitted layout and access arrangements. As there remains some uncertainty as to the precise access arrangements for the final phase (Area 4), it is considered more appropriate to grant planning permission in principle for this part of the site. This would be secured via a suitably worded condition. For the avoidance of doubt, access to Area 4 would not pass through Fleck Avenue as originally proposed.

No comments have been received from NAC Environmental Health, Saltcoats Community Council and Stevenston Community Council.

3. Analysis

In accordance with statute, planning applications require to be determined in accordance with the provisions of the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. As noted above, the site is allocated as a Housing Site in the North Ayrshire Local Development Plan (LDP), adopted November 2019. In the foreword to the LDP, it is stated that:

"We recognise that building new homes will be important to growing our population and we have planned for more than 4,000 new homes being built in the next 10 years. Our focus is on the deliverability of these sites."

Strategic Policy 1 of the LDP states that the Council wants to direct the right development to the right place. Policy 1 states that residential development will be supported in principle on Housing Sites. The site has an indicative capacity for 300 homes in the LDP. The applicant's reasoning for proposing an increased number - 392 - is based on the significant costs associated with the ground stabilisation works that are required to deal with the legacy of historic coal mining below the site. There are also 24 flats in the proposal as well as a significant number of smaller terraced houses, all of which would increase the density of the development beyond the original figure envisaged. As noted above, it is not considered the development would have a density greater than the existing housing to the west of the site. The applicant has identified a demand for the mix of houses and flats proposed in the Three Towns area. Taking these factors together, it is considered that the proposal for 392 houses and flats on a 14 hectare site is not excessive. The density would therefore be 28 houses per hectare, which would help to create a walkable neighbourhood within easy reach of nearby services. The layout of the proposal is assessed below. The proposal is considered to accord with Strategic Policy 1 and Policy 1 of the LDP and principle of development for residential purposes is therefore acceptable.

Strategic Policy 2 will be considered at the end of this assessment.

Policy 22 of the LDP states that development will be required to ensure no unacceptable adverse impact on the water environment. Development should ensure that appropriately sized buffer strips are maintained between the built and water environments. Related to this issue is Policy 23, which deals with flood risk management.

Taking both of these policies together, it is noted that, other than field drains, there are no watercourses within the site. The nearest watercourse, the Quarrel Burn, is situated some 390m to the east. This is considered to be a more than sufficient buffer to reduce impacts on the water environment. The proposed SuDS system would provide two levels of treatment, with all surface water being routed to a detention pond before discharge to the public sewer. An overflow for the pond would be provided, which would lead to the Quarrel Burn. The overflow would only be required during periods when the receiving sewer network is unable to accept storm water flows, and this mechanism is designed to prevent overloading of the sewer network (which can lead to surcharging downstream). The Quarrel Burn itself is a minor watercourse which drains the agricultural land to the northwest of Stevenston. It is a tributary of the Stevenston Burn. The Quarrel Burn does not pass through any residential areas, and follows a route along the northern edge of Stevenston. It flows along the edge of agricultural land to the north of the town and is situated within a gully where it passes under Kerelaw Road. SEPA was consulted and made no objection to the proposal. NAC Flooding made various comments in relation to the drainage arrangements for the site, as noted

above, the resolution of which has been addressed through the submission of further information, and their implementation achieved through a condition. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with Policies 22 and 23 of the LDP.

Policy 27 of the LDP relates to sustainable transport and active travel. This states that Council will support development which meets criteria including improving accessibility to amenities, mitigates adverse impacts of significant traffic generation, provides safe and convenient sustainable transport options, and takes a design-led collaborative approach to street design. Over a period of around six months, discussions on the layout have taken place with the applicant and the Council's transportation officers. The resulting layout and access arrangements represent the outcome of the collaborative process between the applicant and the Council. The proposal is considered acceptable in this regard. The development would provide footpaths and road links to the surrounding area. As noted above, the final phase of the development would be accessed from the existing housing estate in the northeast of Saltcoats. The access route for this phase would not pass through Fleck Avenue, as was originally proposed. The final access arrangements to serve the final phase would require to be clarified prior to its development, which is anticipated to be a number of years in the future. Given the timescales involved, this matter can be reserved by a condition which would restrict any housebuilding taking place in the final phase until access arrangements are submitted and approved by the Council. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with Policy 27 of the LDP.

Policy 31 of the LDP states that the Council will support proposals for the creation or enhancement of district heat networks. Proposals for 50 or more residential units which would not result in the creation or enhancement of district heat networks should include: provision for on-site heat recovery and re-use infrastructure; or a heat network generation and distribution infrastructure plan; or demonstrable evidence that district heating or other forms of renewable generation storage have been explored but are not feasible for technical or economic reasons.

The applicant has provided an Energy Statement which explores the potential for district heating and other low carbon heating systems. Whilst they have confirmed that a district heating network would not be feasible for a development of this type on the grounds that this is no heat source nearby which could be used, as well as a variety of other economic reasons, the homes in the development would be fitted with high efficiency gas boilers and solar panels as standard. As the development progresses during the years ahead, there is a likelihood of new legislation seeking to decarbonise heat and power systems in housing developments. Based on information published by the Scottish Government, the implementation of any new mandatory requirements in this regard would be addressed through the building standards. This would mean that later phases in the development are likely to be subject to more stringent low carbon heat and power systems than is required under current legislation. The proposal is considered to accord with Policy 31 of the LDP.

Finally, Strategic Policy 2 of the LDP sets out the six qualities of a successful place as follows:

- distinctive,
- safe and pleasant,
- resource efficient,
- welcoming,
- adaptable,
- easy to move around and beyond.

Whilst the proposed development would primarily provide a range of 17 'standard' houses which have been developed elsewhere by the applicant, discussions have taken place to ensure the external finishes (in terms of colour and texture) are compatible with the local area. To this end, agreement has been reached in principle on this issue and a condition requiring the submission of external finishes could be attached to ensure the final choice for external finishes is appropriate for this locality. This would ensure that the development provides visual interest and variety within an overall palette of compatible colours, textures and finishes.

The siting of a block of flats at the main access to the development would help to make the development distinctive within the townscape. The orientation of the flats and houses on the edges of the site at High Road would also help to make the development welcoming. Once inside the development, the emphasis is on the creation of streets which all have houses facing onto them, thus eliminating any obtrusive boundary fences onto streets. A range of landscaped open spaces and a children's play area, overlooked by the front elevations of the housing, would also contribute to a sense of welcome.

It is considered that the proposed development would create a safe and pleasant addition to the Three Towns by creating a new neighbourhood with generous landscaping and numerous open spaces which would provide open views towards the surrounding landscape and Firth of Clyde beyond.

The development would be resource efficient in terms of siting, design and heat/power systems, with access arrangements designed to enhance pedestrian links between the site and the surrounding area. For example, the development would result in a more direct pedestrian/cycle link between the northwest of Stevenston and the existing housing in the north of Saltcoats, without the adverse environmental impacts of any through vehicular traffic. This improved connectivity would provide additional walking and cycling opportunities in the Three Towns area. These linkages demonstrate that the development would be easy to move around and beyond.

In terms of adaptability, the proposed 14 hectare development would result in a single land use of housing with open spaces. It has not been designed as a mixed use area either now or for the future. Whilst individual houses would be adaptable and could be modified by the future owners, the neighbourhood would remain wholly residential in character throughout its lifespan and is unlikely to support any other uses. It is however considered that the development would help to support a wide range of other uses in the Three Towns area, including its town centres and the range of social and community activities.

There remains some uncertainty with regards the means of access to Area 4 within the development. However, as the principle of housing development within Area 4 accords with the LDP, a condition could be attached to require the submission of full details before this phase of the site commences. In effect, this would grant planning permission in principle for Area 4, with the specific details to be approved at a future date.

In summary, the application is considered to accord with the relevant policies of the LDP, and the development would secure the delivery of a major housing site that was identified and allocated through the development plan process. Accordingly, the application should be approved subject to the conditions referred to in this report.

4. Full Recommendation

Approved subject to Conditions

Reasons for Decision

Condition

1. That, prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, a scheme of further intrusive site investigations for mine entries and adits shall be undertaken by appropriately qualified persons, the scope of which shall be adequate to fully assess the ground conditions below the site and inform any required remedial works. Thereafter, the applicant or their representative shall prepare and submit a report of findings arising from the intrusive site investigations, including the following:

- the submission of a layout plan which plots the precise location and zones of influence for the mine entries on site;
- the submission of a scheme of treatment for mine entries for approval as well as any necessary mitigation measures required;
- the submission of a scheme of remedial works for shallow workings for approval; and thereafter
- the implementation of all remedial, treatment and mitigation works prior to the commencement of the development,

all to the satisfaction of North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority.

Reason

To ensure the safety and stability of the proposed development.

Condition

2. That the development hereby approved shall be implemented in accordance with all of the recommendations contained in the supporting documentation submitted with the planning application unless otherwise indicated below, all to the satisfaction of North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority.

Reason

To secure the implementation of the recommendations contained in the supporting information.

Condition

3. That the developer shall secure the implementation of an archaeological watching brief for the site, to be carried out by an archaeological organisation acceptable to North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority. The first stage of the watching brief shall be an intrusive archaeological evaluation of an 8% sample of the undisturbed parts of the application area to illuminate the possibilities for buried remains surviving on site. This will serve to investigate the nature and significance of any surviving buried archaeology. Thereafter, the retained archaeological organisation shall be afforded access at all reasonable times during the groundworks phase of the development, and allowed to record and recover items of interest and finds. Terms of Reference for the watching brief shall be supplied by West of Scotland Archaeology Service. The name of the archaeological

organisation retained by the developer shall be given to North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority in writing not less than 14 days before the development commences.

Reason

To make appropriate provision for investigating and recording any buried archaeological remains.

Condition

4. That, prior to the commencement of the development, the findings of the submitted/updated flooding and drainage studies shall be incorporated into the final design stages for the drainage system for the development, certified by an appropriately qualified person and submitted for the written approval of North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority. Thereafter, the development shall be implemented in accordance with such details as may be approved.

Reason

To ensure the drainage arrangements are designed to safeguard the development and the surrounding area from the risk of flooding.

Condition

5. That, prior to the commencement of any building operations, the applicant shall submit for the written approval of North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority a detailed schedule of the proposed external finishes, boundary treatments and in-curtilage ground surface treatments to be used in the development (i.e. driveways, gardens and any incidental open space). Thereafter, the development shall be implemented only in accordance with such details as may be approved, unless otherwise agreed in writing with North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority.

Reason

In the interest of the amenity of the area.

Condition

6. That, prior to the commencement of the development, the applicant shall submit for the written approval of North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority full details of the children's play area(s) to be provided within the development, inclusive of a summary of their future management and maintenance arrangements. Thereafter, the play area(s) as may be approved shall be implemented prior the completion of each phase within the development to the satisfaction of North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority.

Reason

To secure adequate provision for children's outdoor play.

Condition

7. That, prior to the commencement of the development, the applicant shall submit for the written approval of North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority a scheme of landscaping, which shall include details of hedgerows/trees to be retained, plant/shrub species, planting densities, soil treatment and aftercare. Thereafter, the landscaping scheme as may be approved shall be implemented prior the completion of each phase within the development to the satisfaction of North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority.

Reason

In the interest of the amenity of the area.

Condition

8. That, prior to the commencement of the development, hereby approved, confirmation shall be submitted in writing to North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority and certified by a suitably qualified person that a scheme to treat the surface water arising from the site has been prepared in accordance with the principles and practices contained in 'The SuDS Manual' (CIRIA report C753, published November 2015). Thereafter, the certified scheme shall be implemented prior to the completion of the development and maintained thereafter to the satisfaction of North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority.

Reason

To secure an appropriate sustainable drainage system for the site.

Condition

9. That the presence of any significant unsuspected contamination that becomes evident during the development of the site shall be brought to the attention of North Ayrshire Council Environmental Health. Thereafter a suitable investigation strategy as agreed with North Ayrshire Council shall be implemented and any necessary remediation works carried out prior to any further development taking place on the site, all to the satisfaction of North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority.

Reason

To ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of contamination being uncovered following site clearance operations.

Condition

10. That within 6 months of the date of the completion of the houses within Area 2, a footpath link to all abilities standard into Priest Hill View to the south of the site shall be completed to the satisfaction of North Ayrshire Council, as Planning Authority, unless otherwise agreed in writing.

Reason

To secure an adequate footpath link between the site and Priest Hill View.

Condition

11. That, notwithstanding the plans hereby approved, the approval of North Ayrshire Council as Planning Authority shall be obtained before the commencement of building operations to erect any housing within Area 4 as indicated in drawing PH-MFS-BR-01, with regard to the siting, design and external appearance of the dwellinghouses, landscaping and means of access. For the avoidance of doubt, there shall be no vehicular access to the development via Fleck Avenue.

Reason

To ensure that full consideration is given to the means of access to the development of Area 4.

Russell McCutcheon
Executive Director (Place)

For further information please contact Mr A Hume Planning Officer on 01294 324318.

Appendix 1 – Location Plan

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