

## LAND AT BLUNTISHAM ROAD, NEEDINGWORTH PROPOSAL FOR C.150 DWELLINGS

### Introduction

Huntingdonshire District Council are currently preparing a new Local Plan which will contain proposals and planning policies that will guide growth and regeneration across the District over the coming years. Barratt and David Wilson Homes Cambridgeshire ('BDW Cambridgeshire') support the growth aspirations of the Council and are pleased to present land at Bluntisham Road, Needingworth (the 'Site') as an opportunity for residential-led development.

The Site is being promoted by BDW Cambridgeshire, a trading name of Barratt Developments PLC. We are the nation's leading housebuilder and our vision is to lead the future of housebuilding by putting local communities and sustainability at the heart of everything we do. Our aim is to create great places by building long-term relationships to deliver high-quality developments which look great, are a pleasure to live on and will enhance local communities for years to come.

This Document sets out the technical and environmental considerations in developing the site and seeks to put forward a technically deliverable proposal that will be utilised to inform further discussions with Huntingdonshire District Council and the local community. We are keen to demonstrate the Site's deliverability to support the emerging Local Plan.

The overarching vision for the Site is to deliver a high quality, locally distinguishable and sustainable addition to the village. The proposed development would deliver much needed new homes, generous public open spaces, play areas and enhanced area of biodiversity.

BDW Cambridgeshire are proposing the construction of approximately 150 dwellings including public open space and infrastructure works on the Site. An indicative Concept Plan is appended to this document which illustrates how the site could be delivered, bearing in mind known constraints and opportunities. It is noted that a further phase of an additional 150 could also be delivered ('Phase 2'), and a separate Call for Sites submission has been made for the delivery of both phases (c.300 unit total).

Barratt are promoting this highly sustainable site for the delivery of much needed market and affordable homes and we are fully committed to working with the Council and the community to make this happen.

### The Site

The site lies to the east of Needingworth and extends to circa 35 acres. It comprises generally arable land and is accessed off Bluntisham Road.

The site is bound to the west by existing residential properties and Bluntisham Road for which vehicular and pedestrian access is afforded. The northern boundary is defined by a small cluster of residential properties and an access road to the Needingworth Quarry (a working sand and gravel quarry). The western boundary being defined by a strong vegetated boundary, beyond which lies the Ouse Fen Nature Reserve (Hanson / RSPB). The south is bound agricultural land which is being promoted separately as a potential 'Phase 2'.



The topography of the site is relatively flat, with a slope from 10m AOD on the western boundary to 6m AOD on the eastern boundary (subject to survey).

There is no relevant planning history on the site according to the HDC planning public access system. There are no policy, landscape, historic or ecological designations on the site. The majority of the site is in Flood

Zone 1 with low risk of flooding from most sources. The eastern extent of the site falls within flood zones 2 and 3 and would be proposed as part of the Country Park.

### **The Surrounding Area**

The site is well located within Needingworth and also provides easy access to the A1123. Needingworth benefits from a mix of core services that are readily accessible and within walking distance of the site, including; a primary school, post office and convenience store, village hall, churches, public houses, recreation ground and sports ground. The 'A' Busway route is also accessible, for access to Cambridge and St Ives, along with further local services.

Despite being classed as a 'small settlement' in the adopted Local Plan, Needingworth is stated to have "reasonable sustainability" (as stated in the SHLAA), and it has a functional relationship with other neighbouring settlements (notably St Ives). The Local Plan acknowledges the variation in size and availability of services and facilities between these settlements, and it is recognised that varying levels of development could sustainably be accommodated depending on nature of the individual settlement.

### **The Opportunity**

The key feature of the proposal would be the construction of around 300 dwellings along with provision of a significant 'Country Park'. The indicative proposal includes a variety of both detached, semi-detached and terraced units as well as affordable housing provision which would accord with relevant adopted policy requirements.

The design concept has evolved to carefully respond to the landscape setting, existing development and other constraints. The concept masterplan includes (please also see enclosed Vision Document supporting the Call for Sites submission):

- 150 dwelling total capacity (30 dwellings per hectare).
- Potential 150 dwelling 'Phase 2' area (subject to separate Call for Sites submission).
- Proposed access off Bluntisham Road at existing site access location, with relocation and enhancement of existing car parking provision.
- Provision of 'Country Park' within flood zone, complementing adjacent RSPB nature reserve. Pedestrian access to nature reserve retained and enhanced.
- Pedestrian routes retained within a landscaped corridor, with provision of new pedestrian routes throughout.



## Relevant Considerations

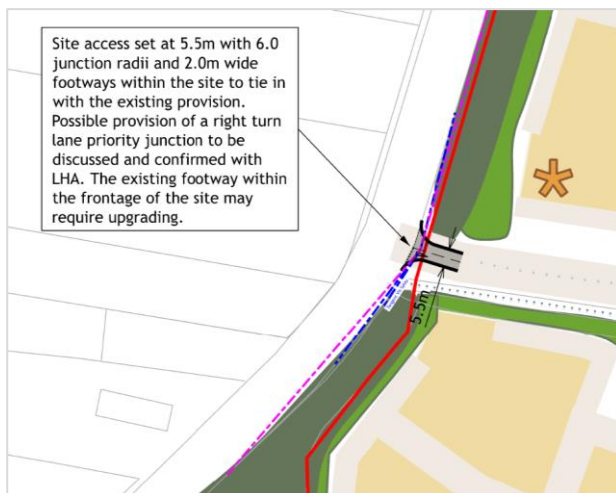
### Access & Sustainability

Needingworth is well located in regards to the level of services and amenities within the village, and with regards to the accessibility of services and facilities within the nearby town of St Ives. The plan adjacent evidences this.

It is proposed to access the Site via a new primary priority 'T' junction onto Bluntisham Road, ensuring there is no conflict between the existing access for the quarry operations. A secondary access could be implemented off Overcote Lane, through the land to the south which is under control of the landowner if required. The access strategy and junction designs ensure a safe pedestrian and vehicular access strategy is deliverable. The indicative access junctions are based on DMRB design criteria and CCC's Highways junction spacing criteria.

Preliminary access drawings are included within the Call for Sites submission and extracts are shown below.

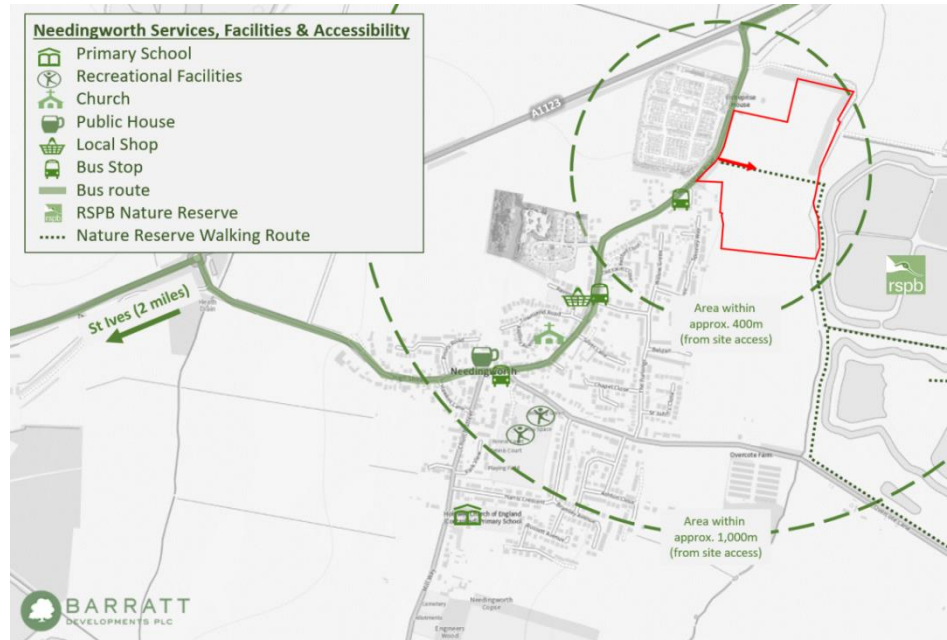
### Primary Access (Bluntisham Road)



### Potential Emergency Access (Overcote Lane)



A footway connection to the existing footway on the eastern side of Bluntisham Road will also be provided to promote safe pedestrian access between the Site, Needingworth village centre and the local area. Again, pedestrian access could also be sought off Overcote Lane. There is also an opportunity to provide extended and enhanced car parking facilities to the adjacent RSPB Ouse Fen Nature Reserve, and potentially hard-surfacing the existing pedestrian/cycle routes.





The site also benefits from easy access onto the wider cycle network, for destinations such as St Ives (12-15 minute cycle), and existing bus stops located on Bluntisham Road are less than 200m from the site entrance, providing services to St Ives, Ramsey, and other local destinations. At St Ives, connections can be made to the Guided Busway to Cambridge.

### Drainage

As shown on the adjacent plan, the majority of the site is within Flood Zone 1 according to latest Environment Agency data, and is therefore suitable for residential development.

The eastern extent of the sites falls within Flood Zones 2 & 3, and would likely not be suitable for residential development. A site survey and further engineering assessment would be required to determine appropriate foul and surface water drainage solutions.

### Ecology and Biodiversity

The site currently comprises arable land and there are no statutory ecological designations covering the site.

The site is located within a 'Green infrastructure Priority Area' in the adopted Local Plan; a location that the Council consider has potential to consolidate and link habitats. Land east, south and west of Needingworth have the same designation, as do significant areas across the District where development has previously been allocated/permitted. Given the nature of the site it is considered that the development on the site could provide such enhancements as sought by the local plan policy, and this could tie in to the adjacent RSPB Ouse Fen Reserve (predominantly owned by Hanson who also own the Site).

A site specific Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) enhancement plan would be produced upon completion of the final draft building and landscape design and prior to any planning application submission. This would ensure that a minimum 10% BNG is achieved as part of the scheme. In addition, a site specific Ecological Survey will also be commissioned to ensure the development can protect and enhance the bio-diversity on the site and ensure no harm to protected species.

Barratt Developments PLC have a Biodiversity Net Gain ambition to demonstrate a minimum 10% increase in biodiversity in all development designs and our commitment to sustainability is linked to our formal partnership with the RSPB which helps guarantee that our developments not only comply with current biodiversity requirements but help deliver longer term improvements to local communities.

### Odour

A sewage works is located approximately 400 metres from the southern boundary. Following a review of planning applications in proximity, and following a site walkover, this is not thought to be a constraint to development given the general direction of the prevailing wind.



### **Country Park Opportunity**

As part of the proposed development it is proposed to include a significant 'Country Park' within the Public Open Space area, complementing the adjacent RSPB / Hanson Nature Reserve (as shown on the enclosed Concept Masterplan). This will also include enhanced car parking provision for the existing Nature Reserve, as well as the retention and enhancement of existing Public Rights of Way.

Positively, Barratt have an established relationship with the RSPB, and since 2014 we have worked in partnership with the charity to drive up biodiversity standards and make our developments havens for wildlife. Together we also created the UK's first truly wildlife-friendly housing development at Kingsbrook, a 306-hectare site on the outskirts of Aylesbury (see adjacent image). The project built the care of the natural environment into the scheme at the earliest stages, including keeping ancient hedges, creating a 250-acre nature reserve and visitor centre, and concentrating homes in areas with the least biodiversity.



### **About us**

Barratt Developments is Britain's largest and best-known housebuilder, trading under the Barratt Homes, David Wilson and Barratt London brands. We build over 17,000 new homes each year across the UK and have built over half a million homes since our inception in 1958.

Barratt is widely acknowledged as the market leader in quality and customer service, being rated 5 Star in the HBF Customer Satisfaction Survey for 14 years in a row. We also aim to be the UK's leading national sustainable housebuilder, being the highest scoring national housebuilder in both the CDP and Next Generation sustainability indices.

As the nation's largest housebuilder, we are well placed to deliver much needed market and affordable homes to address the country's ongoing housing shortage and the identified housing need across the District.

We recognise that successful developments must meet the needs of not just potential residents, but also of existing neighbouring communities. We therefore consult on new developments through tailored engagement with local communities and stakeholders, incorporating feedback into our plans to ensure local people have the opportunity to help shape developments within their community.

Since our inception over 60 years ago in the north-east of England, we now operate from 29 trading divisions which are located in the main population centres in England, Scotland and Wales. This structure enables our divisional management teams to use their locational knowledge and working relationships to buy land, design, build and sell homes which are well-suited to the local area. This Site will be delivered by the Cambridgeshire division, which has a strong track record of delivery both within Huntingdonshire District Council and across Cambridgeshire.

## **Sustainability**

As the UK's largest housebuilder, we are committed to creating a positive environment, social and economic legacy for future generations and we have a history of delivering high quality and sustainable homes and communities.

We are already reducing our carbon footprint and have developed a roadmap towards building zero carbon homes, at scale, from 2030. This roadmap is underpinned by an industry-leading research and development programme, as well as strong relationships with our supply chain, to ensure our homes are technically sound, cost-efficient and meet the needs and expectations of our customers.

Our sustainability commitments mean that local communities and authorities can be certain of BDW Cambridgeshire delivering a scheme which they can rightly be proud of. One that is future-proofed by meeting and exceeding regulatory requirements. Our dedication to research and innovation ensures scalable, high-impact solutions are continually being implemented, and our lasting benefits are as follows:

- As of 2022, all of our homes have delivered a 31% carbon reduction, compared to Building Regulations
- From 2025 this will rise to a 75-100% reduction
- All planning applications to deliver a minimum +10% Biodiversity Net Gain from January 2023
- All new homes will have a water efficiency of 105 litres per person per day – 16% below national requirements
- Over 90% of our materials UK sourced
- 30% of all homes to be built via Modern Methods of Construction by 2025

## **Summary**

This document has set out a Vision for the development of land at Bluntisham Road, Needingworth, and demonstrates how the site is deliverable and located in a highly sustainable location, therefore supporting the potential growth aspirations of HDC.

The illustrative masterplan has been designed to respond to the Site and its context, to deliver a high-quality, distinctive and walkable new place to live. The proposals include significant new areas of open space for play and recreation and these facilities will be of benefit to both new and existing residents, whilst also complementing the adjacent RSPB / Hanson Nature Reserve. The development would also support habitat enhancement and creation.

This is a fantastic opportunity to create a legacy to support the growth of Needingworth and the scheme will bring forward much needed new housing in the District. Further, the potential 'Phase 2' area (subject to a separate Call for Sites submission) could either form part of a comprehensive development in the emerging Local Plan period, or alternatively a subsequent allocation in future Local Plans to maintain housing delivery in a highly sustainable location.

BDW Cambridgeshire are promoting the Site for development alongside the landowners and we are committed to working alongside the Council and other relevant stakeholders through the consultation process.