Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Examination

Hearing Day 7

Matter 3 Area Specific Strategies

Note on Policy SCLP12.72 Land at Street Farm, Witnesham

1. This note responds to an action arising in the hearing session on Matter 3 Area Specific Strategies (Tuesday 17th September, AM) which relates to the consideration of modifications in relation to the future use of the agricultural buildings to the south and east of the allocation.

2. Inspector’s question 3.107 asked whether the policy is justified in not addressing the future of the structures given the uncertainty they present for the living conditions of future occupiers of any dwellings at the site, or on the continued use of the adjacent land for agricultural purposes.

3. The Council’s response (Matter 3 SCLP12.34 – SCLP12.72 Statement, page 55) proposed a modification that would amend the supporting text (paragraph 12.831).

Modifications to Paragraph 12.831:

“This site of 0.7ha comprises a largely disused farm complex on the edge of Witnesham (Bridge). Given the exclusion of agricultural buildings on land to the south, the layout of the development will
need to give consideration to the amenity of future occupiers under Policy SCLP11.2. The farmhouse, a Listed Building, is still occupied. Land south of Hall Road and The Street which includes this site, lies within the River Fynn Valley – a landscape of attractive and distinctive character. Suffolk County Council Archaeology notes that due to the site’s location on the south bank of the River Fynn, an archaeological investigation will be required. A small section of the site along its northern boundary where it borders the River Fynn is within Flood Zone 3. Any development within Flood Zone 3 is to be avoided having the highest potential risk from flooding. The Environment Agency have confirmed that a flood risk assessment will be required as part of any planning application. Anglian Water have confirmed they have no objection to the allocation of this site. Existing access to the site is narrow and directly onto a bend in the road (B1077). Use of the existing access may need to be re-assessed or may otherwise act as a limit to numbers of new dwellings it can serve.”

4. The site is an existing allocation contained in the Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies Development Plan Document (Document F2, Policy SSP19, page 61). A planning application (reference DC/18/3385/FUL) for the development of 20 dwellings on a site which incorporates much of the allocated site and extends further south and east, received a resolution to grant permission at Planning Committee in June 2019, and is awaiting the issuing of a Section 106 agreement.
5. At the hearing session, the Inspector questioned whether the proposed modification above would sufficiently address the issue he had raised, and has asked the Council to consider further modifications.

6. The Council acknowledges that there could be a potential amenity issue related to the presence of the agricultural buildings and that their future existence and use could need to be addressed as part of a planning application for development on the allocated site (notwithstanding that there is a current resolution to grant permission which includes land to the east of the allocation). Whilst Policy SCLP11.2 provides consideration for the amenity of future occupiers of the site, it is considered that as the future of the buildings outside of the site would need to be addressed, reference to this could be included in the policy.

7. The Council acknowledges that some agricultural practices could continue on land adjacent to the site. The Council would therefore support a modification to Policy SCLP12.72, through the addition of an additional paragraph at the end of the policy as set out below:

“Proposals for the site will need to demonstrate that any continued uses and structures on agricultural land to the south of the site would not cause an unacceptable impact on the amenity of occupiers of the site.”

8. The Council will include this revised wording in the schedule of modifications that is being collated as part of the Examination.