

Environmental Statement Non-Technical Summary

Land off Waunscil Avenue, Brackla, Bridgend



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Mullberry Homes Ltd

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Non-Technical Summary

- 1.1 This is a Non-Technical Summary of the Environmental Statement (ES) that accompanies a planning application by Mulberry Homes Ltd for 70 dwellings and associated works at land off Waunscil Avenue, Brackla, Bridgend.
- 1.2 The proposal accords with the Bridgend Local Development Plan and takes account of previous concerns expressed by Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) and Planning Inspectors.
- 1.3 This Non-Technical Summary (NTS) provides a summary of the findings of the ES.

Planning Context

- 1.4 The application site is vacant, previously developed urban land, within walking distance of Bridgend Town Centre. The Bridgend Local Development Plan allocates the site as public open space and community route.
- 1.5 The proposal is acceptable because it will deliver usable open space and the community route sought by the LPD. Residential development at the site should be a priority for development before allocated greenfield sites.

Need for the Proposal

- 1.6 Only the application site can deliver the length of usable community route that is sought by the LDP in this location.
- 1.7 Previous Planning Inspectors have supported residential use at the site because it will bring forward the usable open space at the site that is also sought by the LDP.

Social and Economic Context

- 1.8 The application proposal will provide about 60 jobs in the area during construction. The development will be close to schools where the Location Education Authority has not previously expressed concern about capacity.
- 1.9 The development will deliver a usable community route along the length of the site in accordance with the LDP which promotes the route linking Bridgend and Brynmenyn.
- 1.10 The development incorporates a large area of open space. Previous Inspectors have acknowledged the benefits that this open space will provide. An equipped children's

play area will also be provided. The site is close to shops and other community facilities in Bridgend Town Centre and elsewhere.

Views and Analysis of the Site

- 1.11 The proposal has evolved taking into account the observations made by previous Planning Inspectors, Officers at BCBC and other consultees to previous planning applications and appeals; and on the findings of baseline surveys and the assessment of individual topics.
- 1.12 The site is approximately 2.8 hectares and is a former railway line. It is relatively long and narrow. The site is overgrown. The pedestrian linkages through and across the site are not particularly attractive and are often concealed/obstructed by planting in the summer months.
- 1.13 The land levels across the site vary considerably. The northern part of the site is raised above the existing housing on Herbert, Vernon and Charles Street on an embankment (formerly used for the railway). To the south of Herbert Street is a steep incline rising some 18 metres where the site in the past was originally a railway cutting that has been filled.
- 1.14 As a result, the railway bridge which carried the footpath from Waunscil Avenue to the east is now at ground level due to the cutting it used to span being filled. There are two relatively flat areas of the site, a lower-level north of Herbert Street and a higher level accessed off Waunscil Avenue.
- 1.15 The northern part of the site is higher than the adjacent dwellings along Herbert, Vernon and Charles Street. Development at this location has the greatest potential to adversely affect the living conditions of residents of the adjoining properties.
- 1.16 Existing dwellings along Waunscil Avenue, Chorleywood Close and Gwaun Coed are sensitive to the overbearing impact of tall buildings over 2.5 storeys along the site boundary. Tall buildings in this part of the site (middle and southern end) should be located away from site boundary.
- 1.17 The existing trees and vegetation along the site boundary is an important feature that protects views into and out of the site. The dense planting along the site boundary to the rear of Gwaun Coed and opposite the Waunscil Spur is particularly important.
- 1.18 In order to mitigate against the impact of development on sensitive views, the proposal proposes no built development in the northern part of the site. The proposals have been designed to minimise the impact on dwellings along Waunscil Avenue,

Chorleywood Close and Gwaun Coed. The Tree Protection Plan provided with the ES shows that the important trees along the site boundary will be retained and screening will be enhanced by significant new planting.

Ecology and Nature Conservation

- 1.19 The site does not contain or lie immediately adjacent to any statutory sites of nature conservation value such as SSSIs or LNRs nor any non-statutory sites such as SINC. However, there is a Local Nature Reserve, Tremains Wood, and two SINC, Coed y Morfa and Tremains within 1km of the site.
- 1.20 The site is known to support a range of common and widespread bird species, foraging bats species, invertebrates and reptiles but these are only of conservation importance in the local context and none are of notable significance or exceptional rarity. Areas of hardstanding and Japanese knotweed are considered to be of Negligible Value to wildlife.
- 1.21 Although there will be some negative impacts as a result of the proposed development, these are not considered to be of more than local significance, particularly since habitats in the northern end of the site will be retained.
- 1.22 Likely impacts can however be mitigated and or compensated for through the implementation of various mitigation measures during the construction and development phases. The retention of habitats at the north end of the site, including the broad-leaved woodland, will also provide areas which can be enhanced for biodiversity through additional planting and management.
- 1.23 It is therefore concluded that the site is not significantly constrained for development on ecological grounds. There may be some potential for impact to protected species such as common reptiles, nesting birds and foraging bats, but these should be readily amenable to mitigation.

Soils, Geology, Contamination, Water Quality and Hyrdogeology

- 1.24 The ES assesses the likely impact on the proposed development of potential ground contamination. In addition, an assessment is made of the likely impact of contamination on any controlled waters, the potential for ground gases at the site and the effect of these issues with respect to the proposed development.
- 1.25 Japanese Knotweed, landfill gas and ground contamination are acknowledged as matters to be addressed and are not uncommon problems on brownfield sites. The ES finds that there are well established means of dealing with these, and suitable

conditions could be applied to any planning permission to provide adequate safeguards. Indeed, in some ways neighbouring residents might gain more assurance knowing these matters were being dealt with than if they were left unattended.

- 1.26 In respect of methane, tests were undertaken through the use of four additional boreholes in 2018. The results demonstrate that whilst elevated methane levels were observed in June/July 2018, this had significantly reduced by June/July 2019, and the four additional boreholes confirmed the methane in one was localised and did not extend out to the four additional boreholes.
- 1.27 Protection measures will be required for the proposed development but will be sufficient to deal with these issues.

Traffic and Transport Sustainability

- 1.28 A transport assessment has been undertaken for the proposal. It demonstrates that the location of the site is highly sustainable and the proposed development will reduce dependency on the car in favour of walking cycling and the use of public transport. The provision of the usable community route will be of benefit to future residents and the wider community.
- 1.29 The new vehicular access off the Waunscil Spur and road within the development will meet the requirements of Manual for Streets. The proposed scheme will not have an unacceptable impact on the surrounding highway network.

Utilities

- 1.30 Investigations have been undertaken with utility providers to assess the location and capacity of existing services and to assist with the detailed design of the proposed service strategy. No significant impacts have been identified.

Design Strategy Principles

- 1.31 An assessment has been carried out of the site and its topography. An analysis of the local context and features including development along Waunscil Avenue, Chorleywood Close, Herbert Street and Charles Street has been carried out. A detailed assessment has also been undertaken of observations made previously by Officers at BCBC, Planning Inspectors and other consultees.
- 1.32 The development framework has evolved taking into account all of these factors. This has led to a high-quality building layout and design and integration of the proposed development within a strong landscape structure.

Summary and Conclusions

- 1.33 Mulberry Homes has prepared a comprehensive scheme to redevelop the site for 70 dwellings and associated development including open space, children's play area, community route and landscaping.

- 1.34 The proposal has been subject to an environmental assessment and it is considered that the site can be developed and operated within acceptable environmental standards.