

Land at Hall Bank, Pontesbury (PBY018 & PBY029)

Delivery Statement



Herefordshire Diocesan Board of Finance

November 2013

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This delivery statement has been prepared by Smiths Gore on behalf of the Herefordshire Diocese Board of Finance (HDBoF) as part of the Councils preparation for the latest draft of the Site Allocations and Management of Development plan DPD (SAMDev). The statement relates to the site at Hall Bank in Pontesbury which has been identified within the Revised Preferred Options Draft of the plan as accommodating up to 60 dwellings, including 15% affordable, additional retail offer in the form of a village scale supermarket, parking and open space.
- 1.2 Through identifying and assessing a number of site specific circumstances and characteristics this statement will demonstrate that the Hall Bank site is the best option within Pontesbury for delivering the proposed mixed use development. It will also provide evidence to show that the type, scale and nature of the development is appropriate, deliverable and viable.
- 1.3 In order to achieve this, the statement will consider the suitability of the location both in a broad sense, regarding the settlement and its wider context, and a site specific sense. Site sustainability credentials and opportunities the site presents for enhancement of local sustainability will then be assessed. A rationale regarding the number and type of dwellings and a possible layout and phasing of the scheme are identified, with an indicative layout plan included at Appendix A (showing 63 units). Rationale will also be provided regarding the mix of uses on the site and a brief summary will be provided regarding the retail impact of the proposals. Other potential constraints will then be assessed (Landscape, Ecology etc) before the viability and deliverable nature of the site will be explained. Additional appendices (Appendix B and C) take the form of Technical Notes, prepared by Hydrock and PBA. Appendix B describes the accessibility, connectivity and impact of the proposals on the existing transport infrastructure and Appendix C describes the flood modelling work undertaken to identify the developable area of the site.

2.0 Site Delivery

2.1 Suitability of Location

- 2.1.1 Pontesbury benefits from a number of services and facilities including a senior and a primary school, a library, medical centre, day nursery, a number of public houses, religious buildings, children's play areas and public halls. Within the village centre there is also a post office, convenience store, pharmacy, restaurant, other retail outlets and a small business centre. There are also a number of bus stops on regular services. Given the scale and nature of the settlement all of these services and facilities are easily accessible from the site.
- 2.1.2 The land at Hall Bank is well located within the village, being in close proximity to a number of the local facilities and services as described above. In particular the site is within easy walking distance of the village centre, the medical centre, day nursery, a bus stop (on Hall Bank) with regular services, a play area and existing amenity green space. The primary and senior schools are located to the east of the village, on Bogey Lane, which is an 8 minute walk being approximately 0.4mile in length and all along pavements. At the western edge of the site there are also existing public footpaths which provide further permeability to the village and wider area including Station Road, the play area and the right of way along the former railway line. More detail regarding local facilities and connectivity is included with the transport Technical Note at Appendix B.

- 2.1.3 The site itself is more than capable of accommodating the mix and scale of uses proposed within the draft SAMDev document. The developable area of the site has been confirmed through the detailed flood modelling work undertaken prior to the revised preferred options draft of the plan. The total site area is a little over 4.5 hectares and the developable area 3.55 hectares.
- 2.1.4 The site sits between three existing roads on the south, east and west boundaries whilst the northern boundary is defined by the former railway line, now a public right of way. This gives the site a very well defined and enclosed setting. Furthermore it ensures that it has a very strong relationship with the existing development of the village. There are a number of residential properties along Station Road at the western side of the site whilst within the site and on its southern boundary are an existing day nursery and the medical centre. Further residential development is located on the southern side of Hall Bank, opposite the site. As such it is clear that the site is well located to existing residential development and facilities and services within this part of the village.
- 2.1.5 Services could be brought into the site from those which exist within the vicinity. All the necessary services exist to those properties along Hall Bank and on the basis that the primary vehicular access would be brought in via this route those services could also be brought in here too. Electricity is provided to existing properties around the site via overhead line and within the site this could easily be taken underground.
- 2.1.6 In light of these site specific facts and considerations it is clear that the site is both suitable for the development consulted upon in the broad sense within the context of Pontesbury and in the site specific sense. The sites scale, location, relationship with existing development, services and facilities within the village and the ease of which connectivity to existing utilities could be achieved make the site the ideal location for such a development within the village of Pontesbury.

2.2 Site Sustainability Credentials

- 2.2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) describes how the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The policies within the Framework, taken as a whole, constitute the Government's view of what sustainable development in England means in practice for the planning system. The Framework continues to describe how there are three dimensions to sustainable development, which are an economic role, a social role and an environmental role.
- 2.2.2 As described at 2.1 above, the site already performs extremely well in regards to its location being in close proximity to the services and facilities that the village of Pontesbury provides, as well of those in nearby towns and villages due to its location on bus stops, on regular bus services. These locational considerations provide a strong basis for the sustainability credentials of the site. However, there are other factors which make this site appropriate for such a development and the proposed mixed use development will result in significant enhancements to the overall sustainability of Pontesbury in regards to all three dimensions of sustainable development.
- 2.2.3 Mixed use developments are, by their very nature, a very sustainable form of development. Each dimension of sustainable development can be met and enhanced in this instance and a clear assessment of the benefits of the scheme in each regard will be outlined below, starting with the economic benefits.

Economic Benefits

- 2.2.4 The economic benefits of the mixed use scheme are varied and diverse with a number of benefits to the economy of the village and the wider economy of this area of Shropshire. The proposed retail unit on the site would obviously provide a relatively large number of jobs in a variety of roles. Jobs in retail often provide roles for a mix of needs from members of the local community as often full time, part time and shift work is available. Furthermore, the retail unit would also provide significant benefits to the economy of Pontesbury by reducing the loss of spend which presently leaves the village. Through providing a shop where the community can meet their grocery and main retail needs it is likely that those other shops within the village would benefit, as the residents would be less inclined to drive out of the village to shop. The addition of a car park within the village would also assist in this regard as it would result in linked trips to the new and existing shops and services within the village.
- 2.2.5 The construction of a new, purpose built day nursery to replace the existing run down unit would also result in an opportunity for expansion of the business and the securing of the existing jobs and further jobs provided by any further expansion. This business provides a good service to the local community providing jobs and securing finance within the village which would otherwise be lost. Through the replacement of the existing facility with a modern, purpose built building the business will be able to accommodate more children, staff and be a more attractive prospect to families in need of child care within Pontesbury.
- 2.2.6 The importance of providing and supporting employment provision is clearly set out in the Framework, the Growth and Infrastructure Acts and also echoed in the Government statement "Laying the foundations: A housing strategy for England". The strategy states that for every new home built, up to 2 new jobs are created for a year, and without building new homes economic recovery will take longer than it needs to. The Government Statement also confirms that 3 people are indirectly employed per new home. Therefore it is clear that the proposed development would have a significant and beneficial impact upon the local and wider employment market. For the development proposed (and in respect of the homes to be built only), this equates to the following:
- Construction jobs (1 year duration): up to 120
 - Indirect jobs (1 year duration): up to 180
 - Total new jobs: up to 300
- 2.2.7 The occupants of these properties would also have a positive impact upon the local economy. They would become a significant additional customer base supporting existing facilities and services within the village ensuring the settlement retains its vitality and viability as a sustainable settlement. Furthermore, the occupants would provide an increased and more diverse labour force for the existing business in the village and potential occupants for the existing office units. The proposals would therefore contribute positively towards economic growth and help meet this core principle of sustainable development in the Framework.

Social Benefits

- 2.2.8 The Framework describes one of the key social dimensions of sustainable development as supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations. The proposals at Hall Bank would obviously make a significant contribution to meeting the needs of the

community over the coming plan period. The units provided on site would be a mix of sizes, types and tenures in order to ensure a mix of occupants and a mix of options for a wide range of the community. A percentage of the scheme would also be affordable units, again in a mix of tenures, to ensure that those in housing need within the community can also find suitable accommodation at Hall Bank, rather than having to move away from the village.

- 2.2.9 Through the inclusion of the retail unit on the site and the new day nursery, services required by the community would also be catered for. These services would also provide jobs which would be easily accessible to the existing and new residents of Pontesbury. This would also result in opportunities for meetings between members of the community who might not otherwise come into contact with each other bringing together those who work, live and play in the vicinity.
- 2.2.10 The development would also integrate the currently cut-off and poorly overlooked children's play and recreation area which sits to the north west corner of the site. Additional public open space and green space would also be incorporated into the scheme to ensure sufficient outdoor space. Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. The development would also protect the existing rights of way across the site, namely the public footpath along its western boundary, and link into the existing rights of way running along the old railway line and informal walks to the north along Hinton Lane, resulting in better facilities for users in this regard.
- 2.2.11 Local aspirations included within the Parish Plan have identified objectives to provide additional village car parking, open space, opportunities to enhance the local retail offer and provide better integration of the recreation area. Furthermore the land off Hall Bank has been prioritised by the parish council for residential development because of its central location and close proximity to the existing area of play space. This allocation and the subsequent development will therefore go a considerable way toward meeting the aspirations of the community and meeting the need for housing and additional services and amenities that are required in the village over the course of the plan period. The allocation of this site would be a significant fillip for the community as they would recognise that the aspirations they set out within the parish plan are coming into fruition for the good of the community and community spirit. As such the scheme will ensure that the vitality of the village is sustained and that it would contribute positively towards social capital helping meet this core principle of sustainable development in the Framework.

Environmental Benefits

- 2.2.12 Again, there are a number of varying environmental benefits to the development of a mixed use scheme at Hall Bank within the village of Pontesbury. As described in detail above the site is extremely well located to existing services and facilities within the village as well as existing public transport routes. These facts, as well as the provision of a retail element on the site, mean that occupants of the dwellings would be able to walk to a number of these services and facilities without having to make use of private cars or vehicles. This would have a substantial benefit upon the environment due to this ability to make use of footpaths, bicycles and public transport. The addition of a retail unit would also enhance the overall sustainability of the settlement reducing the number of people who use vehicles to travel to more distant towns to shop and meet their daily needs.
- 2.2.13 The physical characteristics of the site would also allow for the protection and enhancement of the existing landscaping around its perimeter. This landscaping also

provides additional benefits in terms of any landscape impact of the scheme (which will be described in more detail below) so there are significant benefits to its protection for varying reasons. Additional planting within and around the perimeter of the site would produce significant benefits to biodiversity and the mix of species on site. Through the provision of two areas of public open space, including that area within the flood zone at the northern boundary of the site, it will ensure the protection of these green spaces in perpetuity meaning that they can have a positive impact upon the local environment and species within the locality.

2.2.14 By providing 60 units of accommodation in this intrinsically sustainable location it will reduce the need for the Authority to identify a site capable of accommodating these units in a less sustainable location. Through the provision of a mixed use development on the site these sustainable benefits are further increased, reducing the need to travel by car and the impact of emissions upon the wider environment. The proposals would therefore contribute positively towards environmental sustainability and help meet this core principle of sustainable development as set out in the Framework.

2.3 Housing Rationale, Layout and Phasing

2.3.1 The rationale for the housing to be delivered on this site has come out of a local desire on behalf of the parish council and within the Parish Plan to provide additional community facilities and services and to ensure that specific objectives for the community are brought forward. There is a general view in the village that the Hall Bank site has long been identified as having the potential to meet housing, parking, open space and linkage functions within the village.

2.3.2 The provision of 60 dwellings on the site will allow these community objectives to be achieved with more than adequate space being available to provide for each of the uses whilst also protecting the character of the locality and the important aspects of the site that already exist. An indicative layout plan showing how this arrangement could work has been included at Appendix A. The layout presents 63 units on the site at a density across the entire 4.51 hectare site of 14dph, which is a very low density of development. Not including the non-developable area of the site (within the flood zone), and leaving a developable area of 3.55 hectare, the density of development still sits at 18dph. This assessment clearly shows that the density of development on this site could be achieved which respects and reflects that of the existing settlement of Pontesbury. Furthermore this layout confirms that the necessary number of dwellings can be accommodated on site whilst the other uses would also comfortably be accommodated to ensure a well integrated, permeable and high quality village development which respects the site, village setting and wider locality.

2.3.3 The housing on site will provide for a number of different unit sizes to cater for a wide range of housing need including smaller, starter homes at the more affordable end of the open market and appropriate family homes of varying sizes. The scheme would also cater for 15% affordable housing in accordance with the latest needs assessments and affordable housing zones within Shropshire, published on 1st September 2013. This would mean that 9 units of accommodation would be made available, in a mix of affordable rent or shared equity, for people in local need and in perpetuity.

2.3.4 The scheme could be phased in order to allow the Council to have control over the level of development brought forward over the plan period. The site provides opportunities for a great deal of flexibility in this regard. However, an initial phase could involve the construction of the supermarket in the western side of the site and an initial development of approximately 20 dwellings in that part of the site as well as the replacement day nursery, to allow that business to relocate prior to the existing

building being removed. This would allow the access to be created and infrastructure to be connected to the site at the outset. A second phase of development could incorporate, the public open space and a further 20 dwellings. The third and final phase of development would be the final 20 dwellings to the rear of the site (the north) and the finalising of the site and remaining open space.

2.4 Retail Rationale

- 2.4.1 The proposed allocation is to include a food store extending to approximately 465 sq m gross, to act as a village store. The trading area is likely to be in the order of 380 sq m, with the balance of the floorspace used as a backup / warehouse area. An enhanced retail draw was identified within the Parish Plan as being a required service and the Hall Bank site has long been identified locally as being an appropriate site for such a development.
- 2.4.2 The Framework (paragraph 26) confirms that Local Authorities should require an impact assessment of retail proposals, not in a town centre and not allocated within a Development Plan, with a floorspace in excess of 2,500 sq m. The proposal falls well below this threshold, so an impact assessment would not be required.
- 2.4.3 The Framework (paragraph 25) also confirms that a sequential test assessment is not required for small scale rural development. The proposals would fall into this category and as such, the sequential test would not be required.
- 2.4.4 Notwithstanding the above, the existing village has very limited retail facilities including only a very small scale Co-operative and a florist, with floor space likely to be less than 150 sq m. The majority of the commercial uses in the village are service uses, including a hairdresser, tea rooms and dental surgery, where there is no overlap with the proposed retail unit. The proposed unit will act as a local shop for 'top up' convenience shopping and as such, will divert a small amount of trade from the larger supermarkets outside of Pontesbury, which fulfil the main food shop function for the community. The proposal would therefore serve to enhance self-containment of the settlement, since it would reduce the frequency of visits to larger supermarkets reducing leakage out of the settlement. It is unlikely that there would be any tangible impact upon the village facilities, indeed, the proposed development as a whole is likely to increase self-containment and provide additional local population to help support the existing village facilities.

2.5 Landscape Impact

- 2.5.1 As described above the site has well defined boundaries which would ensure that any development would be well enclosed, reducing any significant localised landscape impact. There are a number of mature trees on all sides of the site which would be protected and enhanced as part of any development. This would also aid with the integration of the development into the landscape.
- 2.5.2 The Councils Landscape Assessment Report (LAR) (which assessed the site as two parts in accordance with their respective reference numbers) identified that the vast majority of the site has a medium capacity to accommodate housing development. The section of the site which is considered to have a slightly lower capacity for accommodating housing development is that which is identified on the indicative layout plan (Appendix A) as making up public open space. This will ensure that the highest point of the site remains open, allowing the glimpsing views from the A488 to the wider countryside to be retained. Although views from the north would be affected to a limited degree the

LAR recognises that there are likely to be limited opportunities for this to happen due to the limited number of receptors to the north of the site.

- 2.5.3 The LAR also identified the area on the western side of the site as one of the key areas to be preserved and protected from development to ensure that the public right of way and stream retain their relatively tranquil nature. The layout plan also indicates that this area will be preserved as part of the scheme as it was never the intention to alter the public footpath in this area of the site. This also provides benefit by ensuring that the amenities of existing residents near to this boundary are protected.
- 2.5.4 The Council has also undertaken work to identify locally valued areas for protection. This assessment has shown that a significant proportion of respondents wished to retain and protect the character of the area to the south of the village, including the area around the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) towards Pontesford and Earls Hill. Responses also highlighted the area around the ford and the Plough public house as a particularly valued location, again to the south of the village. Responses regarding preferred directions of growth showed a majority preference for sites north of the A488, as is the case at Hall Bank.

2.6 Flood Risk

- 2.6.1 Precise and detailed flood modelling work has accurately indicated the extent of the likely flood zones taking account of the 1 in 100 year, 1 in 1000 year and 1 in 1000 year plus climate change scenarios. The report detailing the work undertaken, describing its findings and plans indicating the areas at risk of flooding at the site is included at Appendix C. This work has been undertaken in light of discussions with the Environment Agency and they have initially approved the methodology upon which the work was undertaken and are aware of the results of the modelling. This work has therefore addressed the Environment Agency's comments on the allocation, regarding flood risk and makes it clear that this is not a constraint to the development of the areas of the site identified in the indicative layout plan at Appendix A.

2.7 Ecology

- 2.7.1 The Council ecologist recognises that there are no known protected species on the site and that it is not in, adjacent to or within the buffer zone of a designated site. There would however be a need to undertake an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey to identify any suitable habitats and further surveys to identify whether any bats and reptiles make use of the site. A Habitat Regulations Assessment would also be required as the site lies within 3.5km of Stiperstones and Hollies Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- 2.7.2 This work can all be undertaken as part of the preparation process for a formal planning application once the site has been allocated. There would be considerable opportunity to enhance habitats for protected species on the site through increasing the density of boundary treatments and providing further native species planting in the green and open spaces within the site.

2.8 Land Ownership & Commitment to Deliver

- 2.8.1 The site is all owned by the HDBoF and can be made available for development as soon as is required and necessary. There are no other owners of the land and the HDBoF are fully behind the allocation of the land for the proposed development. The HDBoF have been happy to promote the land throughout the plan preparation process and would support the preparation of a formal planning application and subsequent delivery of the site.

- 2.8.2 Throughout the process a potential, local end user for the retail element of the scheme has been engaged and did in fact contact the HDBoF in this first instance, showing a clear desire to bring forward that element of the proposed allocation. Similarly, a local house builder has been engaged throughout the process and has shown a strong interest in being involved in the delivery of the housing and remaining elements of the scheme. As the plans have progressed through the SAMDev process further developers and parties have indicated an interest in the development of the site.
- 2.8.3 This developer and end user involvement and interest shows a clear ability to deliver the scheme on the basis that the market considers the proposed allocation to be a viable prospect worthy of investment. In this regard, an initial informal residual land value assessment has been undertaken which, on the basis of a number of assumptions, indicates that the scheme as proposed for 60 dwellings, a retail shop, a new day nursery and the necessary green space could be viable and delivered.
- 2.8.4 As such, it is clear that the site is available and that the proposed number of units and mix of development indicated would be a viable, and therefore deliverable, allocation. This assertion is supported through the keen interest from both an end user for the retail element and a local house builder.

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 This delivery statement, and the associated appendices, has demonstrated that the Hall Bank site is the best option within Pontesbury for meeting the development needs of the village and that the development is clearly appropriate, deliverable and viable. The key points in this regard are as follows:
- The site at Hall Bank is ideally situated within Pontesbury to accommodate this mix, type and scale of development. The site is located in easy walking distance of existing services and facilities within the village including the village centre, medical centre, both the primary and secondary school and community buildings whilst it is also located on regular service bus routes, to connect with wider settlements and services.
 - The physical characteristics of the site, its boundaries and its relationship with existing residential and other development in the area mean that it is well located and would integrate with ease into the existing settlement. Services and utilities could also easily be brought into the site to serve the proposed allocation.
 - Mixed use development is inherently sustainable whilst the location of the site in close proximity to existing services and public transport means that it has excellent sustainability credentials. The site will also provide numerous jobs to the local community as well as reducing their need to travel for shopping whilst retaining that spend within Pontesbury. There are also considerable social benefits in the form of a mix of homes, open space and jobs whilst the environmental credentials are also significant due to the location of the site.
 - It is the view locally that the Hall Bank site has always been considered the appropriate site for a mixed use development to meet the community's aims and objectives. A scheme for some 60 dwellings will ensure that the additional benefits of the site can be achieved and accommodated in the interest of the village community. The development will also bring forward a mix of housing

types, sizes and tenures to promote a sustainable community. The development of the site could be phased to allow a degree of control over delivery of the level of housing brought forward and the timing for each of the other uses at the site.

- Flood modelling work has taken place on site and identified the developable area. The proposed layout, landscaping and quality of the design will ensure that there is no adverse landscape impact in the locality, again an area where the community identified development should take place. Furthermore there are no known protected species on the site which lies outside of any specific designated areas.
- Transport and highways work has assessed the accessibility and connectivity of the site as well as the impact of the proposals on the existing infrastructure network. The report concludes that there are no significant highways and transportation reasons that should preclude the Council from including the proposed development site within the SAMDev document.
- This allocation will provide the opportunity to realise housing and other community aspirations identified within the Parish Plan which included the provision of additional village car parking, open space, opportunities to enhance the local retail offer and to provide better integration of the recreation area.



Appendix A
Indicative Layout Plan



Appendix B
Transport Technical Note



Appendix C

Flood Risk Technical Note



Planning Team

Steve Briggs
Taunton office
01823 445039
steve.briggs@smithsgore.co.uk

Ian Smith
Peterborough office
01733 559320
ian.smith@smithsgore.co.uk

Debbie Mackay
Edinburgh office
0131 561 7117
debbie.mackay@smithsgore.co.uk

Jo Robison
Darlington office
01325 462966
jo.robison@smithsgore.co.uk

Lee Scott
Petworth office
01798 345971
lee.scott@smithsgore.co.uk

Planning Services

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- Advice on strategy and approach
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- Pre-application and stakeholder negotiations
- Community consultation
- Preparation, co-ordination and submission of planning applications
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- Planning agreements
- Lawful development certificates
- Enforcement matters

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- Employment development
- Agricultural and equestrian projects
- Farm diversification
- Barn conversions
- Agricultural occupancy conditions
- Tourism and leisure development
- Conservation and historic buildings advice
- Renewable energy and energy conservation
- Rights of way