



PRE - APPLICATION REPORT REGARDING RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT WITH ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE AT LAND NORTH OF SEAFIELD ROAD, BILSTON (19/00641/PAC)

Report by Director of Education, Communities and Economy

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of a pre- application consultation submitted regarding residential development with associated engineering works, open space and landscaping at land north of Seafield Road, Bilston. The land comprises part of allocated housing site Hs16 in the Midlothian Local Development Plan 2017 (MLDP) which has an indicative capacity for 350 residential units.
- 1.2 The pre-application consultation is reported to Committee to enable Councillors to express a provisional view on the proposed major development. The report outlines the proposal, identifies the key development plan policies and material considerations and states a provisional without prejudice planning view regarding the principle of development.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Guidance on the role of Councillors in the pre-application process, published by the Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland, was reported to the Committee at its meeting of 6 June 2017. The guidance clarifies the position with regard to Councillors stating a provisional view on proposals at pre-application stage.
- 2.2 A pre-application consultation for residential development with associated infrastructure at land north of Seafield Road, Bilston was submitted on 22 July 2019.
- 2.3 As part of the pre-application consultation, a public event took place at Bilston Miners Welfare and Social Club on 12 September 2019, from 2pm. On the conclusion of the requisite 12 week consultation process the applicant could submit a planning application for the proposal. It is reasonable for an Elected Member to attend such a public event without a Council planning officer present, but the Member should (in accordance with the Commissioner's guidance reported to the Committee at its meeting in June 2017) not offer views, as the forum for doing so will be at meetings of the Planning Committee.

- 2.4 Copies of the pre application notices have been sent by the prospective applicant to the local elected members and the Bilston & Roslin and Damhead Community Councils.

3 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 In assessing any subsequent planning application the main planning issue to be considered in determining the application is whether the currently proposed development complies with development plan policies unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise.
- 3.2 The development plan is comprised of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan (June 2013) and the Midlothian Local Development Plan 2017 (MLDP).
- 3.3 The site is approximately 15.6 hectares of agricultural land with open views from the site westwards towards the Pentland Hills. The land comprises part of allocated housing site Hs16 in the Midlothian Local Development Plan 2017 (MLDP) which has an indicative capacity for 350 residential units.
- 3.4 As an allocated housing site within the established housing land supply, support for the early implementation of the site is supported. The specific policies any proposal is likely to be subject to include STRAT2 Strategic Housing Land Allocations; DEV2 Protecting Amenity within the Built-Up Area; DEV3 Affordable and Specialist Housing; DEV5 Sustainability in New Development; DEV6 Layout and Design of New Development; DEV7 Landscaping in New Development; DEV9 Open Space Standards; TRAN1 Sustainable Travel; TRAN5 Electric Vehicle Charging; IT1 Digital Infrastructure; ENV9 Flooding; ENV10 Water Environment; NRG6 Community Heating; IMP1 New Development; IMP2 Essential Infrastructure Required to Enable New Development to Take Place; and IMP3 Water and Drainage.
- 3.5 The site sits within a wider area of proposed development identified in the MLDP. The eastern part of the southern boundary adjoins the residential areas of Corby Craig Avenue and Corby Avenue Terrace, which is a modern development completed in 2012. The land to the west, up to the A703, also forms part of site Hs16, which was granted planning permission for 155 houses and 36 flats in 2018. The safeguarded route of the A701 Relief Road runs parallel to the northern boundary of this site, the exact location of which has still to be determined. The land between the northern boundary of this site and the A701 Relief Road is identified as safeguarded for consideration in the next local development plan once the route of the A701 Relief Road has been defined.
- 3.6 The Bilston Settlement Statement in the MLDP outlines a number of matters to be considered in the design of any proposed development (page 137). The plan notes that development of the site will depend on the delivery of the A701 Relief Road and that the capacity and layout of development on the site will be influenced by the eventual route of the

road. There will be a need to investigate the ground conditions considering part of the wider site for former landfill operations. The MLDP also states that the site will require significant landscaping to minimise the impact on the setting of Bilston and the wider views to the Pentland Hills, which include a 30m woodland belt along many parts of the northern and western boundaries.

- 3.7 The proximity of the dwellings to the new road line will be a material consideration. This is due to the potential loss of amenity to new residents from noise and air quality impacts from traffic. A detailed ground investigation has been completed for the new road line, which has determined that either the routes identified in the MLDP would be viable. The procurement for the project management work has reached the second stage, which will allow for the delivery of the next key stages, including preliminary survey, design and statutory procedures leading ultimately to construction. The more advanced the work for the Relief Road is, the more certainty there will be in assessing any effects on nearby dwellings, should a planning application be forthcoming.
- 3.8 If an application is submitted and there is a presumption in favour of residential development with associated engineering work, open space and landscaping development there may be a requirement for developer contributions towards infrastructure including the A701 Relief Road, education provision, equipped children's play provision, town centre improvements and a community facility. Additionally, any application would be subject to the need to provide affordable housing equal to or exceeding 25% of the total number of homes consented, as outlined in policy DEV3.

4 PROCEDURES

- 4.1 The Scottish Government's Guidance on the Role of Councillors in Pre-Application Procedures provides for Councillors to express a 'without prejudice' view and to identify material considerations with regard to a major application.
- 4.2 The Committee is invited to express a 'without prejudice' view and to raise any material considerations which they wish the applicant and/or officers to consider. Views and comments expressed by the Committee will be entered into the minutes of the meeting and relayed to the applicant for consideration.
- 4.3 The Scottish Government's Guidance on the Role of Councillors in Pre-Application Procedures advises that Councillors are expected to approach their decision-making with an open mind in that they must have regard to all material considerations and be prepared to change their views which they are minded towards if persuaded that they should.

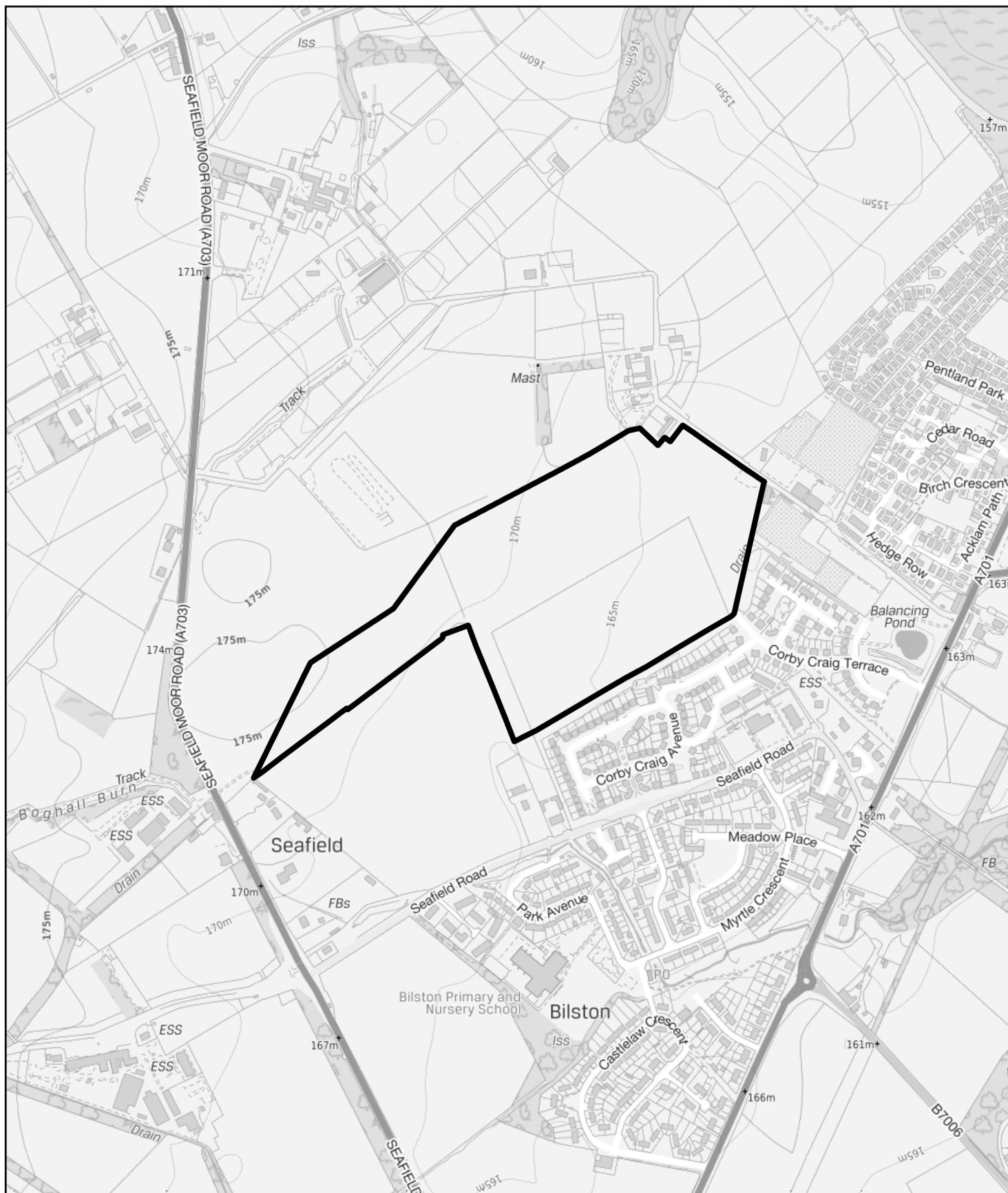
5 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes:
- a) the provisional planning position set out in this report;

- b) that any comments made by Members will form part of the minute of the Committee meeting; and
- c) that the expression of a provisional view does not fetter the Committee in its consideration of any subsequent formal planning application.

Mary Smith
Director of Education, Communities and Economy

Date:	1 October 2019
Application No:	19/00641/PAC (Available online)
Applicant:	Barton Willmore
Validation Date:	22 July 2019
Contact Person:	Fraser James
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Proposal of application notice for residential development
and associated infrastructure at Land North of Seafeld Road,
Bilston, Roslin

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