

**Report to:** PLANNING COMMITTEE

**Date:** 26 August 2015

**Report from:** Assistant Director of Housing and Built Environment

**Application Address:** **Worsham Farm - Land North of Wrestwood Road, Bexhill**

**Proposal:** Outline planning application for demolition of existing farm buildings and structures (other than retention of existing historic main barn and attached annex at Lower Worsham Farm and historic walls at Upper Worsham Farm) and redevelopment to form a residential-led mixed-use urban extension at North East Bexhill comprising up to 1,050 residential dwellings (30% affordable); up to 7,000sqm business floorspace (Use Class B1); up to a two-form entry primary school and children's nursery; up to 2,100sqm (Gross Internal Area) of associated and supporting uses within Use Classes A1-A5 and D1, including commercial premises, multi-use community building and sports pavilion/changing rooms and ancillary car-parking and service areas; public open space and amenity greenspace with sustainable drainage systems; and associated infrastructure including utility services on approximately 57 hectares of land, with all matters reserved other than three primary vehicular accesses from the Gateway Road and a secondary vehicular access from Wrestwood Road.

**Application No:** RR/2015/1760/P

**Recommendation:** Support the application

## Summary

This application is a consultation from Rother District Council in relation to a residential-led mixed use urban extension at North East Bexhill (NE Bexhill). The applicants are, Bovis Homes Ltd (the developer).

## **The Proposal**

In summary, the application is seeking outline planning consent for:

- Up to 1,050 residential dwellings;
- Up to 7,000m<sup>2</sup> commercial floorspace for uses within Use Class B1;
- Up to a 2 Form Entry Primary School and Children's Nursery;
- Up to 2,100m<sup>2</sup> (GIA) floorspace of associated and supporting uses within Classes A1-A5 and D1, including commercial premises; multi-use community building and sports pavilion/changing rooms and ancillary car parking and service areas;
- Retention of existing historic main barn and attached annex at Lower Worsham Farm;
- Retention of historic walls at Upper Worsham Farm;
- Public open space and amenity greenspace with sustainable drainage systems;
- Associated infrastructure, including utility services;
- Three primary vehicular accesses from the main entrance and a secondary vehicular access from Wrestwood Road; and
- Demolition of existing farm buildings and structures (other than those features mentioned above).

The proposals cover an area of 57 hectares of land to the North East of Bexhill (identified as part of the BX2 allocation in the saved Rother Local Plan (2006) with all matters reserved (except the primary access points).



## Planning Background & Site Issues

The planning application site lies between the residential neighbourhoods of Pebsham and Sidley to the north-east of Bexhill. The site is part of the Local Plan (2006) BX2 Allocation.

The majority of the site is currently used as farmland.

There are two farmsteads within the planning application site boundary, Upper Worsham Farm and Lower Worsham Farm. Each farmstead has buildings and structures associated with it. The majority of the agricultural buildings at Upper Worsham Farm are modern structures which are proposed to be demolished, although historic walls, currently used as a shelter will be retained. The agricultural buildings at Lower Worsham farm have more historic value and the majority are proposed to be retained and converted to other uses, where viable and feasible to do so.

Boulder Cottage is a Listed Building located in the centre of the area, accessed direct from Worsham Lane. Boulder Cottage is outside of the redline planning application boundary and does not form part of this planning application. Access to Boulder Cottage will remain from Worsham Lane. Worsham Farm Cottages and Worsham Farmhouse are located to the north, also outside of the redline planning application boundary, access to these properties will remain from Worsham Lane.

Immediately to the north west of the planning application site is Glovers Farm. This area is also part of the BX2 allocation and is currently in the control of SeaChange. SeaChange have obtained planning consent for 22,000 m<sup>2</sup> of commercial development at Glovers Farm, the first phase of which includes the development of a new access road. The new access road (Gateway Road) links the Bexhill to Hastings Link Road (due to be open later in late 2015/ early 2016), with Wrestwood Road. It is the main access road for the BX2 allocation and serves as the main access points for the BX2 new commercial area (Former Glovers Farm) and BX2 residential area (Worsham Farm).

The planning application site has three principal vehicular access points onto the Gateway Road. Two access points will serve the development area to the east of the Gateway Road. A further access will serve the mixed use (residential and commercial) development area to the west of the Gateway Road. Additionally, a secondary access is proposed from the planning application site direct onto Wrestwood Road.

Immediately to the south-west of the planning application site is a smaller area of land promoted separately through the planning system. This land is also part of the BX2 allocation and is currently controlled by Barratt Homes Ltd. Barratt Homes Ltd have secured planning consent for the residential use of the land (108 dwellings). A proposed bus/pedestrian/cycle route links the application site with the Barratts' land and through to Pebsham Lane. There are no other physical connections between the two sites, although strategic open space on the Bovis site will be accessible from the Barratt's site.

In support of the proposals the applicant has stated that the development of the site for housing has the potential to enable significant benefits for the area. These include:

- Provision of market and affordable residential units;
- Provision of a commercial/employment area for new and existing businesses and to create new jobs;
- Provision of public open space and landscaping; and

- Financial contributions through Section 106 Agreement to facilitate the upgrading of infrastructure within the local area.

### **Planning Considerations**

The proposed development of North East Bexhill and the Bexhill to Hastings Link Road forms part of the Planning Strategies in the adopted Rother and Hastings Local Plans and will provide additional housing and employment opportunities for the overall locality. The Combe Valley Countryside Park adjoins the proposed development area to the north and east.

### **Recommendation**

**That Rother District Council be advised that Hastings Borough Council supports planning application RR/2015/1760/P**