

## BRIEFING DOCUMENT FOR BRAMPFORD SPEKE PARISH COUNCIL 6 MARCH 2024

### PROPOSAL FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING AT STONILANDS

#### BRIEF HISTORY OF BSUP&C CLT

**2004** Both the parishes of Upton Pyne & Cowley and Brampford Speke recognised the need for more affordable housing for local people and began investigating ways to provide it.

**2010** Housing Needs Surveys (HNS) were carried out which confirmed a shortage of suitable housing in both. It was decided that the two parishes would work together to maximise expertise and to find and develop suitable sites. Residents from either parish would be eligible to bid for a vacancy wherever it occurred.

**2012** A Community Land Trust is a community benefit society and a non-profit making organisation regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. It was formed, with 10 directors fairly-evenly representing our two parishes.

**2015** The building of 7 affordable homes at Lake's Down was completed just before Christmas. All were let to locally-connected households. Throughout its 8 years it has been home to Brampford Speke applicants and currently 3 families are from Brampford Speke.

**2021** both parishes requested another Housing Needs Survey. Unsurprisingly, it continued to demonstrate a need with around 70% of respondents in favour of another small development.

**2023** Negotiations with Stonilands owner indicated that a fair deal could be struck and that we had a good chance of gaining planning permission and some public funding. Significantly, it also offered the possibility of a large area of community land to be held in public trust and thus protected from further development. Which brings us to where we are today.

The CLT currently has 46 members of which a dozen are actively engaged with the current Stonilands project. Six live in Upton Pyne, five in Brampford Speke and one in Cowley. It has tried to keep you informed through regular Speke Up articles, the development a website [www.bsupcclt.co.uk](http://www.bsupcclt.co.uk) and most recently a village hall drop-in event where 47 people registered attendance.

The focus was on discussing current thinking on design and layout to minimise visual and physical impact. If needed we could consider running these sessions again ? Tables also had information on other aspects of the project such as traffic, use of amenity land and potential tenancies. An appendix gives a brief summary of these issues.

An exit poll asked for level of support for the planned homes and community land. Of the 31 returned 20 were in favour and 6 were opposed. Our website questionnaire has 6 in favour and 2 opposed. So overall there are 76% of respondents favouring building some affordable homes for rent. Consider that the three housing needs surveys completed in the last 20 years also show a level of support around 70% and similar results in the 2012 referendum. **Therefore, the Parish Council has been given a clear mandate to progress with the proposed scheme at Stonilands. Albeit recognising that there is yet some detail to be agreed.**

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### **Appendix**

#### **DESIGN AND LAYOUT**

These proposals have been based on two main assumptions;

1. That the existing gateway access to Stonilands Field is the optimum solution from a highway design point of view; That the existing hedgerow between the field and the 'street' would broadly be retained (See Traffic Considerations below).
2. That the existing transformer and overhead power lines from Pound Cottage and across Stonilands field would be undergrounded, this removes the obstruction to the visibility splay (See1) and the pole in Pound Cottage's Garden.

We have been showing an evolution of four planning iterations: Options 1-4. These show a development of the design towards Option 4 which we have explored in more detail as it has generally been preferred to the others. It has the following main features:

3. There is one unified open space (offered to the Community) which lies at the East end of the land making it easily accessible from the village, giving a welcoming aspect to the entrance and also forming a buffer between the proposed housing and existing dwellings along the 'street'
4. The proposed housing layout is placed at the west end of the site to reduce its impact on the view of Stonilands field seen from Burr ridge Road.
5. The proposed dwellings are arranged to get the benefit of solar gain, facing both south East and South West, both 45deg away from due South. The main glazed areas get the benefit of a view and face their own private gardens. One group of houses faces the proposed Community Space thereby complying with the 'Secure by Design' recommendation that communal spaces be overlooked by housing to reduce the likelihood of antisocial behavior.
6. The layout is based on the section of The Brampford Speke Village Design Statement: 'Grouping of small agricultural buildings as an architectural precedent'. This refers to examples of farm buildings around a farmyard space. The proposal shows a communal 'yard' space surrounded by the houses. This enclosed and protected space encourages social interaction by the inhabitants and accommodates car parking, vehicle turnaround and planting.
7. The design of the proposed housing proposes that thermally efficient timber frame dwellings be located within generic agricultural portal frame barn structures. The elevations to be set back from the roof edges providing large overhangs which protect the timber rain screen cladding from the weather and the houses from excessive solar radiation in high summer. The overall effect is that the housing looks like, and has the texture of, agricultural barns.

8. Thought is given to reducing the height profile of the buildings using low pitch sinusoidal barn type roofing material. Due to the large overhangs, the eaves height of the buildings can be lower than in standard housebuilding. Additionally, the two single storey dwellings are placed uphill at the northern highest part of the layout and it is proposed that modest excavation (approx 1.0M) will allow for the building to be set down below the existing ground levels in parts.

## **TRAFFIC CONSIDERATIONS**

The CLT commissioned a traffic consultant to provide a report on access. His professional view is that a safe visibility splay, meeting highway standards, can be engineered whilst retaining or re-providing the adjacent section of hedgerow . The two-pole transformer would probably have to be moved, which would seem to be of benefit to the village and local residents. i.e. remove an unsightly structure and overhead lines across the field. Underground cabling would also mean that Pound Cottage could remove the pole from their garden.

In addition, the CLT carried out a traffic count in mid-November 2023. The period was chosen as it was out of the holiday season but whilst the school was open and between 07.45 and 09.15 when traffic was likely to be at a maximum. As a control, counts were also carried out at the same time at the exit of Lake's Down UP to give an estimate of possible additional traffic due to any new housing. The study found that on the 3 days recorded, there was no significant volume (on average a vehicle every 48 seconds) and no standing vehicles. The maximum impact of the proposed housing was estimated to be an average reduction to a vehicle every 46 seconds.

This is not to imply that there are no periods of heavy and sometimes stationery traffic but these are unlikely to be caused by families living in the affordable housing who are also very unlikely to be 2 car families.

## **AMENITY LAND**

The prime benefits of the amenity land were seen to be the protection from any further building plus a recreational green space for villagers and their children.

The concept has been well received with support about 3:1 in favour. Suggested uses of the land seem to be pointing towards some kind of re-wilding and a grassed area for village events or exercise. Our suggested plan is that we form a steering group from local enthusiasts.

However, there is concern from some quarters that the area will encourage drug abuse and antisocial behaviour. We should be able to learn from nearby parishes, who have amenity areas, as to how they deal with these issues. For example; the area could be closed off or have restricted access and just kept tidy with minimal maintenance, until we agree an acceptable solution.

As the land is to be held in trust for the benefit of the parish then it seems irresponsible that this once in a lifetime opportunity is lost to you and future generations.