
SUPERSEDED

Land adjacent to Common Road, Wressle Planning Statement

Mr C Morley

November 2019

Land adjacent to Common Road, Wressle

Prepared on Behalf of Mr C Morley

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Contents	Page
1.0 Introduction	1
2.0 The Application Site and Surroundings	2
3.0 The Proposed Development	4
4.0 Planning Policy Context	5
5.0 Planning Assessment	11
6.0 Summary and Conclusions	18

Figures

- 2.1 Satellite Image highlighting the Site in red.
- 4.1 The Settlement Boundary for Wressle as defined by the Housing & Employment Land Allocations DPD (2016).
- 5.1 The proposed Layout Plan.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Mr C Morley (hereafter referred to as 'the Applicant') to support an outline planning application submitted to North Lincolnshire Council (hereafter referred to as 'the Council') for the proposed construction of 4 detached dwelling houses at Land adjacent to Common Road, Wressle (hereafter referred to as the 'Site').

Application Documents

1.2 The application comprises the following documents:

- Application Forms;
- Site and Scheme Drawings prepared by Evans McDowall Architects;
- Design and Access Statement prepared by Evans McDowall Architects;
- Heritage Assessment - PCAS Archaeology Ltd; and,
- Planning Statement prepared by Barton Willmore.

Structure of Statement

1.3 This report is structured as follows:

- Section 2.0 provides details of the Application Site and surroundings;
- Section 3.0 outlines the Proposed Development;
- Section 4.0 summarises the relevant planning policy context;
- Section 5.0 provides an assessment of the proposed development against relevant planning considerations; and
- Section 6.0 contains a summary and conclusions arising from the above including the scheme's compliance with the NPPF and Core Strategy.

2.0 THE APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The application Site is approximately 0.32ha in area, located to the south of Common Road, Wressle. It lies outside but adjacent to Wressle's development boundary but is not categorised as high-quality agricultural land.
- 2.2 The south eastern and south western boundaries are open and used as pasture, for the grazing of horses. The north western boundary fronts Common Road and the north western boundary adjoins existing residential development.
- 2.3 The settlement of Wressle is situated 500m to the neighbouring village of Broughton which provides a number of local services including a pre-school, primary school, shops, pharmacy, post office, two churches, two pubs, a working men's club, a community and sports centre and allotments. The Site sits on the south east edge of Wressle, closest to Broughton and within recognised walking distance, and can be accessed via street lit public footpaths.
- 2.4 The local secondary school is situated in Brigg - approximately 3.5 miles south east of Wressle.
- 2.5 In terms of public transport, Wressle benefits from a local bus service. The bus service operates between Brigg and Scunthorpe and provides connections to neighbouring towns and villages. The bus service operates Monday to Saturday and provides connectivity for residents to commute to work or to various colleges, employment facilities as well as health, retail and recreation facilities.
- 2.6 The location of the Site in relation to the Wressle is shown on the satellite image below, edged in red.

Figure 2.1: Satellite Image highlighting the Site in red.



3.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1 The Applicant seeks outline planning permission for the construction of 4 detached dwellings on the Site. The proposed dwellings are single storey in height in keeping with the adjacent dwellings and it is envisaged that they will be finished in materials to match the local vernacular, with spacious front and rear gardens. It is proposed that access will be gained via Common Road.

Planning history

3.2 A Pre-Application enquiry was submitted in June 2018 proposing residential development for up to 5 dwellings (Ref; PRE/2018/103). At the time of submission, the Council conceded that they had a 3.9 year supply of housing and that the council couldn't demonstrate a 5YHLS. For the reasons outlined within the Statement we still believe this to be the case.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 4.1 The Council are in the process of preparing a new Local Plan, that will replace the Core Strategy and the Housing & Employment Land Allocations DPD. The Preferred Options North Lincolnshire Local Plan will be out for public consultation in January 2020, with adoption likely in 2021.
- 4.2 It is considered that the following policies within the North Lincolnshire Core Strategy (2011) and the Housing & Employment Land Allocations DPD (2016), together with the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF'), are of relevance.

National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework')

- 4.3 Paragraph 11 outlines the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which states that development that accords with the development plan should be approved without delay. Where a development plan is out of date, proposals should be approved unless harm significantly and demonstrably outweighs the public benefits.
- 4.4 The Council claim that they can demonstrate a 5YHLS however Council's position is marginal (+6 units) and relies on completions of all permissions and allocated sites to date. Such completion rates are unrealistic and as such we believe that the development policies are effectively out-of-date.
- 4.5 Key to this application is indent (d) of paragraph 11, which explains that where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date development should be granted unless:
- i. the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
 - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.
- 4.6 Footnote 7 of the NPPF elaborates on this point stating that this includes, for applications involving the provision of housing, situations where the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.
- 4.7 The Core Strategy (2011) policies which relate to the supply of housing are therefore considered to have limited weight in decision making. As a result, emphasis is put on Paragraph 78 of the NPPF. It states as follows:

“To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.”

- 4.8 The proposed development on the Site is not considered to be isolated due to its proximity to the settlement boundary and would appear to meet the above criteria – supported, in part by its close proximity to the nearby settlement of Broughton less than 0.5 km away. The small scheme proposed would sensitively support new housing in a sustainable location, serving to enhance the vitality of Wressle and surrounding villages.

Assessment of Five-Year Housing Land Supply

- 4.9 The previously published data relating to the period between April 2016–March 2021 the Council acknowledged that they could only demonstrate a housing land supply of 3.9 years.
- 4.10 In 2018 the Council’s 5-year housing land supply (‘5YHLS’) position was debated by the Planning Inspectorate through an appeal (APP/Y2003/W/17/3185658), where it was concluded that they could not demonstrate a 5YHLS.
- 4.11 More recently however, the Council’s assessment of 5YHLS covering the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2024 summarises that North Lincolnshire currently has a 5YHLS of deliverable sites with a total of 2424 dwellings. The only reason this situation has changed is because the council can now calculate their housing requirement based on the Standard Methodology figure which is much lower than the adopted Core Strategy requirement.
- 4.12 The margin of oversupply is miniscule in comparison at just +6 units. In calculating the deliverable supply of dwellings, the Council have included all sites with planning permission and/or all sites allocated on 19th July 2019. This list includes:
- Sites with full planning permission;
 - Sites with outline planning permission;
 - Sites under construction; and
 - Sites allocated for housing through the Housing and Employment Land Allocations Development Plan Document.
- 4.13 The chances of all sites with planning permission, outline permission, sites allocated for housing and sites under construction are completed is extremely unlikely, and individually some consents and/or allocations will never be developed. Historically there has never been a 100% completion rate in North Lincs.

- 4.14 Paragraph 75 of the NPPF introduces the Housing Delivery Test which effectively looks back at past housing delivery/completion over 3 years and assumes minimum completion rates of 85%, which in due course will rise to 95%. The completion rate in North Lincs over the past three years is 73% which is measured against a requirement of 1,418 units. This is a significant reduction on the actual housing requirement set out in the Adopted Core Strategy, which would have been 2,262 over 3 years and the delivery rate would have only been 46%, which in our view would represent a true indication of delivery.
- 4.15 The Council's completion rates and land supply is extremely likely to be lower when accurate lead-in times are attributed to the larger sites which have been identified by the Council as being within the 5YHLS calculation. As such, as set out above, we believe the Council's land supply position is significantly worse than stated.
- 4.16 Following the publication of the revised NPPF, Local Planning Authorities now have to provide specific evidence to demonstrate that sites included within their 5YHLS are genuinely deliverable. No information is included with the Council's 5YHLS note which indicates that the Council have sought confirmation from landowners that sites are deliverable, and there are question marks regarding the robustness of the supply.
- 4.17 What is very clear is the Council cannot rely solely on the sites within 5YHLS coming forward in full, on time, in order to main the supply, giving it can only be achieved with a surplus of 6 units. As such they need to continue approving planning applications to ensure that if sites within the 5YHLS don't come forward, there are excess units which can be relied upon.

Core Strategy (2011)

- 4.18 In line with the saved Policy RD2 of the North Lincolnshire Adopted Local Plan (NLLP) (2003), Policy CS2 outlines that:

"Any development that takes place outside the defined development limits of settlements or in rural settlements in the countryside will be restricted. Only development which is essential to the functioning of the countryside will be allowed to take place. This might include uses such as that related to agriculture, forestry or other uses which require a countryside location, or which will contribute to the sustainable development of the tourist industry."

- 4.19 The Core Strategy therefore restricts new residential development beyond the defined limits of Wressle's settlement boundary. The settlement boundary for Wressle is shown below in Figure 4.1, highlighting how the Site falls beyond it. However, in light of the Council's failure to provide a robust and consistent 5YHLS, this policy is deemed to be out of date due to the restrictions it places on housing supply.

- 4.20 Policy CS3 supports CS2 further, outlining how Wressle is subjected to development limits due to its categorisation as a Rural Settlement under the adopted Core Strategy.
- 4.21 Policy CS8 outlines how *"New housing within the rural settlements will create opportunities for small scale infill development that maintains the viability of the settlement and meets identified local needs without increasing the need to travel."*
- 4.22 The proposed development is certainly small scale and the overall proposal for just 4 new houses will only have a minimal impact minimal on the landscape in a residential location. Whilst the proposal therefore is contrary to policy CS3, the restrictive nature of the policy is contrary to national guidance when it is considered that the Council cannot provide a robust 5YHLS. The Council's 5YHLS position is marginal, only 6 dwellings over the threshold, and relies on an unrealistic completion rate that has never been achieved. Restrictive policies such as this are therefore out of date and are afforded no weight.

4.23 Policy CS8 also states:

"Development on greenfield sites will only be allowed where it can be demonstrated that this will bring additional community benefits, contributing to building sustainable communities and is acceptable in terms of its impact on the high-quality environment of the urban space and adjoining countryside."

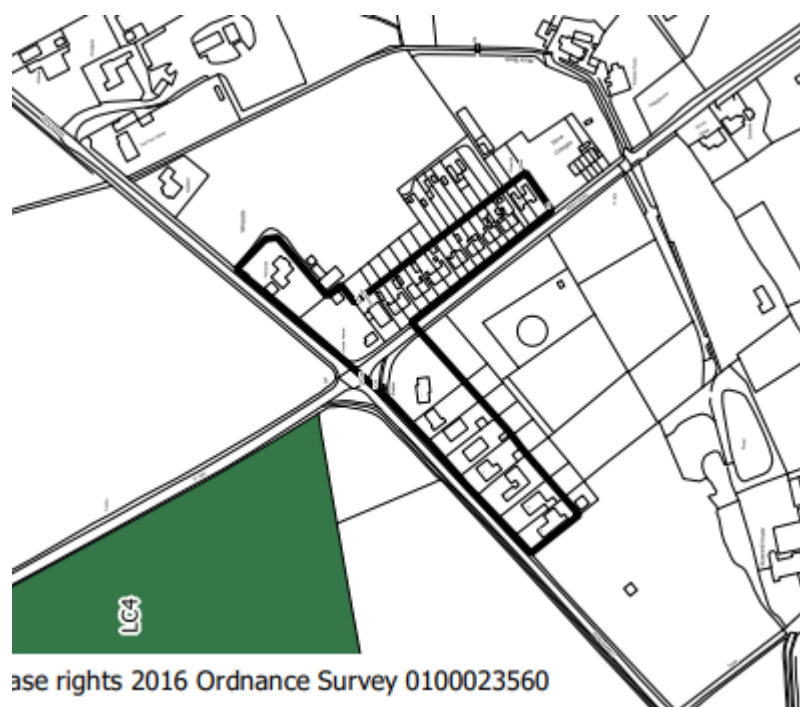
- 4.24 This application reflects the aspirations of Policy CS8, proposing a development which will contribute to the support of local services and the sustainability of Wressle and the villages beyond. The quality of the design proposals will match up to that of the high-quality environment which the Council is keen to protect.
- 4.25 Policy CS9 of the Core Strategy requires that in new residential housing developments of 3 or more dwellings in rural settlements, provision must be made for an element of affordable housing. This policy seeks to achieve a target of 10% in Rural Settlements.
- 4.26 However, Planning Practice Guidance ('PPG') published in May 2016 outlines that contributions should not be sought from developments of 10-units or less. Policy CS9 is therefore not in line with national policy and so is classed as out of date and afforded no weight.

Housing & Employment Land Allocations DPD (2016)

- 4.27 The map below indicates the settlement boundaries for Wressle as defined by the Housing & Employment Land Allocations DPD (2016), with the proposed application site edged in red. It is clear that the settlement boundary has been drawn around the existing residential

dwellings and that such a restrictive approach will only result in the settlement starting to stagnate.

Figure 4.1: The Settlement Boundary for Wressle as defined by the Housing & Employment Land Allocations DPD (2016).



Policy Conclusions

- 4.28 As the Council cannot demonstrate a robust 5YHLS, Policies CS2 and CS3 of the Core Strategy are considered out of date. As such, paragraphs 14 and 49 of the Framework take precedence, giving greater weight to decision making in favour of sustainable development. The restriction of new housing beyond Wressle's settlement boundary is therefore weakened.
- 4.29 Further to this, the small-scale and sensitive nature of the development, in keeping with the dwellings immediately opposite, goes a long way to support the overarching aspirations of the adopted local plan, seeking to complement the existing settlement of Wressle through layout and design. The net increase by 4 new dwellings will have an insignificant effect on the appearance and character of the surrounding area and would provide needed homes which in turn can contribute to the sustainability of the settlement and its facilities.
- 4.30 At paragraph 78 the Framework supports sustainable development in rural areas where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. The Framework urges planning policies identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will

support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village - such as Wressle - may support services in a village nearby - such as nearby Broughton.

5.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

5.1 This section of the statement identifies the main planning issues and provides an analysis of how the development proposals accord with planning policy at all levels. The analysis is ordered according to the following themes:

1. The Principle of Development;
2. Design Considerations;
3. Highways Safety;
4. The Natural Environment;
5. The Historic Environment;
6. Site Specific Infrastructure; and
7. The Benefits of the Proposed Development.

1. The Principle of Development

5.2 In accordance with S38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, development should be carried out in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. It is considered that, although the development plan comprises the saved policies of the North Lincolnshire Local Plan, the Core Strategy, and the Housing and Employment Land Allocations Plan, the Framework is a material consideration that should be given significant weight in the determination of the Application.

Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

5.3 At the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development which is considered to be embedded in both the plan-making and decision-taking process of the planning system.

5.4 The Framework states at paragraph 11 that in terms of plan-making, local planning authorities should 'positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area, and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change' and that 'strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing'. In terms of determining planning applications local planning authorities must approve planning applications for sustainable development without delay that are in accordance with an up to date Local Plan.

5.5 The presumption in favour of sustainable development is promoted through both policy making and decision taking in the provisions of paragraph 11 of the Framework. It is clear within the Framework that where a development plan is absent, silent or out of date,

planning permission should be granted without delay unless any adverse impact of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of doing so.

- 5.6 The North Lincolnshire Local Plan was adopted in 2003 and as per paragraph 215 of the Framework, the Plan is out of date and the amount of weight that can be attributed to the policies within the Plan is dependent upon their compliance with the Framework. It is demonstrated within this section of the statement that the relevant policies within the Local Plan and subsequent Core Strategy do not accord with the Framework and no weight can be attributed to them.
- 5.7 This outline application seeks to deliver 4 dwellings and as per paragraph 49 of the Framework, the presumption in favour of sustainable development should be applied, providing it can be demonstrated that the site is sustainable. In addition, as the Council cannot demonstrate a robust 5YHLS, all policies relevant to the supply of housing are considered out of date.
- 5.8 Sustainable development is defined within the Framework as having three dimensions – an economic role, a social role and an environmental role. Following the publication of the Framework, greater importance has been placed upon the economic benefits that development can bring, whilst empowering the planning system to deliver both current and future economic needs. The Framework places a firm emphasis upon the need for planning to be positive and to encourage and deliver much needed growth and development, including the supply of housing.
- 5.9 As set out below, the development proposed is highly sustainable and as such the application should be approved to avoid stagnation in Wressle and in the interests of more general growth, housing delivery and supporting rural economies.

Sustainability

- 5.10 The settlement of Wressle is defined within the NLLP as a “*Smaller Rural Settlement*”. There is an acceptance that a small amount of residential development is suitable in the settlement, but that it must adhere to several policy restrictions. Wressle has localised services and facilities that can be accessed within the adjacent village settlement of Broughton. As Wressle is relatively well served by public transport this approach complies with the NPPF in that development would support services and facilities in nearby villages (and vice versa); it is therefore sustainable. Whilst residents of the site would in certain instances travel via by private car to access services, this is acknowledged in the Framework as being part of rural life.

- 5.11 In addition, paragraph 78 of the Framework states that development in one settlement, can support services in a village nearby. The settlements of Broughton, Scawby and Brigg are all within a short distance of Wressle – as is Scunthorpe only 4 miles away - and as such it is considered that the requirements of paragraph 78 would be achieved with this development. It is explicit in the opening sentence of paragraph 78 that such forms of development are sustainable.

Five Year Housing Land Supply

- 5.12 In the Council's most recent assessment North Lincs claim to have a 5YHLS of deliverable sites by a margin of just +6 units.
- 5.13 As discussed in paragraphs 4.14 of this report the Housing Delivery Test looks back at past housing delivery/completion over 3 years and assumes a minimum completion rate of 85%, rising to 95%. The completion rate in North Lincs over the past 3 years is 73% so it is clear that the marginal oversupply of 6 units will not be achieved. As such we believe the Council's land supply position is significantly worse than stated.
- 5.14 The Framework states that local policies relating to housing land supply are out of date and can be given no weight in the determination of the application.
- 5.15 The presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out in paragraph 11, therefore applies and the application should only be refused where any adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. The remainder of this section of the statement demonstrates that there are no adverse impacts that outweigh the significant benefits.

2. Design Considerations

Design

- 5.16 Paragraphs 124 to 132 (inclusive) of the Framework deal exclusively with the requirement for good design. They confirm the importance of achieving high quality design in residential developments and are reflected in Policy CS5 of the North Lincolnshire Core Strategy. It outlines that:

"All new development in North Lincolnshire should be well designed and appropriate for their context. It should contribute to creating a sense of place. The council will encourage contemporary design, provided that it is appropriate for its location and is informed by its surrounding context. Design which is inappropriate to the local area or fails to maximise opportunities for improving the character and quality of the area will not be acceptable."

- 5.17 In accordance with national and local planning policy, the design of the proposed development will have regard to the existing built environment surrounding the Site, the nature of the Site and surrounding townscape.

Built Environment

- 5.18 The Site sits immediately adjacent to established residential development with open fields and countryside bound the Site to the south and south west.

Housing Mix

- 5.19 The 4 detached single storey dwellings will be of sufficient size, quality, desirability and energy efficiency that can support and provide good quality new housing in line with the Framework.
- 5.20 Policy CS9 of the Core Strategy requires that in new residential housing developments of 3 or more dwellings in rural settlements, provision must be made for an element of affordable housing which is accessible to those unable to complete in the general housing market. This policy seeks to achieve a target of 10% in Rural Settlements. A target of 70% of the affordable homes will be provided for rent, with the remaining provided as an intermediate tenure, to be agreed on a site by site basis. Wherever possible, affordable housing should be provided on-site, but an off-site contribution may be acceptable where: a) Management of the affordable housing on-site cannot be secured effectively; or b) Affordable housing provision elsewhere in more suitable settlements is more likely to contribute towards the creation of mixed communities.
- 5.21 However, Planning Practice Guidance ('PPG') published in May 2016 outlines that contributions should not be sought from developments of 10-units or less. Policy CS9 is therefore not in line with national policy and is out of date and afforded no weight.

Open Space

- 5.22 Policy CS16 outlines that development proposals are required to improve the quality and quantity of accessible landscape, greenspace and waterscape where appropriate and to address local deficiencies. There is also the requirement to protect trees, hedgerows and historic landscape to be specified where appropriate.
- 5.23 All properties within the development will be afforded generous private gardens to provide private amenity space, with the layout plans included in Figure 5.1 below.

Figure 5.1: The proposed Layout Plan.



3. Highways Safety

Proposed Vehicular Access

- 5.24 New driveways are proposed in a linear layout to reflect the plots of the neighbouring detached dwellings. The proposed dwellings will be set back from the road to reflect nearby development and to create sufficient space for off road parking facilities.
- 5.25 Each property will be provided with sufficient parking facilities as per highways authority requirements. The details of the parking arrangements would be agreed through future reserved matters applications.
- 5.26 It is not considered that the net increase in dwellings will lead to significant increases in vehicular movements that will lead to conditions prejudicial to highways safety. Indeed, the

Framework is clear that a planning application should only be refused on highways grounds where the impacts would be severe. This would clearly not be the case in this instance.

4. Natural Environment

Landscaping

- 5.27 The proposals will include the planting of a new trees, thus enhancing the visual amenity of the site.

Ecology

- 5.28 No major ecological constraints are believed to be associated with plans to develop this land.

5. Historic Environment

- 5.29 A search using the Historic England website in November 2019 revealed that there are no Listed Buildings or Heritage assets within the immediate vicinity or within the wider settlement. As such it is not considered that the proposal will adversely impact upon the setting of the listed building.

- 5.30 Wressle does not have a Conservation Area and as such it is considered unlikely that the proposal will adversely impact upon heritage assets.

- 5.31 PCAS Archaeology Ltd. was commissioned to compile a Heritage Assessment for a proposed residential development on land adjacent to Common Road in Wressle, North Lincolnshire.

- 5.32 The discovery of a Bronze Age barrow on the edge of the East Wood indicates that there is likely to have been a settlement in the wider study area but not specifically within the application site.

- 5.33 The report concludes that there is no evidence of prehistoric and Roman activity within the site itself and that there is no evidence of any settled activity on or near the site.

6. Site Specific Infrastructure

Flood Risk

- 5.34 The Site falls within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore considered to represent a low flood risk.

7. The Benefits of the Proposed Development

5.35 The Framework makes clear that there are three elements to sustainability – economic, social and environmental. It is therefore appropriate to consider the economic, social and environmental benefits which will be provided by the proposed development.

5.36 The economic benefits which will be delivered by the proposed development can be summarised as follows:

- Employment and job creation during the construction of the development;
- Inward investment to the local economy; and
- Provision of New Homes Bonus.

5.37 The social benefits which will be delivered by the proposed development can be summarised as follows:

- The delivery of much needed housing within North Lincolnshire; and
- Assistance in sustaining local business and rural communities.

5.38 The environmental benefits which will be delivered by the proposed development can be summarised as follows:

- The provision of a landscaping scheme that will help to further enhance the visual amenity of the area whilst also enhancing biodiversity.

5.39 The proposed development will therefore lead to a number of public benefits that should be given significant weight in the determination of the application. It is considered that these benefits significantly and demonstrably outweigh any harm that may arise from the development.

6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Mr C Morley to support an outline planning application for the proposed construction of 4 residential dwellings at Land off Common Road, Wressle.
- 6.2 In the most recent assessment, the Council claim to have a 5YHLS of deliverable sites by a margin of just +6 units. This Planning Statement highlights that the Council cannot demonstrate a robust 5YHLS based on the fact that the completion rate in North Lincs over the past 3 years is 73% against a Standard Methodology assumption of 85% (rising to 95%). It is clear that the marginal oversupply of 6 units will not be achieved.
- 6.3 In such circumstances the Framework states that local policies relating to housing land supply are out of date and can be given no weight in the determination of the application and paragraph 49 of the Framework is of relevance.
- 6.4 Paragraph 49 confirms that the Council's planning policies that are relevant to the supply of housing, are out-of-date and should be given limited weight in the determination of the Application. This includes policies which define settlement boundaries and those which prevent residential development outside of such boundaries in rural settlements.
- 6.5 In addition, the Council's lack of a 5YHLS triggers paragraph 11 of the Framework (footnote 7) which means that where a development plan is out-of-date, planning permission should be granted unless *"any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole."*
- 6.6 Notwithstanding our position with regards to the Council's inability to demonstrate a robust 5YHLS, should they maintain their position, the development is still considered to be acceptable, given its compliance with paragraph 78, which would confirm the proposal is sustainable, the fact that it would not lead to harm, and it would provide public benefits as outlined within this statement.
- 6.7 The fact that the Council claim to have a 5YHLS is not a reason to stop approving planning applications for residential development, a fact which has been confirmed by the Planning Inspectorate at appeal. Furthermore, the Council's 5YHLS is so precarious, that they need to ensure a supply of new planning permissions come through the system, and this proposal of 4 units would assist the Council in maintaining their supply.

- 6.8 This Planning Statement has demonstrated that the proposal will lead to public benefits, namely the provision of much needed housing in an area where there is an identified need, and that the development would not lead to harm.
- 6.9 As a result, the planning application should be approved without delay, as per paragraph 11 of the Framework.