

3rd November 2011



Proposed residential development on behalf of Rowland Homes at Willington Lane and Green Lane, Kelsall

Thank you for taking the time to respond to the consultation leaflet that was distributed in August and for attending the public exhibition which was held on 2nd September. We have sought to take account of your views and have amended the scheme, where possible, to reflect the issues raised.

Please find below a summary of the key issues that have been raised, along with our responses.

Highways

▪ Concerns regarding highway safety/ traffic congestion

While Government guidance indicates that the proposal is of too small a scale to require a Transport Statement, to allay concerns, a Transport Statement has been prepared, which has found that there will be minimal impact upon the local highway network. A traffic survey revealed that both Willington Lane and Green Lane are very lightly trafficked and recorded speeds which are well within the accepted range set out within Government guidance. However, despite these findings, Rowland Homes are still proposing to introduce measures to increase safety on Green Lane and Willington Lane as an added benefit to the local community. These measures will be set out in the Transport Statement which will accompany the planning application and shall be finalised following discussions with the council.

▪ Can a satisfactory access be achieved from Green Lane onto Willington Lane?

Transport engineers have discussed access to both sites with the Highways Authority throughout the design process. The submitted application is supported by the Highways Authority and fully accords with relevant standards in terms of visibility splays and detailed design matters. Rowland Homes understand residents concerns regarding this junction and will therefore be discussing in further detail with the council a potential range of measures to further improve this junction. The options are set out in detail in the Transport Statement which will accompany the application.

• Is Green Lane suitable to serve 14 houses?

Some residents have expressed concerns that Green Lane is not suitable to be used as an access for the originally proposed 14 houses due to its narrowness and inability to cope with increased traffic levels. The Transport Statement shows traffic movements would not significantly increase. However, as a result of the consultations, Rowland have taken residents concerns into consideration and have now reduced the number of houses proposed to nine, three of which are bungalows for the over 55s. This will mean a reduction in the number of cars on the lane,



associated with the proposal. Rowland are also proposing to widen a section of Green Lane, at the proposed access point, in order to allow for vehicles to pass side by side

- **There is no footpath on Green Lane making it dangerous**

Unfortunately Green Lane is not wide enough for Rowland to introduce a footpath, however new traffic calming measures are being proposed by Rowland that will seek to ensure the safety of pedestrians on this road. These measures are set out in the Transport Statement which will be available for viewing online once the planning application has been submitted. Along with traffic calming measures, Rowland are proposing to move the school bus stop from its current position on Willington Lane to a position closer to the Church Street junction, which will reduce the number of children walking down Green Lane.

- **What are the parking arrangements?**

A sufficient number of parking spaces will be provided for both sites in accordance with Government and local guidance. Plans showing the layout of the proposed scheme will be available to view online on submission of the application.

Services

- **There is insufficient capacity within existing foul sewers in the area, additional development will only add to this issue.**

Through the planning application process Rowland have been required to demonstrate that the site can be served by existing infrastructure, or where it cannot, demonstrate what upgrade works are required to accommodate the proposed development. Where possible, Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDS) will be provided and mechanisms will be put in place to ensure that existing water runoff rates from the Willington Lane site so not exceed current run off rates. Utility providers such as United Utilities have already been engaged with and will be further consulted by the Council throughout the planning application process.

Shared Ownership Housing

- **How can I find out more information on the shared ownership housing?**

Rowland Homes are currently in talks with a Registered Social Landlord who are interested in taking over the shared ownership scheme once built by Rowland. As matters progress more information will become available and Rowland will be contacting those who have expressed an interest in these houses and bungalows

- **How will the developer ensure that affordable housing remains so after original occupants sell the property?**

As part of the planning process, the council requires a S106 legal agreement to be agreed. This agreement will form a legal basis between the site owner / applicant and the council for matters such as open space and affordable housing. With regards to the latter, certain criteria will be included in the agreement that will provide occupancy criteria and detail how the housing will remain affordable housing in perpetuity.

- **What is defined as local people and how will the developer ensure that these houses go to local people?**

As above, this will be set out in the S106 legal agreement to ensure that local people are given priority. While the exact meaning of 'local' will be agreed with the council during the application process, it is anticipated that people already living in Kelsall, working in Kelsall or with a family association with Kelsall will be given priority.

- **Why can't the shared ownership houses be incorporated onto the Willington Lane site?**

The Green Lane site is classed as an 'exception site' under local planning policy, as it is on the edge of the existing built up area of Kelsall. Local policy allows for the development of such sites for provision of affordable dwellings. Development of the Green Lane site for 100% affordable housing will allow Rowland to provide four more affordable houses than required by local planning policy, three of which will be bungalows, to the benefit of Kelsall and local residents and meeting a specific need highlighted by the council.



Housing Growth

- **Kelsall does not require further growth**

Following a long period of housing restraint (which was put in place by Chester City Council), there is now a housing undersupply issue in Cheshire West and Chester. Not enough housing is being built to meet housing needs and comply with housing requirements that are set out in Regional planning guidance. Local Authorities are required by national planning policy to demonstrate a 5-year supply of deliverable housing sites, currently the council can only demonstrate a 2.3-year supply. The undersupply of affordable housing is even more pronounced. It should be noted that the proposals have sparked interest from local Kelsall residents who currently cannot afford a property in Kelsall.

- **Why is a planning application being submitted ahead of the Core Strategy?**

Rowland Homes is fully aware of the Core Strategy process, however, national planning policy is clear regarding the way in which proposals for new housing must be considered where a 5-year supply of deliverable housing sites cannot be demonstrated. Applications in this instance should be considered favourably subject to other policies such as sustainability. The same guidance is very clear that prematurity of a development plan being in place is not a reason for refusal. This has been recently further endorsed by Government Ministers who have announced that there should be a presumption in favour of sustainable development.



Design Issues

- **The proposed scheme contains too many houses.**

The revised scheme has been reduced to 12 family houses and 9 shared ownership houses/bungalows. The density of the development has been discussed with planning officers who have not raised any objections. National planning policy has also been considered which requires the best and most efficient use to be made of land, while respecting local distinctiveness.

- **Relationship with surrounding houses/planning permissions**

All of the housing on site meets the council's requirements in terms of separation distances from existing and proposed houses/extensions. Plans of the proposal were amended as a result of responses received during the consultation process.

- **How will the application meet the needs identified in the Kelsall Parish Landscape and Design Statement and draft National Planning Policy Framework?**

Rowland can confirm that both of these documents have been considered throughout the design process. Details of how the scheme complies with the Kelsall Parish Landscape and Design SPD and the draft National Planning Policy Framework will be outlined in the Planning Statement and Design and Access Statement which will accompany the application.

Green Issues

- **The village character of Kelsall**

There is a concern that the loss of green spaces, such as these sites, is ruining the village feel of Kelsall. Rowland feel that a development of this size is not out of place within Kelsall and that Willington Lane in particular, is a logical place to build houses. Although Green Lane is not surrounded on all sides by housing, it is a small site which is well contained by surrounding development. Neither site is allocated or designated in the local plan as Green Belt or for amenity use, and is not currently used as such. The sites are therefore the most appropriate in the locality to accommodate the identified housing needs.

- **Treatment of existing trees**

A Phase 1 Ecological Survey has been undertaken which highlights which trees have been recommended for removal by a tree specialist. Rowland have sought to preserve trees wherever possible and will be replanting trees where appropriate. Details of planting will be agreed with

the council's tree officer. The landscaping section of the Design and Access Statement and accompanying landscape statement also offers more information on this topic.

Other Issues Raised

- **How will construction traffic be managed throughout the construction of the site?**
Further consideration will be given to this matter throughout the planning application process. Furthermore, the local planning authority will need to be satisfied that construction can safely enter and leave the site through the construction phase. These issues are likely to be dealt with via a planning condition.
- **Can the local school cope?**
Rowland have been in contact with the council's Education Officer, who has confirmed that the council are likely to seek a commuted payment towards local schooling in Kelsall. This amount will be finalised in the S106 agreement.
- **Green Lane is a habitat for Badgers**
A Phase 1 Ecological Survey has been undertaken which has found no badger setts on either site. There is evidence that badgers sometimes cross and forage on the Green Lane site, however, there are several other places nearby which they will still be able to access, so there will be no significant affect on badgers in the area.



I trust that you will find the above response informative. The planning application will be submitted to the council shortly and all plans, drawings and reports will be available to view on the Cheshire West and Chester Council website. Details of how to make representations on the proposal are available from the council's planning department.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Heathcote'.

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