



**UPPINGHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – DRAFT REFRESHED VERSION
COMMENTS IN RELATION TO THE UPPINGHAM GATE SITE LPR/UPP/02 FOR LYNTON
DEVELOPMENTS LTD.**

Introduction

We have been invited by the Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Group (NPAG) to comment on the initial draft of the NPAG Housing Group Paper forwarded to us on 29th of July last. This text relates principally to future housing in Uppingham. We are aware that subsequent material will be produced by the NP Advisory Group which will cover employment and mixed use which are key matters of relevance to the development future of Uppingham Gate. This is the context within which our comments below should be read i.e. looking to respond to the initial housing paper, referencing numbered paragraphs, but then setting out our development objectives to be both deliverable and viable, for inclusion in subsequent NPAG commercial section.

Evidence Section

The draft NPlan text at its 3rd paragraph suggests that there is a need for more specialist housing for the elderly, including bungalows. However, it should be acknowledged that bungalows can be relatively low density and thereby not necessarily an efficient use of land. They are likely to require an element of cross subsidy from other enabling development. We are working with a provider who may, however, be able to deliver small bungalows efficiently as part of a wider specialist housing scheme.

In respect of viability it is our opinion that an additional paragraph should be added to explain that the employment allocation at Uppingham Gate has not progressed for many years because of viability issues.

The rental values of office or industrial development do not cover development costs including the provision of infrastructure including a new access to the A47 key, inter alia, to the delivery of the retail interest being expressed in the site. If a proportion of the allocated land is to be developed for employment purposes, then there will need to be an element of cross subsidy from other enabling development such as residential and food retail.

In addition to enabling development we continue to maintain that public sector support from Government and the LEP must be a key facilitator in relation to delivering employment development on the UG site. This need for public support is reinforced by the Government's drive to invest in economic stimuli to look to overcome the economic crisis caused by the pandemic.

We can supply evidence that there is demand for mixed residential use, including care homes, bungalows, and affordable housing through to live work units and executive housing for sale. In addition, a significant food retail development is a key part of the proposed mix

at Uppingham Gate. The uses mentioned are based on a constant stream of enquires over the past couple of years received and being progressed by our Agents

Summary of Community Engagement

At the end of the 3rd paragraph with reference to the feedback from the ‘Developer’s Morning’ , held in December of last year, which we were pleased to attend, we would welcome reference to how well-received by the public our proposals for mixed-use development at Uppingham Gate were. No negative comments about any of the proposed uses were recorded.

Reinforcing the Sustainability and Offer to the Community of Uppingham - Site Allocations for Uppingham Gate

Since our first involvement in Uppingham Gate in 2016 we have promoted it for mixed use employment, retail, and housing development.

A mixed-use approach on this major site will play a significant part in reinforcing the business, housing, leisure, and retail offer of Uppingham both for the benefit of existing residents and visitors to the town but to future residents and businesses. It will contribute to making the town more self-sufficient in terms of the range of services and accommodation it offers. This will reduce the need to travel and keep customer spend more local.

Food stores and ‘on the go’ food outlets coffee shops and the like all command higher values and help deliver schemes like these, where viability is tight given the desire to encourage, inter alia, the development of small business accommodation. High value uses help to deliver the low value uses.

The potential is there for this complete and diverse scheme to significantly reinforce the quality of life and opportunity for the Uppingham community.

Returning to our comments on the initial text we are of the opinion that a definition of ‘mixed-use development’ of the Uppingham Gate site should be provided to explain that it includes not only small office and industrial units and bungalows, but also other specialist housing for the elderly, general market housing, a children’s nursery, a leisure use e.g. gym/ cinema (NB all subject to viability tests in the overall scheme), a retail food store. This is an excellent site for such developments because of the proximity to an existing health centre and pharmacy and the good transport connections including the well supported local Hoppa Bus service.

A well-designed scheme would be a ‘gateway’ asset for the Town from the main A47 which would encourage visitors not only to Uppingham Gate but also then into the centre of Uppingham which would be of significant benefit to existing shops, hotels, pubs and restaurants

Housing

The site can go towards meeting the strong demand for ‘housing for sale’ in Uppingham. Housing for sale should be seen in the context of the delivery of the mixed use of Uppingham Gate as an enabler significantly assisting in contributing towards the overall viability and thereby deliverability of the Uppingham Gate development.

We would suggest that the 7th paragraph should be amended to explain and amplify the potential of the Uppingham Gate site through enabling mixed-use development to meet not only the road infrastructure and employment objectives of the revised Neighbourhood Plan, but also the housing objectives specifically to provide more specialist housing for elderly for which there is evidence of need and affordable /social housing. This could include an 'extra care' home facility and 'retirement village' including a number of small bungalows.

Housing Numbers

To deliver the housing elements of the Uppingham Gate site we have secured strong market interest from a specialist provider to build some 32 apartments and 25 small bungalows to meet the demand in Uppingham for specialist housing for the elderly.

In terms of 'for sale' market housing we are working with a major Midland house builder keen to deliver some 55 houses on our site a proportion of which will be 'affordable' in line with the planning authority's standard.

In order to meet the overall development objectives of the Uppingham Gate site as set out above we will promote the overall allocation of housing in Uppingham being increased to 280.

It is appreciated that setting proposed 'housing numbers' is a challenging subject for Neighbourhood Plans and Local Plans. In order to secure NPlan and Local Plan support for the number of houses we are looking for on the Uppingham Gate site we will present our case in the form of market evidence of need and demand, overall development viability and the related requirement to maximise the development potential of this important site, a key Government objective.

It may be the case that we are able to phase the development of the overall housing we propose, subject to the need for 'up front' income from the site to fund the necessary infrastructure to 'open up' the site, over 2 to 3 years to coincide with, for example, a further Neighbourhood Plan review period.

In addition we would look to promote such a phasing proposal and the housing numbers we say is appropriate for the Uppingham Gate site in our representations to the emerging Rutland Local Plan which we expect to see as the subject of public consultation shortly.

Employment Development

By now it will be apparent that we strongly advise that this section should include reference to the Uppingham Gate site which has long been the principal employment land allocation for Uppingham in the Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan, but has proved to be difficult to deliver because of poor viability.

If small office or industrial units are to be provided on the site, it requires cross-subsidy by other enabling development. Taking into account the jobs provided in any specialist housing for the elderly, the retail food store and the small business units, the total number of persons employment by such a mixed-use development would be between 150 and 200 which would have significant economic benefits to local residents and the town.

We appreciate that employment considerations vital to the development of Uppingham Gate and some smaller sites in the town will be the subject of a specific paper to be prepared by the NPAG. We look forward to further commenting on such a paper.

Policy 3 – Housing Numbers

As indicated, we are of the opinion that the total allocation for Uppingham should be increased to 280 dwellings with the table site reference for LPR/UPP/02 being amended with a further 55 mixed housing units in addition to the 25 bungalows mentioned. Specialist housing for the elderly such as an extra-care scheme of 40 plus units should be in addition to this.

Policy 7 - Retail Development

There should be reference to a possible food retail convenience store on the Uppingham Gate site. There is evident demand from retailers for this and the proposal was well received by the community at the 'Developer's Morning'. Such a scheme would provide greater choice for Uppingham people and should not be seen as potentially damaging competition for existing shops, including the Uppingham CoOp in the Town Centre, as it would help to bring additional customers from elsewhere to the Town. It would also help to serve the proposed housing growth of the Town.

Policy 11 – Employment

An additional policy should be added which refers to the potential of a mixed-use scheme for the Uppingham Gate site to deliver more employment on the site, not only through small office and industrial schemes, but also other elements such as specialist housing for the elderly and a retail food store. Once again, we understand that it is likely that this aspect will be covered in an employment paper prepared in the near future by the NPAG.

Timescale

Our Client, working with NPAG, is expecting to be able to begin to prepare planning applications for the site with a view to submission early in the new year 2021. This will be contingent upon the Neighbourhood Plan, the site allocation vehicle, having in place agreed text which has received local support following a programme of public consultation which in turn can be relied on to support the mixed use proposals which Lynton Developments with their end users in the fields of housing, retail, leisure and employment look to implement on the Uppingham Gate site.

ANCER SPA LTD

On behalf of Lynton Developments Ltd

Developers of the Uppingham Gate Site

6th August 2020