

SUBJECT DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION REPORTS ITEM 7

REPORT OF Head of Planning & Building Control

APPLICATION NO.	P09/W0201/O
APPLICATION TYPE	Major
REGISTERED	12 March 2009
PARISH	Crowmarsh Gifford
WARD MEMBER(S)	Mr Nicholas Odd
APPLICANT	JS Bloor (Northampton) & Hallam Land
SITE	Land east of Benson Lane Crowmarsh Gifford
PROPOSAL	Outline application for the erection of 210 dwellings (including affordable housing provision), associated landscaping and arboricultural works, parking, public open space provision, together with a vehicular and pedestrian access from Benson Lane and Lane End.
AMENDMENTS	- As amplified by i) Technical Note 1: Groundwater matters received 27 May 2009 (Further information submitted under regulation 19 of the EIA Regulations 1999); ii) Technical Note – Air Quality dated 5 January 2009 - As amended by email from Woolf Bond dated 9 June 2009 amending Parameters Plan: i) height of two storey development to a maximum of 8.2m; ii) height of Benson Lane frontage development from 2 1/2 storey to maximum 2 storey height.
GRID REFERENCE	
OFFICER	Ms C D Scotting

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This application has been referred to Committee at the request of the Local Member, Mr N Odd for the reasons that the application is contrary to the existing Local Plan, and objections to the scale and sustainability of the proposal. A site visit and briefing session was held with Members on 11 May 2009.

- 1.2 Outline planning permission is sought for residential development comprising 210 dwellings on land situated off Benson Lane, Crowmarsh. This application represents a re-submission of proposals submitted last year (P08/W01028/O and P08/W01029/O for 420 and 200 dwellings respectively). A site plan is **attached** showing the application site.

- 1.3 The site is a green-field site in agricultural use and is not allocated for development in the adopted Local Plan. The application has been advertised as a departure from the Development Plan.

- 1.4 An Environmental Statement accompanies the application. Further information was submitted under the Regulation 19 of the EIA Regulations (1999). Re-consultations and advertisements were carried out in accordance with the Regulation 19.

2.0 **SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

- 2.1 The parish of Crowmarsh Gifford has around 600 dwellings and 1440 people (2001 Census). The village is smaller containing around 487 dwellings, including 22 houses built since 2001. Within the village is a primary school, 2 pubs, a church, village hall, a shop (which formerly included the post office), There are also some commercial uses e.g. Jewsons builders merchants and Lister Wilder (agricultural machinery hire service) in The Street and the SODC Council offices in Benson Lane. The Institute of Hydrology and Howbery technology park are situated further north off Benson Lane and incorporate employment land of some 30 ha. The village also has some allotments at Thamesmead, playing fields, a pavilion and play area behind Lister Wilder, and a leisure park including outdoor paddling and swimming pools and camping / caravan sites.
- 2.2 Crowmarsh Gifford lies between Oxford and Reading off the A4074. The majority of the village lies west of the A4074 and east of Wallingford separated by the River Thames. The Wallingford Bridge connects the settlements of Crowmarsh and Wallingford and access to the town can also be gained via the bypass to the south and west of Wallingford and Didcot beyond. The distance from the site to Wallingford town centre is approximately 1.2km.
- 2.3 The site is 14.01 ha and forms the majority of an agricultural field between the A4074 to the east and Benson Lane to the west. Marsh Lane, a restricted byway, forms the northern boundary of the site. The southern boundary is flanked by residential properties along the Street and Lane End. There are also residential properties and the village hall in Benson Lane abutting the site.
- 2.4 The far southeast corner of the site is in the Chilterns AONB and adjoins a residual piece of land behind Lane End (also in the AONB) that is outside of the application site. There are protected trees behind 8, 9 and 10 Lane End some of which are in the site. Other protected trees lie along Marsh Lane.
- 2.5 At present there is farm vehicle access on to the site from the A4074 and Lane End. In addition to Marsh Lane (Restricted Byway 181/ 4), there are public footpaths crossing the site. Footpath 181/ 2 runs east - west along the rear of back gardens in the Street and through a narrow alley to Benson Lane; 181/ 3 runs north south from Marsh Lane and meets 181/2 behind residential properties numbers 99/101 The Street.
- 2.6 No major services cross the site although connections and access are possible.

3.0 **THE PROPOSAL**

- 3.1 The documents accompanying the application are:

- 1) Supporting Planning Statement
- 2) Design and Access Statement
- 3) Sustainability Statement
- 5) Energy Statement
- 6) Statement of Community Consultation
- 7) Transport Assessment

- 8) Travel Plan
- 8) Environmental Statement – Volume I – Technical Assessment
- 9) Environmental Statement – Volume II - Figures and Appendices
- 10) Environmental Statement – Volume III - Non Technical Summary
- 11) Technical Note on Groundwater (Further Information under Regulation 19)
- 12) Technical Note on Air Quality dated 5 January 2009

3.2 The application is in outline with access to be determined. Other matters: layout, scale, appearance and landscaping are reserved. Although in outline guidance in Circular 01/06 advises that as a minimum, the following information is necessary to determine the principle of the development:

- Use–distinct development zones
- Amount of development
- Indicative layout
- Scale parameters
- Indicative access

3.3 Access:

The proposed main vehicular access to the site is a T junction from Benson Lane 40m north of the nearest existing residential property. The access is opposite 33 Benson Lane, which is in use as a funeral directors, and just north of the access to the SODC offices. An island for pedestrians is proposed just north of the proposed access. A secondary access serving 9 properties would be from Lane End and this would also act as an emergency access. The junction of Benson Lane and The Street would be changed from a mini roundabout to a signalised junction with pedestrian and cycle phasing. Traffic calming on the southern end of Benson Lane is proposed. Some widening work at the A4074 junction with the Street is also planned.

3.4 Amount and Scale:

The illustrative masterplan is **attached** showing 210 dwellings, As the scheme is outline the details of plots and secondary roads are indicative. A parameters plan (amended by email dated 9 June 2009) is also **attached** showing the key elements of the development proposal that would form the principles of a detailed scheme. The proposal incorporates:

- An average density of 39 dwellings per hectare
- A mix of tenures including 40% affordable housing
- All dwellings built to Level 3 Code for Sustainable Homes
- Landmark buildings at the main entrance from Benson Lane 2 storeys
- Landmark buildings in key locations in the centre of the built development, with heights 2-2.5m storeys (9.5m high)
- Frontages along the southern and western edges of the site 2 storeys (8.2m high)
- Central development blocks throughout the development will have a height of two storeys

3.5 Use and Layout:

The residential development follows a dog-legged central road through the site forming an approximate triangle in the southern part of the site. In the south west corner adjoining the village hall a play area is proposed amongst open space which continues in a linear form 25 - 40m wide behind properties in the Street. Woodland planting is proposed along the east and northern boundaries supplementing the existing planting on these boundaries. The remainder of the site is open space and provides attenuation area for surface water drainage with three permanent ponds in the north west. Allotments are proposed in the far south east corner of the site adjoining the residual land to the south outside of the site. The existing footpaths across the site (181/2 running east- west to the rear of properties in the Street, 181/3 running north south from Marsh Lane to 181/2) would remain and have been incorporated as part of the layout.

3.6 Phasing:

The application proposes that the housing would be phased over 3 years beginning 2010, with numbers comprising 60, 90, 60 over the successive years.

4.0 **CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

4.1 A summary of the responses is set out below. Full details can be viewed on the Councils website under the planning reference number P09/W0201/O or by appointment at these offices.

4.2 SEERA

The current application is not of regional significance. The policy objectives made in relation to the previous larger application apply to the current application. SEERA made the following comments in relation to policy objectives on P08/W1028/O:

- The Council need to ensure that the release of this unallocated greenfield site is necessary and the most appropriate and sustainable location to meet local housing needs
- The provision of new infrastructure needs to be closely related to the scale and pace of development

No further comments on Reg 19 information.

4.3 Crowmarsh Gifford Parish Council

Object:-

- 1) Contrary to adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan
- 2) Contrary to Oxfordshire Structure Plan
- 3) Contrary to Crowmarsh PC policy which is for infilling and development of brown filed sites
- 4) Serious traffic implications for Crowmarsh Gifford and Wallingford. The re-introduction of traffic lights is a retrograde step and indicates high traffic volumes. The amount of traffic using The Street and Wallingford Bridge would increase enormously. This would negate the current imperative to reduce air pollution levels in the Air Quality Management Area.

4.4 Wallingford Town Council

Object -:

- 1) Unacceptable increase in traffic over bridge
- 2) Increase in air quality problems in the High Street
- 3) Existing educational resources are inadequate to support this development
- 4) There are more appropriate sites within the town's bypass boundaries
- 5) The proposed development is too large for Crowmarsh and it would lose its' identity
- 6) It would result in the loss of good quality agricultural land.

4.5 Benson Parish Council

Object - Concerns expressed about the scale of development, traffic, a possible rat run, noise and whether existing water supply & sewage works could cope. Object as the site is not in the Local Plan.

4.6 Neighbours

There are 206 objections from Crowmarsh residents, residents of nearby settlements, and other developers plus 1 letter of support. A matrix summarising the comments is **attached** at Appendix A. The main reasons for objection are:

- The scale of the development would be disproportionate to the scale and character of the established village
- The proposal is on a greenfield site not allocated within the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011
- The village school could not accommodate a development of this proportion
- The proposal is premature and should wait for the publication of the council's Core Strategy, to properly consider strategic sites
- This site is prime agricultural land which must be retained for food production,
- Increased traffic congestion along The Street and Benson Lane
- Detrimental impact on views from the adjacent AONB
- The site is home to a variety of wildlife which would be lost with this development
- Crowmarsh does not have sufficient amenities to support a population of this size
- The development has the potential to cause flooding to proposed and existing properties within the village
- Noise and air pollution would increase significantly
- There are other more sustainable settlements which could accommodate a development of this scale

4.7 Crowmarsh Gifford Village Hall Management Committee

Objection - The village is of some 450 houses and has had over 200 new houses in recent years. Additionally plans have been passed for Lister Wilder and there is the development of Mongewell Park. This site should not be considered in isolation until the Council's Core strategy has been discussed and resolved. This scheme, if authorised, would lead to another application for 200 houses. The sewerage system is failing, electricity is suspect and absence of adequate infrastructure make these plans unacceptable. Crowmarsh is not part of Wallingford, development would overwhelm the village and significantly change its rural character. The level of traffic particularly over the bridge is not acceptable. The village hall together with the pavilion and recreation ground adequately serves the needs of village people. The developers have not contacted the Hall Committee to discuss their plans.

4.8 Crowmarsh Gifford C E Primary School (Headmistress and Governors)

Objection - The school has been extended to accommodate over 200 pupils and a small pre school. All the infrastructure is already over stretched. The school is predicted to remain full for the next two years. The number of children on special needs register is currently the national average. Forty per cent social housing on 210 dwellings is likely to create additional pressure on special needs resources. There is a serious lack of school places and Wallingford schools are over subscribed. The school cannot build upwards without substantial structural works, and the site is too small to accommodate the required sports and play facilities, even if rebuilt on the current site. Old Reading Road could not safely accommodate increase in traffic.

4.9 Crowmarsh Residents Action Group (CRAG)

Object on the following grounds:

- Contrary to the Local Plan
- Unsustainable
- Impact on traffic congestion
- Likely groundwater flooding risk.

A flood risk assessment on the groundwater regime was produced by CRAG concluding that the damage to the shallow gravel aquifer beneath the development will be significant and place a serious flood risk for existing and future residents. Following the submission of the Technical Note on groundwater (Reg 19 information) CRAG consider that the environmental setting has not adequately been considered.

4.10 Doctors Surgeries (Mill Stream Benson and Wallingford Medical Practice)

No objections

4.11 Other Landowners/ Developers

Landowners/developers of other sites in the central Oxfordshire region have objected to the development (details in the representations matrix) principally on the grounds that the development is contrary to the existing local plan and although housing land supply is a significant consideration it is not appropriate to allow such a large development before the housing strategy options are thoroughly considered.

4.12 OCC – Highways

No objection - The Transport Assessment considers movements and highway impacts in relation to 250 dwellings. It is estimated that there will be 49 movements inbound to the development in the morning peak and 106 outbound. In the evening peak there will be 107 inbound and 62 outbound.

It is the Highway Authority's view that the road network with the mitigation measures would cater satisfactorily with the increased traffic. The traffic signals will operate the junction more effectively and safely and allow safer access for cyclists and pedestrians including school children.

Conditions and Section 278 and 38 agreements would be required in respect of visibility splays, traffic calming, traffic signals and phasing, increased footways and lighting. Contributions would also be required to enhance public transport and pedestrian and cycle routes.

More information on the travel plan is required, in particular the role and funding of the travel plan co-ordinator, baseline modal assumptions, promotional material, more regular monitoring, timescales for meeting targets, options and funding of additional measures.

4.13 OCC – Developer Funding

The development will incur financial pressures upon education, youth centre/ childrens early years learning, library, waste, museum, social day care and extra care housing in addition to transport / access requirements.

The development is likely to produce a peak increase of school age children of 76 extra primary school-aged children (in 2015) and 70 extra secondary school-aged children (in 2022) assuming an immediate start in construction. OCC seek a contribution towards the provision of additional permanent accommodation at Crowmarsh Primary School to include not only the provision of extra classrooms to accommodate the additional children, but the need to expand the school hall and the staff room.

The extra building plus linked additional playing field requirement cannot be met from the existing school site which is too small to allow any further extension. As a result, in addition to the financial contribution towards the extra infrastructure, the developer would have to acquire at his expense additional land outside, but immediately adjacent to, the current school site. Financial contributions are also required towards the provision of additional permanent school accommodation to the local catchment secondary school at Wallingford.

4.14 Environment Agency

Following the submission of the report on groundwater conditions by CRAG the Environment Agency requested further information under Regulation 19 of the 1999 EIA Regulations in respect of groundwater. The Technical Note on groundwater was received 27 May 2009.

The EA letter dated 10 June 2009 states:

“Based upon the information within the Technical Note, it is unlikely below ground structures for the development will encounter groundwater. Where groundwater levels are unusually high and could encounter below ground structures, drainage surrounds should prevent the emergence of groundwater at surface. Therefore it is unlikely that the development will increase the risk of groundwater flooding at the site.

The Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) prepared by Brookbanks Consulting, reference 1343/FRA/03 dated 30 January 2009 contains sufficient information for the principle of this development to be acceptable. However, the applicant will need to provide further information to ensure that the proposed development can go ahead without posing an unacceptable flood risk.

We are pleased with the commitment of the applicant to implement a surface water drainage system above ground, providing water quality, ecological and amenity enhancements. As part of the detailed design of the drainage system we would require details of all proposed drainage features including the proposed SUDs channel”.

Conditions in respect of surface and foul water drainage are requested.

4.15 Thames Water Development Planning

The existing water supply infrastructure has insufficient capacity to meet the additional demands for the proposed development. A condition should be imposed to prevent commencement until impact studies and a suitable connection have been agreed. An informative should also be attached advising of the minimum water pressure to be taken into account during design.

Benson STW at present does not have spare capacity to accept all the flows from the development. A growth programme, delivery of which is subject to OFWAT approval will be during 2010 – 2015 to make necessary upgrades to accommodate further dwellings. At present this is only for a limited upgrade (200 person equivalent or 100 dwellings) however the site does have capacity to accommodate further improvements to meet further growth provided funding is available and is approved by OFWAT. Request condition that only a limited development be occupied until essential infrastructure upgrades have been carried out at Benson STW. Further improvements may be required post 2015 to accommodate further growth.

4.16 Natural England

No objection - However as the site is visible both from local viewpoints and parts of the Chilterns AONB recommend that any development should:

- follow guidance in the Chilterns AONB Building Design Guide
- the pattern of hedgerows, trees and woodland which are characteristic features of the traditional landscape are maintained and strengthened by further planting
- the views of Chilterns AONB Unit are sought and fully taken into account in determining this application.

No objection regarding protected species but recommends conditions are attached.
No further comments on Reg 19 information.

4.17 Chilterns Conservation Board

No objection - Request conditions / legal agreement to secure retention and reinforcement of hedgerows and trees, including alongside public rights of way. The built development should face outwards towards to the boundaries of the site and AONB, rather than backs of dwellings being the visible elements.

4.18 Chiltern Society

Objection - Encroachment into the countryside and AONB and contrary to adopted Local Plan. The site is outside the boundaries of nearby villages – this scale of development would be harmful to character of the two villages and services on which they depend.

4.19 CPRE -N J Moon (Rights of Way)

Objection - The development would transform footpaths 2 and 3 into urban alleyways and deprive existing residents of a valuable recreational resource.

4.20 Thames Valley Police

- 1) Property: Developer contributions are sought towards increased police infrastructure.
- 2) Crime Prevention: There are concerns about permeability in two areas on the north side of the development. Request a condition is attached so that residential units are built to the physical security standards set out in Secured by Design Part 2.

4.21 Ministry of Defence

No objection

4.22 Countryside Officer

The ES presents a fair assessment of the current ecological value of the site. In general terms the site is of relatively low ecological value when assessed against the national criteria. There are areas of local value which have been identified in the application. My concerns with the previous applications have been addressed – no further objections. In response to representations concerning stag beetles:- these are deadwood specialists and would probably be found in amongst hedgerows and other areas where there is dead wood, either on the ground or partially buried. As the majority of the land is arable it is unlikely that there would be any significant impact on the species. If they are on site the only place they are likely to be found would be along the hedgerows. Stag beetles do receive protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 under section 9 (5) however, this only makes it an offence to sell or trade products of the species.

4.23 Forestry Officer

No objection - The trees within the site are subject of a TPO. The layout is sympathetic to trees. Those marked for removal are low quality and their loss could be mitigated by landscaping. A buffer to existing residential dwellings is required and new planting must be in keeping with the surroundings. The SUDS should not have a negative impact in relation to surrounding trees. Tree protection and detailed aftercare is necessary.

4.24 Health & Housing Services

Supports the principle of the proposed development which will provide much needed new affordable housing in a sustainable location. The exact quantum, tenure, mix and location of the affordable units will need to be secured as part of the s106 agreement and should reflect the Council's Core Strategy Preferred Options with an overriding emphasis on two bedroom properties (50%). Adequate provision must be made for pepper-potting of the affordable homes across different phases of the development. It will be expected that all the affordable ground floor properties will be constructed to "Lifetime Homes" standards and that all the affordable homes will be built to current HCA Design & Standards and meet a minimum of Code Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.

4.25 Environmental Health – Air Quality

The assumptions in the Travel Plan, assuming a 50% reduction in car use for education/leisure/shopping, seem high but further information (technical Note dated 5 January 2009) has been submitted showing how these assumptions were calculated.

The air quality modelling in the ES demonstrates that the impact on air quality is low, however it is clear that the addition of 210 homes close to Wallingford AQMA is going to result in additional movements through this AQMA.

The Travel Plan contains good ideas and initiatives but further information and details are required on the Travel Plan Co-ordinator, information points, welcome packs, targets and timescales and monitoring reports.

Fully support OCC Highways request for contributions towards public transport, upgrading footpaths and cycle link, due to the impact on air quality. These need to be secured by S106 agreement. Also require conditions to assist with ameliorating the impact on air quality.

4.26 Environmental Health – Noise

No objection – recommends conditions restricting hours of construction, noise and dust management plan for construction, details to ensure ambient noise levels for new dwellings are satisfactory and external lighting.

4.27 Environmental Health – Contaminated Land

Recommends condition.

4.28 Conservation / Design

The masterplan has now has much to commend it in urban design terms. While the application is seeking only to confirm access details, further work will be required to ensure the detailed design reinforces local distinctiveness by reflecting the built form of Crowmarsh i.e. in terms of scale, form and massing, the grain of development and introduction of terraced accommodation, building lines, vistas through the development, materials etc.

5.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

5.1 Last year two applications were submitted for residential development on land including the current application site. On 19 December 2008 P08/W1028/O for 420 dwellings was refused. Application P08/W1029/O for 200 dwellings, which represented a first phase of the larger scheme, was withdrawn prior to determination. A copy of the masterplan and

decision notice for P08/W1028/O is **attached** - Appendix B. An appeal has recently been lodged on the scheme for 420 dwellings with an Inquiry likely in the autumn.

- 5.2 In April 2004 the appeal for 4 houses on land east of Lane End (adjoining but not within the current application site) (P03/E0432/O) was dismissed. The development was unacceptable as it extended development into the countryside and detracted from the Chilterns AONB.

6.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

- 6.1 The statutory Development Plan now comprises the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan, the South East Plan and mineral and waste policies in the Oxfordshire Structure Plan. Planning decisions should be in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (Section 38 of the Town and Country Planning and Compensation Act). Where there is a conflict between the Plan policies, decisions should be taken in light of all material considerations including local needs and priorities. Some weight can be attached to policies in emerging development plan documents and the government indicates that the weight depends upon the stage of preparation, increasing as successive stages are reached.

- 6.2 The government response to the Taylor Review published in March 2009 indicates 'the weight to be attached to emerging policies will be dependent upon the circumstances surrounding the plan and application in question, therefore the local planning authority will need to assess the weight attached to emerging policies on a case by case basis. In the consideration of this application it is the council's view that the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy Preferred Options, which has been supported through the consultation processes, should be given significant weight.

South East Plan - Policies BE5, SP1, SP3, H1, H3, H4, H5, C3, CC4, CC7, CC8, CO1 and CO3.

- 6.3 On 7 May 2009 the South East Plan published strategic policy for the region. This replaces the Oxfordshire Structure Plan, to form part of the development plan. It provides a vision for the region up to the year 2026. The SE Plan identifies central Oxfordshire as a sub region which is to accommodate growth. The majority of new housing in the South Oxfordshire part of the sub-region is to be in Didcot, however the rest of the sub region also has to accommodate more housing. Separate housing allocations have been made for Didcot and for the rest of Central Oxfordshire in this district. Between 2006 and 2026 the South East Plan requires a minimum of 2240 dwellings to be built in the Central Oxfordshire sub-region (excluding Didcot). Taking into account completions from 2006, existing allocations and planning permissions, provision needs to be made for approximately 1450 additional dwellings. The vision for this growth is explained below with reference to the draft Core Strategy.

6.4 Planning Policy Statements:

PPS1 Delivering sustainable development
PPS 3 Housing
PPS 7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
PPS 9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
PPS12 Local Spatial Planning
PPG13 Transport
PPG16 Archaeology and Planning
PPG17 Sport and Recreation
PPG 24 Planning and Noise
PPS 23 Planning and Pollution Control
PPS 25 Development and Flood Risk

6.5 Other Government Publications:

Living Working Countryside: The Taylor Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing – July 2008

The Government Response to the Taylor Review – March 2009

South Oxfordshire Policy Documents

6.6 South Oxfordshire Local Plan January 2006

The South Oxfordshire Local Plan (SOLP) is the adopted policy document for district up until 2011. It does not accommodate new growth identified in the South East Plan, this will be included in the Local Development Framework documents in particular the Core Strategy. Relevant local plan policies are saved and are applicable. The relevant SOLP policies are:

- General: G1, G2, G3, G4, G5, G6
- Protecting Natural and Built Environment C1, C2, C4, C6, C7, C8, C9
- Environmental Protection: EP1, EP2, EP3, EP4, EP5, EP6, EP7, EP8
- Encouraging sustainable and high quality development: D1, D2, D3, D4, D6, D7, D8, D10, D11, D12
- Housing: H2, H4, H6, H7, H8, H9, H14
- Recreation R1, R2, R3, R6, R7, R8
- Transport T1, T2, T3

6.7 Supplementary Planning Guidance

- South Oxfordshire Design Guide - July 2008
- Affordable Housing - Sept 2004
- South Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment - April 1998
- Chilterns Buildings Design Guide 1999 (reviewed 2009)

South Oxfordshire Core Strategy – Preferred Options - March 2009

6.8 As stated above, the South East Plan makes allocations for housing development to 2026 and includes a significant amount for the district in the Central Oxfordshire sub region. The council has indicated how it intends to make provision for this new housing in the Core Strategy Preferred Options published in March 2009. This identifies a strategy for new development across the district and makes strategic site allocations for the period to 2026. The strategy aims to ensure that new housing will be distributed in a way that reflects the dispersed nature of the existing population so that the current scale and dependencies between market towns and villages is generally maintained. The strategy aims to establish a strong network of settlements throughout the district by allowing growth that respects the scale of existing settlements including limited development in smaller villages through infilling and exception sites. This should make the whole district more self sufficient so that everyone has reasonable access to a range of services and facilities and it supports the South East Plan aim to improve and enhance the viability of rural settlements.¹

6.9 The network of larger villages with a greater range of services is important to the success of this strategy. Larger settlements (over 1000 population) in the district falling in the Central Oxfordshire sub region (excluding Didcot) include Wallingford, Benson, Berinsfield, Cholsey, Crowmarsh and Wheatley. Of these only Wallingford and Wheatley have over populations 3,000, and Crowmarsh is the smallest with a population of around 1,100. Excluding Didcot there is a need to find sites in the 'Rest of Central Oxfordshire' for 1450 dwellings. This figure is additional to existing

¹ South East Plan paragraph 7.10

allocations in the adopted Local Plan and existing planning permissions. The Core Strategy Preferred Options proposes to distribute this growth by way of a strategic allocation for up to 850 dwellings in Wallingford and the remainder (600 dwellings) amongst the 5 larger villages (Benson, Berinsfield, Cholsey, Crowmarsh, and Wheatley) and Bayswater Farm (nr Oxford), with an indicative range of 50 – 150 in any one village². Sites for these settlements will be allocated in the forthcoming Site Allocations DPD.

- 6.10 A summary of the programme (Local Development Scheme) for the aforementioned documents forming part of the local development framework is set out in the table below:

Table 1 Summary of Programme for South Oxfordshire Development Plan Documents

	Consultation	Examination	Adoption
Core Strategy	Submission Oct - Nov 2009	May 2010	Jan 2011
Site Allocations DPD	Preferred Options	May 2011	Jan 2012

PPS 3 Housing

- 6.11 PPS3 requires local authorities to determine their spatial vision for the area and determine the strategy for delivering that vision. This is set out in the spatial vision of the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy. In identifying suitable locations for housing it requires amongst other things that account is taken of the need to create and maintain sustainable, mixed and inclusive communities in all areas, both urban and rural.
- 6.12 PPS3 advises that where Local Planning Authorities cannot demonstrate an up to date five year supply of deliverable sites, for example where Local Development Documents have not been reviewed to take into account policies in PPS3 or there is less than five years supply of deliverable sites, they should consider favourably planning applications for housing (para 71). However the statement makes it clear that not all development will be acceptable and it states (para 69) that in deciding planning applications Local Planning Authorities should have regard to:
- Achieving high quality housing
 - Ensuring developments achieve a good mix of housing
 - Using land effectively and efficiently
 - Suitability for housing including environmental sustainability
 - Development is in line with housing objectives and the spatial vision for the area reflects the need and demand for housing, and does not undermine wider policy objectives.
- 6.13 To be deliverable sites should:
- Be available now
 - Be a suitable location for development and would contribute to the creation of sustainable, mixed communities
 - Be achievable – there is a reasonable prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years.

² SODC Preferred Options Consultation March 2009 - Paras 7.26 - 7.32

- 6.14 The council has recently published its 'Assessment of 5 Year Supply of Deliverable Sites – April 2009' which looks at existing allocations and permissions and, after discussion with relevant landowners and developers, anticipates delivery times over the next five years. The South East Plan allocates housing in specific parts of the district and states that it will be a matter for Local Development Documents to respond to the figures. Whilst a degree of flexibility is appropriate local authorities must in the first instance seek to deliver their sub-regional allocations within their part of Central Oxfordshire. The Assessment has a separate 5 year supply calculation for each part and considers housing figures in relation to 'Didcot', the 'Rest of Central Oxfordshire' and the 'Remainder of the District'.
- 6.15 The shortfall for Didcot is 1572 houses, the 'Rest of Central Oxfordshire' is 28 and the 'Remainder of the District' 14. Thus, there is not a serious 5 year land supply shortfall in the 'Rest of Central Oxfordshire' area where the site is located. The council acknowledges that the Didcot shortfall is likely to be difficult to resolve in the short term and is considering bringing forward the plan provisions for the 'Rest of Central Oxfordshire' and phasing Didcot over a longer period of time. This action has not yet been finally agreed by GOSE. However as the council are not in a position of having an overall 5 year supply of deliverable sites the advice contained in PPS 3 (paras 71 and 69) is relevant and must be considered.

7.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

7.1 The main issues are discussed under:

- Principle of development - policy
- Suitability for housing including environmental sustainability (including Location, Landscape, Hydrology, Biodiversity, Archaeology, Agricultural Land and Character and Distinctiveness)
- Transport / Access / Air Quality
- Design
- Density
- Housing - Mix and Affordable Housing
- Infrastructure and services
- Delivery

Principle of development – Policy

- 7.2 Crowmarsh is identified in the adopted Local Plan as a larger village outside the Green Belt. The site is in the countryside and adjoins the built up area of Crowmarsh. The application site is not an allocated site (Policy H2) and the size and location of the site are such that they do not meet the requirements of Policy H4. Policies G4 and H6 state that planning permission will not be granted for development in the countryside or on the edge of settlements where the built up area of the settlement would be extended. This application is therefore contrary to the adopted Local Plan.
- 7.3 The Core Strategy Preferred Options propose a housing distribution strategy for the whole district which meets the housing requirements of the South East Plan and when adopted will provide a 5 year supply of housing land. In the 'Rest of Central Oxfordshire' sub-area it identifies development for 850 dwellings that will be allocated as a strategic site(s) in the Core Strategy. In addition it proposes 600 dwellings for the other 6 settlements (see para 5.9 above). A range of between 50 – 150 dwellings is envisaged for the villages to maintain population levels and support village services. More work needs to be done on sites in villages and these will be allocated in the Site Allocations Document. So whilst some development is envisaged for Crowmarsh, an appropriate location and amount of development has yet to be identified. Objective 2 of

the Preferred Options indicates that new housing development will respect the scale of existing settlements. The average allocation for each village would be around 100 houses and although the maximum number suggested is 150, it should be borne in mind that Crowmarsh is the smallest of the villages in this sub area.

- 7.4 Whilst Crowmarsh is very close to Wallingford and residents use the services and facilities the town has to offer, this is no different to other villages in the Wallingford catchment. The council's policies treat it as an independent village, its character comprising a small attractive historic core with a number of small developments of different ages. The village has its own community structures such as the church, school, community hall and recreation ground. It has a separate and distinctive character which the council's policies are seeking to retain and which the Parish Council and community groups and residents recognise. Crowmarsh is one of the smallest of the larger villages and the council's strategy is that it should have limited growth which respects the scale of the existing settlement and caters for residents needs.
- 7.5 The council seeks to ensure that some new development is spread to other settlements around the district to provide a network of sustainable communities and accessible services to all residents. In considering the relationships between settlements the aim is to ensure that growth is distributed in a way that supports informal social support networks, assists people to live near their work and benefit from key services, minimise environmental impact and, where possible, encourage environmental benefits. This follows the guidance in PPS3 and the theme of the Taylor Review the Living Working Countryside to maintain the sustainability of rural areas. If a substantial portion of the housing allocation is used in one area this is likely to reduce the council's flexibility to achieve this aim and jeopardise the success of the whole strategy.
- 7.6 The proposed development exceeds what is envisaged for Crowmarsh in the draft Core Strategy. It is considered that this amount of growth would undermine the policy objectives and spatial vision of the draft Core Strategy.

Suitability for Housing and Environmental Sustainability

- 7.7 Fundamentally it is important to consider is whether the site is suitable for housing and environmentally sustainable. These matters concern location, landscape, hydrology, biodiversity, archaeology, agricultural land, character and local distinctiveness.

Location

- 7.8 The site is on the edge of Crowmarsh, a larger village with some facilities and is situated some 1.2km from the centre of Wallingford, a town with a wide range of facilities. A distance of 1.2km is considered an acceptable walking distance (PPG13) and in this case it is an attractive route across the bridge, which is more likely to encourage walking. The site is also close to employment opportunities at Howbery Park. It is located between Oxford and Reading, served by a regular express bus route. The site's proximity and access to employment, facilities and services and public transport routes do present, in principle, a sustainable location for new housing development. Furthermore, the configuration of this site incorporating a frontage and public rights of way do present opportunities for an integrated development. The design and layout (discussed below) is crucial to realising these opportunities.

Landscape

- 7.9 In terms of Crowmarsh's character, as distinct from Wallingford, this application would not affect the physical segregation afforded by the river and surrounding open river

plain land to the west of the village. In relation to the adjoining countryside the site is partially within the AONB but is segregated from the wider AONB to the east by the A4074. The site is linked to the wider AONB by virtue of topography and views are obtained through the site to the wider AONB. From wider views the road itself impacts upon on the AONB and the landscape setting of the site. There is existing hedgerow along the full length of the eastern boundary of the site (except for the farm access). The site is visible from public viewpoints in the wider AONB but it will be seen against the backdrop of existing development in The Street and Benson Lane.

- 7.10 Any development on this site will encroach into open countryside and have an impact on the landscape. Clearly the larger the development the more impact it will have. This scheme has a significantly reduced impact compared to the previous application as the extensive highway infrastructure does not form part of the proposals and the development does not encroach through and north of Marsh Lane. The built development is contained and proposes additional planting and open space. The proposed planting alongside the eastern boundary and Marsh Lane together with open space will assist in mitigating the landscape impact. Provided the details (at reserved matters) are appropriate in terms of design, materials, height and scale in relation to the surrounding buildings and countryside there is no objection in respect of the wider landscape and impact on the AONB.

Hydrology

- 7.11 Surface Water - The site is not within an area of flood risk. The surface water drainage for the site should be based on SUDS (source control principles), i.e. to seek initially to drain runoff into the ground via permeable surfaces, soakaways, swales etc. Channels/culverts and attenuation areas can be employed, but as a backup system for such features. The scheme incorporates such a design so that all increased surface water is runoff into the ground and attenuated on site amongst the open space. Some areas will be permanent wet habitats and others will fill in storm conditions. The scheme should not produce increased discharges off site than present conditions.
- 7.12 Ground Water - The Environment Agency expressed concern that the Flood Risk assessment, submitted with the application, did not address ground water following a report commissioned by CRAG. The CRAG report asserts that the development would put pressure on groundwater and lead to ground conditions liable to flood. Further information was provided in a technical note and re-consultations under regulation 19 of the EIA regulations were carried out. The EA have confirmed that the development is unlikely to increase the risk of groundwater flooding at the site and have suggested conditions in respect of drainage.
- 7.13 Foul Water - Thames Water (TW) advises that the foul waste system received at Benson Sewage Treatment Works has insufficient capacity and requires new infrastructure. Proposals to increase capacity are in the Thames Water asset management plan for between 2010 and 2015. TW advise that the proposed upgrade will accommodate only a limited amount of development (approx 100 dwellings). Subsequently TW advise that the site has capacity for an increased upgrade subject to funding and OFWAT approval.

Water Supply

- 7.14 Thames Water has advised that a condition is necessary to require a further study at the developer's expense to confirm infrastructure upgrades/connection points. At present there is insufficient capacity to serve the site but this could be rectified with improvements.

Biodiversity

- 7.15 There is no objection to the scheme on grounds of biodiversity. A condition and legal agreement is required to ensure the proposed open space habitats are provided and managed.

Archaeology

- 7.16 There is no objection to the scheme on grounds of archaeology – a condition is required for a staged programme of archaeological investigation to be agreed.

Agricultural Land

- 7.17 The site is a mixture Grade 2 and 3a agricultural land and forms part of a substantial arable farm operated from Cold Harbour Farm which extends to over 400 hectares. PPS 7 states that the loss of best and most versatile land will not be permitted unless there is an overriding need for development that cannot be accommodated on previously developed land. Given the draft Core Strategy identifies greenfield sites to meet housing need and other sites would also involve the loss of such land there is not in principle objection to the loss of 14 ha agricultural land on this site.
- 7.18 The masterplan does exclude a residual piece of land to the south adjoining Lane End. This area will not be able to be farmed and its future use and management is therefore unclear. It is regrettable that this piece of land is not included in a comprehensive scheme, however this land is not within the applicants' control.

Character and Local Distinctiveness

- 7.19 The proposed development of 210 dwellings represents a 43% increase in housing and a similar increase in population (using 2016 forecast occupancy rates) of the existing village. In terms of land take the amount of built development proposed represents 18% of the existing residential area, and 11% of the whole of Crowmarsh including the employment area. Taken in the context of needing to find a site(s) for development in Crowmarsh there is no objection to the principle of developing this site as discussed in the preceding paragraphs. However this scale of increase will add a large amount of development on the edge of the village in the open countryside, which will significantly alter the character and distinctiveness of this attractive village. This view is documented in many of the representations.

Transport / Access and Air Quality

- 7.20 The Transport Assessment considers the impact of 250 dwellings and makes assumptions in relation to sustainable travel. The assessment also considers the impacts in relation to forecasted growth in 2013 and 2023 and includes planned employment in Benson Lane. The main location seeing a marked increase (around 10 - 15%) in traffic is at the junction of Benson Lane and The Street. The increase in traffic at the junction of The Street and Clacks's Lane Roundabout is up to 3.2%. Many objections have been received in relation to increased traffic over the Wallingford Bridge. The Transport Assessment predicts that there would be a maximum 5.7% increase over the bridge. The highway authority advises that the Wallingford Bridge has sufficient capacity.
- 7.21 Proposed measures to cater for the increased traffic include a signalised junction to replace the mini roundabout. There are objections to this however the highway authority consider that this is the most appropriate means to deal with the traffic and it will improve highway safety for pedestrians including school children with timed pedestrian crossings at the junction. Traffic calming along Benson Lane with raised tables is also proposed. It is acknowledged that there is a need for some traffic calming

but in terms of design, these tables are not considered the most sympathetic, and this is discussed below under *design of highway works*. There are also proposals within highway land to widen the junction of The Street with Clacks Roundabout.

- 7.22 The predicted increase in traffic relates to the assumptions on sustainable travel. It is acknowledged that these assumptions are quite high. However with increased opportunities for sustainable travel and good pedestrian and cycle links together with appropriate travel plan measures these assumptions are realistic. The applicants are prepared to subsidise a further bus service each hour (increasing from 2 to 3) on the express Oxford – Reading routes (X39 and X40). They are also willing to fund improvement to public footpaths and cycle ways. These are set out in the draft S106 heads of terms (**attached** at Appendix C).
- 7.23 Air quality is intrinsically linked to traffic. Development in this area is of concern due to the existing Air Quality Management Area in Wallingford. The modelling in the Transport Assessment indicates that the impact will be low however it is recognised that there will be some increased adverse impacts on air quality. Appropriate travel plan measures and the increased public transport and improved footpath and cycle network will assist in achieving more sustainable travel. In principle there is no objection on grounds of air quality but further measures in the Travel Plan would need to be agreed by condition / legal agreement.
- 7.24 It is accepted that there will be an increased impact on the highway network. However the impacts will be dispersed in different directions from the site and together with proposed mitigation measures, there is no highway objection subject to various provisions required through conditions and legal agreements. Similarly, there will be an increased impact on air quality but proposals to encourage public transport and cycling and walking should reduce the potential increased impact. It would be important to secure the improved bus service and the Travel Plan measures need to fully consider air quality.

Design

- 7.25 Good design is fundamental to the development of high quality housing. Proposals should be well integrated and complement neighbouring buildings and the local area in terms of scale, density, layout and access. Development should enhance or create distinctive character. The indicative masterplan varies significantly from the previously refused application in that less development is proposed and excessively large and dominating highway infrastructure has been deleted.
- 7.26 The site is rural in character and framed by loose knit two storey residential development to the south. In Benson Lane there is a mixture of two storey dwellings and bungalows adjoining and opposite the proposed access to the site. Marsh Lane, in particular, is an important landscape feature and public right of way and the eastern A4074 boundary is lined by hedgerow. There are two other rights of way crossing the site and potential for linkages to Benson Lane and The Street. Given the site's advantages in terms of connectivity, non-vehicular access to shops and services and bus routes, the site has the potential to offer good amenity and integrate with the surrounding area.

Layout

- 7.27 The masterplan is illustrative and only key parameters are for determination at this stage. In terms of permeability and linkages the layout connects with existing streets and rights of way. The open space and play area in the south west corner is a strong

focal point and the potential is there to link through to Benson Lane from the village hall. This would increase permeability and provide a more open route than the existing alleyway further south (footpath 2). This route would need to be agreed with the Parish Council. The existing rights of way are incorporated into the scheme and will be surrounded by open space providing general amenity for new and existing residents. Whilst the agricultural character would be lost along these routes it would be replaced with landscaped public open space that would provide amenity and biodiversity.

- 7.28 The proposed layout incorporates a main dog legged route through the site which more reflects the linear grain of the village, than the previous application. The perimeter development faces outwards on to open space which is important for security, integration and appearance. The reserved matters details would need to ensure that there is adequate privacy for existing residents however in general the distances shown incorporate a buffer which protects privacy. The layout of the secondary roads is illustrative and it is considered that this, in part, is not reflective of the built form of Crowmarsh and is too meandering. However this detail is not for determination now and would be subject to reserved matters.

Scale

- 7.29 The scale of the current proposal relative to the existing village has been discussed above under Character and Local Distinctiveness. Although the concept of the masterplan is generally acceptable (subject to conditions) the amount of development proposed is still considered too much for this village, which has had only incremental growth over many years. A development of 210 houses will be overwhelming upon the character and distinctiveness of this village.
- 7.30 In terms of height, the parameters plan shows the proposed scale of development. This has subsequently been amended by email from Woolf Bond dated 9 June 2009. The parameters plan shows that two storey development around the perimeter of the development as being at a maximum height of 9.5m. However in order to integrate with the surrounding built form and assimilate into the open countryside the maximum proposed heights should be in the order of 8m. The applicants have confirmed that a maximum height of 8.2m is acceptable – this would allow a particular house type to be incorporated. This amendment to a maximum height of 8.2m for 2 storey development is acceptable and does not differ from some surrounding development. In addition a landmark entrance of 2.5 storeys was proposed at the access from Benson Lane, however this is not considered appropriate on this edge of village location in the vicinity of low key bungalow and two storey dwellings. This element of the parameters plan has also been amended so that the frontage development will be no higher than 2 storey (8.2m).

Sustainable design

- 7.31 Sustainability in terms of location has been discussed above. The application proposes all the housing to be Code Level 3 and 10% of energy requirements to be generated on site. The commitment to build to Code Level 3 is welcomed and meets the council's Design Guide standard. However it is considered that this should be a minimum and the housing should be built to the Design Guide standard prevailing at the time of reserved matter approval. The standard in the Design Guide applies until April 2010 (SODG page 79). This will be reviewed prior to this date and will apply to development constructed post April 2010. No details have been provided on the generation of renewable energy. It is likely that this will be in the form of solar energy which assists with meeting energy requirements in respect of the Code. Details of renewable energy, how it is incorporated into the detailed design and Code standards could be met by conditions. The proposed allotments are also a welcome sustainable feature of this development and utilise an area of the site which is difficult to find appropriate use.

7.32 A self sufficient sustainable urban drainage system is proposed unlike the previous application where some drainage was proposed to run off site to Howbery Ditch. The principal attenuation area is in the open space in the north west near Marsh Lane and includes some permanent ponds. The development will not therefore put increased pressure on existing systems and at the same time will provide ecological habitat. Detailed design and management arrangements would need to be secured for all the open space including allotments.

Design of highway works

7.33 There are objections to traffic and the proposed mitigation measures including the traffic lights and traffic calming. Highway safety is discussed above. The junction at Benson Lane and The Street had traffic lights many years ago and the Wallingford Bridge has lights. It is not considered that lights would be out of character or significantly more urbanising. Roundabouts are a feature of modern highways and a return to lights could be considered more in keeping with the historic character. However the proposed table traffic calming is not considered sympathetic to the character of Benson Lane and an alternative design e.g. pinch points and tree planting would perhaps be more in keeping. Consultation with local residents is appropriate and this should be required by condition.

Density

7.34 PPS 3 and Policy H8 require that housing is developed at a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare unless it would adversely affect the character of the area. A density of 40 dph or higher is considered appropriate in town centres. The scheme indicates an average net density of 39 dph ranging from 35 to 45. The density complies with using land efficiently although it is considered that a lower density would be necessary in parts of the site, for instance at the edge of the built development, whereas it could be higher in more central parts. In Crowmarsh the density varies: for example The Street adjoining the development is around 11 dwellings per hectare, Winters Field 20 dph, Howbery Farm 32 dph, Jethro Tull 38 dph. With careful detailed design it is not considered that this density would be out of character with the village.

7.35 The development site overall has a gross density of 14 dwellings per hectare. It could be argued that the land should be used more efficiently particularly in view of the need for housing. However the development is already considered too large in relation to the size of the village and more housing would not be appropriate in relation to the character of the village.

Housing Mix

7.36 The application is for 210 dwellings, 40% of which would be affordable equating to 84 affordable dwellings, 126 market dwellings. Ensuring developments achieve a good mix of housing is a key criteria of PPS3 in addition to adopted Local Plan policy. The application proposes an illustrative mix of market housing which is compared to the policy requirements below in Table 2:

7.37 Table 2: Application P09/W0201/O Market Mix – Number of Bedrooms

Number of bedrooms	Amount - Market (percentage)	Local Plan Policy H7 – percentage	Draft Core Strategy - percentage
1 bedroom	-	7.5%	7%
2 bedroom	57 (45%)	48.5%	43%
3 bedroom	38 (30%)	24%	17%

4 + bedroom	31 (25%)	20%	33%
Total	126 (100%)		

- 7.38 In terms of market mix Policy H7 requires that a mix of dwelling types and sizes to meet the needs of current and future households will be sought. The South Oxfordshire Housing Needs Survey (updated 2009) shows that a high proportion of smaller dwellings are still required. Policy H7 text advises that at least 45% of the mix should be 2 bedroom dwellings unless it would adversely affect the character of the area. As can be seen from Table 1 the proposed mix incorporates 45% 2 bed dwellings which meets policy requirements. The mix for 3 and 4 beds differs slightly from the recommended mix but the Housing Needs Assessment, summarised in the draft Core Strategy is actually indicating that more 4 beds are required than previously sought. Although illustrative, the housing mix for this scale of development is considered relatively balanced and is acceptable.

Affordable Housing

- 7.39 The Councils policy (H9) requires 40 % affordable housing and the detailed mix, tenure and type should be in accordance with the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance. The application and draft heads of terms propose 40 % affordable housing but no specific details on tenure, numbers of flats / houses or cluster numbers have yet been agreed. In the draft Heads of Terms for a S106 obligation (received 19.05.09) **attached** at Appendix C, the applicants confirm that the affordable housing offer will be 40%. This will be provided as 30% social rented and 10% intermediate housing subject to the scheme securing Housing Community Agency (HCA) grant. In the event that grant is not forthcoming, the quantum would still be 40% but there would have to be an adjustment in the tenures to compensate for the lack of grant. Consideration of this application is therefore on the basis that 40% affordable housing will be provided with a 75% social rented / 25% intermediate housing tenure split. Any other variation proposed would need to be subject to a viability assessment as per the advice in the adopted Local Plan.
- 7.40 However as details in respect of affordable housing have not been secured, by way of legal agreement, there is an objection to the proposal. If satisfactory details are agreed this reason for refusal could be overcome.

Infrastructure and Services

- 7.41 Officers have assessed the type of facilities and services that would be required in connection with these applications and appropriate contributions. The draft heads of terms (Appendix C) submitted by the developers are acceptable in most respects, the outstanding matters relate to education and sport and recreation.

Education

- 7.42 On the previous application there was concern that development at Crowmarsh would prejudice the strategic delivery of education in Wallingford, including a new school. In the County Council's correspondence received 18 May the County confirm that there would be no strategic objection and the delivery of a new primary school and expanded secondary education would not be prejudiced. In relation to this application, and indeed any growth in Crowmarsh of 50 dwellings plus the provision of land and contributions to the existing primary school in Old Reading Road will be required. The applicants have confirmed that they have an option to buy the land next to the school to facilitate expansion and are willing to pay contributions for an extension to the school. The level of contributions has yet to be agreed however provided sufficient contributions were

made to meet the educational needs of the development the council has no objection.

Sport and Recreation

- 7.43 The applicants have agreed the principle of funding outdoor and indoor sport and recreation. No formal provision is made on site but due to the proximity to Crowmarsh playing fields and pavilion it is considered that expansion / enhancement of these facilities is more appropriate than providing segregated facilities on site. The location and provision of on-site facilities on the previous application raised accessibility and management issues and was objected to. In terms of contributions the developers are seeking some offset from the amount requested by officers in view of the amount of public open space provided plus an examination of formulas. This needs to be discussed further. Provided sufficient contributions were made to meet the sport and recreational needs of the development the council have no objection.
- 7.44 The detail of these matters (e.g. timing of payments, indexation) would also need to be agreed and secured by way of a planning obligation so as to ensure timely provision of infrastructure, facilities and services. As there is an objection to the amount of development the obligation requirements have not been progressed. As it stands there is outstanding objection to the proposal on the grounds of increased pressure on services, facilities and infrastructure and the lack of provision to mitigate the needs of the development. However were such details to be agreed this objection would be overcome.

Delivery

- 7.45 Were this application to be acceptable it would only be on the grounds that it could contribute significantly to the shortage of deliverable housing. The site must therefore be available and deliverable within 5 years. Crucial to an early delivery is the existence of adequate infrastructure and it is apparent that there are current issues in relation to water supply and the capacity of sewerage infrastructure. However with further work, funding and approval Thames Water have indicated that adequate infrastructure could be put in place by 2015.
- 7.46 The applicants have advised that the site is available now and propose that the dwellings would be delivered from 2010 over 3 years. Information about the company and options on land was set out in correspondence received 12 May 2010, to demonstrate that the company is in a position to deliver the housing and required infrastructure and services. There is no reason to believe that the site could not be delivered within 5 years.

8.0 **CONCLUSIONS**

- 8.1 This application is on a greenfield site and does not conform with the adopted Local Plan policies for housing development. Also necessary to consider is advice in PPS3 that requires that applications for housing are permitted, subject to various criteria, if there is an inadequate 5 yr supply of housing land. This district does not have a 5 year supply of housing land and does need to make further provision for housing and affordable housing. However the shortfall in land is primarily in the Didcot area. Whilst the council has indicated that it will consider bringing forward development in the 'Rest of Central Oxfordshire' any such development should be in accordance with the emerging core strategy set out in the council's preferred options document. The proposed development, due to the amount of housing, does not conform with the emerging core strategy as it does not respect the scale and local distinctiveness of the existing village and will jeopardise the ability to provide an appropriate distribution of housing in other villages. For this reason the application is unacceptable.

- 8.2 The application raises other environmental issues which have been addressed in the Environmental Impact Assessment and application documentation. Drainage and potential groundwater flooding is addressed in the EIA and by way of supplementary information. The Environment Agency has no objection, subject to conditions. In terms of traffic it is accepted that there will be an increased impact on the highway network. However the impacts will be dispersed in different directions from the site and together with proposed mitigation measures, there is no highway objection subject to various provisions required through conditions and legal agreements. There will also be an impact on the landscape directly on the site and to a limited extent from the wider area, including the AONB. However the masterplan incorporates a landscaped setting for the development, retains important planting and supplementary planting. There are no material design or technical concerns that could not be overcome by condition / legal agreement. Overall the concept of the masterplan is considered acceptable and is a marked improvement on the previous application. However the amount of development is still considered excessive for Crowmarsh village.
- 8.3 The net density of the development accords with policy and sufficient open space and amenity would be provided. The proposed housing mix incorporating affordable housing and a range of sizes is an acceptable housing mix. The affordable housing and tenure mix have yet to be determined by a S106 obligation and as such there is an outstanding objection. This also applies to the provision of services, facilities and infrastructure, which have yet to be agreed although the applicant has confirmed willingness to provide and were such details to be agreed this objection would be overcome.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1 **a) That the application be refused for the three reasons set out below.**

b) Reasons 2 and 3 could be overcome in the event that that a satisfactory planning obligation in respect of affordable housing and infrastructure, facilities and services is completed to the satisfaction of the council, delegated to the Head of Planning.

- 1. The proposed development is on a greenfield site that is not allocated for development in the adopted Local Plan, it is contrary to SOLP policies G4, H2 and H6. This development does not reflect the South East Plan village management policy BE5 or housing objectives and spatial vision for the area outlined in the emerging South Oxfordshire Core Strategy Preferred Options. The South East Plan supports small scale proposals for affordable housing which respect the capacity of the built form and distinctive character of the village. The South Oxfordshire Core Strategy aims to establish a strong network of settlements throughout the district by allowing growth that respects the scale of existing settlements and maintains the population and sustainability of villages so that services and facilities may be retained. This amount of development in Crowmarsh Gifford will undermine these policy objectives, as it does not respect the scale and local distinctiveness of the existing village and will jeopardise the ability to provide an appropriate distribution of housing in other villages. The proposal is contrary to the adopted Local Plan and the council's vision and objectives 1 and 2 in the emerging Core Strategy. Although the council does not have a 5 year supply of housing land, the shortfall in land is primarily in the Didcot area. Whilst the council has indicated that it will consider bringing forward development in the 'Rest of Central Oxfordshire' in the short term, any such development should be in accordance with the**

emerging core strategy set out in the council’s preferred options document.

- 2. The application fails to secure provision for affordable housing as required by Policy H3 of the South East Plan, Policy H7 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance ‘Affordable Housing’.**
- 3. The application fails to secure provision for necessary infrastructure, facilities and services to meet the needs of the development as required by Policies CC7 and CC8 in the South East Plan, Policies D11, D12, R2, R3, R6, and C6 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan.**

Author Ms C Scotting
Contact No. 01491 823757
Email Add. planning.west@southoxon.gov.uk