

**SUBJECT                    DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION REPORTS                    ITEM 7**

**REPORT OF**            Head of Planning & Building Control

<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	<a href="#">P09/W0489</a>
<b>APPLICATION TYPE</b>	FULL
<b>REGISTERED</b>	10.06.2009
<b>PARISH</b>	CHOLSEY
<b>WARD MEMBER(S)</b>	Mrs Pat Dawe Ms Felicity Aska
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Wates Homes Ltd
<b>SITE</b>	Land west of Reading Road Winterbrook Wallingford
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Demolition of 10 Winterbrook, and development of land to the west so as to accommodate 106 dwellings together with associated new access and landscaping works.
<b>AMENDMENTS</b>	(as amended and clarified by revised site location plan 839-S02 rev A accompanying Agent's letter dated 11 June 2009, by the revised Statement of Community Involvement accompanying the Architect's letter dated 10 July, the additional drainage calculations accompanying Agent's email dated 15 July 2009, amended plans 0839-P01B and P02H to address concerns of the Crime prevention Officer accompanying Agent's letter dated 23 July 2009 and the technical note from I-Transport accompanying Agent's letter dated 30 July 2009).
<b>GRID REFERENCE</b>	460459188602
<b>OFFICER</b>	Mrs S Crawford

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 A detailed planning application for 106 houses (a net increase of 105 dwellings) has been submitted for residential development on land to the West of Reading Road, Winterbrook, Cholsey.
- 1.2 Most of the site is agricultural land and the site is not allocated for development in the adopted Local Plan. The proposal involves the demolition of an existing house fronting onto Reading Road to provide a new junction and access to the land to the rear of the existing frontage development on Reading Road. The application has been advertised as a departure from the Development Plan, as affecting the setting of listed buildings and as major development.
- 1.3 Members visited the site on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2009 to assess the details of the application in relation to the character of the area and the setting of the listed buildings nearby, neighbour impact and the impact of the new junction on the character of Reading Road.
- 1.4 In view of the strategic importance of this proposal the Development Manager has decided that the application should be determined by the Planning Committee.

**2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

- 2.1 Winterbrook lies in the parish of Cholsey immediately to south of the built up limits of Wallingford and is within the line of the Wallingford by-pass. The application site is located on the western side of Reading Road, one of the principal roads into Wallingford. The distance from the centre of the site to the Town Hall is just over 1 km (0.7 of a mile). The land is bounded by agricultural land to the west, with the built development of Winterbrook to the east and south; a watercourse, Bradford's Brook, runs along the northern boundary. A site plan is **attached** at Appendix 1 showing the application site.
- 2.2 The application site comprises three fields and the property and grounds of 10 Winterbrook, which is included to achieve access onto the Reading Road. Five listed buildings are located within the vicinity of the site (including Winterbrook Close, which backs onto the site). Winterbrook House, Winterbrook House stables and Winterbrook Lodge are in close proximity to the proposed junction. The Wallingford Conservation Area boundary extends as far as Squires Walk, some 300 m to the north of the site entrance.
- 2.3 The three fields of the site area are mostly in pasture. There are a number of small fruit trees on the central field which are the remnants of a former orchard. The fields are classified as Grade 2 agricultural land which is land of the "best and most versatile quality". The land forms a gently undulating plain over the most part, with a gentle fall to the north. The altitude of most of the site falls between about 46 and 48 m above Ordnance datum Newlyn.
- 2.4 Access onto the site at present can be gained at two points via; a single track access serving old agricultural buildings between 6 Winterbrook and Winterbrook Close; and the field access onto Winterbrook Lane.
- 2.5 The trees on the site are not covered by a Tree Preservation Order but the orchard is a protected biodiversity habitat as defined in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.
- 2.6 Bradford's Brook runs along the northern boundary of the site and the areas along the banks are in flood zones 2 and 3.
- 2.7 The site lies within an area of archaeological interest.

**3.0 PROPOSAL**

- 3.1 There are a number of detailed documents submitted with the application which are available for inspection on the Council's website. The documents are listed below:
1. Planning statement
  2. Housing land supply report
  3. Design and access statement
  4. Transport assessment
  5. Landscape and visual impact assessment
  6. Arboricultural impact report
  7. extended phase 1 habitat and phase 2 surveys (ecology)
  8. Agricultural assessment
  9. Flood risk assessment
  - 10a. Archaeological desk based assessment
  - 10b. Archaeological evaluation report
  11. Built Heritage assessment

12. Foul Drainage and utilities assessment
13. Geo environmental assessment
14. Road traffic noise study.
15. Air quality assessment
16. Sustainability assessment
17. Statement of Community engagement
18. Heads of terms
19. Draft environmental management plan

- 3.2 The application is a full application with all details submitted for consideration. Planning permission is sought for 106 dwellings; 40% of which would be affordable (42 affordable units 62 private units). The break down of accommodation is as follows;
- 9 one bedroom flats (all affordable)
  - 11 two bedroom flats (9 affordable, 2 private),
  - 40 two bed houses (13 affordable, 27 private),
  - 25 three bed houses (9 affordable, 16 private),
  - 17 four bed houses (2 affordable, 17 private)
  - 2 five bed houses (all private)
- 3.3 The site area is 3.9 hectares (9.75 acres) with 0.96 hectares (2.4 acres) of landscaped amenity area within the site. The gross density is 27 dwellings per hectare. Taking out the open space from the calculation gives a net density of 36 dwellings per hectare.
- 3.4 Access to the site would be secured with the demolition of 10 Reading Road. A new junction controlled by traffic lights is proposed.
- 3.5 Additional information and amended details have been submitted in respect of;
- The concerns of the crime prevention officer
  - Additional information to address the concerns of the Environment Agency
  - OCC concerns relating to pedestrian links into the town centre
  - Slight revisions to the application area; and
  - Revisions to the Statement of Community Involvement to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act.

#### 4.0 **CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

- 4.1 Comments from consultees are summarised. The detailed comments can be viewed on the website under the planning application reference number.

OCC (archaeology) The site lies within an area of considerable archaeological potential. The desk based assessment and geophysics survey suggest the presence of a middle Iron Age settlement within the development area. The features are mainly located in the northern field. A staged programme of archaeological evaluation is recommended if planning permission granted, this can be secured by condition.

OCC (Highways)

In its previous response the LHA indicated that although it had no objection in principle to the proposed development, it had serious concerns about the sustainability/accessibility of the site and in particular the opportunities to reduce car borne travel. Although acknowledged that the proposed site access lies within 2km of many services and key facilities, it was the LHA's opinion that the layout as submitted did not encourage end occupiers to walk to destinations within Wallingford due to both the distance and the nature of the walking routes.

Since the submission of this response, further information has been provided by the applicant's transport consultants on the pedestrian connectivity of the site (Pedestrian Connectivity report dated 24.7.09).

Commenting on this report, it is the LHA's opinion that the permeability/accessibility of the site can be enhanced through the provision of a pedestrian/cycle bridge across Bradford's Brook. This however requires land which is not in the control of the applicant and is subject to ownership agreements. Following discussions with planning officers at SODC and with the applicants transport consultants it has been agreed that a developer contribution will be provided towards this bridge.

Further enhancements of pedestrian and cycle links to the north of the site have also been proposed to encourage pedestrian and cyclist movements from the site into the centre of Wallingford and the developer has agreed to provide a contribution towards these enhancements.

Whilst the LHA will need to agree the proposals that have been put forward, it is satisfied that some of these are deliverable.

In addition, the developer has also agreed to pay a contribution towards improvements to existing public transport services and infrastructure on the Reading Road Corridor. This will further encourage end occupiers of the site to use public transport and is considered vital in reducing car borne trips and movements. It is therefore the LHA's opinion that both the pedestrian/cycle bridge, enhancements to the Reading Road and improvements to the existing public transport services will improve the attractiveness of the routes to the town centre and will encourage end occupiers of the site to walk/cycle/use public transport to access the centre of Wallingford.

To aid air quality the developer has agreed to pay a contribution towards the implementation of schemes in the Wallingford Air Quality Management Area action plan. The developer has also agreed to pay a contribution towards the Wallingford to Cholsey cycle scheme. The contributions satisfy all the requirements as set out in the formal Government advice OPDM Circular 05/2005.

In view of the above, it's is the LHA's opinion that the sustainability/accessibility of the site can be improved making walking, cycling and public transport options more attractive to end occupiers. Subject to the satisfactory completion of a Legal Agreement and to the inclusion of conditions and informatives (as detailed in the LHA's previous response dated 13.7.09) the LHA wishes to withdraw its holding objection.

OCC (Developer contributions)	Contributions are required in respect of education, transport, including bus services, cycle links and a travel plan co-ordinator, library, waste recycling centre, museum resource centre, social and health care – day resource centre, extra care housing and youth provision.
Environment Agency	<p>In response to the additional surface water drainage calculations dated July 2009 and revised drainage layout drawing Figure 8 Rev P5 we are now in a position to <b>withdraw our objection on flood risk grounds</b>.</p> <p>The calculations demonstrate that there should be no informal flooding on site up to and including the 1 in 100 year rainfall event with an allowance for climate change.</p> <p>A significant buffer area between the development and the Bradford's Brook Is provided with improvements to the banks and the wildlife corridor.</p> <p>The applicant has also provided a wide range of sustainable drainage methods to manage flood risk, water quality and also provide biodiversity and amenity value as part of the development.</p> <p>Subject to appropriate conditions there is no objection to this proposal.</p>
Health and Housing (contamination of land)	No objection comments regarding contamination
Health and Housing (air quality)	No objection on the grounds of air quality provided that the mitigation measures to minimise the impact of the development on local air quality outlined in the Framework Residential Travel Plan are fully implemented conditions in this respect are recommended.
Forestry	No objection comments
Landscape consultant	<p>Objections to site E were submitted in the Core Strategy because of the impact development would have on the character of the area and there is no change to this objection. The changes relating to the character of Winterbrook / Reading Road as a consequence of this application would be considerable and would undoubtedly erode the existing informal character of Winterbrook and introduce an increasingly urban character to the sense of arrival into Wallingford.</p> <p>Approval of this application would erode the distinctive character of Winterbrook (the "village") and impact adversely on its setting. The distinctive sense of arrival into Wallingford along Winterbrook (road) would be diluted and formalised by the proposed access arrangements and associated "enhancement works". Whatever the merits of the proposal, it would also prejudice a holistic approach to the wider Option E site, if it were to become the preferred site for development. The Core Strategy attempts a more comprehensive approach to the district's housing requirements, thereby avoiding ad hoc planning applications</p>
Thames Valley Police	Contributions are required towards Police infrastructure

Health and Housing (waste collection)	The road will have to be fully adopted, have a section 38 agreement or an indemnity waiver provided by the developer to the Council's contractor before residents move in. Comments regarding collection points.
Cholsey Parish Council	<p>1) Extra traffic on Reading Road would create noise and fumes and make it difficult for residents to access their properties</p> <p>2) Reading Road will also experience pressure from Fairmile development</p> <p>3) Winterbrook does not have an urban character; it is a semi rural hamlet.</p> <p>4) The designs are a generic pastiche and are out of keeping with the character</p> <p>5) Winterbrook has a density of 6.8 dph, the scheme is 27dph – congested, urban form out of character</p> <p>6) This is a back door approach in advance of the core strategy – Green field site.</p> <p>7) Opposed demolition of 10 Winterbrook</p> <p>8) Will impact on residents' views</p> <p>9) Adverse impact on services no new ones proposed, particularly education, schools are all full</p> <p>10) Access road implies later development and Reading Road can not cope with traffic</p> <p>11) Flooding has been a problem in the past.</p>
Wallingford Town Council	Refuse. The application should not be decided in advance of the core strategy decision for preferred growth for Wallingford, Access and egress onto Reading Road will cause traffic congestion and it is a difficult route for pedestrians; and Flooding concerns.
Crime prevention officer	Concerns about a number of footpaths and access routes incorporated into the design. Underpasses are crime generators. And surveillance over open areas. These concerns have now been addressed by amended details.
OCC Structure Plan	<p><b>For information: Oxfordshire County Council is no longer the Structure Plan authority, the Structure Plan has been superseded by the South East Plan.</b></p> <p>Holding objection. 1) Application comes in advance of the LDF and could prejudice the proper planning and deliverability of a viable infrastructure package need to support the development of an urban extension to Wallingford and undermine the creation of a healthy thriving community contrary to the objectives of the SE plan policies SP3 and BE1 and of Oxfordshire 2030</p> <p>2) lack of direct pedestrian and cycle link to enable access to the town centre and key service facilities leading to unsustainable development and unnecessary travel</p>
Thames Water	The existing waste water and potable water infrastructure is not sufficient to accommodate the needs of the development proposed and on or off site drainage works will be required. These can be satisfactorily achieved by condition.
Countryside Officer	No objection. Considerable pre-application negotiation. Issues about mitigation and landscape management can now be covered in a legal agreement and by condition.

Prupim (agent acting for developer of Site B)	Detailed objection to the application coming forward in advance of the core strategy.
Neighbours – 131 objections (as of 13 August 2009)	out of keeping with character Greenfield site Poor access and pedestrian links Overdevelopment Strain on infrastructure and local services Noise and pollution Flooding and contamination Overlooking This is a cynical attempt to force SODC to make a decision on a contentious issue before the proper democratic process of consultation on the core strategy has been completed. It should be rejected. Piecemeal development Road trips through town in transport assessment can not be correct Inadequate parking provision Changes rural character of Winterbrook Lane Pedestrian links to the town are poor No improvements to infrastructure or services proposed
Neighbours – support (7)	Smaller schemes on the edges of towns are better as they do not place traffic pressures all on one road. There are similar cul-de-sac developments in Winterbrook and this would not be out of place. Winterbrook is an integral part of Wallingford not a separate settlement; 106 houses is not overlarge and can be accommodated There is a need for new housing in Wallingford/Cholsey Balance of dwellings is appropriate More population will support and encourage improvements in the town centre Very sustainable location This is the best location for growth in the long term.
Neighbour representations (no strong views (25) Petition against 76 signatures	

## 5.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

5.1 The following applications relate to the field fronting onto Winterbrook Lane.

- P03/W0492/O - Residential development of five, two storey houses with associated garages. REFUSED – APPEAL DISMISSED
- P03/W0491/O - Residential development of six, two storey houses with associated garages. REFUSED – APPEAL DISMISSED
- P03/W0490/O - Residential development of three, two storey houses with associated garages. REFUSED – APPEAL DISMISSED
- P84/W0085/O – three detached, two storey houses – REFUSED

5.2 In the 1960's and 70's a series of applications for residential development on a wider area of land, including the current site, were submitted. Of the applications that

received a decision all applications were refused planning permission (seven applications).

## 6.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

### 6.1 South East Plan

Policies: SP1 (co-ordinated planning in the subregions), SP3 (urban focus), CC2 (climate change), CC7 (infrastructure and implementation), CC8 (green infrastructure), H1, H3, H4 (type and size of new housing), C5 (rural urban fringe), C6 (countryside access and rights of way), BE1 (management for an urban renaissance), BE4 (role of small rural towns), CO1 (core strategy) and CO3 (scale and distribution of housing).

From May 2009 the South East Plan has replaced 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 has identified 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 where there is adequate provision for infrastructure improvements. However the rest of the sub region also has to accommodate more housing. 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 (this figure has now gone down to 1350 taking into account this years figures) Larger settlements in the Central Oxfordshire sub region include Wallingford, Crowmarsh, Benson, Cholsey, Berinsfield and Wheatley. Wallingford is the only town in the subregion.

### 6.2 South Oxfordshire Policy Documents

The South Oxfordshire Local Plan (SOLP) was adopted January 2006 and covers a 5 year period up until 2011. The relevant SOLP policies are:

- General: G1, G2, G3, G4, G5, G6
- Protecting Natural and Built Environment C1, C2, C4, C5, C6, C7,C8, C9
- Historic Environment CON5, CON12, CON13
- Environmental Protection: EP1, EP2, EP3, EP6, EP7
- Encouraging sustainable and high quality development: D1, D2, D3, D4, D6, D7, D8, D10, D11, D12
- Housing: H2, H4, H6, H7, H8, H9
- Recreation R1,R2, R3, R6, R7, R8
- Transport T1, T2

### 6.3 Supplementary Planning Guidance

- South Oxfordshire Design Guide - July 2008
- Affordable Housing - Sept 2004
- South Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment - April 1998

### 6.4 Local Development Framework (Core Strategy)

6.5 The Council is in the process of preparing a Core Strategy as part of the Local Development Framework. This will identify a strategy for new development and strategic site allocations for the period to 2026 to meet the requirements of the South East Plan. In November 2007 the Council consulted on the Core Strategy: Issues and Options Paper and this suggested Wallingford as an appropriate location to accommodate housing growth. A number of alternative directions of growth were



suggested for Wallingford (A plan showing all the sites considered is **attached** at Appendix 2). Site B and site E were put forward as the preferred options for the growth in Spring 2009 and the application site forms part of site E. Following on from the analysis of the consultation stage, it is envisaged that one of these sites will be selected as the area for growth with the second choice site only being released if the preferred site does not come forward for reasons other than market conditions. A decision on the chosen site will not be made until autumn 2009.

6.6 The submission version of the Core Strategy is due to be published in late 2009 ready for further consultation at the start of 2010. This will indicate the Council's preferred strategy including strategic allocations for development in the Central Oxfordshire sub region. To meet the requirements in the South East Plan land for approximately 1350 additional dwellings needs to be identified. At this stage in the process the Council has not decided on its strategy for future housing allocations in this district. In the absence of an adopted or significantly progressed core strategy, which advises on the Council's housing objectives; this application needs to be determined in relation to the existing Development Plan and other material planning considerations as required by Section 38 of the Town and Country Planning and Compensation Act.

6.7 Planning Policy Guidance :  
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

## 7.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

7.1 The main issues in this case are:

- Principle of the development, in light of the adopted policies in the development plan and other material considerations
- To identify aspects of the proposal where there is an objection.
- To identify aspects of the proposal where there is no objection
- Other issues identified as a result of the public consultation.

### (i) Principle of development- Policy

7.2 The proposed site is not an allocated site (Policy H2 SOLP). It is not within the built up limits of Wallingford or Winterbrook and the proposal does not constitute infill development. Both the size and location of the site are such that they do not meet the requirements of Policy H5. 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. Policy C4 also aims to protect the landscape setting of settlements. Development of this site is contrary to the policies of

the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan.

However, the local plan is not the only element of the Development Plan. The Oxfordshire Structure Plan has been superseded by the South East Plan which is now part of the Development Plan. The South East Plan requires land for approximately 1350 additional dwellings to be identified for development in the Central Oxfordshire region up to 2026.

- 7.3 At the preferred options stage of the core strategy Wallingford was identified as the smallest market town in the district with a population of some 8,000 people (if Winterbrook in the parish of Cholsey is included). The preferred strategy for Wallingford will develop the town's role as a local service centre to complement rather than compete with Didcot and build on Wallingford's particular strengths. The overall aim for Wallingford is to provide an urban extension of up to 850 dwellings at either option B or option E, (this figure will be reviewed in response to updates to the housing figures).
- 7.4 It is also necessary to consider PPS3 issues. PPS3 states 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, having regard to the aims of PPS3.

The South East plan gives housing targets for different policy areas – Didcot (within Central Oxfordshire, but it is given its own housing target), the rest of Central Oxfordshire and the remainder of the district. The housing targets run from 2006 to 2026. This Council does not have an overall five year supply of housing but the shortfall is in Didcot. In both the rest of Central Oxfordshire and the remainder of the district we are meeting our 5 year land supply requirement. Didcot has received government funding for housing growth points to provide the additional infrastructure requirements associated with the planned growth and it would not be appropriate to offset the shortfall in Didcot with development elsewhere in the district because the funding for the infrastructure demands associated with growth is not available in the rest of the district. Meeting the shortfall in the rest of the district would also undermine policies C01, C02 and C03 in the South East Plan which focus growth at Didcot to support the economic development at the Science Vale UK area and to develop a town offering a wide range of services and supporting infrastructure. In the circumstances there is no requirement for the Council to provide an increased supply of housing land within the Central Oxfordshire area in advance of the decision on the core strategy.

Where there is an up-to-date five year supply of deliverable sites and applications come forward for sites that are allocated in the overall land supply, but which are not yet in the up-to-date five year supply, Local Planning Authorities will need to consider whether granting permission would undermine achievement of their policy objectives. Whilst site E is not yet in the five year supply (pending the decision on the preferred direction for growth) this application should only be approved if it can be demonstrated that the development would not undermine the achievement of the Council's policy objectives

- 7.5 Successful and sustainable communities and new developments depend on suitable physical and social infrastructure being in place to meet the needs of their residents. New development must be served and supported by appropriate on- and off-site infrastructure and services. Planning permission will only be granted when infrastructure and services to meet the needs of the new development and/or mitigate the impact of the new development is already in place or will be provided to an agreed timescale. PPS12 advises on local spatial planning through the new local

development framework and encourages developers to participate in the development plan process to achieve comprehensive development.

Whilst Site E has been put forward as an option for growth this application has been submitted in advance of the decision for the preferred growth of Wallingford before the detailed analysis of the infrastructure requirements necessary to accommodate the growth and before the proper assessment of potential alternative development opportunities within the Wallingford area. The application proposes piecemeal development of Site E and could prejudice the provision of infrastructure and services required to meet the whole of the planned growth for Wallingford (such as the provision of a new primary school in particular), it would therefore undermine the Council's policy objectives and is not acceptable. As there is not a shortfall of housing land supply in the Central Oxfordshire region the application should be determined in accordance with the current adopted Local Plan.

ii) To identify aspects of the proposal that are not acceptable

7.6 The aspects of the proposal that are unacceptable relate to the piecemeal development of Site E which do not allow the site as a whole to be planned and developed comprehensively and consequently does not make adequate provision to protect the character of Winterbrook or provide adequate pedestrian and cycle links to the town centre. These are;

- Impact on character of Winterbrook and also on the setting of listed buildings
- Lack of pedestrian links into the town centre

*Character.*

7.7 The site has no special landscape designation although it was classified as land of Great Landscape Value in the previous local plan. Whilst the site is very close to Wallingford town centre, Winterbrook (Reading Road) has a different character, separate from and contrasting with the dense grain, narrow streets and continuous street frontages of Wallingford's historic core. Winterbrook has a linear form along Reading Road. Development from the mid-eighteenth century reflects the prosperity of the market town and substantial, detached Georgian and Victorian villas set in large gardens line the road. These buildings remain prominent in the street although infilling has diluted their eminence and reduced the amount of land formerly associated with the buildings. These houses are set back off the road in generous treed plots

Winterbrook Lane has a different character of smaller, detached and semi- detached, more modern houses on smaller plots. However, as it is a single track lane with a field breaking the northern ribbon of development it has a semi rural character. Previous appeals on the field fronting onto Winterbrook Lane have identified this semi-rural character as being important.

The new access road onto Reading Road would involve the demolition of 10 Winterbrook, a house built in the late twentieth century. The dwelling is suburban in character and fails to reinforce local distinctiveness. The gap created by its demolition on Reading Road would be an improvement, as it would reinstate the loose grain of development. However, the access into the site will have an impact on the character of Winterbrook. Reading Road has retained some of its rural character but also has elements of suburbanisation, e.g. street lighting, bus stops and road markings because it is a main route into Wallingford. The introduction of further urban features associated with the junction; traffic lights, roadside markings and improvements to the pedestrian route into Wallingford would be further additions that would introduce an increasingly

urban character to the sense of arrival into Wallingford.

The development of the site creates an infill block that is different to the established built form of linear development and would fill the open gap onto Winterbrook Lane. This proposal will have the effect of subsuming Winterbrook into the wider townscape of Wallingford, blurring its distinctive linear form and rural character in the process. The details of the road junction will also have an urbanising impact on the wider character of the settlement as noted below. A comprehensive masterplan for the whole of site E would allow for a scheme that could address the character issues in a more sympathetic manner.

*Setting of listed buildings*

- 7.8 The proposed new junction is within sight of Winterbrook House, Winterbrook Stables and Winterbrook Lodge, all grade II listed buildings. The front elevations of the houses are set back slightly from Reading Road behind boundary walls and vegetation limits views of their ground floor level to glimpses. The first floor and roofs of both dwellings are clearly visible.

Para 2.17 of PPG15 states that;

*“...the setting of a building may be limited to obviously ancillary land, but may often include land some distance from it....Where a building forms an important visual element in a street, it would probably be right to regard any development in the street as being within the setting of the building.”*

Given that the houses make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the road, your officers consider that the street is part of their setting, rather than being limited to their front boundaries as described in the Built Heritage Assessment. The development associated with the junction would have an impact on their setting and on the rural character of the wider streetscape. The stables face towards Winterbrook House and are set well back into the plot behind the 1.8m boundary wall. As the stables do not have a direct relationship with the road, the junction will have a negligible impact on the building's setting. Whilst there are traffic lights located adjacent to listed buildings in Wallingford identified in the Built Heritage Assessment, these are situated within an urban context in the town centre rather than on the town's fringes.

The rear of Winterbrook Close is very visible in views through the site at the rear. The fields form part of its incidental setting but this would not be sufficient to justify the refusal of the application, particularly as the nearest dwellings are positioned over 50m away, beyond the substantial garden boundary wall.

*Pedestrian links to the town centre*

- 7.9 The site is on the edge of Wallingford, close to the town centre with a wide range of facilities. The distance from the centre of the site to the Town Hall is just over 1 km (0.7 of a mile). Any distance less than 2 km is considered an acceptable walking distance (PPG13). The site is also close to employment sites (Hithercroft), and is located between Oxford and Reading, served by a regular express bus route. The sites' proximity and access to employment, facilities and services and public transport routes do present a sustainable location for new housing development. However, the existing pedestrian route into Wallingford is not attractive as Reading Road is a busy road that lacks a footway on both sides and requires pedestrians to cross at several points to join the pavement. The pavements on Reading Road and into the town centre are also narrow. It is not an attractive route and is unlikely to encourage walking.

In the case of this scheme the best option would be to provide a pedestrian/ cycle bridge over Bradford's Brook into the Wallingford Hospital car park which would then allow pedestrians to follow the relatively quiet route along Squires Walk. However this

may not be possible as there would be a need to secure permission from the third party landowner. A second alternative for improvements to the existing route along Reading Road has also been put forward which overcomes the concerns of the highway authority but has implications for the character of the area discussed above.

In putting site E forward as a preferred option for growth the Council have identified the need to improve pedestrian routes and linkages into the town centre. A master plan for the whole site would be able to plan such improvements comprehensively and the fact that this can not be done would undermine the Council's wider policy objectives.

iii) Aspects of the scheme that are considered acceptable

7.10 Setting aside the policy considerations and concerns of piecemeal development discussed in the report, your officers have been involved in detailed pre-application discussions to secure the best possible scheme for the site. There are aspects of the scheme that comply with the Council's policy and are acceptable. If planning permission were to be granted these issues could be adequately covered by condition and contributions to additional infrastructure and the provision of affordable housing could be secured through a legal agreement. These aspects of the scheme are;

- The site is in a sustainable location for development (albeit with difficult links into the town centre)
- The internal design and layout of the scheme take advantage of the particular opportunities of the site (not considering wider impact on character),
- The design of the buildings in general (the size and scale of the block of flats is a concern in relation to impact on character) (G6)
- Mix of units (Policy H7)
- Density of development (H8)
- Affordable housing provision (H9) subject to an RSL being prepared to take on the block of flats which needs further clarification (subject to S106).
- Lifetime homes (H14)
- Biodiversity (Policies C6, C8, C9)
- Provision of open space and play space (R2, R6)
- Vehicle and bicycle parking (D2)
- Plot coverage and garden areas (D3)
- Design against crime (D6)
- Access for all (D7)
- Loss of agricultural land
- Archaeological issues (CON12, CON13)
- Sustainable forms of construction (D8, D9)
- Waste management (D10)
- Public art (D12)
- The technical details of the junction provide for a safe and convenient access to the highway and the highway network can accommodate the increase in traffic.
- Air quality (EP1)
- Loss of mineral reserve
- Surface water and foul drainage (EP6 and EP7)
- Provision of infrastructure and services to meet the needs of the immediate site (this does not include the wider issue of the total growth for Wallingford) (subject to S106).
- The scheme is immediately deliverable
- Allows links into larger site E (notwithstanding concerns regarding piecemeal development)

*iv) Aspects that need expansion as a result of comments raised in the public consultation not already discussed.*

*Biodiversity*

- 7.11 The site is in agricultural use and Bradford's Brook runs along the northern boundary of the site. There are known protected species associated with Bradford's Brook and the old orchard in the centre of the site is a protected habitat. Detailed reports in respect of these matters have been submitted with the application. There has also been considerable pre-application negotiation in relation to the buffer zone between the brook and the new development, the extent and rejuvenation programme for the old orchard, and mitigation for protected species. The scheme provides generous amounts of open space and provides opportunities for green infrastructure. The scheme is acceptable in these respects and issues about mitigation and landscape management can now be covered in a legal agreement and by condition.

*Drainage – Flood Risk*

- 7.12 The northern part of the site adjacent to Bradford's Brook is within an area of flood risk and a detailed Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been submitted with the application. A significant buffer area between the development and Bradford's Brook is provided together with improvements to the banks and the wildlife corridor. Whilst the Environment Agency had initial concerns regarding the surface water strategy, these have been addressed by the submitted additional calculations. The calculations demonstrate that there should be no informal flooding on site up to and including the 1 in 100 year rainfall event with an allowance for climate change. The applicant has also provided a wide range of sustainable drainage methods such to manage flood risk, water quality and also provide biodiversity and amenity value as part of the development. Thames Water has no objection to the proposal; they advised that the existing waste water and potable water infrastructure is not sufficient to accommodate the needs of the development proposed and on or off site drainage works will be required. A new pumping station is provided for on the site and improvements to the infrastructure to serve the development can be covered by appropriate conditions

**8.0 CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 The proposed application is contrary to the policies of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 in that this large site is not allocated for strategic development and would extend into and encroach upon the open countryside on the edge of Wallingford detracting from the landscape setting of Winterbrook. The application has been submitted in advance of a decision on the core strategy and there are concerns that approval will prejudice the comprehensive development needed to accommodate the total growth of Wallingford. The development of Site E in a piecemeal fashion does not allow for the comprehensive masterplanning or development and consequently fails to provide a high quality design for the site as a whole because it does not minimise the adverse effects on the environment and would undermine the Council's policy objectives. As there is not a shortfall of housing land supply for the Central Oxfordshire region the application should be determined in accordance with the current adopted Local Plan and no need to bring land forward in advance of the core strategy.

**8.0 RECOMMENDATION**

**That planning permission be refused for the following reasons:-**

**Contrary to the Local Plan.**

1. That the proposed development is contrary to the policies of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan. This development for 106 dwellings and associated infrastructure is on land outside of the built up area of Winterbrook and in the open countryside. The site is not allocated for development (H2) and it is not infill development (H5). The development would undesirably extend into and encroach upon the open countryside (H6) and detract from the character and landscape setting of Winterbrook (C4).

**Lack of comprehensive development across the whole of site E and this scheme does not allow for the protection of the character of Winterbrook**

2. The development of this site does not allow for the comprehensive masterplanning or development of the larger site E and consequently fails to provide a high quality design for the site as a whole and does not minimise the adverse effects on the environment. The access and layout proposed does not integrate well with Winterbrook and the surrounding area and would erode the existing informal character of this area. The application fails to provide good links and permeability, and does not respect the character of the landscape and existing settlement patterns. The development would be harmful to the character and distinctiveness of Winterbrook and the surrounding countryside, contrary to PPS1, PPS3, PPS 7 and Policies G2, G4, G6, D1, C1, C4, C6, and C9 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan.

**The development would undermine the achievement of the Council's policy objectives.**

3. There is no housing shortfall in the Central Oxfordshire area and no need to bring sites forward in advance of the core strategy. Planning permission should be granted only where it can be demonstrated that the proposal would not undermine the achievement of the Council's policy objectives. Development of this site at the current time as piecemeal development of Site E would prejudice the proper planning and deliverability of a viable infrastructure package needed to support the development of an urban extension to Wallingford and comes before the proper assessment of potential alternative development opportunities within the Wallingford area. As such the proposal would undermine the creation of a healthy, thriving community, contrary to the strategic objectives of SE Plan policies SP3 and BE1 and policies C01, C02 and C03 which focus growth at Didcot and to contrary to advice in PPS3 and PPS12.

**Lack of affordable housing**

4. That the proposal fails to provide affordable housing in accordance with PPS3 and Policy H9 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan.

**Lack of infrastructure and services**

**5. That the proposal fails to provide adequate facilities and services to meet the needs of the development contrary to PPS12, policy G3 of the Oxfordshire Structure Plan and Policies C6, R2, R3, R6, D11, D12 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan.**

**NB: reasons 4 and 5 can be overcome subject to the completion of a Section 106 agreement.**

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