

SUBJECT DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION REPORTS ITEM 7

REPORT OF Head of Planning & Building Control

APPLICATION NO.	P10/W1959
APPLICATION TYPE	Major
REGISTERED	14 January 2011
PARISH	Didcot
WARD MEMBER(S)	Mrs M Davies Mrs E Hards
APPLICANT	Bloor Homes (Western)
SITE	Park Road, Didcot
PROPOSAL	Construction of 154 dwellings; informal open space; new means of vehicular and pedestrian access onto Park Road and associated infrastructure
AMENDMENTS	Amended by drawings acc letter dated 21 October 2011, further drainage information received 23 November and drawings and reports acc letter dated 24 November 2011.
GRID REFERENCE	451372/189020
OFFICER	Ms C D Scotting

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This application is being referred to Planning Committee because the recommendation differs from the view of Didcot Town Council.
- 1.2 This application site lies off Park Road, Didcot. It is situated at the edge of Didcot, south of Portway and is currently a green field site, used for agriculture / grazing. This site of 5.15 ha is within the larger site of Great Western Park (GWP) (180 ha) which benefits from outline planning permission for residential development and supporting infrastructure and facilities (Ref P02/W0848/O). Although this current application site is within the overall GWP site, the master developer (Taylor Wimpey) do not have control over the Park Road land and the landowner of this smaller site is not party to the S106 legal agreement for GWP. The GWP phasing strategy identifies the Park Road site as within the last phase of development, however the master developer cannot influence when development on this parcel comes forward.
- 1.3 Bloor Homes is seeking full planning permission for 154 dwellings together with new vehicular and pedestrian accesses and some open space. The principle of residential development on this site accords with the main GWP masterplan, however some of the details vary from the overall masterplan and these are discussed in the report.
- 1.4 A site location plan, the layout and street scenes as viewed from Park Road are **attached** as appendices.

2.0 **PROPOSAL**

2.1 An amended scheme was received 24 October 2011 reducing the number of dwellings, altering the mix and increasing the amount of affordable housing. Also included were proposals for traffic calming in West Hagbourne. Further information was received 24 November 2011.

2.2 The October amendments to the application encompass:

- A reduction in the number of dwellings from 159 to 154
- An increase in affordable housing from 30% to 40%
- Changes to the mix, housetypes, scale and layout
- Alteration to the open space (park and balancing ponds)
- Amendments to the landscaping and tree planting

2.3 The land use areas of the site now comprise:

- 5.15 ha total
- 0.3 ha main road
- 0.45 ha park / play area
- 4.4 ha residential (including estate roads and structural landscaping but excluding play area/park)

The gross density of the development is 30 dph and the net density is approximately 35dph.

2.4 Further information received 23 and 24 November encompass:

- Proposals to remove the home office over garage buildings
- Minor changes to some elevations
- Further landscaping proposals
- Road safety audit
- Residential travel plan
- A parking schedule
- Drainage calculations

2.5 A new vehicular access will be centrally placed on the Park Road frontage to serve the development. The main access road passes through the middle of development, into a small square and turns north, terminating on the northern boundary of the field some 80 - 90 m south of the rear gardens in Portway. This road will eventually adjoin the GWP development and has been designed to accommodate buses in the future. A series of minor estate roads are served off the main road.

2.6 The majority of the dwellings are detached but the layout includes some semi-detached and small terraces. Most of the development is two storey however some houses on the Park Road frontage and the western edge are two and half storeys, as are the houses in the small square. In addition to the dwellings, open space is proposed including an area on the Park Road frontage which will cater for drainage attenuation, landscaping along the open boundaries and a small linear park / play area in the middle of the scheme which lie adjacent to the southern boundary. Part of the western boundary abuts the existing public footpath (Didcot FP19 and West Hagbourne FP16) and a new public footpath from Park Road through the site will link with this footpath. The northern boundary will, in time, adjoin the future GWP development and the north eastern boundary abuts residential properties nos. 1 - 31 Portway.

2.7 The applicants have agreed to provide for the following by way of S106 agreement:

- County transport contribution
- County infrastructure contribution
- District infrastructure contribution
- Indexation to contributions
- Affordable housing – 40%
- Provision of equipped play area park and open space on site
- Translocation of wildlife species

Further details are **attached** (Appendix 1).

3.0 **CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 Didcot Town Council – Object: Overall we consider that this application at this time is inappropriate at this stage in Didcot's development and should be refused. This application is premature and contrary to the outline planning permission for Great Western Park. This gives rise to the following issues:

- Construction traffic - if approved a rigorous traffic management plan is necessary and traffic should be routed via the A4130 Didcot Link to the A34 and not from the east. Park Road is a residential road, an important route to school for both pedestrians and vehicles, for access to the Children's Centre on Newlands Avenue, and a major route to work for staff employed at the Harwell Science Park.
- Air pollution - pollution levels on Lower Broadway already exceed safe limits at peak times. This problem would be exacerbated if the Georgetown Roundabout were carrying construction traffic, whichever route the lorries use.
- Developing this site now will mean that it cannot benefit from the carefully planned storm drainage and foul drainage for Great Western Park. This site floods after heavy rain (the July 2007 flood water reached the gardens of the adjoining properties); and (b) the foul sewers on Meadow Way and Portway are well known for backing up. Are the experts sure that the drainage arrangements for surface and foul water will be adequate?
- School capacity - Bringing this development forward before primary school places are provided on Great Western Park would have a knock on effect on the school population of the rest of Didcot. Although there is some spare capacity at Northbourne School and Willowcroft, there is a shortage of places on the Ladygrove development north of the railway. The approved phase of development at Great Western Park will shortly have an impact on the primary schools south of the railway, mainly Stephen Freeman and Manor schools. Manor School in particular takes children who cannot be accommodated at Ladygrove Park School and All Saints School. Those children will be displaced and there will be more if Ladygrove East ever gets under way. We foresee that children from the Ladygrove area will end up with nowhere to go to school in Didcot because they have longer journeys to school than from other locations.
- Shortage of community facilities in the south west part of Didcot. The nearest general facility to this site is the Civic Hall which is the best part of a mile away.

- 3.2 West Hagbourne Parish Council – Object:
- Development is out of sequence with the remainder of Great Western Park, concern re construction traffic using Park Road
 - Character of the Development – mix departs from original application where it was envisaged that smaller units, more denser housing would be in neighbourhood centres and larger, detached houses nearer the countryside. There is insufficient screening along southern boundary.
 - The strip of land to the south, owned by the other developer should be disregarded.
 - Traffic calming for West Hagbourne – proposed funding is welcomed but parish wish to discuss further and have input on detailed measures.
 - Other S106 measures – Appropriate signage re construction traffic, upgrade foot / cycle routes. Funding for a meeting place in West Hagbourne.
- 3.3 East Hagbourne Parish Council – Object:
- Timing of development, out of sequence from original proposal
 - Strict condition re construction traffic – no access through East Hagbourne or West Hagbourne
 - The documentation for surface and foul water proposals is still inadequate
 - Concern that 25m strip south of development could be a possible road
 - How does the road and pathway infrastructure link with GWP
 - Transport analysis is inadequate – addresses impact as an isolated site
 - No community or amenity facilities except a play area
 - Need to ensure a Strategic Gap is maintained
- 3.4 Harwell Parish Council – Concerned that this application for Phase 9 of GWP is premature and urge that it be rejected until the rest of GWP and its associated infrastructure is in place.
- 3.5 Local Residents: Thirty three letters have been received from local residents. The following objections and concerns have been raised:
- Contrary to local plan
 - Previous applications have been refused
 - GWP will provide sufficient development
 - Loss of green field site, loss of recreational land, loss of view, loss of grade 2 agricultural land
 - Should be using brownfield sites
 - Volume of traffic – road infrastructure overloaded, noise and pollution
 - Impact on infrastructure, schools , doctors, sewer capacity
 - Effect on wildlife, need more greenspace
 - Piecemeal development
 - Not in accordance with GWP phasing – concern over linkages to GWP and delivery of infrastructure
 - Uncertainty over existing public footpath
 - Need affordable homes

- High density, disparity of density between proposed and existing development – visual continuity
- Need to consider security, minimising crime.
- Flooding – locally and remotely in the Hagbournes
- Effect on house prices
- Overlooking and loss of privacy
- Damage to trees

3.6 RPS on behalf of Taylor Wimpey (master developer GWP) - Comments:

- General lack of consideration to the relationship between this proposal and the wider GWP development.
- GWP is subject to the approval of a detailed Development Strategy and Framework Plans. These have not been approved for the Southern neighbourhood area and therefore this development cannot give full and informed consideration to the wider GWP development.
- There are conflicting figures regarding the developable site area, it is not possible to calculate the net density but it appears to accord with the minimum density requirements in the Local Plan (policy H8 – 30dph).
- The proposed mix does replicate Policy H7 but we understand that this amendment is to allow for a provision of greater affordable dwellings. TW have no objection in principle but require assurance that the agreed mix on GWP will not be affected.
- The proposals should contribute 0.93 ha of open space to accord with Policy R2, and fall short.
- Community facilities will not be accessible to these residents until latter stages of GWP.
- The strip south of the application site will be un-useable if it is not integrated with this application. We have no objection to the removal of this developable area provided overall net residential area in GWP is maintained.
- Unclear why a footpath is proposed parallel to the existing claimed right of way further south.
- The approved masterplan shows an area of medium density to the northern of the proposed development. Plots 90-103 may constrain the layout of this future residential area.
- Significant advanced planting should be provided along the southern boundary and the current application does not include this.
- Main access is located further south than proposed in GWP masterplan. Need to ensure that the proposed development links in effectively to the GWP spine road and bus gateway.
- Assume that the S106 package will be in line with the obligations in the GWP S106 agreement.

3.7 OCC Highway Officer

Awaiting confirmation that the revised details are acceptable.

No objection in principle to traffic generation and proposed highway measures. Conditions for the details in respect of the access road and estate roads required. A S38 and s 278 agreement will be necessary. Contributions towards enhanced bus service and wider Didcot highway measures, and West Hagbourne traffic calming required.

- 3.8 OCC Countryside Service
The proposed development will have an impact on the surrounding rights of way network. Require the provision of better non-vehicular access to help mitigate the impact the development will have and to ensure the development fits in with the aims of the Oxfordshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan. Improvements are required to:
1) Didcot public footpath 19 and West Hagbourne public footpath 16 from the south west corner of the development site up to the beginning of West Hagbourne footpath 16 near to Portway.
2) Didcot footpath 17 running from Park Road east toward East Hagbourne and part of Sustrans route 5.
- 3.9 County Archaeological Services
Should permission be granted, a condition should ensure a staged programme of archaeological work.
- 3.10 Environment Agency
No objection subject to conditions. No information has been included to clarify the issues of localised contamination and high ground water levels. This could restrict the use of the infiltration basin. However, we are satisfied following the submission of calculations (23/11/11) that there is sufficient flexibility within the drainage system, should infiltration not be possible, to provide attenuation and storage on site without significantly altering the overall form and layout of the development.
- 3.11 Monson Engineering Ltd.
Thames Water comments regarding the capacity required. The principles of the drainage system are acceptable – details need to be submitted and approved before development commences.
- 3.12 CPRE -N J Moon (Rights of Way)
We are pleased to note footpath Didcot 19 being retained on its current line. We are concerned that no provision has been made for claimed footpath A and require reassurance that this current development does not prejudice plans for the dedication of this claimed right of way.
- 3.13 Defence Estates Safeguarding
No objection
- 3.14 Health & Housing
Air Quality - Concerns re air quality and suggests several measures should be considered in order to mitigate air quality impacts.
Contaminated Land – No comments
- 3.15 Thames Water
Recommend condition regarding surface and foul drainage required. No objection re water infrastructure. Recommend informative re water pressure.
- 3.16 Thames Valley Police- Infrastructure
Request monies towards police infrastructure – towards additional accommodation, vehicles and other ancillary facilities.
- 3.17 Thames Valley Police - Design
Request that a condition requiring that developers apply for secure by design. Suggests increased surveillance of driveways and rear garden paths.

3.18 Countryside Officer

The site includes horse pasture, scrub and a hedgerow. There are no priority habitats on the site. There are unlikely to be any significant impacts on populations of farmland birds over and above those already accepted as a result of the overall GWP scheme. The reptile survey methods used provide clarification that the surveys were conducted according to best practice and that the results are likely to be reliable. With appropriate obligations built into the s.106 agreement the development will not have any significant impact on the ecology of the area in the longer term. The developer will need to develop and agree an appropriate reptile translocation strategy to a receptor site.

3.19 Landscape Consultant

The notes accompanying the revisions received on 24 November from Boyer Planning have addressed quite a lot of the issues raised in my email of 12 November. There are a few issues still outstanding, these can be covered by condition.

3.20 Forestry Officer

Appropriate species selection in relation to scale and type of development and planting specifications, including tree pit volumes and provision for long term compatibility are of concern. It is accepted that some of this detail will be produced at a later stage but minimum tree pit volumes relative to mature tree size, need to be established and agreed at this stage.

Other specific points are:

- boundary planting and general landscaping, particularly the southern boundary needs to be informed by future land use proposals for the adjoining land to ensure appropriate structure and design is established that can be further enhanced as and when the surrounding areas are developed
- there is a need to reinforce the landscape buffer/tree screening properties of the boundary with existing dwellings
- the proposed tree planting in the hard surfaced open space appears inappropriate to the setting and scale of development

3.21 Waste Management Officer

Infrastructure to facilitate refuse / recycling collection e.g. road surface, adequate turning area, location of parking (not to impede access), space to store bins.

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 Outline planning permission was granted 18 July 2008 (P02/W0848/O) for a mixed-use urban extension of 3,300 new dwellings together with associated local shops & services, leisure, open space & community facilities & transport, drainage & utility infrastructure. A S106 agreement is attached to the planning permission.

4.2 To guide the future development on GWP a phasing strategy, a development strategy plus a series of framework plans for the whole development and local area briefs (LABs), for important public spaces, need to be approved. The phasing strategy and development strategy have been approved as far as they relate to the Northern Area Framework Plan although the overall approach for both documents has been agreed informally. The Northern Area Framework Plan and two LABs have approval.

4.3 Reserved matters approval has been granted for the access from the A4130 and part of the spine road, north of Wantage Road. A total of 463 dwellings have reserved matters approval, submitted by two developers Taylor Wimpey and David Wilson Homes. Areas of landscaping and public urban space have also been approved. Development is well underway, with over 80 completions due by the end of the year (Nov 11 data).

4.4 Throughout the 1970s to the 1990's a series of planning applications for residential and recreational development were refused. The last of these applications was in 1997 (ref P97/W0063/O) and was refused. These applications are no longer relevant in the context of this site being allocated for housing in the Local Plan (2006 - 2011) and the outline planning permission referred to above.

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 The Localism Act (15 November 2011) confirms that the regional spatial strategy (the South East Plan - SEP) will be abolished. Whilst the SEP is not material to plan making in remains material to the consideration of planning applications. Policy CO3 allocates 6000 dwellings to Didcot. Around 2700 of these already have planning permission in South Oxfordshire, (the GWP site including the current application site). Further housing will be identified in the Core Strategy.

Adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 - Policies:

- Didcot: DID1 , DID 2
- General: G1, G2, G4, G6
- Protecting Natural and Built Environment: C1, C2, C3, C4, C6, C7, C8, C9
- Environmental Protection: EP1, EP2, EP3, EP6, EP7, EP8
- Encouraging sustainable & high quality design: D1, D2, D3, D4, D5, D6, D7, D8, D9, D10, D11, D12
- Housing: H2, H7, H8, H9, H14
- Recreation: R2, R6, R8
- Community facilities: CF1, CF2
- Transport: T1, T2, T3, T7

National Policy Guidance:

The National Policy Planning Framework is due to replace the planning policy statements next year – however for now they remain in force. Relevant PPS's and circulars are listed below:

PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development

PPS3: Housing

PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

PPS22: Renewable Energy

PPS25: Development and Flood Risk

PPG13:Transport

PPG17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation

Circular 05/2005, Community Infrastructure regulations

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

Principle of development

6.1 This application must be considered against the provisions in the Development Plan and within the context of the Governments' policy direction including the draft NPPF, the agendas for growth and the recent housing strategy.

6.2 This site is part of the existing Local Plan allocation and forms part of the GWP development site. It benefits from outline planning permission for housing. Objections that relate to the principle, e.g. loss of the green field site and traffic impacts from the residential traffic have therefore been discussed at the outline stage and proposals for mitigation approved. However this part of the site was envisaged to be the last phase of the overall development and the plan to develop now, before the GWP development connects to this site, raises several issues. In the main these relate to construction traffic, accessibility to facilities, the location and capacity of infrastructure

to meet the needs generated by this development and ecological mitigation. These matters are discussed below in para 6.3: 'Impacts arising from the timing of development'. This application also proposes 40% affordable housing, as compared to 30% on the main GWP development and a different open market mix, incorporating more large houses than the main site. These matters are discussed under 'Housing'. All other planning considerations under discussed under subject headings.

Impacts arising from the timing of development

- 6.3 The main concerns arising from the timing of this application are the routing of construction traffic and the accessibility to facilities, services and open space. The GWP permission requires all of the construction traffic for GWP to be accessed from the A4130, through the site along the new spine road. Bringing forward development on the Park Road site means that construction traffic will need to be routed through the town. A construction traffic plan will need to be agreed with the highway authority which will detail the route and times of traffic. Construction traffic for this Park Road site will still use the A4130, and travel south via Foxhall Road and Park Road and return using the same route. There will be no construction traffic travelling from the south or east. This construction traffic plan would be agreed prior to any works on site.
- 6.4 The residents on this Park Road site will not have access to the facilities planned in the vicinity on the main GWP site for some time. These will include a primary school, small community centre, allotments and, potentially, a small local centre. However, the Park Road site will have access to existing facilities in the same way surrounding residents do. Recognising that this part of Didcot is not particularly well served by community facilities it is proposed to enhance the existing bus service and upgrade public footpaths to improve connections as well as financially support the enhancement of community facilities in the vicinity through S106 contributions.
- 6.5 Bringing this parcel forward of the main development will mean that surrounding informal open space will not be immediately available. This means that protected reptile species on the site cannot be translocated to adjoining land. However the Countryside Officer is content that species could be translocated to Mowbray Fields Nature Reserve, which owned by the Council, and this can be secured in a S106 agreement. It also means that residents will not have immediate access to the open space proposed, surrounding this land. However there will be good links to public footpaths and Edmonds Park is close by. Monies will be available towards recreation facilities, including the enhancement of local spaces and for facilities within the main GWP site.

Housing

(i) Affordable housing

- 6.6 The original application proposed 30% affordable housing. Following a viability assessment carried out for the Council a proportion of 40% has been agreed. This has been possible by using the current affordable rent model (as compared to social / target rents) and a change to the open market mix. The tenure in the affordable sector will be 70% rented / 30% shared ownership.

(ii) Housing Mix

6.7 The proposed mix is set out below, the percentages are rounded:

Size	Total Units:	Affordable Units: number and percentage	Market Units: number and percentage	Local Plan – Policy H7: % Market mix	Housing Needs Survey 2008 % Market mix	GWP Market mix %
1bed	18 (12%)	18 (30%)	-	7.5	10	30
2bed	45 (29%)	25 (41%)	20 (22%)	48.5	60	
3bed	41 (27%)	15 (24%)	26 (28%)	24	10	35
4bed +	50 (32%)	3 (5%)	47 (50%)	20	20	35
Total	154	61	93			

6.8 Policy H7 of the Local Plan requires a mix of dwelling types and styles to meet the needs of current and future households in the district. It shows a need for smaller dwellings (particularly two bed dwellings) to meet the priority needs of the District. The latest information on needs of current and future households is contained within the Housing Needs Assessment, 2008. This again shows the need for smaller dwellings in the district, with the need for two bedroom units actually increasing since 2004. The above table also refers to GWP approved market mix.

6.9 The proposed housing mix does not accord with the policy requirements and demonstrated need. However it is evident that in current market conditions, financial constraints are such that there is more demand for larger units by buyers that already have equity and this is affecting the development viability. With the proposed market mix, 40% affordable housing is possible and the size mix of the affordable dwellings will assist in meeting the need for smaller units.

6.10 The main GWP mix also arose following a viability examination. Due to a condition on the GWP permission the change to the market mix on the Park Road site would affect the mix required on the main GWP site – by marginally requiring more small units. However the Council are willing to maintain the approved mix on the main GWP site, (given the affordable housing requirement and mix associated with the outline permission) albeit this will need to be regularised on the main permission.

(iii) Numbers and Density

6.11 The GWP permission also limits the total number of dwellings to 3300 on the overall site including the Park Road site. In the GWP masterplan a density of 35dph was envisaged for this part of the site and the current application accords with this. However the residential site area originally envisaged was larger with the consequence that a lower number of dwellings (compared to the GWP masterplan) are proposed. The numbers on the remainder of the GWP site will therefore be marginally higher by 12-13 dwellings. Accommodating this number of dwellings within the built development areas of GWP is not an issue.

6.12 The GWP masterplan also indicates that a thin strip of land (between 25-30m wide) to the south of the Park Road site would be developed as residential land. Beyond that there is a wider strip (120m) to the southern boundary which will be informal open space and not affected. The applicants were asked to demonstrate how this thin strip of land could be developed for residential and this was shown on their original submission. However realistically it is unlikely that this strip could be developed successfully. As this is residential land that the master developer is unlikely to build

out the optimal course of action would appear to be to amend this strip to open space/landscaping and find alternative residential area within the main site. As the rest of the main site is around 175 ha this is not a concern in principle, however the detail of where open space is substituted will need to be carefully considered. This can be regularised within the scope of the existing GWP permission.

Highway matters

- 6.13 As explained above, this application does not propose any more housing than has previously been permitted. The main GWP application limited the numbers of dwellings to be served off Park Road to 200. This proposal is within that limit and at this stage it is not known whether any more dwellings (up to 200 in total) would be served from Park Road. As a result of the development proposed there is likely to be an increase of traffic in the peak hour of around 77 vehicles or approximately just over 1 vehicle every 60 seconds. However this is not additional to what has already permitted and this development will not have an additional highway impact, in the medium to longer term, than what has already been considered.
- 6.14 It is accepted that in the short term there will an impact upon Park Road and Foxhall Road during construction. Also, once the residential is built out there will be a marginal increase on Park Road sooner than anticipated. However the construction impact is temporary and will be controlled by way of a construction management plan, as referred to above. With respect to Park Road and the mini roundabout at the north, (Wantage Road, Foxhall Road and Broadway), it is considered that the residential traffic from this site will have little effect on its operation, representing the same position as in the main GWP proposal. However the highway authority will monitor as GWP progresses and may consider the need for improvements if necessary. Monies will be available for wider Didcot transport improvements.
- 6.15 The highway authority has advised that buses will pass through this site once the GWP development is physically integrated, and not through Portway as originally envisaged. The layout has therefore been designed to accommodate buses in the longer term and the Council have assurance that this can be achieved without changing the proposed layout with details to be secured by condition. In the interim it is intended that the existing bus service to Portway will be enhanced and the developer has agreed a contribution to subsidise this service. Enhancement to the bus service would need to be agreed between the bus operator and the County Council. However the intention is to enhance the existing bus service by expanding the times so as to operate between 06.00-09.00 and also from 14.00-19.00 (it already operates between 9.05 and 14.05). On Saturdays the service would expand from 14.00 at present to 19.00. This service would operate at least twice an hour.
- 6.16 The access from Park Road is in a slightly different place than the point of access shown on the GWP application but there is no objection to the position and arrangements for this access. The internal layout within the site is acceptable. As well as the construction traffic plan, the highway authority has identified the need for a residential travel plan, and construction management plan, to be finalised before development commences. There is adequate parking on the site, with many of the dwellings having 2-3 spaces.
- 6.17 In the GWP S106 agreement there is provision for traffic calming (in Harwell) to be considered at occupation of 2500 dwellings but no formal requirement for the Hagbournes. The highway authority does recognise that there could be an impact on West Hagbourne, in particular, as a result of this current application. The current proposals actively propose traffic calming in West Hagbourne although the details are to be agreed. As with any traffic calming proposals there will be formal consultation

with the highway authority and local community. The principle of these works is considered acceptable although the details will need to be agreed by the highway authority and the local community.

Layout and Design

- 6.18 As referred to above there will be design framework plans to guide future development on GWP. As this site has come forward now there is no overarching framework plan in place for this part of GWP. On this isolated case which has a separate access and frontage from the main GWP development and is spatially confined by the public footpath to the west it is considered that this site can be designed independently from the main GWP site. However care will need to be taken in integrating the development to the north. It is not considered that there would be any difficulty in satisfactorily integrating the two developments in the future.
- 6.19 The surrounding development is mainly two storey except for some bungalows on the eastern side of Park Road. Generally the proposed development is two storey however some houses on the Park Road frontage and the western edge, adjacent to the footpath, are two and half storeys, as are the houses in the small square within the development. The higher scale of development will be particularly noticeable when approaching from the south on Park Road. However the development is set back from the frontage which provides a landscape setting for the higher scale.
- 6.20 The amended plans (October 2011) also have altered the proposed dwelling types behind the rear gardens of Portway, some of which were to be two and half storey, and provoked objection from local residents. They are now all two storey. The Portway gardens are long, ranging from 25 - 40m, and abutting the rear boundaries are either side gardens, small car parking courts or rear gardens over 12m in depth. The recent amendments (November 2011) also revised the elevations so there will be no undue overlooking. Given the context of the site being allocated for housing and having outline planning permission, there will be no unacceptable impacts on amenity.
- 6.21 The latest revisions (November 2011) secure the removal of the HoGs (home over garages). These were two storey garage buildings with a habitable room (e.g office / playroom) over. On most of the plots these were considered too be too bulky, effectively the size of a small dwelling, and would appear cramped and overdeveloped. Following the amendments and provided appropriate landscaping and suitable materials are incorporated it is considered the development will appear acceptable in the wider landscape.

Landscape and Open Space

- 6.22 Ecology - The proposals to translocate the reptile species, as described above in para 6.5 overcome the ecology objections. In all other respects the impact on ecology is acceptable.
- 6.23 Footpaths – The claimed right of way (A), referred to in the CPRE and RPS' comments, lies parallel and south of the site, i.e. not within this application site. This current proposal does not affect the plans to formalise this claimed route to a dedicated route as part of the wider GWP proposals. The current proposals will result in the upgrading of the Didcot Paths 19 and 17 to be secured through a legal agreement, as per the comments of OCC's Countryside Service. There is also a footpath proposed along the southern boundary which will provide a link between these paths as well as direct access for these residents and this additional footpath is considered necessary for improved links. Overall the proposals for footpath links are considered beneficial to wider connections.

- 6.24 Landscape – The north eastern boundary abuts properties in Portway and care will need to be taken in protecting existing trees and hedgerows along the boundary. For the most part rear gardens will abut this n.e. boundary but in three places there are small car parking courts. Appropriate boundary treatments either in the form of a fence or brick wall will be secured at these boundaries. The northern boundary will be exposed in the short to medium term before the GWP development progresses into this area. The amended scheme provides for more tree planting along this northern boundary. The southern boundary will also be exposed, given the delay to the substantive planting planned with the GWP development. A row of tree planting and a hedgerow will be secured along this boundary which in time will soften the development. In the longer term the GWP open space planting will provide a buffer. In all cases the details in terms of planting e.g. species, tree pit sizes etc need to be agreed by condition.
- 6.25 Open space - The provision and accessibility to open space has been discussed above (para 6.5). Whilst this development site does not provide for the amount of recreation and open space required in Policy R2, there will be some open space on the site including a small park /playground. Furthermore Edmonds Park is close by, around 700m from the access. The improvements to public footpaths will also assist accessibility to the wider countryside. In the short term therefore there will be adequate access. In the longer term further facilities will be provided on GWP and a contribution towards these facilities and as well as existing facilities has been secured. It is not considered that there is any long term shortfall for the recreational needs of the new residents.
- Infrastructure
- 6.26 Although this site is within the overall GWP development, the owners of the Park Road site were not party to the GWP S106 agreement. Particular obligations apply to this site subject of this application, which is called the 'brown land' in the GWP S106. The Councils (District and County) must make reasonable endeavours to obtain monies towards the provision of infrastructure being provided by the master developers. In the opinion of the Councils this will be achieved through the completion of a S106 agreement with Bloor Homes and a subsequent agreement with Taylor Wimpey. However the Councils recognise that the timing of this Park Road development, relative to the overall GWP development, means that some infrastructure will not be available as planned and there are additional demands. This means that some monies must be directed towards early mitigation, where possible. The issues concerning recreation and community facilities have been referred to above. Also of concern is the capacity of the schools.
- 6.27 Schools – The town council and residents have raised concerns over the capacity and location of schools to serve the development. In line with the current phasing strategy for GWP the second primary school would have been provided by the time the Park Road development was built out. Clearly with the current time frames this will not be the case however the education authority have advised that there will be sufficient capacity in Didcot to meet all the needs of this development, and the GWP development. More specifically children on this development would be within catchment for Manor and Northbourne schools and this may displace some children who attend these schools from out of catchment. Of concern to the town council is children from Ladygrove, as currently there is an over subscription to Ladygrove schools. Overall however the education authority confirms that given the scale of development across the town, including existing expanded capacity at Stephen Freeman school plus the two new schools on GWP, the school capacity can be provided and it is a matter of managing catchment areas to match to population. Ultimately this development will not affect any overall capacity issues and therefore

there is no material objection.

Housing delivery – 5 year supply

- 6.28 There is a need to consider the 5 year housing supply in line with paragraph 69 of PPS3. Based on delivery projections and other outstanding commitments as at April 2010, there is currently in Didcot a 5 year requirement for 1907 dwellings and a predicted supply of 1970. Whilst in recent years Didcot's housing delivery has been low, averaging 35 dwellings per annum over the past five years this is now changing. The main reason for the delay has been the economic downturn which led to Great Western Park being slow to get started. Now construction is up and running and the site is delivering at a strong rate, with projected completions of over 1100 over the next five years. As well as this source of supply, homes will begin to be delivered on the sites allocated in the submission Core Strategy and these will contribute to the 5 year supply.
- 6.29 Didcot is expected to deliver 4% above its 5 year requirement to 2015/16. Although officers are confident that this can be achieved, the more contingency supply that is added, the stronger the Council's position will be against speculative applications. This is because it adds a further buffer against any future slippage in delivery. This could be important in the context of the Government's Draft National Planning Policy Framework, which contains proposals requiring Local Planning Authorities to deliver 20% above their five year housing requirement.
- 6.30 The Park Road application forms part of an existing Local Plan allocation. Allowing this site to come forward earlier in the plan period, with an additional developer Bloor Homes, will provide an additional boost to supply at Didcot. This will help mitigate the backlog that has built up as a result of undersupply in recent years and provide a more robust housing supply. Notwithstanding the housing supply issue, the development is acceptable in principle and in detail.
- 7.0 **CONCLUSION**
- 7.1 This site is allocated for housing in the adopted Local Plan and has outline planning permission for housing. The current application is for full planning permission for 154 homes including 40% affordable housing. There is no objection to the principle of this development and it is part of the planned housing for Didcot. The main issues relate to the timing of this development. These comprise, in the main, construction traffic and accessibility to facilities and services. The details now proposed in the application include a package of measures in the s106 agreement and these will mitigate the problems to an acceptable degree. Taking an overview of the whole scheme, this proposal will deliver much needed housing including affordable housing on a development site that is acceptable in policy terms. This development, subject to conditions and a legal agreement to secure adequate infrastructure, including provision towards facilities on GWP, is acceptable.
- 8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**
- 8.1 **Delegated to the Head of Planning to Grant Planning Permission on P10/W1959 subject to:**
- (i) the completion of agreements with the County Council and the District Council requiring provision for the terms listed in Appendix 1**
- (ii) detailed conditions in accordance with the summary of conditions set out overleaf**

Conditions:

1. **Commencement 3 yrs - Full Planning Permission**
2. **Planning condition listing the approved drawings**
3. **Implementation of Programme or Archaeological Work**
4. **Construction Management Plan**
5. **Hours of Construction**
6. **Surface water drainage works (details required)**
7. **Foul drainage works (details required)**
8. **Tree Protection (Detailed)**
9. **Landscaping (incl access/hard standings)**
10. **Landscape Management Plan**
11. **External Works (incl street furniture, fencing, walls)**
12. **Residential Travel Plan**
13. **Levels (details required)**
14. **New vehicular access**
15. **New estate roads**
16. **Dwelling access, driveway, parking and turning areas**
17. **External Lighting**
18. **Cycle Parking Facilities**
19. **Sample materials required (all)**
20. **Play Space details**
21. **Sustainable Homes - Code Level 3**
22. **Withdrawal of PD (Part 1 Class E) - no buildings/enclosures – specific plots**
23. **Withdrawal of PD (Part 1 Class A) - no extension/alteration – specific - plots**
24. **No Garage conversion into accommodation**

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