

<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	<u>P16/S4062/O</u>
<b>APPLICATION TYPE</b>	OUTLINE
<b>REGISTERED</b>	14.12.2016
<b>PARISH</b>	CHALGROVE
<b>WARD MEMBER(S)</b>	David Turner
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Mr John Tarvit
<b>SITE</b>	Land east of Chalgrove
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Outline planning application for the erection of up to 120 residential dwellings and space for a community facility (Use Class D1/D2) with associated highways, landscaping and open space, with all matters reserved except access.
<b>AMENDMENTS</b>	None
<b>GRID REFERENCE</b>	464318/196632
<b>OFFICER</b>	Joan Desmond

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The application is referred to the Planning Committee because the officer's recommendation conflicts with the view of the Parish Council.
- 1.2 The site (which is shown on the OS extract attached as Appendix A) comprises 7.45ha of agricultural land located on the south-east edge of the village of Chalgrove. The site is bounded by existing housing development at Farm Close and Chiltern Close to the west, the B480 to the north, The Grange of Berrick Road to the south and open agricultural land to the east. A belt of young trees lies at the eastern end of the site and a public right of way runs along the southern boundary. The site falls to the brook to the south which runs through the centre of the village. The site is not within any areas of special landscape designation.

**2.0 PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 This application seeks outline planning permission for up to 120 homes, including 40% affordable homes and provision for a scout hut/community facility (D1/D2 use measuring 330 sq. metres in size). The application seeks approval of the proposed access onto the B480 but reserves detailed matters relating to the scale, layout, and appearance and landscaping of the development for future consideration.
- 2.2 An illustrative masterplan has been submitted with the application to show how the site could accommodate up to 120 dwellings and associated public open space and green infrastructure. Access would be from the B480 via a new roundabout junction. Given that the application is in outline, the masterplan is for indicative purposes only.
- 2.3 The indicative housing mix outlined in the application is as follows:

<b>1 bed</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>2 bed</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>3 bed</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>4 bed</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>120</b>

- 2.4 The indicative masterplan and is attached as Appendix B. The application is accompanied by a number of supporting documents, including a Design and Access Statement and Planning Statement. These are available to view on the council's

website at [www.southoxon.gov.uk](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk)

**3.0 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

Full responses can be found on the Council's website but are summarised below.

**3.1 Chalgrove Parish Council** – Object for the following reasons:

1. This is not the preferred site chosen by the CNDP and the public. Chalgrove village infrastructure, in particular education, can only sustain adequately one future development of circa 200 homes as required in the emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan.
2. This site is situated on the edge of the built up area of Chalgrove with no highway connection to it and therefore apart from the village. Future residents would not naturally integrate easily into the village from a community coalescence point of view.
3. There is only one vehicular access in the planning application and this egresses on to the B480, again deterring integration as the development would be detached from the village. There is concern about the road safety aspect of this access from the B480 which we would be surprised if OCC would not also be concerned about; the net effect being three access points into the village from the eastern side and two of them with no road access into the village.
4. There is one proposed new pedestrian access onto the B480. The other proposed one connecting to the village near the junction of Monument Road, the High Street and Berrick Road exits onto a dangerous and narrow side road with no pavement, which leads to a narrow bridge. This path floods frequently after heavy rainfall. The suggestion of two pelican crossings here across the triangle of grass would appear wholly unsuitable, on a fast bend which leads in and out of the village. The sight lines into the crossings would be very restricted and dangerous with motorists having very little time to spot the crossings before they are at them. We would be most surprised if OCC would agree to such a dangerous situation. The suggested path across the triangle of grass would spoil a popular seated area, which presents a very attractive approach to the east end of the village. This exit from the site has caused major concern – the whole proposed concept of these crossings will not be safe and would be contrary to the character of the village scene.
5. The fear of flooding remains a prime concern in the village. This site is upstream, so any risk of future flooding would affect the whole village. There are concerns from past experience that we cannot depend on yet unproved reliability of SUDS long term, especially when there is another option at the western end of the village. We cannot take the risk, however small, of any future flooding from which the village already suffers.

**CPRE Campaign for the Preservation of Rural England (Rights of Way)** – The urbanisation of this site and loss of rural views from the footpath (FP15) would inevitably be regrettable for walkers and would detract from the pleasure currently to be derived from walking this footpath. However, if this site is to be developed, we welcome the fact that it is proposed to retain a green corridor flanking the footpath and thus minimise the impact of the development on the footpath.

**Oxfordshire County Council Highways** – No objection subject to conditions and completion of a legal agreement to secure improved public transport and Travel plan monitoring fees.

**Oxfordshire County Council Education** – No objection subject to Community Infrastructure Levy funding to mitigate the impact on Secondary Education. Primary education, early years and childcare provision has capacity to accommodate the development.

**Oxfordshire County Council Archaeology** – Following the submission of archaeological field evaluation, no objection subject to a condition to secure a programme of archaeological investigation.

**Oxfordshire County Council Property** – No objection subject to Community Infrastructure Levy funding to mitigate the impact on County Council related infrastructure.

**Forestry Officer**– No objection but detailed layout will need to consider space for planting to help break up the uniformity of the proposed development.

**Countryside Officer** – No objection subject to a condition requiring a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy.

**Urban Design Officer** – Overall, I think the density of the development is too high because the illustrative layout indicates to me that this would be a development with quite a hard, urban character. This is because the western end of the site has little space for significant tree planting or pockets of open space and consequently, the residents of these dwellings would not have the same outlook afforded to the less dense development towards the eastern end. The roundabout entrance into the site seems to be overly engineered and there is a strip along the western boundary which is not well defined and would serve as an unhelpful buffer between the existing and proposed developments. As the layout currently remains, I am not satisfied that up to 120 dwellings could be accommodated on the site without creating an overly dense layout, appearance and character.

**Drainage Consultant (Monson)** – No objection subject to condition requiring approval of sustainable drainage details.

**Environmental Health Officer** - No objection subject to conditions requiring the agreement of measures to mitigate the impact on air quality ad noise during demolition/construction.

**Environmental Health Officer** – No objection to the development in principle, subject to conditions to protect the amenity of surrounding residents from noise and dust.

**Housing Development Officer**– Affordable housing provision should reflect the significant demand for two bedroom units for both rented and shared ownership tenures with a reduction in one-bedroom accommodation and an adjustment to the number of larger homes.

**Chalgrove Neighbourhood Development Plan Committee (CNDP)** - Following a detailed site assessment, which included a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), the Land West of Marley Lane and the Land East of Chalgrove were identified as possible sites for development of 82 homes in Chalgrove, with the land West of Marley Lane as the preferred option, this was supported by community consultation. As a result of the SHMA, Chalgrove is now likely to be expected to take in the vicinity of 200 homes. Following further consultations the land West of Marley Lane was identified by residents as the preferred option. CNDP request that both applications are heard at the same meeting and deferral of any decisions until the CNDP is produced. Despite many challenges, the Steering Group remain committed to produce a NDP and would ask that the amount of work and effort put in by the group are taken into account when considering these allocations. The following issues are of major concern and could limit

the number of homes Chalgrove can accommodate as sustainable development:

- Flooding - all proposed development sites would be subject to a flood risk assessment.
- Sewer capacity - Chalgrove treatment works could accommodate an additional 140 dwellings before having a deterioration of more than 10%, and therefore it is unlikely that Thames Water would accept additional flows before upgrade works have been carried out.

School Capacity - The school is full in Nursery with some gaps in years 5 and 6. There is capacity for 240 pupils including Nursery and 210 without. The school currently has 183 pupils with 27 spaces mainly in years 5 and 6. A development of 200 homes would produce 50 Primary school children, exceeding the current capacity.

**Cllr Steve Harrod** - My main concern remains that the new development will be isolated from the rest of the village, with access to village amenities only possible via the B480 and not directly through any adjoining streets. In addition this will significantly increase traffic flow along the B480.

### Local residents

- 35 responses in objection to the application – objections received in relation to the following matters:

#### Planning

- Proposal is premature – planning authority must take strategic overview, incorporate ALL current ongoing work - including NDP + Airfield.
- Other identified sites more suitable
- Proposed site not favoured due to flood risk
- Is circumventing the NDP process.

#### Flooding

- Risk due to fall in level between the B480 and the Grange – the Grange land floods. Development of field to hard surface will exacerbate this. Should locate new development downstream not upstream
- No attempt to provide permeable surfaces on site
- Once underground drainage systems are buried the cause of future flooding will be very difficult to establish
- Best to develop sites to west and install drainage to reduce flood risk
- Boundary ditch on site is essential to prevent flooding/runoff and must continue to be maintained
- Site fails the flood risk sequential test
- Flooding is a recurring issue here – please consider local voices and local knowledge/experience

#### The site

- Layout varies in density – should be rebalanced to allow more space to the west of the site
- Development visible from various well-established viewpoints around the village – should be better screened as well as from neighbouring properties
- No need for community centre – better to provide play area
- Too far to walk to village centre – residents will drive there
- Loss of privacy and security for immediate neighbours – new housing too close and proposed barrier sparse and ineffective –conifers would be better than deciduous shrubs proposed

- Development designed to allow further development on next field

**Traffic**

- Developer has failed to resolve safety issues re the footpath, blind bend without pavement
- Respondent proposes pedestrian bridge over stream to Berrick Close and across land at Franklin Close to provide safe crossing
- Proposal is claimed to be 'environmentally friendly re transport' but provides a parking space for each bedroom
- Will cause severe problems in Cuxham and Watlington, already congested and unable to increase capacity for traffic
- Lack of infrastructure planning to alleviate increased traffic in other villages
- Need second access to site via Farm Close

**Impact on village**

- Creeping extension to village but tacked on, not a part of it
- Should install high fences to shield existing residents from the new housing or brick wall as in French Lawrence Way
- Site not integrated into village, separated by the only access (Monument Road) which is narrow and has no footpath around a blind bend which will put new residents at risk
- Village infrastructure inadequate – school, GP , parking, shops
- More children will be exposed to the dangerous school walk
- Unsafe pathway connection to village centre
- Site too far from village centre – proposed sites at other (western) end of the village preferable as closer to centre and within walking distance
- Village centre already overloaded and difficult to park
- Will ruin existing path adjacent to site well used by walkers
- Loss of views across field from existing houses – shift development to west of village
- Risk to children due to winter shooting in nearby field/copse

**Loss of wildlife/habitat**

- Gardens trees shrubs etc. on the developed site will not compensate for loss of trees, hedgerows, wildlife
- Loss of: badgers, hare, fox, roe deer, muntjac, red kites, buzzard, rabbits, seagulls, woodpeckers, bats and owls

1 response - accepted the principle of development but had concerns.

**4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 There is no relevant planning history relating to this site.

**5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE**

**5.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

**5.2 NPPF Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)**

**5.3 South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (SOCS) 2027**

CS1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development  
CSB1 - Conservation and improvement of biodiversity  
CSC1 - Delivery and contingency  
CSEN1 - Landscape protection  
CSEN3 - Historic environment

CSG1 - Green infrastructure  
CSH1 - Amount and distribution of housing  
CSH2 - Housing density  
CSH3 - Affordable housing  
CSH4 - Meeting housing needs  
CSI1 - Infrastructure provision  
CSM1 - Transport  
CSM2 - Transport Assessments and Travel Plans  
CSQ3 - Design  
CSQ4 - Design briefs for greenfield neighbourhoods and major development sites  
CSR1 - Housing in villages  
CSR3 - Community facilities and rural transport  
CSS1 - The Overall Strategy

**5.4 South Oxfordshire Local Plan (SOLP) 2011 saved policies**

C4 - Landscape setting of settlements  
C6 - Maintain & enhance biodiversity  
C8 - Adverse affect on protected species  
C9 - Loss of landscape features  
CF2 - Provision of additional community facilities  
CON12 - Archaeological field evaluation  
CON13 - Archaeological investigation recording & publication  
D1 - Principles of good design  
D12 - Public art  
D6 - Community safety  
EP1 - Adverse affect on people and environment  
EP2 - Adverse affect by noise or vibration  
EP4 - Impact on water resources  
EP6 - Sustainable drainage  
G2 - Protect district from adverse development  
G3 - Development well served by facilities and transport  
G4 - Protection of Countryside  
H4 - Housing sites in towns and larger villages outside Green Belt  
R2 - Provision of play areas on new housing development  
R6 - Public open space in new residential development  
R8 - Protection of existing public right of way  
T1 - Safe, convenient and adequate highway network for all users  
T7 - Protection and improvement to footpath and highway network

**5.5 Emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2032**

The consultation on the ‘Preferred Options’ for the Local Plan closed 19 August 2016. The Preferred Options does not allocate sites for development and instead devolves delivery of houses in villages to the Neighbourhood Plan process.

**5.6 Chalgrove Neighbourhood Plan (CNP)**

The Parish Council is currently working on the draft version of its neighbourhood plan. The draft version has yet to undergo its six week consultation prior to its submission to the District Council.

**5.7 South Oxfordshire Design Guide - Sections 3,4 and 5**

**5.8 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)**

The site is over 5 hectares and therefore exceeds the ‘exclusion thresholds’ in Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011. Although in excess of the size criteria, the physical scale of the

development would be significantly below the guideline in the PPG of a development that would have a significant urbanising effect (more than 1,000 dwellings).

The development is not within a sensitive area. Taking into account the nature, scale and location of the proposal, the effects from this proposal are likely to be of local importance but not significant within the context of the EIA regulations and guidance. As such, the proposal is not EIA development and a full Environmental Statement is not required.

## **6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 The relevant planning considerations in the determination of this application are:

- The principle of the development, including:
  - the council's housing land supply position,
  - how the development of the site fits with the council's spatial strategy,
  - the emerging Neighbourhood Plan,
  - the accessibility of the site to services and facilities.
- Matters of detail / technical issues, including:
  - affordable housing and housing mix,
  - highway safety and traffic impact,
  - landscape impact,
  - agricultural land,
  - trees and ecology,
  - design and layout,
  - neighbour amenity and amenity of future residents,
  - flood risk and surface / foul drainage,
  - impact on Heritage Assets
  - environmental matters (air quality and noise).
- Infrastructure requirements, including:
  - on-site infrastructure to be secured under a legal agreement,
  - contributions pooled under the Community Infrastructure Levy.

### **The principle of the development**

#### The council's housing land supply position

- 6.2 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. One such material consideration, of notable importance, is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 6.3 To significantly boost the supply of housing, the NPPF requires local planning authorities to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of housing against their housing requirements. This supply should include an additional buffer of 5% to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. Alternatively, where there has been persistent under delivery of housing, the buffer should increase to 20% to provide a realistic prospect of achieving the planned supply.
- 6.4 The most recent evidence base that informs the council's housing requirements is the 2014 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). To meet the identified housing need for the district, the SHMA committed economic growth housing forecast is 750

homes per annum. This is a sizable uplift from the requirement for 547 homes per annum set out in the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (SOCS).

- 6.5 Based on the evidence in the SHMA and past delivery, the council has a housing land supply of 3.8 years (including the 20% buffer for under delivery). The council cannot therefore currently demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.
- 6.6 Para.49 of the NPPF specifies that relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. Para.14 adds that where relevant policies are out of date, *planning permission should be granted unless*
  - *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole;*
  - *or specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted.*
- 6.7 This means that the policies for the supply of housing in the SOCS are given significantly less weight. Applications for housing should now be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development and should be permitted unless there is planning harm that outweighs the benefit of providing new housing.

How the development of the site fits with the council's spatial strategy

- 6.8 Although the policies for the supply of housing in the SOCS have less weight in the decision making process, I consider that weight should still be attributed to the overarching spatial strategy in the SOCS. The spatial strategy in the SOCS seeks to focus development in locations which are, or can be, made accessible and is consistent with the core planning principle of the NPPF. This is particularly important given that South Oxfordshire is a predominantly rural district.
- 6.9 Policy CSS1 of the SOCS sets out the overall distribution strategy for the district. This strategy:
  - (i) focuses major new development in Didcot;
  - (ii) supports the roles of Henley, Thame and Wallingford by regenerating town centres and providing new housing, services, employment and infrastructure;
  - (iii) supports larger villages as local service centres;
  - (iv) supports other villages by allowing for limited amounts of housing;
  - (v) outside of the above areas, any change needs to relate to very specific needs.

- 6.10 Chalgrove is identified as one of the larger villages with the ability to act as a local centre with planned growth based on the existing size of the village. Chalgrove is preparing a Neighbourhood Plan to identify sites where the new homes should be built. Based on the latest SHMA evidence, Chalgrove is expected to accommodate approximately 200 dwellings. Whilst this site was identified as a potential housing site in the early consultation stages of the NP, the current draft proposes just one site on land to the west of the village.

Emerging Neighbourhood Plan (NP)

- 6.11 The Parish Council is currently working on the draft version of its neighbourhood plan which is due to go out to consultation shortly. Once this process has been completed

the draft plan will be submitted to the District Council. When adopted the plan will form part of the statutory development plan for the area. The plan is at an early stage of preparation (pre – submission stage) and it must still undergo consultation and independent examination before it can proceed to local referendum and its ultimate making.

- 6.12 The PPG confirms that an emerging neighbourhood plan may be a material consideration and that paragraph 216 also applies to the weight that may be given to its policies. As the NP is still at pre-submission stage it cannot be afforded any weight because it has not yet been submitted to the Council and has not been finalised; it is not known, having regard to national and local policy, whether it would be appropriate to adopt the NP and it is not known whether objections to policies have been resolved by the Parish Council in a satisfactory manner. This site was nevertheless, identified as an option site for housing (Site 7) in the NP consultation process. The draft NP now proposes just one site for 200 dwellings on land to the west of the village.

**Conclusions on the principle of residential development**

- 6.13 In view of the above it is clear that the decision-making process for the determination of this application is therefore to assess whether the adverse impacts of granting planning permission for the proposed development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

**The accessibility of the site to services and facilities**

- 6.14 Chalgrove is a large village and provides access to a range of facilities and services including a primary school, convenience stores, public houses and health facilities many of which are within walking and cycling distance from the site. The site is accessible by sustainable modes of transport with a bus service (T1) linking Chalgrove to Watlington, Stadhampton and Cowley (Monday to Saturday) with extended journeys to and from Oxford City Centre. In addition a school bus provides access to Icknield Community College in Watlington.
- 6.15 It is acknowledged that the development would increase demands placed on local infrastructure and services. County Education has commented that there is insufficient capacity at the secondary school in the area and as such funds from CIL would be required to mitigate this impact. The primary school has capacity to accommodate this development, but as some year groups are full it is likely that some children may have to travel to alternative schools. Early years and childcare provision also has capacity to accommodate this development.

**Matters of detail / technical issues**

**Affordable housing and housing mix**

- 6.16 Policy CSH3 of the SOCS specifies that 40 per cent of new homes shall be affordable, with a tenure mix of 75 per cent social rented and 25 per cent shared ownership. Given that the application is on outline, the mix is currently indicative. The indicative mix would include 48 affordable units and this amounts to 40 per cent. In terms of the tenure split, 26 homes (75%) would be for affordable rent and 12 homes (25%) shared ownership.
- 6.17 The SHMA is the most up to date evidence base for considering housing mix but the Housing Development Officer has commented that the demand for two-bedroom shared ownership properties is much higher than for one-bedroom properties, therefore

the overall affordable housing mix may be more suitably delivered with a higher proportion of two bedroom properties than is indicated in the SHMA guidance. In general, it is anticipated that the mix of affordable housing should reflect the significant demand for two bedroom units for both rented and shared ownership tenures with a reduction in one-bedroom accommodation and an adjustment to the number of larger homes. The table below sets out a suggested mix for 48 affordable housing units across both Affordable Rent and Shared Ownership. The applicant has agreed to this mix.

	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed (5 person)	3 bed (6 person)	4 bed
Affordable rented	10	20	4	2	0
Shared Ownership	0	8	4	0	0

- 6.18 The affordable units would be distributed throughout the development and a legal agreement would require the units to be built “tenure blind” in respect of external design and features so they are materially indistinguishable from the general market housing. Subject to the completion of a legal agreement to secure the affordable housing provision, I consider that the scheme is acceptable in this respect and complies with the above policy.
- 6.19 In terms of the market housing, the NPPF seeks to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, highlighting the need to plan for a mix of housing based on current and future needs. Policy CSH4 of the SOCS reflects this requirement. The application proposes to provide a range of housing types ranging from 1 to 4 bed dwellings. The market housing mix would need to reflect the SHMA requirements shown below which could be secured by condition.

<b>Market homes</b>	<b>1 bed</b>	<b>2 bed</b>	<b>3 bed</b>	<b>4+ bed</b>
SHMA	6%	27%	43%	24%

#### Highway safety and traffic impact

- 6.20 A Transport Assessment (TA) has been submitted with the application. Vehicular access is proposed via a new roundabout from the B480 and it is proposed to re-use the existing public footpath that connects the southern part of the site with the southern end of Monument Road. This access would serve pedestrian, cyclists and accommodate emergency vehicles.
- 6.21 Local concern has been raised regarding pedestrian safety entering/leaving the site to cross Monument Road/High Street. The TA has assessed accident data for these roads and notwithstanding the good safety record of the local highway network, the applicant has indicated his willingness to fund the provision of Pelican crossings at Monument Road/High Street. A 2m wide pavement is also proposed on the western side of the roundabout, continuing along the southern side of the B480.
- 6.22 The impact of the estimated trip generation from the development on various junctions in the surrounding area have been modelled and the TA concludes that within the vicinity, Stadhampton and Watlington, each junction would operate with substantial spare capacity and minimal queuing and delay.
- 6.23 Following discussions with OCC the proposed roundabout access arrangements have been revised to ensure safe and suitable access for all vehicles including refuse

vehicles and buses. Improvements have also been made to proposed pedestrian/cycle access. OCC consider the revised plans to be acceptable and raise no objection subject to highway conditions and contributions towards improvements to public transport.

- 6.24 The NPPF makes it clear that developments should only be refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts are severe. Safe and suitable access can be provided to the site as well as a layout that is safe, secure and minimises conflict in accordance with section 4 of the NPPF. As such I consider that the proposed development would be acceptable in highway safety terms subject to appropriate highway conditions and contributions towards encouraging sustainable modes of transport.

#### Landscape impact

- 6.25 The South Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment (SOLA) includes the site in the Undulating semi-enclosed landscape, which is a predominantly rural landscape with some local intrusion of main roads, power lines and built development. The Landscape Capacity Study of potential housing sites in some of the villages of the District looked at eight sites in Chalgrove, including the application site (CHAL 7). This found that the site has a high capacity for development, i.e. that much of the site is able to accommodate significant areas of development, providing that it has regard to the setting and form of the existing settlement.
- 6.26 The adopted Local Plan and the Core Strategy contain policies that seek the protection of landscape character and features and set requirements about the quality of development, to ensure that it is appropriate to the site and its surroundings and enhances local distinctiveness. The Chilterns AONB is located some 4 kilometres to the south-east of the application site, and is separated from the site by substantial woodlands and tree belts.
- 6.27 The site is fairly typical of the rural landscape to the east of Chalgrove, although the adjacent built forms (to the west and the south) and the B480 have an influence on the character of the site, so it has an urban edge appearance. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been submitted with the application which concludes that the existing landscape condition of the site is 'ordinary' with scope to improve land cover with appropriate management and local indigenous planting. The landscape value is considered to be 'poor' and the landscape sensitivity considered to be 'moderate-low'. There are no views into the site from the Chilterns AONB and while the erection of 120 dwellings on site would alter the character of the site, it is already influenced by the existing built forms to the west and south. The landscape strategy for the site includes the retention and enhancement of the existing trees and hedgerows on the site, including the tree belt on the eastern boundary, plus generous areas of new planting including woodland mix planting, native hedgerows and specimen trees within the 'landscape buffers' along the northern and southern boundaries. The LVIA confirms that the landscape and visual impacts of the proposed development would not result in any material adverse long term or significant impacts on the appearance of the area. The landscape and visual effects of the application proposals are judged to be limited, localised in extent, short term and capable of mitigation.
- Notwithstanding the above, the development of an open agricultural field to provide up to 120 dwellings would inevitably have an urbanising effect and would cause some erosion of the rural landscape of the area. However I consider that these effects would be localised in nature, Nevertheless, the proposal would result in the loss of what is currently open agricultural land, and its replacement with housing, streets, lights and

associated human activity would clearly have an adverse effect on the rural quality of the landscape. As such the proposal would result in landscape harm and this is a matter that must be put into the planning balance to weigh against the proposal.

Agricultural Land

- 6.29 Paragraph 112 of NPPF advises that local planning authorities should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile land (BMV). Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local planning authorities should seek to use poorer quality land in Grades 3b, 4 and 5 in preference to higher quality land. Paragraph 109 of the NPPF puts the protection and enhancement of soils as a priority in the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment.
- 6.30 The land is partially contained within grade 3a and partially within 3b. The grade 3a land constitutes BMV land and its loss also weighs against the proposal in the overall planning balance.

Trees and ecology

- 6.31 The Arboricultural Implications Report concludes that the arboricultural impact of the scheme would be of negligible magnitude, and that the proposed development would not have an adverse arboricultural impact on the character and appearance of the local landscape or on the amenity or biodiversity that the existing trees provide.
- 6.32 The Forestry Officer has raised no objection to the application but comments that the detailed layout will need to consider space for planting to help break up the uniformity of any proposed layout and to enable additional planting along the south eastern boundary to create a more attractive woodland edge. As the application is in outline form, with landscaping reserved for latter consideration, an appropriate landscape scheme could be secured at the reserved matters stage.
- 6.33 An ecological appraisal has been submitted with the application which concludes that the majority of the site is of low ecological value. The Countryside Officer has commented that the proposal would not have any significant impacts on important habitats or species. The illustrative layout has the potential to ensure that the site can deliver a no net loss for biodiversity and with careful planning could deliver a small net gain.
- 6.34 In light of the above, there is no evidence to suggest that there are any overriding ecological constraints to the development of the site for residential purposes. The proposals would deliver a net benefit for wildlife which could be secured through appropriate planning conditions.

Design and layout

- 6.35 The NPPF sets out that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people. The NPPF also provides that the planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities.
- 6.36 The NPPF goes on to advise that although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are very important factors, securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations. Therefore, planning decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment (paragraph 61).
- 6.37 The design policies of the SOCS (particularly CSQ3) and SOLP policies (particularly D1-D4) echo these requirements.
- 6.38 The layout of the proposed development is to be the subject of a reserved matters application. However, an illustrative site layout has been provided and this communicates the key design principles that a subsequent reserved matters application should reflect. This is supported by a detailed design and access statement which explains the design concepts behind the illustrative layout and how this relates to the surrounding area. The net density of the development would be 30 dwellings per hectare.
- 6.39 The indicative plans show that sufficient public open space (POS) could be provided to meet policy R6 of the SOLP, which requires 10% of the gross site area to be provided as informal open space. The scheme would provide 2.7ha of public open space. The illustrative layout indicates green buffer spaces to the north and southern ends of the site and open spaces within the development. A local area of play and two equipped areas of play would be provided which would comply with policy R2 of the SOLP. The formal and informal POS and play areas could be secured with a S106 legal agreement. The illustrative site layout also indicates a Scout Hut/community building at the south eastern end of the site with provision for 18 car parking spaces. The emerging CNP has highlighted the community's desire for such a facility.
- 6.40 The Council's Urban Design Officer has raised concerns relating to the illustrative layout and its failure to demonstrate that it would comply with the principles of the design guide. In response to these concerns the agent has commented that the layout is illustrative only and that the density would be 29dph and 2.7ha would be open space, which would greatly exceed the amount required by policy. Notwithstanding the concerns of the Urban Design Officer, the application is in outline form only with matters such as layout reserved for later detailed consideration. Overall, it is considered that the site is capable of accommodating the quantum of development proposed but a note is recommended to ensure that any reserved matters application complies with the Council's design guide.

Neighbour amenity and amenity of future residents

- 6.41 Policy D4 of the SOLP requires new development to secure an appropriate level of privacy for existing residents. The layout may change at reserved matters stage and the impact on neighbouring properties will be carefully assessed under a future application. Based on the indicative layout, proposed strategic landscaping and the separation that can be achieved between the proposed dwellings and neighbouring properties, I am of the opinion that the development could be achieved without any

adverse impacts on neighbours in terms of light, outlook and privacy.

**Flood risk and surface / foul drainage**

- 6.42 The development area of the site is located in Flood Zone 1 (Least probability of flooding) and consequently, the site passes the Sequential Test. The southern boundary of the site is partially within Flood Zones 2 and 3. The submitted Flood Risk Assessment advises that the local topography suggests that floodwater emanating from Chalgrove Brook to the south of the site would flow west along the valley into Chalgrove rather than flowing uphill onto the site itself and there are no recorded incidents of flooding at the site itself. Therefore, it is argued that the site is at low risk of flooding from this source and all other sources including surface water flooding. The Environment Agency has no objection to the proposed development as there would be no built footprint or ground raising within Flood Zone 2 or 3.
- 6.43 A Drainage Strategy has been submitted which identifies that the existing culvert into Chalgrove Brook has capacity for the development including the forecasted effects of climate change. To ensure that the rate of post development surface water run-off is no greater than existing it is proposed to attenuate run-off from all hardstanding using local attenuation basins/tanked permeable paving collectively designed to store surface water run-off from storm events up to and including the 1 in 100 year storm plus a 40% allowance for climate change. Swales would be used to treat and convey run-off across the site where feasible. The potential use of additional tanked permeable paving, green roofs and tree pits would be confirmed at the detailed design stage.
- 6.44 Initial concerns raised by the Council's Drainage Consultant have now been addressed following the submission of additional information and a condition is recommended requiring the submission and approval of sustainable drainage details.
- 6.45 In terms of foul drainage, the Drainage Strategy advises that Thames Water has confirmed that the existing foul sewer network does have sufficient capacity to accommodate foul wastewater from the proposed development.

**Impact on Heritage assets**

- 6.46 Paragraph 129 of the NPPF requires that local planning authorities identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal. Core Strategy Policy CSEN3 sets out that designated historic heritage assets will be conserved and enhanced for their historic significance. Local Plan Policy CON5 provides that proposals which would adversely affect the setting of a listed building will be refused
- 6.47 The Historic Environmental Assessment concludes that the site is situated at some distance from any designated heritage assets with sensitive settings. It also benefits from extensive screening from these. Given this distance and screening, it is not considered that the construction and ongoing presence of the proposed development within the site would result in any harm to the significance of any designated heritage assets in the surrounding area through effects to their settings.
- 6.48 Policy CON13 of the SOLP requires appropriate archaeological investigation for developments that affect sites of archaeological importance. The site is located in an area of archaeological interest containing a Roman burial of some status. Further information on the archaeological interest of the site in the form of an archaeological evaluation was required by the County Archaeological Officer (CAO).

- 6.49 The archaeological field evaluation has recorded a number of features dating to the Late Iron Age/Early Roman period and consists of a number of linear ditches. A small number of pits were also recorded. The CAO has raised no objection to the application subject to a condition requiring a programme of archaeological investigation ahead of any development on the site.

Environmental matters (air quality and noise)

- 6.50 Policy EP1 of the SOLP seeks to secure mitigation measures to ensure that developments do not have an adverse effect on the health and amenity of future occupiers. Based on the size of the proposed development, basic good practice design should be applied to this site in order to help mitigate against the air quality impacts and to enable future proofing of the development.
- 6.51 The Environmental Health Officer has recommended conditions relating to noise and air quality to protect the amenity of neighbouring residents.

Infrastructure requirements

6.52 On-site infrastructure to be secured under a legal agreement

On-site infrastructure can be secured through a legal agreement under S106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). The S106 would secure the following:

- delivery of the affordable housing (set out at Para 6.16)
- delivery of the on-site open space and play areas including a LAP, LEAP and NEAP
- a contribution of £170 per dwelling towards wheeled bins for each house
- a contribution of £1,608 towards street naming and numbering
- The sum of £4408 towards the Council's S106 monitoring fee
- Provision of land for the D1/D2 use (Scout Hut)
- Contribution of £120,000 (index-linked, RPIX January 2017) towards improved public transport to benefit residents of the proposed development site.
- Contribution of £10,165 (index-linked, BCIS January 2017) for provision of flag mounted Real-Time Information display at Oxford-bound bus stop and new pole/flag/timetable case at Watlington-bound bus stop.
- Travel Plan monitoring fees of £1,240 and the implementation of a residential travel information pack.

- 6.53 I consider that these contributions / obligations accord with policy CSI1 of the SOCS, which requires new development to be supported by appropriate on and off-site infrastructure and services. They accord with the relevant tests in the NPPF as they are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, are directly related to the development and are fair and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

6.54 Community Infrastructure Levy

The proposed development would be CIL liable at a charge of £150 per square metre. This would exclude the floor space of the affordable homes as relief from the charge can be claimed against these dwellings. The money collected from the development can be pooled with contributions from other development sites to fund a wide range of infrastructure to support growth, including schools, transport, community, leisure and health facilities.

**7.0 PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 In this case the development accords with the Council's spatial strategy, as Chalgrove is identified as a larger village which acts as a local service centre. The village is identified for approximately 200 dwellings. The site was one identified, in the early consultation stages of the NP, as a potential housing site, although it is recognised that this site is not now the preferred option for the CNDP Committee.
- 7.2 Nevertheless, the NP is at such an early stage of preparation it cannot be afforded any weight. The Council does not have a 5 year housing land supply and as such all the relevant development plan policies for the supply of housing are out of date. Where policies for the supply of housing are out of date, para.14 of the NPPF requires a presumption in favour of sustainable development and that planning permission be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. In order to judge whether a development is sustainable it must be assessed against the three dimensions of sustainable development set out in the NPPF: the economic, social and environmental planning roles.
- 7.3 With regards to the economic dimension of sustainability, the Government has made clear its views that house building plays an important role in promoting economic growth. In economic terms, the proposal would provide construction jobs and local investment during construction, as well as longer term expenditure in the local economy. I consider that moderate weight should be afforded to these benefits.
- 7.4 The development would deliver significant social benefits. The proposal would positively support the delivery of housing, including affordable housing. There is a considerable need for market and affordable homes within our district and the proposal would contribute towards this at a time of serious housing need. I attach very substantial weight to this social benefit. Other social benefits include the provision of play areas and space for a new community facility.
- 7.5 In terms of the environmental dimension, whilst the proposed development would intrude into open agricultural land, the scale and particular location of the proposal are such that its impact is likely to be limited to the immediate surroundings. Furthermore, the impact of the development could be further mitigated by appropriate landscaping. Nevertheless, there would be a landscape impact which would constitute harm in terms of the environmental sustainability of the proposal. The proposals would also result in the loss of Grade 3a (BMV) land. The proposed development would not be at an unacceptable risk of flooding and would not exacerbate flooding problems for third party property. The development's impact on heritage assets is likely to be largely neutral and any impacts could be appropriately mitigated. In terms of ecology and nature conservation, it has been demonstrated that the development would not have a detrimental impact upon biodiversity.
- 7.6 With regard to accessibility, Chalgrove is a large village and provides access to a range of facilities and services including a primary school, convenience stores, public houses and health facilities many of which are within walking and cycling distance from the site. The site is accessible by sustainable modes of transport with a bus service linking the village to Watlington, Cowley and Oxford with stops close by the site. In addition a school bus provides access to Icknield Community College in Watlington. Safe and suitable access can be provided to the site as well as a layout that is safe, secure and minimises conflict in accordance with the NPPF.
- 7.7 Overall, I am satisfied that there are no adverse impacts which, either individually or together, are of sufficient weight to indicate that the development should be restricted.

Placing all of the relevant material considerations in the balance, I consider that the adverse impacts would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the very substantial benefits which would result from the provision of new housing and affordable housing to boost supply as required by the NPPF. When considered against the development plan as a whole, the proposal would represent a sustainable form of development.

**8.0 RECOMMENDATION**

**To delegate authority to grant planning permission to the Head of Planning subject to:**

**(i) The prior completion of a Section 106 agreement to secure the affordable housing, financial contributions and other obligations stated above; and**

**(ii) The following conditions:**

- 1. Commencement - outline with reserved matters.**
- 2. Approved plans.**
- 3. Maximum number of dwellings.**
- 4. Sample materials required (all).**
- 5. Refuse and recycling storage (details required).**
- 6. Biodiversity mitigation and enhancement strategy (outline).**
- 7. Air quality mitigation to be agreed.**
- 8. New vehicular access prior to occupation.**
- 9. Access and vision splays.**
- 10. Construction method statement.**
- 11. Construction traffic management.**
- 12. Hours of construction.**
- 13. Provision of cyclist/pedestrian link.**
- 14. Surface water drainage.**
- 15. Foul drainage.**
- 16. Fire hydrants.**
- 17. Landscaping (including hardsurfacing and boundary treatment).**
- 18. Landscape management plan.**
- 19. Tree protection (general).**
- 20. Market housing mix (outline).**
- 21. Cycle parking facilities.**
- 22. External lighting – general.**
- 23. Levels (details required).**
- 24. Archaeology (submission and implementation of written scheme of investigation).**
- 25. Residential travel plan.**

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