

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>APPLICATION NO.</b>  | <a href="#">P16/S3609/O</a>  |
| <b>APPLICATION TYPE</b> | OUTLINE  |
| <b>REGISTERED</b>       | 31.10.2016   |
| <b>PARISH</b>           | DIDCOT   |
| <b>WARD MEMBER(S)</b>   | Alan Thompson<br>Margaret Turner   |
| <b>APPLICANT</b>        | A R Payne, D R C Payne & J F Payne (Rockspring Barwood Didcot Limited)   |
| <b>SITE PROPOSAL</b>    | Land to the South of A4130 Didcot<br>Outline Planning Permission for up to 166 Dwellings, associated open space and infrastructure (as altered by amended plans received on 14 February 2017). |
| <b>AMENDMENTS</b>       | Revised Development Framework Plan received  |
| <b>GRID REFERENCE</b>   | 451033/190967  |
| <b>OFFICER</b>          | Phil Moule   |

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This application is referred to the Planning Committee as the officer's recommendation conflicts with the views of Didcot Town Council.
  
- 1.2 This application was presented to the Planning Applications Committee on 29 March 2017. The application was deferred as highway safety concerns were expressed by Members of the committee and Didcot Town Council in relation to the proposed site access onto the A4130. The applicant was asked to negotiate with adjoining land owners to explore the opportunity for an alternative site access to be provided which would not link directly onto the A4130.
  
- 1.3 The applicant has duly considered this request, but has decided to not to engage with the adjacent landowners. This is on the basis that the application, in their opinion, proposes a suitable site access junction which has received no technical objection from the County Council as the Local Highway Authority. The applicant has raised that there is no legal or policy basis upon which the council can require the applicant to negotiate with a neighbouring landowner to design a different access including land outside of its ownership or control. The applicant has therefore requested that the application be determined on the site access proposals as submitted.
  
- 1.4 To assist with the consideration of the issue of highway safety, additional information has been provided in this report at Section 6 (Para's 6.18 to 6.23) relating to the proposed site access junction. This provides a summary of details contained within the Transport Assessment that accompanies the application including the results of a Stage 1 Safety Audit for the proposed junction.
  
- 1.5 The application site is located on the western edge of Didcot between the A4130 to the north and the Great Western Park development to the south. Beyond the A4130 to the north is a railway line and beyond this is the site of the former Didcot A power station (which has a resolution to grant outline permission for a mixed use development subject to the signing of the S106 Agreement).
  
- 1.6 Immediately to the west of the site lies a narrow parcel of land separated from the application site by a ditch and a tall hedgerow. Adjacent to this strip of land are blocks of recently planted woodland. Beyond this to the west is a signalised junction on the

A4130 that serves Great Western Park via Sir Frank Williams Avenue. Further to the west of Great Western Park is the site of the Valley Park development which has a resolution to grant outline permission for a development of up to 4,254 dwellings. To the east of the application site is an area of established woodland and an area of public open space and newly planted woodland.

1.7 A plan identifying the site can be found attached at **Appendix 1** to this report.

2.0 **PROPOSAL**

2.1 This is an outline application for a residential development of up to 166 homes with associated open space and infrastructure. The site access is to be considered as part of the outline application, with all other matters reserved. Access to the site is proposed to be from a new junction with the A4130. The application is a departure from the development plan and has been advertised accordingly. The illustrative Development Framework Plan is attached at **Appendix 2** of this report.

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

|     |  |  |
|-----|--|--|
| 3.1 | Didcot Town Council                    | <p><b>Objection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The vehicle access and egress point onto the A4130 is considered to be dangerous</li> <li>• Consideration should be given to creating an access point from the development onto Sir Frank Williams Way</li> </ul>   |
|     | Oxfordshire County Council - Highways  | <p><b>No objection subject to conditions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposed access (and contingency access following the widening of the A4130) are sufficient to establish the principle of access in planning terms</li> <li>• The vehicular impact along with the impact of predicted queue lengths has been assessed as part of the Transport Assessment</li> <li>• A 13 metre wide strip of land on the site is required to be dedicated for the purposes of widening the A4130</li> <li>• Financial contributions sought towards public transport improvements and bus stop infrastructure</li> <li>• Consideration should be given to relocating the children’s play area to a more central area</li> <li>• The layout should be adjusted so that all of claimed Footpath P can remain on its current line through the site</li> </ul> |
|     | Oxfordshire County Council – Education | <p><b>No objection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The development would increase the demands placed on local infrastructure and services</li> <li>• There is insufficient capacity at early education and childcare settings, primary, secondary and special schools in the area to meet the needs of the development</li> <li>• Sufficient capacity for early years, primary, secondary and SEN will be provided through the new schools planned for Didcot which need to be funded through CIL contributions</li> </ul>  |
|     | Oxfordshire County Council – Property  | <p><b>No objection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CIL funding would be required for any necessary mitigation to address the impact from this</li> </ul>  |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <p>development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No specific impact identified.</li> </ul>   |
| Oxfordshire County Council - Archaeology | <p><b>No objection subject to conditions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A programme of archaeological investigation will need to be undertaken ahead of any development</li> </ul>  |
| Countryside Officer                      | <p><b>No objection subject to conditions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The main habitats on the site (the majority of the grassland and the hedgerows) are of low ecological value and are widely distributed.</li> <li>• There are areas of wetter grassland and ditches which are of higher ecological value in the local context.</li> <li>• No significant populations of protected species have been identified on the site although the hedgerows and ditches in the south western part of the site are of value to foraging bats.</li> <li>• The proposal would lead to a loss of the majority of the grassland, including the areas of more species rich grassland in the north eastern part of the site.</li> <li>• Further thought will need to be given to avoiding impacts on the more species rich grassland habitats within the reserved matters application.</li> <li>• The reserved matters stage will need to demonstrate (through the use of biodiversity accounting) that the proposals can avoid a net loss in biodiversity overall</li> </ul> |
| Forestry Officer                         | <p><b>No objection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All mature trees across the site are protected by a Tree Preservation Order</li> <li>• The new access from the A4130 will result in a significant section of field hedgerow will need to be removed</li> <li>• Reserved matters stage to include a well-designed landscaping scheme to enable many new trees across the site, tree lined highways and larger long lived trees.</li> </ul>   |
| Health – Air Quality                     | <p><b>Amended Proposal - No objection subject to conditions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issues previously raised can be overcome if the development is set back a distance 39 metres from the kerbside of the A4130</li> </ul> <p><b>Original proposal – comments as follows:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submitted Air Quality Assessment needs to address impact of cumulative impact of other developments in the area and include sensitivity analysis</li> </ul>   |
| Health – Environmental Protection        | <p><b>No objection subject to condition</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M-EC Noise report does present a high level of noise in the area, however this can be mitigated by design, layout and materials such as fencing and glazing</li> </ul>   |
| Housing Development                      | <p><b>No objection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alternative mix for affordable units requested</li> </ul>   |
| Landscape Consultant                     | <p><b>No objections – comments as follows:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The submitted LVIA is acceptable</li> </ul>   |

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
|                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The application proposes dwellings within 40 metres of the A4130 which is closer than adjacent sites</li> <li>• The location of the main public open space, including the play area, is located adjacent to the A4130 within an identified noise contour. The play area should be relocated beyond this contour.</li> <li>• The location of the play area would not benefit from good levels of natural surveillance</li> <li>• The central area of the site rises and any proposed 2.5 to 3 storey buildings in this area will be prominent in the landscape</li> <li>• Where possible rear gardens should not face onto the boundary of Great Western Park</li> </ul> |
| Environment Agency                 | <p><b>No objection subject to condition</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development should be only be carried out in accordance with the approved Flood Risk Assessment with no build development of land raising to be within Flood Zones 2 and 3.</li> </ul>  |
| Thames Water                       | <p><b>No objection subject to condition</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A condition is requested to approve a drainage strategy prior to the commencement of development</li> <li>• Drainage strategy to include points of connection to the public sewerage system as well as flows into proposed connection points</li> <li>• Thames Water have no objection with regard to water infrastructure capacity.</li> </ul>   |
| CPRE (Rights of Way)               | <p><b>Comment as follows:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern raised that the section of claimed (footpath) FP 'P', linking FP5 to FP35 west of the application site is not shown and would be built over in several places</li> <li>• It would seem feasible to rearrange the layout of the site to allow the western part of claimed FP 'P' to remain on its claimed line</li> </ul>  |
| Harwell Campus Bicycle Users Group | <p><b>Objection:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Object to another junction on the A4130 cycle path.</li> <li>• Integrity of the A4130 cycle path is being eroded with junction to new housing</li> <li>• The junction needs to be designed so that cyclists have priority over motor traffic on the development access road</li> </ul>   |
| Neighbours                         | No comments received   |

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 No relevant recent history.

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 **South Oxfordshire Core Strategy 2027**

CS1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development

CSS1 - The Overall Strategy

CSH1 - Amount and distribution of housing

CSH2 - Housing density

CSH3 - Affordable housing  
CSH4 - Meeting housing needs  
CSM1 - Transport  
CSM2 - Transport Assessments and Travel Plans  
CSDID3 - New housing at Didcot  
CSDID4 - Other proposals for Didcot  
CSQ3 - Design  
CSB1 - Conservation and improvement of biodiversity  
CSEN1 - Landscape protection  
CSG1 - Green infrastructure  
CSI1 - Infrastructure provision

**South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011**

C4 - Landscape setting of settlements  
C6 - Maintain & enhance biodiversity  
C8 - Adverse affect on protected species  
C9 - Loss of landscape features  
D1 - Principles of good design  
D2 - Safe and secure parking for vehicles and cycles  
D3 - Outdoor amenity area  
D4 - Reasonable level of privacy for occupiers  
D6 - Community safety  
D10 - Waste Management  
EP1 - Prevention of polluting emissions  
EP2 - Noise and vibrations  
EP4 - Impact on water resources  
EP6 - Sustainable drainage  
EP7 - Impact on ground water resources  
EP8 - Contaminated land  
G2 - Protect district from adverse development  
G4 - Protection of Countryside  
G5 - Making the best use of land  
R2 - Provision of play areas on new housing development  
R6 - Public open space in new residential development  
R8 - Public rights-of-way  
T1 - Safe, convenient and adequate highway network for all users  
T2 - Unloading, turning and parking for all highway users

- 5.3 National Planning Policy Framework  
National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance  
South Oxfordshire Design Guide (2016)

**Environmental Impact Assessment**

Screening opinion P16/S2529/SCR determined that an EIA is not required for this development

**6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

**6.1 Principle of the development**

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. The development plan currently comprises the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (SOCS) and the saved policies of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (SOLP).

- 6.2 Didcot is identified as a Town within the SOCS. Policy CSS1 of the SOCS sets out the

overall distribution strategy for the district and this includes focussing major new development at the growth point of Didcot so the town can play an enhanced role in providing jobs and services with improved transport connectivity.

- 6.3 Policy CSDID3 of the SOCS allocates land to the north east of Didcot for 2,030 homes. In addition to this site allocation, the policy states that planning permission will be granted for housing on suitable infill or redevelopment sites. The application site would border houses that form part of the Great Western Park development on its southern boundary, but would not border housing on its other boundaries. As such, the proposal would not constitute infill development. The development proposal would not therefore accord with the development plan.
- 6.4 In accordance with the Planning Act cited above and Para 12 of the NPPF, determination of the application requires an assessment against other material considerations. These include Para 49 of the NPPF. This 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
- 6.5 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. Of relevance to this position are a number of appeal decisions that have been allowed in the past two years<sup>1</sup>. In each case, the council's housing land supply was discussed in detail at public inquiries and the Inspectors concluded that the council cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites. In accordance with the NPPF, the application should therefore be granted unless any harm that would ensue significantly and demonstrably outweighs the benefits.

#### **Landscape impact**

- 6.6 The application is supported by a landscape and visual impact assessment prepared by CSA Environmental. The site is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory designations for landscape character or quality and is subject to a number of urbanising influences including the A4130, railway line and Didcot Power Station. In addition to the vegetation along the boundaries, the site contains a number of landscape features including mature tree lines and hedgerows and a series of drainage ditches. The landscape quality and sensitivity of the site is assessed as being medium, with a reasonable ability to accommodate change.
- 6.7 The LVIA advises that the proposals offer the opportunity to sensitively develop the site whilst seeking to retain all of the important landscape features, providing strengthening to these features through the introduction of new planting, the careful distribution of open space and through the establishment of green corridors throughout the site. The proposed development will result in a change to the inherent character of the site as that is an inevitable consequence of developing green field land. However the landscape and visual effects arising from the development will be limited and localised.

---

<sup>1</sup> 1 Land at Winterbrook, Wallingford (P15/S0191/FUL), Land North of Lower Icknield Way, Chinnor (P15/S0154/O), Land to the east of Newington Road, Stadhampton (P14/S4105/O) and High Street, Tetworth (P14/S3524/O)

- 6.8 Due to the nature of the surrounding topography, the proliferation of existing trees and vegetation in the local context, the presence of the key infrastructure routes to the north and the presence of the recently constructed housing to the south, there are no opportunities to view the site from the middle and long distance.
- 6.9 The LVIA concludes that there will be some close range views of the proposed development, however careful consideration of the layout and the inclusion of suitable landscaping will assist in reducing the visual impact on these views. Accordingly, development in line with the proposed development framework plan could be accommodated on the site without giving rise to any significant landscape or visual effects.
- 6.10 The Council's Landscape Consultant has raised no objection to the proposed development on landscape grounds or the conclusions of the LVIA. In response to comments received from the Council's Landscape Consultant, the amended development framework plan shows a widened landscape buffer in the north eastern corner of the site and the development is shown set back a distance of 47 metres. The open space and play area have also been relocated away from the A4130 and outside of the noise contour.

#### **Highways impact**

- 6.11 The County Council, as the local highway authority, have not raised an objection to the application. The application is in outline form with the matter of the site access to be considered as part of the current application. The access to the site is to be taken from the A4130 and the County Council have assessed this in the context of proposed alterations to the A4130 and local safety.

#### Proposed site access arrangements

- 6.12 Two significant highway schemes are proposed in the vicinity of the proposed development which are the widening of the A4130 to the west of Didcot and the delivery of Science Bridge (a new bridge over the railway line to provide relief to Manor Bridge and support development and improve access in the Science Vale area). The County Council require a 13 metre wide strip of land to be safeguarded to enable the future widening of the A4130. This is acknowledged in the application proposal and the Development Framework includes a safeguarded highway buffer zone.
- 6.13 Two proposed site access junction drawing are submitted with the application. These are attached at Appendix 3A and 3B of this report. One (drawing no. 22109\_08\_020\_01 Rev A) shows the access coming from the A4130 on its current alignment should the development be implemented prior to the widening of the A4130. The second (drawing no. 22109\_08\_020\_02) shows the access junction linking to a widened A4130. This demonstrates that the site access arrangements can allow for modification as and when the road widening works / capacity enhancement works are delivered.
- 6.14 The County Council have confirmed that these drawings are sufficient to establish the principle of access, in planning terms, from a highways perspective. A condition will be required to ensure the access is formed, laid out and constructed in accordance with the Local Highway Authorities specifications and all ancillary works undertaken prior to first occupation. The need to implement an access junction from a widened A4130 can be secured through a Section 278 Agreement and the S106 Agreement.

Impact on the local road network

- 6.15 The impact of the proposal on the road network is detailed in the submitted Transport Assessment and this has been assessed by the County Council. Queue lengths at six junctions in the vicinity of the application site have been assessed, these are:
- Junction 1: A4130/Basil Hill Road/Milton Road roundabout;
  - Junction 2: A4130/B4493/Mendip Heights roundabout;
  - Junction 3: A4130/Sir Frank Williams Avenue signalised junction;
  - Junction 4: A4130/Ridgeway Industrial Access signalised junction;
  - Junction 5: Valley Park Access roundabout; and
  - Junction 6: Valley Park Access priority junction
- 6.16 The County Council have commented that there would be a small contribution to exceeded capacities at Junction 1, while the other junctions are within normal parameters. No objection from the County Council has been raised in relation to the impact the proposed development would have on the local road network.
- 6.17 To mitigate the impact of the proposed development, a financial contribution on £795 per dwelling is to be secured towards public transport to serve the site as part of the Science Vale public transport strategy. A financial contribution of £89,648 is also to be secured towards bus stop infrastructure to benefit residents of the proposed development.

Highway safety relating to the proposed site access junction

- 6.18 Vehicular access to the development would be taken from the A4130 via a newly constructed ghost island priority junction. The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (TD42/95 Part 6) advises that 'ghost islands shall be used on new single carriageway roads, or in the upgrading of existing junctions to provide right turning vehicles with a degree of shelter from the through flow. They are highly effective in improving safety, and are relatively cheap, especially on wide 2-lane single carriageway roads where very little extra construction cost is involved'.
- 6.19 The design manual goes on to state that 'The use of ghost islands on unrestricted rural single carriageway roads can, in certain circumstances, pose safety problems. In situations where overtaking opportunity on the major road on either side of the junction is restricted, the presence of a widened carriageway, albeit with hatch markings, could result in overtaking manoeuvres which may conflict with right turns into and out of the minor road'. This issue is considered below as part of the submitted Stage 1 Road Safety Audit.
- 6.20 The Transport Assessment advises that speed surveys were carried out on the A4130 at the proposed site access location by Road Data Services Ltd over a seven-day period commencing 30th June 2016. The 85th percentile speed for eastbound traffic was 47 mph and for westbound traffic was 44 mph. The required visibility splays for the junction are provided.
- 6.21 A Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (RSA) has been commissioned from TMS Consultancy for the proposed new site access road (Report No. 13066.) This report is included in Appendix O of the Transport Assessment. The report indicates that although there are no major safety issues with the proposed access junction, there are four minor problems. These are set out in the table below along with a response from the applicant's transport consultant in terms of the design of the junction.



|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Problem identified (1)</b>  |   |
| <b>Location</b> – A4130 at proposed right turn lane  |   |
| <b>Summary:</b> Risk of collisions with street furniture   |   |
| The traffic islands at either end of the right-turn lane may not be clearly visible to approaching drivers. Vehicles could overrun the islands whilst attempting to overtake or enter the right-turn lane. |   |
| <b>Recommendation</b>  | <b>Response from applicant's transport consultant</b> |
| Both low-level and high-level keep-left signs should be installed on the traffic islands   | Agreed. Appropriate signage will be provided          |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Problem identified (2)</b>   |  |
| <b>Location</b> – A4130 at proposed right turn lane   |  |
| <b>Summary:</b> Risk of collisions with street furniture  |  |
| The width of the traffic islands at either end of the right-turn lane is not specified. They may not be wide enough to accommodate keep-left bollards with adequate clearance from the traffic lanes. Passing vehicles could strike the bollards. |  |
| <b>Recommendation</b>   | <b>Response from applicant's transport consultant</b>  |
| The traffic islands should be wide enough to accommodate keep-left bollards with adequate clearance from the carriageway.   | Agreed. Traffic islands will be of sufficient width to accommodate existing street furniture |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Problem identified (3)</b>  |  |
| <b>Location</b> – A4130 footway / cycleway   |  |
| <b>Summary:</b> Risk of cyclists' loss of control  |  |
| The alignment of the proposed footway / cycleway deviates abruptly to cross the existing ditch north of the proposed junction. The abrupt deviation may not be anticipated by cyclists travelling at relatively high speed along the otherwise straight cycleway, and might cause a cyclist to lose control and fall off or enter the carriageway into the path of a passing vehicle |  |
| <b>Recommendation</b>  | <b>Response from applicant's transport consultant</b>      |
| The radius of the double curve should be appropriate for the speed of cyclists using the cycleway. Advance warning of the deviation should be provided for cyclists on both approaches   | Agreed. A smoother alignment for cyclists will be provided |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Problem identified (4)</b>   |   |
| <b>Location</b> – A4130 footway / cycleway  |   |
| <b>Summary:</b> Hazard for site impaired pedestrians  |   |
| The tactile paving shown on the NW side of the junction crossing may not be deep enough to ensure that a sight impaired pedestrian does not step over it and inadvertently walk into the carriageway into the path of an approaching vehicle. |   |
| <b>Recommendation</b>   | <b>Response from applicant's transport consultant</b>   |
| Tactile paving on the in-line approach should be of adequate depth (DfT guidelines currently indicate that 1200mm depth is sufficient)  | Agreed. All in line crossings will be to a depth of 1200mm, in accordance with recommended guidance |

6.22 The Transport Assessment also sets out the predicted trip generation rates associated with the proposal in both the AM (0800 – 0900) and PM (1700 – 1800) peak times. This

is based on TRICS and is set out in the table below.

|                     | Arrivals | Departures | Two-way |
|---------------------|----------|------------|---------|
| AM Peak (0800-0900) | 23       | 64         | 87      |
| PM Peak (1700-1800) | 53       | 32         | 86      |

- 6.23 Predicted trip distribution data has also been provided in the submitted Transport Assessment, based on journey to work data agreed by the County Council. This predicts that around half of the vehicles (48%) exiting the site would turn right onto the A4130, with the remaining (52%) turning left. On this basis, around 31 vehicles are predicted to turn right from the site onto the A4130 in the AM peak.

Public rights of way

- 6.24 The County Council and the CPRE Rights of Way requested that the site layout be amended so that claimed footpath FP 'P' can remain on its claimed line. This will ensure a continuous route between footpath 189/35 to the west and the continuation of claimed footpath FP 'P' to the east. The applicant has agreed that claimed footpath FP 'P' can remain on its claimed line and this is demonstrated on the amended Development Framework Plan. This can be secured via condition.

**Ecological impact**

- 6.25 The Council's Countryside Officer has raised no objection to the application. They have commented that the main habitats on the site (the majority of the grassland and the hedgerows) are of low ecological value and are widely distributed. There are areas of wetter grassland and ditches which are of higher ecological value in the local context.
- 6.26 No significant populations of protected species have been identified on the site although the hedgerows and ditches in the south-western part of the site are of value to foraging bats. The proposal would lead to a loss of the majority of the grassland, including the areas of more species rich grassland in the north eastern part of the site. Further thought will need to be given to avoiding impacts on the more species rich grassland habitats within the reserved matters application. The reserved matters stage will need to demonstrate (through the use of biodiversity accounting) that the proposals can avoid a net loss in biodiversity overall. The area of land immediately to the west of the application site within the applicants control can be used for the purposes of ecological mitigation and enhancement

**Air quality**

- 6.27 The application is supported by an air quality assessment. This demonstrates that following the implementation of the proposed development NO2 and PM10 concentrations will remain below the NAQS air quality objectives at the application site and at existing residential receptors. Initial concerns were raised by the Council's Air Quality Officer in relation to the submitted air quality assessment and how the results related to diffusion tube data from a nearby location.
- 6.28 To overcome this issue, the Air Quality Officer advised that new dwellings on the development should be set back a distance of 39 metres from the kerbside of the A4130. This takes account of the proposed future widening of the A4130. The applicant has agreed to this and the amended Development Framework Plan shows the new dwellings set back a distance of 47 metres. To ensure this is carried forward into the reserved matters application, a condition is required to ensure any new dwellings are set back a minimum distance of 39 metres from the kerbside of the A4130 in its current alignment

**Noise**

6.29 The application is supported by a noise assessment to consider the impact of road noise from the A4130 on the proposed development. This demonstrates that existing sound levels in an area on the northern part of the site adjacent to the A4130 would exceed the recommended internal and external noise levels for new dwellings. A noise contour is demonstrated on the Development Framework Plan.

6.30 Mitigation measures to reduce sound levels to within the recommended guideline values are set out in the report. These comprise:

- Careful orientation of dwellings with a line of sight to the A4130, with gardens located at facades facing away from the road;
- Installation of acoustically sound fencing around gardens with a line of sight to the road; and
- Selection of glazing, acoustically attenuated ventilation and building fabric with a sufficient sound reduction index

6.31 The Council’s Environmental Health Officer is satisfied that the noise levels can be effectively mitigated by the measures proposed. The final elements will need to be presented in a detailed mitigation scheme which can be approved via condition.

**Impact on trees**

6.32 The Council’s Forestry Officer has raised no objection to the application. All of the mature trees growing across the site are protected by a tree preservation order as is the woodland growing next to the eastern boundary. To create the proposed access into the site from the A4130, a significant section of the field hedgerow will need to be removed. The Forestry Officer has no objection to this.

6.33 The Forestry Officer has advised that as part of the reserved matter application a well-designed landscaping scheme and strategy will be essential. Many new trees should be introduced into the site. To soften the appearance of the development, space should be provided for tree lined roads along the main routes through the site. Larger long lived trees of a wide variety of species should be included to ensure a diverse and robust tree scape. Drainage, service routes and road layout should be considered as part of the landscape scheme to ensure proposed tree planting is not hindered. An arboricultural method statement will be required as part of the reserved matters application to show how existing trees will be protected during the construction phase.

**Affordable housing**

6.34 The application as submitted confirms that 40% of the dwellings to be provided would be affordable. Of this, 75% of the affordable provision would be rented and 25% would be shared ownership. This accords with Policy CSH3 of the Core Strategy. The Council’s Housing Officer has recommended that the affordable mix set out in the table below is provided. These are expressed as a percentage as the exact number of dwellings to be provided on the site will be determined through the reserved matters application (up to 166). The applicant has agreed to this mix, which is set out the draft S106 Agreement.

| <b>Affordable Housing</b> | 1 bed | 2 bed | 3 bed (5 person) | 3 bed (6 person) | 4 bed (7 person) |
|---------------------------|-------|-------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Affordable Rent (75%)     | 11.5% | 46.2% | 30.8%            | 7.7%             | 3.8%             |
| Shared Ownership (25%)    | 0%    | 66.7% | 33.3%            | 0%               | 0%               |

**Market housing mix**

- 6.35 The application should provide the mix of market homes set out in the table below. These are expressed as a percentage for the reason highlighted above. This mix accords to that recommended in the Oxfordshire SHMA (2014). This mix should be secured via condition to inform the reserved matters application.

| Market Housing | 1 bed | 2 bed | 3 bed | 4+ bed |
|----------------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
|                | 5.7%  | 26.7% | 43.4% | 24.2%  |

**Layout**

- 6.36 The layout of the proposed development is to be the subject of a reserved matters application. However, a Development Framework Plan has been provided and this communicates the key design principles that a subsequent reserved matters application should reflect. Adequate provision is made for open space (2.9ha). The developable area at 4.1ha could provide up to 166 dwellings at a density of 40 dwellings per hectare. Careful consideration will need to be given to the density of development at the reserved matters stage which may affect the number of homes that could be delivered on the site. However, it is your officer’s view that up to 166 dwellings could potentially be delivered on the site.

**Archaeology**

- 6.37 The County Council have raised no objection to the development on archaeological grounds. The site is located in an area of archaeological interest and conditions will be required to secure an Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation prior to the commencement of development, to be followed by a programme of archaeological mitigation.

**Flood risk**

- 6.38 The application is supported by a flood risk assessment. The whole of the site is located within Flood Zone 1 (least probability of flooding). A small area of land in Flood Zones 2 and 3 is located to the north east of the site, outside of the application boundary and adjacent to the A4130. The Development Framework Plan indicates that new housing would be located well away from the area of flood zone, with a Sustainable Urban Drainage feature to be located in the north-eastern corner of the site. The Environment Agency has raised an objection to application. They have requested a condition ensure the development is carried in accordance with the approved flood risk assessment and the mitigation measures set out within the assessment including that no development or land raising to be within Flood Zones 2 and 3.

**Foul drainage**

- 6.39 Thames Water have not raised an objection to the application. They have commented that with the information provided they have been unable to determine the waste water infrastructure needs of this application. Accordingly, they have requested that a 'Grampian Style' condition be applied to any planning permission requiring a drainage strategy detailing any on and/or off site drainage works to be approved before commencement of development.

- 6.40 With regard to water infrastructure capacity, Thames Water have advised that they have no objection to the application.

**Surface water drainage**

- 6.41 As is now standard practice, a detailed scheme for the site would need to incorporate a

Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDS) compliant strategy to ensure that all surface water run-off is accommodated within the confines of the site and discharged in a controlled manner. The submitted Flood Risk Assessment demonstrates that a variety of SUDS measures could be implemented on the site. The final details of the surface water drainage strategy will need to be approved via a condition prior to the commencement of development.

#### **CIL**

- 6.42 The proposed development would be CIL liable at a charge of £85 per square metre (plus indexation). This would exclude the floor space of the affordable homes provide in the site as relief from the charge can be claimed against these dwellings. The money collected can be pooled with contributions from other development sites to fund a wide range of off-site infrastructure to support growth, including schools, transport, community, leisure and health facilities.

#### **S106 – heads of terms**

- 6.43 A draft S106 Legal Agreement is being prepared to secure the following:
- delivery of the affordable housing (set out at Para 6.28)
  - delivery of the on-site open space and locally equipped play area
  - a contribution of £795 per dwelling towards public transport to serve the site as part of the Science Vale public transport strategy
  - a contribution of £89,648 towards bus stop infrastructure (shelters, flags, poles and real time information displays)
  - Securing a 13 metre wide strip of land adjacent to the A4130 to be dedicated for the purposes of capacity improvements on the A4130
  - Securing a site access to a widened A4130 if required
  - A financial contribution of £1,240 towards the costs of monitoring the travel plan.
  - a contribution of £170 per dwelling towards wheeled bins for each house
  - a contribution of £107.80 per 10 dwellings towards street naming

#### **7.0 CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The proposed development does not relate to an allocated site in the SOCS and would not constitute infill development. The application therefore does not accord with the development plan. However, as set out at Para 6.4 of this report, in accordance with the NPPF as the Council cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites, planning permission should be granted unless any impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.
- 7.2 Paragraph 14 of the NPPF contains a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The NPPF identifies three mutually dependent dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.
- 7.3 Didcot is the focus for new development in the district so the town can play an enhanced role in providing jobs and services with improved transport connectivity. The application site would be located close to good public transport links serving the Great Western Park development and new bus stop facilities would be provided. The application site is in close proximity to the services and facilities offered in Didcot town centre and local employment opportunities. Additional housing at Didcot would also contribute towards supporting projected employment growth within the wider Science Vale area. The application would also provide needed affordable housing and contribute towards the supply of housing at Didcot where delivery have been slow to come forward over recent years.

74. It is your officer's view that the proposal would constitute sustainable development offering social and economic benefits. With regard to harm, there are no technical objections to the application and the proposal would not have a harmful impact on landscape or highway grounds. The application has demonstrated that it would not impeded to County Council's intention to widen the A4130 for capacity improvements. Consequently, the application is recommended for approval subject to conditions and a legal agreement to secure affordable housing and developer contributions.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1 **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, other obligations and financial contributions listed in Para's 6.34 and 6.43 of this report and**
- ii) **The following conditions:**
  - 1. **Development not to commence until details of reserved matters (landscaping, appearance, layout and scale) have been submitted and approved.**
  - 2. **Approved plans (relating to access)**
  - 3. **Market housing mix to be in general conformity with SHMA at 5.7% 1 bed, 26.7% 2 bed, 43.4% 3bed and 24.2% 4 bed units**
  - 4. **Sample materials to be agreed**
  - 5. **Landscaping scheme to be approved**
  - 6. **Landscape management scheme to be agreed**
  - 7. **Play space / equipment to be approved**
  - 8. **New vehicular access to be laid out and constructed in accordance local highway authority's specification prior to occupation**
  - 9. **Vision splay details to be approved**
  - 10. **New estate roads: including all highways infrastructure to be provided prior to first occupation**
  - 11. **Parking and manoeuvring areas and car parking plan to be submitted and approved prior to commencement of development**
  - 12. **Public right of way shown on framework plan to be secured through the site**
  - 13. **Travel Plan and travel information pack to be submitted and approved prior to first occupation**
  - 14. **Construction Traffic Management Plan to be agreed**
  - 15. **The distance between the front elevation of any dwellings and the kerbside of the A4130 shall measure 39 metres**
  - 16. **Electric vehicle charging points to be provided**
  - 17. **A scheme for noise protection to be submitted and approved prior to commencement of development**
  - 18. **Construction method statement to be agreed**
  - 19. **Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation to be submitted and approved prior to commencement of development**
  - 20. **Staged programme of archaeological evaluation to be carried out**
  - 21. **Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy to be submitted and approved concurrent to reserved matters application**
  - 22. **Limit on hours of construction – 7:30am to 6pm Mondays to Fridays and 8am to 1 pm Saturdays**
  - 23. **Appropriate provisions for control of construction noise and dust**
  - 24. **Development to be carried out in accordance with approved Flood Risk**

**Assessment and mitigation measures detailed within**

- 25. Surface water drainage works, including site investigation information, to be submitted and approved prior to commencement of development**
- 26. Foul drainage strategy detailing any on / off site drainage works to be submitted an approved prior to commencement of development**

**Author:** Phil Moule

**Tel no:** 01235 422600

**Email:** [phil.moule@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:phil.moule@southandvale.gov.uk)

This page is intentionally left blank