

<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	<a href="#">P16/S3630/O</a>
<b>APPLICATION TYPE</b>	OUTLINE
<b>REGISTERED</b>	2.11.2016
<b>PARISH</b>	EYE & DUNSDEN
<b>WARD MEMBER(S)</b>	Paul Harrison Will Hall
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Gladman Developments Ltd
<b>SITE</b>	Land off Peppard Road, Emmer Green
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Residential development of up to 245 residential dwellings (including up to 40% affordable housing), structural planning and landscaping, informal public open space and children's play areas, vehicular access from Peppard Road and Kiln Road and associated ancillary works. All matters reserved with the exception of the main vehicular access.
<b>AMENDMENTS</b>	None
<b>OFFICER</b>	Joan Desmond

1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The application site (which is shown on the OS extract **attached** as Appendix A) adjoins the suburb of Emmer Green within the Parish of Eye and Dunsden. The southern boundary of the site also forms the boundary with Reading Borough Council. The site lies to the west of Peppard Road (B481) and extends to Kiln Road to the east. The village of Sonning Common lies approximately 2.6km to the north west of the site.
- 1.2 The application site comprises 13.48ha of agricultural land with mature hedgerows along the field boundaries. A public right of way crosses the south eastern part of the site which links Cherry Close to the south with Bryant's Farm to the north. A Tree Preservation Order (TPO) has recently been served on various trees/group of trees on the site and this is likely to be confirmed in due course. A TPO already exists on an Oak tree within the site. Open fields adjoin the site to the north, east and west. 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 245 residential dwellings (including up to 40% affordable housing), structural planning and landscaping, informal public open space and children's play areas, vehicular access from Peppard Road and Kiln Road and associated ancillary works. All matters are reserved with the exception of the main vehicular access.
- 2.2 An updated illustrative masterplan has been submitted with the application to show how the site could accommodate up to 245 dwellings and associated public open space and green infrastructure. The primary access would be from Peppard Road with a secondary access off Kiln Road. Given that the application is in outline, the masterplan is for indicative purposes only. The indicative masterplan 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**

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

**Eye and Dunsden Parish Council** – Strongly recommend refusal of the application for the following reasons:

- Such an urban extension beyond the Reading boundary would not meet South Oxfordshire's housing supply requirement as the site is not connected to any settlement in South Oxfordshire. Would not therefore accord with the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2032 Preferred Options.
- Unsustainable development in an unsuitable location
- Infrastructure in and around Emmer Green is already over-stretched and struggling to meet the needs of the existing population. Application fails to make provision for the necessary infrastructure and facilities to ensure that the development is sustainable.
- Access arrangements unsuitable and road network is already severely overstretched and dangerous to use, particularly at peak times. The Oxfordshire Cycleway crosses this route and cyclists would be put in danger as a result.
- The proposed development would place intolerable pressure on the already seriously over-stretched river crossings in Sonning and Reading.
- Traffic flow data collection is flawed and inaccurate.
- Bus services are inadequate locally for a development of this significance and provision of bus stops near the entrance to the development site on the B481 (Peppard Road) will have a detrimental impact on traffic flow
- Issues with the water supply for the development and concerned about the capacity of the sewerage system.
- Lack of employment opportunities
- No benefit from this development to local residents in neighbouring Emmer Green in Reading, or Sonning Common in South Oxfordshire.
- Significant amenity value will be lost if the development goes ahead.
- The proposed site currently provides an important Strategic Green Gap between Reading and Sonning Common. The development would create a precedent for further intrusive breaches into this gap and the separation between Emmer Green and the communities of Dunsden and Sonning Common.
- Concerned that the proposed development would affect the setting of the AONB.
- The development would be out of keeping with the rural character of the parish of Eye & Dunsden.
- Concerned that the applicants have inadequately addressed the geology of the local area where there are a large number of chalk caverns and swill holes.

**Sonning Common Parish Council** – Recommend refusal on following grounds:

1. The proposed development would occupy a significant part of the Strategic Green Gap between Sonning Common, Emmer Green and Eye and Dunsden.. This gap is essential to preserve the character and integrity of the rural settlements.

2. One of the primary objectives of the adopted Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan (SCNP) is to preserve the village's separateness from Reading. This development would be only one mile from Sonning Common's southern boundary. The village's character and surrounding rural landscape would be permanently and irrevocably damaged by allowing this urban extension to Reading.

3. The proposed housing development is unsustainable. The provision of sustainable development is an essential requirement of the NPPF. The nearest South Oxfordshire

services would be in Sonning Common. New residents would be unable to walk to the village along the B481 since there are no pavements. It would be dangerous to walk or risky to cycle along the road since there is often a high volume of traffic, including heavy-weight vehicles and farm machinery.

4. An urban extension beyond the Reading boundary would not meet South Oxfordshire's housing requirement as the site is not connected to any settlement in South Oxfordshire. It would therefore not accord with the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2032 Preferred Options.

5. The option of siting new housing next to neighbouring major urban areas has already been specifically rejected in the South Oxfordshire Proposed Submission Core Strategy December 2010:

7. Further development focused on Reading would increase the pressures on the constrained bridges crossing the Thames and the strategy does not therefore provide for urban extensions to Reading.

6. This planning application fails to make provision for the necessary infrastructure and facilities to ensure that the development is sustainable, as required by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

7. The proposed development is in an unsuitable location. The large scale of the proposed development would place intolerable pressure on the area's rural road network.

8. The proposed access from the B481 is inadequate and dangerous. The alternative proposed access, off Kiln Lane, is narrow and leads to a network of country lanes in Eye and Dunsden, many of which are single-lane. The Oxfordshire Cycleway crosses this route and cyclists would be placed in danger by increased traffic movements on these narrow, rural routes.

9. The applicant's traffic flow data is flawed and inaccurate.

10. In the absence of a third bridge to Reading the proposed development would place intolerable pressure on the already seriously over-stretched river crossings in Sonning and Reading.

11. Local bus services are inadequate for a development of this scale. The proposal to provide bus stops near the entrance to the development site on the B481 (Peppard Road) will have a detrimental impact on traffic flow on that road.

12. There is concern over the capacity of the sewerage system locally and the provision of water supply to the site, problems identified by the applicant.

13. The Oxfordshire SHMA identifies future job growth as being in Didcot and the Science Vale, not in this part of South Oxfordshire. Neither Sonning Common nor Emmer Green are areas of high or growing employment and sufficient employment opportunities for new residents in this area would not exist.

14. The Chilterns AONB is just 700m away from the site. This large-scale development would cause an unacceptable intrusion into the AONB and permanently destroy the landscape setting of the area.

15. Significant amenity value will be lost if the development goes ahead. The site is defined by the applicants themselves as "ancient countryside" and has long been used

for informal recreation purposes. There are ecological and environmental benefits in retaining the existing landscape which is typical of the Chilterns dip slope and offers pleasing vistas from a large number of neighbouring properties.

16. We are concerned that the applicant has inadequately addressed the geology of the local area where a large number of chalk caverns and swill holes exist.

17. This proposed development is out of keeping with the rural character of the parishes of Sonning Common and Eye and Dunsden.

**Kidmore End Parish Council** – Application should be refused on the following grounds:

- Contrary to local plan
- No significant employment opportunities in the area
- Incursion into ancient open countryside, in an area adjacent to the Chilterns AONB
- Loss of productive farmland
- Will swamp already overstretched infrastructure
- Inadequate highway network
- Highway safety concerns relating to new access

**Harpsden Parish Council** – Object as it would extend urban development of Reading across the county boundary into valuable countryside unprepared for the traffic, or the demand for services, that it would generate; Appears essentially unsustainable; The lanes of South Oxfordshire are inadequate for existing traffic; The development proposed would simply increase the pressure on Harpsden and Binfield Heath (among other small villages) without bringing any compensating benefit; The clear distinction between the built-up area of Reading and the green rural area of South Oxfordshire reflects good and responsible planning which should not be imprudently abandoned.

**Binfield Heath Parish Council** – Recommend refusal and object strongly for the following reasons:

- **Unsustainability:** the 245 units, is nearly twice the size of the existing parish (150 households). The result will be two entirely different communities, one rural and based on old agricultural occupations and the new one which is an expansion of a large modern housing estate tacked on to the outskirts of Reading.
- **Facilities:** the parish has no shop, school or health clinics. These will have to be sourced in Emmer Green, which is in Berkshire, so maintenance costs will fall to Reading, where there is already pressure on schools and health service.
- **Employment:** Job growth has been identified in Didcot and the Science Vale but not in this part of South Oxfordshire
- **Access:** This would create traffic congestion on narrow country roads along both roads leading to the housing. This will impact further afield, including our parish.
- **Landscape value:** The development is completely inconsistent with the character of the rural parish of Eye & Dunsden. It is typical of the Chilterns area and a valuable gap between Emmer Green and the nearby boundary of the Chilterns AONB, which includes part of our parish.
- **Precedent:** Such a development could create a precedent for further breaches into the open land which separates Emmer Green from the

communities of Dunsden and Sonning Common. Reading has no policy for green belt around it and we need to maintain one.

- Local Plan: The proposal does not accord with the preferred options identified in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2032 Preferred Options (Stage 3, June 2016)

**Rotherfield Peppard Parish Council** – Objects to proposed development.

**Shiplake Parish Council** - Objects strongly to application for the following reasons:

- Unsustainability: 245 additional houses would add more than 100% to the existing parish (150 households) and represents a significant urbanisation of the greenfield area in the southern part of South Oxfordshire.
- The road and public transport infrastructure is known to be already inadequate for current needs and local schools and GP facilities are oversubscribed in both the immediate locality of Emmer Green, Reading and the nearby villages of South Oxfordshire
- Shiplake Primary School currently provides limited places for Eye & Dunsden children but is already oversubscribed and unable to provide sufficient places for the current population. Primary school children will likely have to be bussed to distant schools.
- This development is contrary to NPPF policies and CSR1 of SODC Core Strategy and policies C4, G4 and T1 of the Local Plan.
- We strongly support the objections of Eye & Dunsden Parish Council the application should be refused.

**Reading Borough Council** – Objects on the following grounds:

a) The proposal would have a significant impact on the surrounding infrastructure in Reading Borough including highways, education, open space/leisure facilities (encompassing the use of Clayfield Copse and Blackhouse Wood), air quality and the provision of affordable housing. No clear plan or mechanism to secure appropriate mitigation to these impacts has been secured without which the scheme is considered unsustainable and contrary to para 203 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

b) The proposed development would result in the increased use of substandard road junctions, which would have an adverse effect on road safety and the flow of traffic.

c) The proposed development is unlikely to function or operate in a sustainable manner, taking account of the site's relatively remote location, which is poorly served by public transport links and pedestrian/cycle routes.

**OCC (Highways)** – No objection subject to conditions and contributions towards public transport improvements.

**OCC (Archaeology)** – No objection subject to conditions.

**OCC (Footpaths)** - As this application develops to the reserved matters stage the County would expect to see the applicant develop proposals to improve the surface of the path so that it is in keeping and moreover, able to sustain the additional use generated by the development.

**OCC (Education)** – No objection.

**OCC (Cllr David Bartholomew)** - Object on following grounds:

- This proposed development straddles urban Reading and rural South Oxfordshire thus compromising the county boundary and destroying the clear distinction between urban and rural areas
- The development would cause severe harm to the rural character of the area
- The development would clearly be part of Reading in practical terms, but would fall into the Oxfordshire County Council, South Oxfordshire District Council and Eye & Dunsden Parish Council areas of administration. This would present serious issues in terms of funding and management of resources for all councils concerned.
- There is little employment in the immediate area and it is highly likely most residents would need to cross Reading Bridge or Caversham Bridge to get to work directly or via the mainline railway station. Most of this travel would be by car. Reading Borough Council has already identified both these bridges as being used well beyond their capacity and the increase in congestion would be substantial, conflicting with the objectives of sustainable development.
- This area is not scheduled for major development in the SODC Local Plan.

The Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan has been 'made' and while this site isn't within the area of the plan, it is immediately adjacent to it, so should be taken into consideration. The rural character of the site is as important to Sonning Common residents as it is Emmer Green residents.

**Chilterns Conservation Board** - asks that weight is given to the potential AONB boundary review and the status of this land as a valued landscape. We would request that attention is given to the Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2014- 2019. The site is within the setting of the Chilterns AONB and the impacts of its development go beyond simply a visual relationship. The new households would be likely to look to Reading rather than South Oxfordshire for their services and employment, so increase pressure for a third Thames Crossing which would impact on traffic levels, noise, air quality, light spill and tranquillity in the AONB.

**Drainage Engineer (MONSON)** – A more detailed description of the overall means of drainage should be supplied with detailed design proposals. As such a drainage condition is recommended.

**Campaign for the Preservation of Rural England (Rights of Way)** – Object on principle as the County boundary was revised in 1977 to reflect the actual boundary of the built up area of Reading and in the intervening period the public rights of way network surrounding it has become heavily used as a recreational resource by the population of Reading. By breaching this boundary and thereby incorporating rural rights of way into the built-up area, this valuable resource would be eroded to the detriment of local residents and the clear boundary to the urban area would be lost.

**Forestry Officer**– The council's forestry officer has considered the impact on trees within the site and on the highway. No objection subject to securing mitigation planting, future management and funding through a legal agreement and a tree protection condition.

**Countryside Officer** – No objection subject to conditions and contribution towards Clayfield Copse.

**Contaminated Land Officer** - No objection subject to a condition requiring an

assessment, investigation, and if necessary, remediation of any contamination.

**Air Quality Officer** – No objection subject to a condition requiring the agreement of measures to mitigate the impact on air quality.

**Environmental Protection Officer** - No objection

**Thames Water** -

**Southern Gas Networks Gas Transporter** – No objection. Provided guidance on safe practice around gas pipes.

**Emmer Green Residents Association** – Objections:

- The local public services are already under pressure and will be unable to cope with additional demands. The arrangements for contributions to be made towards strengthening services are thought to be inadequate and possibly impractical.
- The vehicle access planned is seen to be hazardous.
- The traffic generated will exacerbate the serious congestion problems that already exist on the bridges crossing the Thames.
- The proposal is not in accordance with present planning policy for the land on the boundary between SODC and Reading Borough
- Approval of the proposal would almost certainly lead to further development applications that would have the most damaging, piecemeal, impacts on local services and infrastructure.
- Loss of Amenity - Loss of any of this area will be seen to be detrimental by the community, and will be particularly hard for the residents on the boundary who will be directly affected.

**Friends of the Area** – Object on following grounds:

- Wish to protect precious and valuable countryside and wildlife particularly the bat community
- Should not build on active farmland which would cause loss of food production
- Light and noise pollution
- Extra traffic problems
- Strain on infrastructure and services
- Vital to maintain green gap between Sonning Common and Emmer Green
- Other land available such as at Didcot

**Caversham and District Residents Association** – Object on following grounds:

- Contrary to policy
- No residential development should be permitted until the traffic modelling has been completed and location of Third Reading Bridge has been determined
- Cumulative effects of South Oxfordshire developments have contributed to a worsening of traffic congestion, pollution and quality of life in Caversham
- Local traffic - this proposal is based upon generic trip data and not on reliable, locally sourced trip rates and is, therefore, flawed and does not inspire confidence
- All primary schools in Caversham and Emmer Green are at capacity. No provision to increase capacity of school places

- Primary Health – At capacity in North Reading. Need to increase capacity of local primary health care services.
- Unsustainable and contrary to NPPF

**Bishopsland Educational Trust** – Aware and appreciate necessity for extra housing; however 245 seems too many and will inevitably change the character of the area and effect:

1. Traffic generation
2. Noise and disturbance
3. Will threaten the Green Belt and Conservation Area

Trust amount of housing can be reduced.

342 responses raising objections:

- **Local Planning**
  - Should be evaluated alongside the plan to build an additional 200 homes in Sonning Common
  - Need to involve Reading BC as major stakeholder
  - Not aligned to current SODC housing/devt strategy (CSS1) which does not support urban extensions to Reading. SODC principal policy objective not addressed in applicants' submission.
  - Against 2012 SODC local plan – no permission for devt on edge of settlements where built up area will be extended
  - Not in line with neighbourhood plan
  - Applicant is arguing sustainability and that SODC lacks 5 year land supply – will SODC fight this and other applications?
  - Material considerations should justify refusing this application, against policy: distribution strategy, urban extension, highways, infrastructure, loss of open countryside, good agricultural land, setting of AONB
  - Proposal also against RBC policy
  - Community engagement not promoted to SODC residents, application advertised in Henley Standard but presented as Emmer Green site thus in RBC to local residents – inaccurate documentation
  - Enough sites in Didcot, brownfield sites in Oxfordshire etc. to provide this type of devt – those should be used for current/future demand
  - Area has green corridor status in Devt Framework Plan.
  - No decision should be taken until 3<sup>rd</sup> Reading Bridge decided
  - Will lead to further devt along the RBC/SODC boundary
- **Impact on local area**
  - Breaks rural/urban boundary
  - Out of keeping with existing surroundings
  - Land is green belt
  - Find an alternative site that doesn't raise magnitude of issues that this one does
  - Will destroy local habitat which is teeming with wildlife
  - Loss of countryside/open land/buffer/attractive rural site/strategic green gap between Reading and Sonning Common
  - Is a green lung for Reading
  - Will ruin views across the fields
  - Empty houses during daytime will increase crime
  - Light pollution from street lamps



- Loss of privacy for existing residents
- Disturbance in local park and Phillimore Road
- Applicants assume high levels of walking to local shops/schools/GP – unrealistic
- Impact on AONB setting – site included in proposed extension to AONB by Chiltern Conservation Board (2013)
- 5 listed buildings within 500m of site (Bishopsland Farm)
- Loss of trees/verges along Peppard Road, introduction of street lighting
- **Housing**
  - Inappropriate devt, too large, dense
  - Unacceptably high density and over devt
  - Will destroy privacy for existing residents
  - 245 is far too many for the neighbourhood
  - Unsuitable location for housing devt
  - Will not count towards RBC housing target
  - Huge and overwhelming proposals
- **Traffic**
  - Increase traffic on Peppard Road/Kiln Road
  - Peppard Road already a rat run to M40 via Watlington
  - Will create dangerous conditions on the roads either side of the devt particularly for other users: cyclists, walkers, riders
  - No safe access for the devt
  - Local roads lack pavements
  - Add to existing peak hour congestion into Reading (queues from Esso Garage down to traffic lights at A4155 junction)
  - Access onto road already difficult in peak hours
  - Local roads inadequate to cope with at least 490 cars
  - Will result in further congestion at Sonning bridge
  - Will add to pressure for third bridge in Reading
  - Proposed access from Kiln Lane unsuitable
  - Do not extend Marchwood Road as a through road into the new site
  - Emergency traffic will be even slower through congestion, risking lives
  - Dangerous accesses for site sets precedent for other open land
  - Refuse Peppard Road access, nearly impossible to achieve legal vision/sightlines and already high accident rate
  - Need pedestrian and cycle route along B481 to Emmer Green
  - 90% s106 must be used to develop highway into central Reading and must be completed prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> sale
  - Transport assessment flawed – assumption made that commuting will reduce due to home working (but Emmer Green 2011 census showed 4% worked at home); data for road conditions collected during school holiday (10am 22.12.15), and traffic count for one day in summer
- **Landscape**
  - Will ruin the landscape
  - Intrusion into countryside
  - Adverse impact on Chilterns AONB
- **Local infrastructure**
  - Not sustainable without considerable investment in schools
  - Schools and doctors in SODC and RBC cannot cope with extra people
  - Already stretched to bursting point.
  - Will need a new PS as existing schools already oversubscribed

- Local surgeries already full
- Telecoms and sewerage in Sonning Common already inadequate
- Problems with education in Caversham since 1990's when PS promised for Bugs Bottom devt never provided. Free school proposal cannot find site
- Health centres in Caversham will not accept SODC residents
- Drainage proposals for surface water unsustainable/inadequate and may contribute to downstream flooding
- Water main crosses site and will prevent devt
- Site is disconnected from local communities
- **Impact on wildlife**
  - Eagles seen in particular tree in area (Kites?)
  - Loss of habitats for red kites and barbastelle bats
  - 27 invertebrates on site including wall brown butterfly (priority species), wild honey bee (special protection). Biodiversity on site a testament to the careful stewardship of current farm manager – must be kept for posterity
  - Protected species would be decimated by domestic cats
- **Sustainability**
  - Loss of high quality and productive agricultural land
  - Additional pollution: CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, light, traffic noise
  - Air quality already poor in congested area both in Reading and SODC
  - Unsustainable site as underlain by chalk mines and a fault line. Risk of subsidence and collapse. Insufficient surveys could lead to collapse.
  - Southern parts of the site subject to flash flooding in winter and the proposed drainage scheme is inadequate to mitigate the effects of building on a sensitive natural drainage
  - Geo environmental report 4.17.2 recommends specialist advice for stabilisation and/or land management plan
  - Plant woodland if not needed for farming
  - Ground level changes will probably cause the pond near the Riding School to flood as the substrata are disturbed by excavations

3 responses in support:

- **Housing**
  - Much needed housing
  - Make sure 98 of the houses are affordable (40%)
  - Higher density would protect land elsewhere
- **Local infrastructure**
  - Local services will grow to provide the new residents, as will the economy

2 responses support the principle of development but have the following concerns:

- **Local infrastructure**
  - Support provided that necessary investment is made for infrastructure: schools/GPs/roads
  - Residents will pay council tax to SODC but use RBC services
  - No further school spaces proposed
  - Extra traffic will cause more problems on Peppard and Kiln roads

Access to Reading town centre will be more difficult without a third bridge across the Thames.

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**

5.2 **National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance**

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

CSS1 - The Overall Strategy

5.4 **South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 saved policies**

C4 - Landscape setting of settlements

C6 - Maintain & enhance biodiversity

C7 - Adverse affect on protected site

C8 - Adverse affect on protected species

C9 - Loss of landscape features

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

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 council has recently completed the Second Preferred Options consultation of the Local Plan 2032. The Second Preferred Options seeks to build upon the existing settlement hierarchy and actively create a pattern of development central to the area.

**5.6 South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2008**

Sections 3, 4 and 5

**5.7 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).

5.8 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 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,
  - archaeology,
  - environmental matters (air quality, contamination and noise).
  
- Infrastructure requirements, including:
  - on-site infrastructure to be secured under a legal agreement,
  - contributions pooled under the Community Infrastructure Levy.

**6.2 The principle of the development**

The Council's housing land supply position

6.3 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).

- 6.4 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.
- 6.5 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).
- 6.6 Based on the evidence in the SHMA and past delivery, the council has a housing land supply in the region of 4.1 years (including the 20% buffer for under delivery). The council cannot therefore currently demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.
- 6.7 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.*
- 6.8 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

- 6.9 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.
- 6.10 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.

- 6.11 The application site is within the parish of Parish of Eye and Dunsden and lies in open countryside, outside any defined settlement boundary in the SOCS. The site does however, adjoin the suburb of Emmer Green which lies within Reading Borough Council. As such the development would form an extension to the built up area of Emmer Green.
- 6.12 The conflict with the spatial strategy is a matter to be weighed up in the planning balance against the benefits of providing much needed new homes. In making this assessment, it is necessary to consider the sustainability of the site which is considered in detail below.

The accessibility of the site to services and facilities

- 6.13 Emmer Green has a number of services and facilities which includes education facilities, convenience stores and shops, post office, playing fields and allotments. These are within a 15 – 20 minute walk from the site. Reading rail station is located approximately 4.6km from the site.
- 6.14 The main town of Reading would also provide a very wide range of services and employment opportunities. Emmer Green has public transport links to Reading. The closest bus stop to the site lies approximately 400m to the south of the site on the east side of Peppards Road. There is also a bus stop which includes a bus shelter on the west side of the road slightly further south. The proposal includes the provision of a new bus stop located opposite the site access along with a new pedestrian refuge to provide access to bus route 25. The hard standing area proposed for the new bus stop has been reviewed so as to accommodate sufficient children that would utilise the bus stop to travel to Chiltern Edge School.
- 6.15 A bus stop has also been proposed on the southbound (inbound) side of Peppard Road to improve accessibility to an alternative mode of travel, this is essential to reduce car trips within Reading to and from the application site. The bus stop is in the form of a layby to the north of the proposed vehicular access to the site. Bus route 25 is however already at capacity in the peak times and no evening service currently exists. As such both Reading Borough Council and OCC have commented that a contribution towards improving capacity of route 25 would be required to promote alternative modes of travel.
- 6.16 In terms of education infrastructure and childcare provision, OCC recognised that although the site is in Oxfordshire, the children from this proposed development would be expected to attend schools and access early years and childcare provision in Reading, as these are closer to the proposed housing. Nevertheless, Reading Borough Council (RBC) have advised that the local schools in the immediate vicinity are at capacity therefore there would be an objection in principle to development that would increase demand on school places that cannot be mitigated. RBC has also advised that it does not have a duty to build new places for children located outside of the Borough therefore children from within the proposed development would not get a school place before the children of Reading residents living within the catchment.
- 6.17 In response OCC has advised that the nearest Oxfordshire primary schools to the development (within approximately 3 miles) include Sonning Common, Kidmore End, Shiplake and Peppard. OCC had originally objected to the application on the grounds that there was insufficient primary school capacity and that the above schools were on constrained sites and were unable to expand to meet the needs of this proposed

development. In terms of secondary education Chiltern Edge (secondary) School currently has surplus places. Following this objection detailed discussions have been held with County Education and Counsel opinion was sought by the applicant including a view on its overall responsibility for education provision but more specifically on whether the provision of education is covered by CIL as education infrastructure is included within the Regulation 123 list. Counsel held that by including education in the Regulation 123 list, the Authority has opted to deal with education issues by way of CIL levy payments. The Council has sought its own Counsel opinion on this issue and essentially our Counsel opinion is that by including education in the CIL Regulation 123 list the Council have opted to deal with education issues in this way. In effect, the provision of education infrastructure is dealt with by CIL.

- 6.18 Notwithstanding the above, revised forecasts for pupil numbers show that although there is currently no spare capacity, pupil numbers will fall so that by the time this development would be occupied, there will be sufficient capacity to meet the level of need for both planned and the proposed development. On the basis of this evidence, OCC has withdrawn its objection to the proposed development.
- 6.19 In conclusion, in transport terms the site, given its location on the edge of the urban area of Reading, is accessible to a wide range of facilities and services and the development would provide improvements to public transport infrastructure. There will also be sufficient capacity at both secondary and primary school level to meet the needs of this development.

6.20 **Matters of detail / technical issues**

Landscape Impact

- 6.21 The site has strong links with the wider rural landscape and affords open views north over the rural landscape, with the Chiltern escarpment visible on the skyline. Development of the site would extend the settlement edge of Emmer Green reducing the essential separation between Emmer Green and Sonning Common, to the north.
- 6.22 The application has been supported with a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) which concludes that overall the site is considered to be of medium landscape quality, value and sensitivity. The visual assessment found that the site is well contained by virtue of the adjoining urban area and by the existing vegetation and the undulating topography of the surrounding landscape. It considers that the vast majority of the mature landscape features which contribute to the wider landscape character and the adjoining street scene, are capable of retention within a residential layout and that an appropriate development could be accommodated which respects the sites existing landscape features and provides a sensitive edge to the adjoining countryside. The retention and enhancement of the existing mature landscape framework would assist in assimilating the proposed development within the wider landscape. The character of the views from within the AONB would not change and overall the LVIA concludes that the site can be developed in the manner proposed without giving rise to material landscape or visual effects.
- 6.23 The Landscape Officer has previously commented on a pre-application enquiry for this development and considered that the proposals to retain existing landscape features within green corridors was positive. Concerns were raised about the proposed access points and potential requirement to remove hedgerow and trees. In this respect the proposed plans indicate the loss of a large portion of the hedgerow alongside Peppard Road, which would have immediate effects on the visibility of the site and the character

of the road. The proposed access from Kiln Road would require a small section of hedgerow to be removed. Concerns were raised that the development framework plan showed limited usable open space within the centre of the site with both the proposed LEAP and NEAP being pushed to the edges of the development and that woodland planting which highly characteristic of the area should be extended into the proposed development and these concerns have not been addressed. Nevertheless, this application is in outline form with all matters apart from access reserved and these details could be addressed at the reserved matters stage.

- 6.24 The Chilterns Conservation Board (CCB) has requested that weight is given to the potential AONB boundary review and the status of this land as a valued landscape. The CCB comment that the development area would reduce the gap between Sonning Common and Emmer Green by around a third and that the defined urban edge mentioned in the South Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment would be eroded and make it hard for the LPA to consistently apply a refusal to other such urban edge sites. The new households would be likely to look to Reading rather than South Oxfordshire for their services and employment, so increase pressure for a third Thames Crossing which would impact on traffic levels, noise, air quality, light spill and tranquillity in the AONB. Nevertheless, in their conclusion CCB raise no objection to the application on the grounds that it would have an adverse impact on the setting of the Chilterns AONB.
- 6.25 In conclusion, the development of this open agricultural land to provide up to 245 dwellings would inevitably have an urbanising effect and would cause some erosion of the rural landscape of the area. However it is considered that these effects would be localised in nature and that the development would not have an adverse effect on the landscape setting of the AONB. 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

- 6.26 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.
- 6.27 A survey indicates that the land is either Grade 3a or 3b and any Grade 3a land would constitute BMV land and its loss also weighs against the proposal in the overall planning balance.

#### Design and layout

- 6.28 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.
- 6.29 The NPPF also provides that the planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities.



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). The design policies of the SOCS (particularly CSQ3) and SOLP policies (particularly D1-D4) echo these requirements.

- 6.30 The application is in outline only, with layout, appearance and scale to be considered later at reserved matters stage. A revised Development Framework Plan has been submitted to address concerns raised by the Council’s Urban Design Officer (UDO) to show lower density peripheries to the northern and eastern boundaries as well as showing suggested pedestrian links to the north and south of the main public square. The UDO had also recommended the relocation of the POS to more centralised parts of the layout, but this remains unchanged as it is argued that the perimeter areas of POS are necessary for a number of reasons including utility easements, retention/enhancement of existing perimeter vegetation and landscape mitigation. Given these constraints the UDO is satisfied with the revised framework plan which makes it clear that the different POS would be well connected and the two ‘green corridors’ crossing in the centre of the site would be strong, landscape led corridors which would be a key principle of future reserved matters applications. These corridors could also be multi-functional and include recreational elements.
- 6.31 In conclusion, I am satisfied that an appropriate layout could be provided which would take account of the strategic landscaping, provide a mix of homes and adequate green space, meeting the NPPF objectives. A condition is also recommended to ensure that the development is limited to 2 storey only given its edge of settlement location.

Affordable housing and housing mix

- 6.32 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 intermediate housing. Given that the application is on outline, the mix is currently indicative. The application seeks to provide 40 per cent affordable housing (98 units). The Design and Access Statement (DAS) states that the affordable housing would be fully integrated within the market housing and be of a type and size to meet local need.
- 6.33 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.
- 6.34 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 DAS states that the housing mix would be determined at the reserved matters stage but it is expected to include a broad range of house types, sizes and tenures. The market housing mix would need to reflect the SHMA requirements shown below which could be secured by condition.

Market homes	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed
SHMA	6%	27%	43%	24%

Highway safety and traffic impact

- 6.35 With respect to highway safety matters, the advice in the NPPF is that *Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of the development are severe*. Policies D1, D2, T1 and T2 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan (SOLP) also require an appropriate parking layout and that there would be no adverse impact on highway safety.
- 6.36 Whilst the application is in outline form, the means of access is unreserved. Two main accesses are proposed, one off Peppard Road and the other off Kiln Road. A pedestrian link is also proposed to Marchwood Avenue. The proposed vehicular access arrangements on Peppard Road would be a priority controlled junction. The Transport Assessment (TA) highlights that modelling results has indicated that there would be some capacity issues on certain junctions in the area but that the increase in queuing that is predicted would not represent a severe impact requiring mitigation works. The TA has since been supported with additional information in relation to junction assessments and proposed junction mitigation works and certain junction designs have been revised.
- 6.37 The access arrangements have also been amended following discussions with RBC and OCC to include the addition of a southbound bus stop on Peppards Road and to improve inter-visibility for pedestrians waiting to cross Peppard Road. Traffic calming measures are also proposed. OCC consider that both site access junctions would operate comfortably within capacity. The Travel Plan has also been updated to be more consistent with the OCC guidance but will require further development. It is proposed to extend the existing 30mph speed limits on both Kiln Road and Peppard Road as part of the development.
- 6.38 The option of accessing off Marchwood Avenue instead of Kiln Road has been investigated but was found not to be possible due to a ransom strip. RBC (Transport) object to the application on the grounds that the proposed development would result in the increased use of substandard road junctions, which would have an adverse effect on road safety and the flow of traffic.
- 6.39 RBC (Transport) consider that mitigation works are required for the junction of Peppard Road and Kiln Road (SJ5). Following these concerns, a revised junction design has been proposed which RBC (Transport) consider would represent an improvement to the original scheme and are now satisfied with the mitigation works proposed. Works within the highway and Traffic Regulation Order's to reduce speed limits would be subject to a legal agreement, which the applicant would need to enter into with the County Council.
- 6.40 The NPPF makes it clear that developments should only be refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts are severe. OCC has raised no objection to the application on highway grounds and many of the concerns raised by RBC could be addressed through mitigation measures comprising junction improvements. As such I consider that 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 the proposed development would be acceptable in highway safety terms subject to appropriate highway conditions/junction improvements and contributions towards encouraging sustainable modes of transport.

Trees and Ecology

- 6.41 The council's forestry officer has considered the impact of the development against the relevant development plan policies and this includes policy C9 of the SOLP, which seeks to retain landscape features that make an important contribution to the local scene. The Forestry Officer notes that the small number of trees growing within the site make a very positive contribution to the character of the area, the key feature trees being three fully mature aged Oaks growing within the central hedgerow. These trees and other groups of trees, both on and off site, are now subject of a newly served tree preservation order.
- 6.42 The submitted information suggests all of the trees can be retained, with only small sections of hedgerow needing removal to accommodate the access and detailed highway drawings have been requested to indicate the extent of hedging that would be removed to create the two accesses and the associated vision splays. Additional arboricultural information requested demonstrates that the new access points can be achieved without damaging the protected trees.
- 6.43 Due to the scale of the proposed development a well-designed landscaping scheme and strategy would be essential to enable many new trees to be introduced into the site. The illustrative masterplan indicates a new woodland belt on the northern boundary of the site and the reinforcement of the site boundaries to form a robust landscaped edge. The proposed landscape strategy would help to integrate the development within the surrounding landscape setting.
- 6.44 I therefore have no objection to the proposals providing the planting, its future management and funding are secured through a legal agreement. As required by the council's forestry officer, a tree protection condition is also necessary to protect those trees that will be retained.
- 6.45 An Ecological Impact Assessment (EIA) has been submitted with the application which identifies that two local wildlife sites (LWS) lie within close proximity to the site including Clayfield Copse and Blackhouse Wood. Clayfield Copse is also a designated Local Nature Reserve. The proposed development would create a significant increase in the local population, many of whom are likely to access the LWS's sites for recreation and this has the potential to result in damage. The Ecologist at Reading Borough Council and the Countryside Officer, recommend that a financial contribution would be necessary to mitigate the potential adverse effects of development to the LWS's.
- 6.46 Subject to appropriate mitigation and precautionary measures the EIA concludes that the proposed development is not anticipated to result in any significant adverse residual effects to important ecological features. The masterplan would deliver net benefits for wildlife in the form of additional habitat with the opportunity to provide additional biodiversity enhancement measures.
- 6.47 The council's countryside officer has commented that the proposals would not lead to any significant direct impacts on protected species or important habitats on site and would provide sufficient space to allow ecological mitigation and enhancement measures to be incorporated into the scheme. The net result of this would ensure that the completed scheme can deliver a net gain for biodiversity in accordance with policy CSB1 of the Core Strategy and paragraph 109 of the NPPF.
- 6.48 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. A contribution towards mitigation measures at Clayfield Copse to protect the woodland from the harmful impacts of increased recreational pressure could be secured by a S106 agreement.

Neighbour amenity and amenity of future residents

- 6.49 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.
- 6.50 Policy D3 of the SOLP requires all new homes to benefit from either a private garden, outdoor amenity space or a shared amenity area. I am satisfied that a suitable layout could be achieved that would provide an appropriate level of amenity space for all of the plots. It would also be possible to secure an appropriate layout within the site to ensure that there would be no adverse overlooking, or loss of light and outlook, between plots.

Impact on Heritage assets

- 6.51 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
- 6.52 A Heritage and Archaeological Statement has been submitted which advises that no designated heritage assets are located within or immediately adjacent to the site. It concludes that the proposed development would result in a negligible degree of harm to six designated heritage assets, as a result of alteration to their setting, comprising: the Grade II\* Listed Row Lane Farmhouse; and the Grade II Listed Bishopsland Farmhouse and associated Grade II Listed barn and three granaries. The buildings of Bryant's Farm, which are considered to be non-designated heritage assets, lie to the east of the site. Development would be set back from the complex and of a low density where closest to the buildings. The proposed development would result in a change to part of the wider agricultural setting of these buildings which would comprise less than substantial harm to the significance of these assets.
- 6.53 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). The results of the field evaluation confirmed the presence of prehistoric activity at a low density across the area and the presence of a probable Roman farmstead focused on the central and eastern areas. The farmstead was represented by boundary ditches, pits, two ovens/kilns and a possible cremation burial. No certain evidence was discovered for buildings, although a single possible wall footing was identified.
- 6.54 Following the results of the field evaluation the CAO raises no objection to the

application subject to a further programme of archaeological investigation and mitigation which can be secured through a condition

Flood risk and surface / foul drainage

- 6.55 The application site is within Flood Zone 1 (least probability of flooding) and as such, there are no objections to the development in relation to flood risk.
- 6.56 Additional information on surface water drainage has been submitted to address the concerns raised by the Drainage Engineer who considers that a more detailed description of the overall means of drainage should be supplied with detailed design proposals and a drainage condition is recommended. 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. As required by the council's drainage consultant, the details of this can be secured by condition.
- 6.57 Thames Water (TW) have identified an inability of the existing waste water infrastructure to accommodate the needs of this application and as such has recommended a 'Grampian Style' condition requiring drainage works to be carried out to ensure that sufficient capacity is made available to cope with the new development. A supplementary foul drainage analysis report has been submitted, which demonstrates how the proposed development can be effectually drained without causing any detriment to the public sewerage system. The agent argues that a foul drainage condition is unnecessary as matters relating to foul drainage would also be addressed by other primary legislation. A similar argument was considered in detail at a recent appeal in Chinnor (APP/Q3115/W/15/3097666). In this case the Council argued that the use of Grampian conditions is supported by national planning policy and that the planning system has the power to require sewer upgrades in response to development that the sewerage undertaker does not. Overall, it was considered that the Grampian condition was an appropriate and proportionate response when looking to approve any planning application that would connect into a sewer system that is under capacity. Having heard the evidence, the Inspector concluded that conditions relating to drainage were required to ensure that the site is properly drained and to prevent flooding. As such a condition requiring the approval and implementation of a foul drainage scheme is recommended.
- 6.58 TW has also commented that the existing water supply infrastructure has insufficient capacity to meet the additional demands for the proposed development and recommends a condition requiring an impact study of the existing water supply infrastructure to be carried out to determine the magnitude of any new additional capacity required in the system and a suitable connection point. The agent has again argued that such a condition is unnecessary and refers to a recent appeal decision at Chinnor where the need for a similar condition was debated. The Inspector failed to impose such a condition as he considered that "... I am not persuaded, on the basis of the evidence that I heard at the Inquiry that this work is in a developer's gift rather than that of Thames Water itself". The Inspector was therefore of the view that unless clear evidence was produced to demonstrate that the works required under the suggested water supply condition were actually within the Developer's gift, the condition should not be imposed. Despite further requests to Thames Water to justify such a condition, no further evidence has been provided. As such it is not considered appropriate to impose such a condition in this case.

Environmental matters (air quality, contamination, noise)

- 6.59 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 the potential cumulative effects of piecemeal developments, and to enable future proofing of the development.
- 6.60 Following discussions with the Council's Environmental Health Officer a revised air quality mitigation strategy has been submitted and I have recommended a condition requiring air quality mitigation measures to be agreed. Mitigation measures can include measures such as electric vehicle charging points and sustainable travel packs for residents. Subject to the imposition of this condition, I consider that the development would comply with the above policy
- 6.61 Policy EP6 of the SOLP sets out the council's approach to development on contaminated land. The council's contaminated land officer has considered the details submitted with the application and has recommended that a phased risk assessment is carried out to ensure that any contaminative risk from previous industrial land uses including the Unspecified Pit and Chalk Pit are addressed during any development. This can be achieved through condition.
- 6.62 Noise arising from construction is an unfortunate consequence of any development. In order to ensure that the development works are carried out within appropriate times, I have recommended a construction hours condition to ensure that noisy construction activities are carried out at reasonable hours.

#### Infrastructure requirements

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

- 6.63 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 6.32)
  - delivery of the on-site open space and play areas including a LEAP and NEAP
  - a contribution of £170 per dwelling towards wheeled bins for each house
  - a contribution of £3283 towards street naming and numbering
  - The sum of £4,568 towards the Council's S106 monitoring fee
  - Improvements to public bus service (Route 25) – £281,303
  - Traffic Regulation Order (speed limit reduction on Kiln Road and Peppard Road £5,200
  - a contribution towards mitigation works at Clayfield Copse.
  - A contribution of £15,990 towards bus stop infrastructure adjacent to the development site.
  - Travel plan monitoring fees of £1,240
- 6.64 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.

Community Infrastructure Levy

6.65 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, there are material considerations which indicate that the application should be decided otherwise in respect of the development plan. As we cannot demonstrate evidence of a five year supply of deliverable housing sites the relevant development plan policies for the supply of housing are out-of-date and that is a material consideration that can justify a departure from the plan and the grant of planning permission.

7.2 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 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.

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 some Grade 3a (BMV) land. However, in the context of the site's modest size and a lack of evidence that its loss would harm the holding or the farming industry, I have attached only a limited degree of weight to this matter.

7.6 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 designated heritage assets is likely to be largely negligible and in terms of non-designated assets the impact would be less than substantial 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.

7.7 With regard to accessibility, Emmer Green has a number of services and facilities which

includes convenience stores and shops, post office, playing fields and allotments. These are within a 15 – 20 minute walk from the site. Reading rail station is located approximately 4.6km from the site. The main town of Reading would also provide a very wide range of services and employment opportunities. Emmer Green has public transport links to Reading. In addition, improvements are proposed to public transport infrastructure including a new bus stop and refuge area for children travelling to the secondary school. 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.

7.8 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**

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, financial contributions and other obligations stated above; and**

**ii) The following conditions:**

- 1. Commencement - outline with reserved matters.**
- 2. Approved plans.**
- 3. Phasing scheme.**
- 4. Maximum number of dwellings.**
- 5. Market housing mix (outline).**
- 6. Sample materials required (all).**
- 7. Maximum height – two storey.**
- 8. Highway works including junction improvement.**
- 9. New vehicular access.**
- 10. Vision splay details.**
- 11. New estate roads.**
- 12. Estate accesses, driveways and turning areas.**
- 13. Cycle parking facilities.**
- 14. Construction method statement.**
- 15. Construction traffic management.**
- 16. Travel plan.**
- 17. Travel information pack.**
- 18. Landscaping (including hardsurfacing and boundary treatment).**
- 19. Landscape management plan.**
- 20. Tree protection (detailed).**
- 21. Biodiversity enhancement strategy.**
- 22. Construction environmental management plan.**
- 23. Hours of construction.**
- 24. Levels (details required).**
- 25. Sustainable design – surface water drainage.**
- 26. Foul drainage.**
- 27. Refuse and recycling storage (details required).**



- 28. Fire hydrants.
- 29. Contamination - remediation strategy.
- 30. Air quality mitigation measures.
- 31. External lighting – general.
- 32. Archaeology (submission and implementation of written scheme of investigation).

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