

APPLICATION NO.	P17/S2469/O
APPLICATION TYPE	OUTLINE
REGISTERED	6.7.2017
PARISH	EAST HAGBOURNE
WARD MEMBER(S)	Jane Murphy Pat Dawe
APPLICANT	Greenlight Developments Limited
SITE	Land adjacent to the Village Hall, Main Road, East Hagbourne
PROPOSAL	Outline application with all matters reserved, for a residential development of up to 74 dwellings (including 40% affordable housing) (as amended by drawings & information accompanying letter from Agent dated 24 July 2017).
OFFICER	Joan Desmond

1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The application site (which is shown on the OS extract **attached** as Appendix 1) is located on the western edge of the village of East Hagbourne and comprises 3.71ha of agricultural land. The site lies on the northern side of the main road and is bounded by existing residential development to the north and east. The village hall also adjoins the site to the south east. The village school is located opposite the site and the school playing fields adjoin its western boundary, beyond which is the cemetery. An elevated section of disused railway line, now a permissive right of way, defines a portion of the site's north west boundary, beyond which is agricultural land.
- 1.2 The East Hagbourne Conservation Area, which covers the historic core of the village and contains a number of listed buildings, is located further to the east and south.

2.0 **PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 This application seeks outline planning permission for up to 74 dwellings, including 40% affordable homes with all matters such as access, scale, layout, appearance and landscaping reserved for later consideration.
- 2.2 A revised illustrative masterplan has been submitted with the application to show how the site could accommodate up to 74 dwellings and associated public open space and green infrastructure. Site access is shown via a new T-junction off the Main Road. New pedestrian and cycle links are also indicated from the site onto the Sustrans Route 544, which runs along the old railway line. The revised illustrative masterplan also indicates additional parking for the village hall. Given that the application is in outline, the masterplan is for indicative purposes only and is **attached** as Appendix 2. The application is accompanied by a number of supporting documents, including a Design and Access Statement and Addendum and a Planning Statement. These are available to view on the council's website at www.southoxon.gov.uk

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

- 3.1 **East Hagbourne Parish Council** – Original Plans – Strongly object on following grounds:
- The proposal is speculative and conflicts with all local plans for sustainable development.
 - The size of the development compromises the village heritage and

environment.

- This proposed development is both unneeded and far above any planned size of expansion.
- The disproportionate size of this proposed development which would amount to a 15% increase in the number of houses in the village would have a significant and damaging effect on the village community and infrastructure.
- The impact of the size of the development on the heritage and culture of East Hagbourne would be extremely detrimental, contrary to the NPPF.
- The site is inappropriate for a development of this size
- In this Village Character Assessment the area of the proposed development is designated as area VF04 and it is clearly identified as an area of high potential for community use. The proposed development would both destroy potential community use while at the same time greatly adding to the need for more community infrastructure.
- The environment would be significantly degraded by the size of this development through the loss of significant views from railway embankment towards the Church and Conservation Area, contrary to the NPPF.
- The location of the proposed development is in a very sensitive part of the village and would also overlook and have an adverse effect on the houses in Lake Road and Harwood Road.
- The only access to the site and that proposed in the plan is onto the already severely congested main road into the village.
- A development of this size in this location will result in significant danger to schoolchildren.
- The extra traffic generated would result in highway dangers
- Insufficient capacity for accommodating this size of development. The school is already at full capacity and does not have room for expansion without severely compromising the quality of the schooling provision. Additional pressures would result in an antisocial and potential dangerous transportation of children to neighbouring (and often overcrowded) schools outside the village.
- Any access or use by residents of the development to expand the capacity of the on-site parking for the village hall would be totally inappropriate.

Amended Plans – Objections remain fundamentally unchanged. Number of existing car village hall parking spaces indicated is incorrect and options for extended car park would fundamentally change the access to the car park, which would be unacceptable. Due to increased pressure on the existing car park nothing less than a doubling of the car park spaces would enable the parking to become adequate for the present and potential future demand. Parking along Main Road at school/pre-school times causes difficulties for local residents and the addition of a new access would exacerbate existing congestion problems. None of options address this on-road parking issue and are likely to be used for overspill parking for the new houses. None of the options are acceptable. The application represents a huge overdevelopment in a sensitive part of the village and significantly compromises the safety of the schoolchildren. We feel the potential harm substantially outweighs any benefit of the increase in housing stock and therefore repeat our request that the application is refused by SODC.

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

Oxfordshire County Council Education – No objection subject to Community Infrastructure Levy funding to mitigate the impact on local infrastructure and services including early education and childcare settings, primary, secondary and special

schools in the area.

Oxfordshire County Council Archaeology – No objection subject to a condition to secure a programme of archaeological investigation.

Oxfordshire County Council Strategic – The current bus service (94) that serves the site is currently under threat due to the withdrawal of bus subsidies and appropriate measures should be implemented to ensure the site continues to be served by bus. Access to the Sustrans NCN route is welcomed.

Forestry Officer – No objection.

Countryside Officer - No objection subject to conditions and contribution towards mitigation measures to protect Mowbray Fields LNR.

Urban Design Officer – No objection.

Natural England – No comments.

Conservation Officer – No objection.

Environmental Health Officer (Air Quality/Noise) - No objection subject to conditions requiring the agreement of measures to mitigate the impact on air quality and noise during demolition/construction.

Environmental Health Officer (Contaminated Land) – Recommend condition to establish risk from potential sources of land contamination.

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

Environment Agency – No comments.

Drainage Consultant (Monson) – No objection subject to drainage condition.

CPRE (South) – Strongly object on following grounds:

- This speculative proposal is contrary to the Local Plan and the Core Strategy (CSR1). It also is clearly in conflict with all the local emerging plans.
- The size of the development compromises the village character and heritage.
- The facilities in East Hagbourne are not sufficient to support this development, the school is already full, as are the surrounding schools. The roads in this area are already congested and this development would add to these pressures, particularly around the school and village hall.
- The character of East Hagbourne is of a rural village, with fine views to the south across the downs (the North Wessex Downs ANOB) and surrounded by quality farmland. This development would substantially damage this character. It would damage the views to and from the ANOB and would adversely affect the rural nature of the well-used foot and cycle path which runs along the old railway line.
- It would remove a precious piece of agricultural and which separates East Hagbourne from Didcot.

East and West Hagbourne Cemetery - Concerned, about the effect on the visitors to the Cemetery of the increased traffic that this development would cause. It will increase the risks for those walking to the cemetery from the village hall car park. Also fear that our 5 car parking spaces might be used by contractors and so preclude parking for our visitors. Any resultant increase in traffic movements to the proposed development will increase the background noise levels surrounding the cemetery and so distract cemetery visitors during their quiet contemplations at the graves they are visiting.

Didcot Garden Town Team – Area of land identified as a proposed green buffer area between Didcot and the settlements of West Hagbourne and East Hagbourne. Important to protect surrounding villages from encroachment as Didcot Garden Town expands. Support Parish Councils in their efforts to designate this area as a 'green buffer area; within their emerging neighbourhood plans.

Red Light Greenlight Campaign – Applicant has not addressed the very obvious dangers caused by the extra traffic generated by this development. A petition of 448 signatures has been submitted demanding either SODC or OCC Highways instruct Greenlight to produce a Road Safety Audit (RSA). This planning process should be halted until this issue is addressed. Understand that a RSA cannot be undertaken without 'access' to this development being included in the Application and therefore it must be removed from being a reserved matter. Safer Traffic Solutions Report submitted (See conclusions in highway safety section below). Bluestone Planning commissioned by the Campaign Group raise the following additional concerns:

- Danger to the character and setting of the village including the wider landscape setting
- Coalescence of settlements
- Impact on residential amenity of neighbouring properties of Harwood Road
- Loss of Grade 3a agricultural land
- Conflict with Policy CSR1, saved local plan policy H4 and emerging local plan
- Potential harm to heritage features (Archaeology)

Hagbourne Village Hall Management Committee - Increased traffic will greatly exacerbate existing parking problems and pose a danger to school children. Village Hall car park need to be expanded. Development would exacerbate existing parking problems on Main Road. The main entrance to the estate cuts directly across path to playing field thus increasing the risk to children using the playing field. Would overload local facilities and services. Brownfield site preferable. Too high density.

187 responses objected to the proposals on the following grounds:

- **local planning**
 - growth proposed unacceptable for small village (500 houses)
 - site not allocated in emerging neighbourhood plan or in SODC local plan
 - lack of 5 year land supply leads to a free for all and constant threat of large and inappropriate development contrary to Core Strategy and unsustainable
 - development is an unplanned, speculative development
 - safe access can never be a reserved matter – should be part of application Road Safety audit cannot be undertaken unless access to devt included
 - conflict with NPPF, Core Strategy and Local Plan Policies H10, T10, G2, C4, CSR1, CSM1, CSB1, D1 (vi), Didcot Garden Town buffer
 - Statement of Community Engagement a sham, contrary to NPPF para

- 66 misleading re benefits to village via CIL
- o Refuse application and allow policy context to catch – local and neighbourhood plans
- o Green Gap Inspector decided that it was possible and legal to give sufficient weight to local policy to trump NPPF's presumption in favour of development even without a 5 year land supply
- o Nonsensical to allow devt of this site to wedge itself between preschool/primary school and playing field.
- o Inappropriate speculative development with no regard for character of village or safety of inhabitants
- o proposal is unsustainable dangerous and has so adverse an impact on infrastructure of the two villages that under NPPF it should be rejected by SODC
- o GWP not finished, other major sites – N Ladygrove, E of Tesco: should be not more devt until improved infrastructure exists to support it
- o 16000 new homes in total in expanding Didcot excluding GWP – no need for small village sites
- **traffic impact**
- reject proposal on highway grounds
- village roads through and beyond centres are narrow and bendy, poor visibility at junctions and bends increases risk: street parking prevails due to age of houses often, too narrow to pass, already problems with buses and tractors let alone 140+ more cars, road inaccessible in mornings and early afternoon.
- Risk of vehicles misjudging bend and falling into deep pond in W Hagbourne
- limited footways throughout village: impact on road safety/pedestrian safety
- village already congested at both ends during peak hours: roads too narrow to absorb additional traffic from devt & villages already used as cut through to Didcot/A34 during peak hours
- no provision for improvements to existing road network
- school run from W Hagbourne already causes congestion outside school – village already suffering from additional traffic from Park Road and GWP devt and will enforce reduction to one lane in Main Street
- no public transport – modal split of 1.5% public transport particularly high
- does not take into account additional traffic generated by major expansion in Didcot in progress and in future
- pressure also on rail services due to high levels of London commuting
- risk of emergency vehicles unable to access
- Road Safety Audit is totally inadequate
- **impact on East & West Hagbourne**
- development is high density, not appropriate for village
- extends village into countryside
- No infrastructure, loss of more beautiful countryside, better places to build these houses
- Loss of heritage, character distinctiveness, coalescence with Didcot
- Loss of tranquillity in village cemetery
- Will damage community – West Hagbourne shares Church, primary school, cemetery and village hall
- Needed expansion of village hall carpark would be prevented – this site could be used for community/new school which would release existing school site for much more suitable residential devt

- Creeping urbanisation – divorces playing fields and cemetery from the village – and around Didcot, destroying the character of the villages and the town itself
- Invasion of privacy, loss of light in nearby gardens, impact on internet speeds
- **housing**
- 74 houses is massive overdevelopment: village policy is for sites of between 5-10 houses – Policy H10
- Site opposite school entrance, proposed access unclear
- Construction access not addressed – is significant issue
- Site close to existing focus for traffic
- Suggestion that devt will bring affordable housing is ridiculous
- Small affordable devt for young and old would suffice
- 3500 houses being built within a mile, many for sale
- **local infrastructure**
- development will put pressure on local services: school already full and village children go out of village, GP practice overstretched with long waits for appointments
- site should be dedicated to village for expansion of village hall and additional parking.
- Developers' proposal to locate access to site through the village hall car park is ridiculous and will increase problems with traffic flows
- Only one local shop –shopping will be done by car or by delivery via internet shopping
- If council cannot fund investment in services for current people (school /playschool/children's' centres) why are we increasing village by a fifth
- **environment**
 - severe impact on landscape and historic setting of village, loss of views from Sustrans route (railway line to west of village, conflicts with G2,G4 and C4
 - setting dates back to Domesday Book – let's leave it that way
 - negative impact on character of village, Conservation Area and listed buildings, against NPPF para 126
 - site partly Flood Zone 3 often floods and never really dries out and drains to other areas in village Flood Zone 2(called Lake Road for a reason): proposed SUDS insufficient to deal with drainage issues
 - council aware of flood risk and sends warning letters to W Hagbourne residents
- loss of Grade 2 agricultural land,
- impact on wildlife particularly bats
- light pollution conflicts with SODC policy EP3, impact on bats
- loss of rare island habitat for many species including Great Crested Newts/feeding ground for bats – value not replaced by proposed SUDS – loss of greenspace will reduce ecosystem ability to regulate air quality, reduce provision of clean air and water while increasing pollution through increased traffic
- adjacent land shows Ridge & Furrow – habitat of great ecological importance due to cultural land, regulates water flow, replenished by groundwater and decreasing flooding from heavy rainfall events
- serious impact on Mowbray Field Nature Reserve

2 responses supported the proposals:

- Injection of new and remaining families/individuals to maintain and enhance village amenities
- development feeds into village proper and many residents will feel part of community
- 10% increase limit should be relaxed
- Traffic is an issue: awkward corners and bends
- Flood retention pond in Mowbray Field restored to keep Lake Road dry and to ensure culvert capacity below Lake Road not exceeded
- Gift of playing field to parish generous and would place a strict limit on future adjacent developments
- Traffic flows too low to justify alarm.
- Need new houses in village, not just for well off. Children can use existing zebra crossing to cross road

1 response accepted the principle of development but had concerns as follows:

- Consultation mainly during school holiday – extend it
- Scale of development too large for existing infrastructure

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 This application has been submitted following pre-application advice for the erection of up to 80 dwellings of which 40% are to be affordable dwellings, with associated new access (off main road) and car parking, on site bio-diversity and suds areas, and on-site play area.

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**

- CSS1 - The Overall Strategy
- CS1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- CSB1 - Conservation and improvement of biodiversity
- CSC1 - Delivery and contingency
- CSEN1 - Landscape protection
- CSEN3 - Historic environment
- CSG1 - Green infrastructure
- CSH1 - Amount and distribution of housing
- CSH2 - Housing density
- CSH3 - Affordable housing
- CSH4 - Meeting housing needs
- CSI1 - Infrastructure provision
- CSM1 - Transport
- CSM2 - Transport Assessments and Travel Plans
- CSQ3 - Design
- CSQ4 - Design briefs for greenfield neighbourhoods and major development sites
- CSR1 - Housing in villages
- CSR3 - Community facilities and rural transport

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

- C4 - Landscape setting of settlements

- C6 - Maintain & enhance biodiversity
- C8 - Adverse affect on protected species
- C9 - Loss of landscape features
- CON5 – Setting of listed buildings
- CON7 – Character of Conservation Areas
- 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
- CF2 – Community facilities
- G2 - Protect district from adverse development
- G3 - Development well served by facilities and transport
- G4 - Protection of Countryside
- H4 - Housing sites in towns and larger villages outside Green Belt
- R2 - Provision of play areas on new housing development
- R6 - Public open space in new residential development
- R8 - Protection of existing public right of way
- T1 - Safe, convenient and adequate highway network for all users
- T7 - Protection and improvement to footpath and highway network

5.5 **Emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2032**

The council has just 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. It identifies strategic levels of growth at three locations connecting through this central area of the District. East Hagbourne is identified as a smaller village which are likely to deliver 5%-10% growth which should be met through small sites of 10 homes or less and infill development through Neighbourhood Development Plans.

5.6 **East Hagbourne Neighbourhood Plan**

The Parish Council is currently working on its Neighbourhood Plan but it is at an early stage of preparation with some survey work being undertaken. The survey work includes a Village Character Assessment and Landscape Study (VCALS). The site is included within area VF04, identified as a multi-use area including both the village hall and car park and school playing field. The VCALS identifies that VF04 should continue as an area of mixed use with a focus on community facilities.

5.7 **South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2016**

5.8 **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)**

The development falls within the definition of an ‘urban development project’ as set out in Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 (as amended in 2015). The relevant thresholds are not however met and a screening opinion for the development was issued in June 2017 which concluded that the proposal was not EIA development and a full Environmental Statement was 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:
 - how the development of the site fits with the council’s spatial strategy,
 - the emerging Neighbourhood Plan,
 - the council’s housing land supply position,
 - the accessibility of the site to services and facilities.

- Matters of detail / technical issues, including:
 - affordable housing and housing mix,
 - highway safety and traffic impact,
 - landscape impact,
 - agricultural land,
 - trees and ecology,
 - design and layout,
 - neighbour amenity and amenity of future residents,
 - flood risk and surface / foul drainage,
 - impact on Heritage Assets
 - environmental matters (air quality and noise).

- Infrastructure requirements, including:
 - on-site infrastructure to be secured under a legal agreement,
 - contributions pooled under the Community Infrastructure Levy.

6.2 **The principle of the development**

The Development Plan

- 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). The development plan comprises the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy and the saved policies of the local plan.

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

- 6.4 Although the policies for the supply of housing in the SOCS have less weight in the decision making process as the Council cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites, I consider that weight should still be attributed to the over-arching 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.
- 6.5 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.

- 6.6 East Hagbourne is identified as one of the smaller villages which has some facilities and services. In the smaller villages infill development is supported (sites of up to 0.2ha). East Hagbourne is preparing a Neighbourhood Plan and is considering whether to identify sites where new homes should be built. In the emerging local plan smaller villages are likely to deliver 5%-10% growth which should be met through small sites of 10 homes or less and infill development through Neighbourhood Development Plans.

Emerging Neighbourhood Plan (NP)

- 6.7 The Parish Council is currently working on its neighbourhood plan and has undertaken some survey work, including the VCALS as detailed above. As such the NP is at a very early stage of preparation. The PPG confirms that an emerging neighbourhood plan may be a material consideration and that paragraph 216 also applies to the weight that may be given to its policies. As the NP is still at an early stage it can only be afforded limited weight.

National Policy/Guidance

- 6.8 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF also sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development and states that development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved without delay. The NPPF goes on to say that where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, 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 Framework taken as a whole; or where specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted. In this case, there are no specific policies which indicate that development should be restricted.
- 6.9 The NPPF requires applications to be considered in the context of sustainable development and sets out that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. In essence, the economic role should contribute to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy; the social role should support strong, vibrant and healthy communities; and the environmental role should contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment. These roles should not be undertaken in isolation, because they are mutually dependant.
- 6.10 The NPPF is supplemented by the Government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). Of relevance to this case is the section on rural housing which states that it is important to recognise the particular issues facing rural areas in terms of housing supply and affordability, and the role of housing in supporting the broader sustainability of villages and smaller settlements. It follows that a thriving rural community in a living, working countryside depends, in part, on retaining local services and community facilities such as schools, local shops, cultural venues, public houses and places of worship. Rural housing is essential to ensure viable use of these local facilities.

The Council's housing land supply position and the implications of the NPPF

- 6.11 The NPPF requires local planning authorities to demonstrate an up-to-date five year supply of deliverable housing sites. Where there has been a persistent under-delivery of housing, a 20% buffer is applied. Where local authorities cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites, paragraph 49 of the NPPF sets out that housing policies contained within development plans should not be considered up-to-

date.

- 6.12 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).
- 6.13 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.
- 6.14 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 (Identified in footnote 9).*
- 6.15 Such restrictive policies include those seeking to protect heritage assets which is addressed in detail later in the report.

Conclusions on the principle of residential development

- 6.16 In view of the above it is clear that the decision-making process for the determination of this application is therefore to assess whether the adverse impacts of granting planning permission for the proposed development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits or whether there are specific policies in the framework which indicate that development should be restricted.

The accessibility of the site to services and facilities

- 6.17 East Hagbourne is a small village and provides a range of facilities and services including a primary school, convenience store/post office, public house and village hall many of which are within walking and cycling distance from the site. The village is also close to Didcot which provides a wider range of facilities and services. The Sustrans route adjoining the site provides a walking and cycling route directly into Didcot.
- 6.18 Bus services are also available including the 94 and 95 bus service which provides access to the surrounding areas of Didcot, West Hagbourne, Upton and Blewbury.
- 6.19 It is acknowledged that the development would increase demands placed on local infrastructure and services. County Education has commented that there is insufficient capacity at early education and childcare settings, primary, secondary and special schools in the area at this time to meet the demands arising from the development. To mitigate the impact of these demands, funds would be required from the CIL charging Authority. County Education note that additional secondary school capacity in this area is being provided through new schools, and therefore a greater contribution may be required. Similarly, if sufficient capacity cannot be provided at Hagbourne CE Primary School, then non-catchment children may be displaced back to Didcot, where new schools are planned, and CIL funding at new school rates may be required.

Matters of detail / technical issues

Affordable housing and housing mix

- 6.20 Policy CSH3 of the SOCS specifies that 40 per cent of new homes shall be affordable, with a tenure mix of 75 per cent social rented and 25 per cent shared ownership. Given that the application is in outline, the mix is currently indicative. The indicative mix would include 30 affordable units and this amounts to 40 per cent. In terms of the tenure split, 22 homes (73.5%) would be for affordable rent and 8 homes (26.5%) shared ownership.
- 6.21 The SHMA is the most up to date evidence base for considering housing mix but the Housing Development Officer (HDO) has commented that the demand for two-bedroom shared ownership properties is much higher than for one-bedroom properties, therefore the overall affordable housing mix may be more suitably delivered with a higher proportion of two bedroom properties than is indicated in the SHMA guidance. In general, it is anticipated that the mix of affordable housing should reflect the significant demand for two bedroom units for both rented and shared ownership tenures with a reduction in one-bedroom accommodation and an adjustment to the number of larger homes. Following discussions with the Housing Development Officer the Affordable Housing Statement refers to a mix of 1, 2, 3 and 4 bed units as follows:

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

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

- 6.24 Whilst all matters including access are reserved for later consideration, the illustrative masterplan (see Appendix 2) indicates that vehicular access to the site is proposed to be taken from Main Road in the form of a priority controlled T-junction with adequate visibility splays to be provided. A raised table would be incorporated into the access junction design to slow vehicle speeds on Main Road. Following discussions with OCC a gateway feature is also proposed at the entrance to the village on Main Road to slow

vehicle speeds.

- 6.25 In terms of pedestrian access, the footways provided adjacent to the access road would connect into the existing fenced footway which runs along the site frontage, and which would be slightly diverted into the site. This would provide a direct link between the site and the zebra crossing to the school and to the playing fields to the west. Additional pedestrian and cycle access points would be provided to the footway/cycle route which runs along the former railway line to the northwest of the site (see plan **attached** as Appendix 3).
- 6.26 A Transport Assessment (TA) has been submitted with the application which concludes that the existing and proposed infrastructure has the capacity to accommodate the additional trips likely to be generated by the proposed development and that no mitigation measures are necessary. A Safe Routes to School Assessment (SRTS) has also been undertaken which confirms with the proposed footway connections that the residents of the proposed development would have a safe route to Hagbourne C of E Primary School. An assessment has also been undertaken of the impact the development vehicle trips would have on the operation of the highway network including the Broadway/Jubilee Way/Hitchcock Way roundabout. This concluded that the development would not add a significant level of traffic in actual vehicle numbers or as a percentage of the traffic already on the network. The modelling also identified that the additional vehicles would have a minimal impact on the operation of the roundabout and that the increase in queuing was a result of the existing congestion at the junction. As such, it is concluded that this development should not be required to contribute towards an improvement scheme at the roundabout. A review of the existing parking situation on Main Road has confirmed that the on-street parking is not significant along Main Road and does not adversely affect the link capacity.
- 6.27 The TA concludes that the proposal from a highways perspective represents sustainable development and that it would have no material impact on the operation of the local highway network.
- 6.28 Many local residents have expressed concerns on highway safety grounds and the Red Light Greenlight Campaign Group has commissioned Safer Traffic Solutions Ltd (STS) to assess the TA submitted with the application. STS consider that the TA does not justify approval of the application as it does not comply with current standards as set out in the NPPF, Manual for Streets, Design Manual for Roads and Bridges and Local Transport Note 1/04 and fails to include a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit. STS conclude that the TA does not provide sufficient evidence or clarity that it will encourage sustainable transport from use of walking cycling or public transport. It also introduces additional motor vehicle/vulnerable road user (VRU) conflict zones, and as such will compromise the safety of VRUs. The impact of allowing this scheme will be to increase motor vehicle use on an already severely congested road network and compromise safety and because of this the proposal should be rejected on highway grounds. Following the concerns raised a Stage 1 Road Safety audit (RSA) has been submitted which concludes that the proposed access design would be acceptable.
- 6.29 OCC has commented that considering the site is rural in nature the accessibility of the site to goods, services and employment are reasonably good by the sustainable modes of foot, especially cycle (potentially plus train) and by bus. The site should not have the propensity to generate an excess of car-borne trips, as a consequence of the unavailability of other modes on offer to future occupants as a result of lack of choice. Nevertheless, a robust Travel Plan would be necessary to encourage alternative modes of transport, particularly by foot through improved pedestrian links into the village. OCC concur with the conclusions of the TA in respect of highway impact and raise no

objection to the development subject to highway conditions and contributions towards improvements to public transport provision and bus stop infrastructure.

- 6.30 County Education has commented that it will be crucial that safe passage is ensured between the school site and the playing fields across the road, which adjoin this development. As discussed above, the TA includes a SRTS assessment which identifies that *“Guard railing is provided at the northern footway to ensure pedestrians keep to the designated footway up to the zebra crossing point. The footpath along the site frontage is also bounded fencing to provide a safe route between the zebra crossing and the playing fields to the west of the site”*. The SRTS was requested by OCC who have raised no objection to the application.
- 6.31 The NPPF makes it clear that developments should only be refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts are severe. Safe and suitable access can be provided to the site as well as a layout that is safe, secure and minimises conflict in accordance with section 4 of the NPPF. As such I consider that the proposed development would be acceptable in highway safety terms subject to appropriate highway conditions and contributions towards encouraging sustainable modes of transport. A S278 agreement would also be required to provide the gateway feature, vehicular access to Main Road and access links to the Sustrans Route.

Landscape impact

- 6.32 The adopted Local Plan and the Core Strategy contain policies that seek the protection of landscape character and features and set requirements about the quality of development, to ensure that it is appropriate to the site and its surroundings and enhances local distinctiveness.
- 6.33 The site and its surrounding landscape lie within the National Character Area of the Upper Thames Clay Vales as defined by Natural England. The South Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment (SOLA) includes the site in the Wessex Downs and Western Vale Fringes. The assessment describes the area as follows:
- “Around Didcot, a band of calcareous siltstones and sandy limestones of the Upper Greensand (or ‘malmstone’) forms the transition between the higher lands of the downs and the lower lying vale.”*
- 6.34 The site and the area immediately around it fall within landscape character type ‘Open rolling downs’. The key characteristics of which are as follows:
- smoothly rounded hills and downland flanks;
 - dominance of intensive arable cultivation with weak or absent hedgerow structure and large-scale field pattern;
 - distinctively ‘grey’ and flinty soils;
 - large-scale, open and denuded landscape;
 - rural character with few detracting influences;
 - open landscape results in high intervisibility and extensive views.
- 6.35 A landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been submitted with the application which concludes that the site and the area immediately surrounding it are not typical of this landscape type and do not strongly display the attributes listed above. The LVIA found that while agricultural in nature, the site experiences a number of urban influences in the form of the disused railway line, the adjoining village, the village hall and Main Road. The site itself has a discrete character with a limited intervisibility with the surrounding area.

- 6.36 The visual assessment found that the site is visually well contained with views from the north and east being screened by intervening built form and views from the west being partially restricted by the elevated embankment of the disused railway. The site can be viewed from Main Road to the south and from the elevated disused railway line. In distant views from the North Wessex Downs AONB East Hagbourne is seen in the context of Didcot. The site itself is difficult to discern with the naked eye and forms a very small element within a wide panoramic.
- 6.37 The assessment found that there were no significant effects associated with the landscape type defined by the SOLA. The only significant effect was in relation to the site itself, which would change in character from arable farmland to built form and would experience a Substantial Adverse effect. This locally significant effect would not extend beyond the bounds of the site itself. The new urban edge would be moved approximately 140m westwards, with the existing, abrupt and somewhat unsympathetic, interface between the rear gardens of the existing houses on Lake and Harwood Road and the site, being replaced with the active frontage of the new properties facing onto the Main Road and forming the new introduction to the village. These new properties would sit behind a generous area of open space wrapping around the west and south of the development, which would form their setting.
- 6.38 The LVIA concluded that this reconfigured introduction to the village would give rise to a minor beneficial effect both on the character of this entrance to the village and the visual amenity of those approaching from the west. The visual assessment found a small number of locally significant adverse effects, namely those views experienced by residents and walkers immediately adjacent to the site. Given the existing urban context, there would be little change to views from further afield.
- 6.39 The Didcot Garden Team have commented that this area of land is identified as part of a proposed green buffer area between Didcot and the settlements of West Hagbourne and East Hagbourne in the Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan, which underwent a consultation process this summer. The application site is shown as a proposed woodland area and forms part of the proposed green gap around the Hagbournes. This site is however, separated from adjoining open land to the west by the former railway line and is bordered by the school playing fields and cemetery to the west. As such it is considered that the site is well contained and relates well to the village settlement.
- 6.40 The proposed development would form a modest extension to East Hagbourne and lies adjacent to the urban area. Nevertheless, it would result in the loss of an open agricultural field which would inevitably have an urbanising effect and would cause some erosion of the rural landscape of the area. However I consider that these effects would be localised in nature, Nevertheless, the proposal would result in the loss of what is currently open agricultural land, and its replacement with housing, streets, lights and associated human activity would clearly have an adverse effect on the rural quality of the landscape. As such the proposal would result in landscape harm and this is a matter that must be put into the planning balance to weigh against the proposal.

Trees and ecology

- 6.41 The Arboricultural Impact Assessment identifies that owing to the current use of the site, the small amount of tree cover is confined to the site boundaries, with no trees present in the main body of the site. Only a few trees are of moderate quality and value with most being specimens of low quality or value. Any tree removal, if required, is likely to affect trees of low landscape value which would only represent a very minor impact, and of negligible consequence in terms of the effect on the overall surrounding

landscape. The proposals would also necessitate the removal of a short (3m approx.) length of the southernmost end of the hawthorn hedge, which borders the Village Hall car park. This is to enable the construction of the proposed footpath running approximately east west across the site frontage onto Main Road, and linking to the Village Hall car park access. The effect of the removal of the very short section identified will be a negligible impact.

- 6.42 The Forestry Officer (FO) has no objection to the proposed development. As the application is in outline form, with landscaping reserved for latter consideration, an appropriate landscape scheme could be secured at the reserved matters stage.
- 6.43 The site has been subject to an Ecological Appraisal which concludes that on the evidence of the ecological surveys undertaken, the site is not considered to be of high intrinsic value from an ecology and nature conservation perspective. The design of the proposed development and the implementation of mitigation measures recommended in the report would ensure that there would be no adverse effects on any designated sites or protected species as a result of development at the application site. Moreover, it is considered that the proposals offer enhancements for biodiversity over the existing situation.
- 6.44 The Countryside Officer (CO) has commented that reptile populations were found in the edge habitats on site, but is satisfied that a suitable working method statement can be devised and implemented to avoid any impact on the reptile populations. The biodiversity calculator impact assessment has taken place and demonstrated that the scheme can deliver net gains in biodiversity. Mowbray Fields Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is located approximately 60 metres from the site and is likely to be a popular destination for local recreation dog walking etc. The site and its habitats have suffered damage in the past due to misuse and vandalism which have increased the difficulty in managing the site to protect its special interest and to maintain safe access for the public. There is no adequate way to quantify the impacts of increased visitor pressure on the LNR however, experience of past management has shown that working with the local communities to help them to understand the special interest and involve them in the management of the site has helped to significantly reduce the level of damage and misuse. The Earth Trust have proposed a number of measures which they believe will help to mitigate the impacts of the population growth and increase the resilience of the site in the light of population growth.
- 6.45 The proposed mitigation measures include:
- Delivering outreach events to the residents of the new developments
 - Planning and delivery of educational events on the LNR specifically targeted at new residents
 - Improvements to the sites interpretation
 - Upgrading and improving site infrastructure (benches, bridges etc)
 - Entering the site for a Green Flag Award (as a measure of success of the mitigation measures).
- 6.46 Due to the notable habitats and existing hardstanding used as paths, no significant impact is considered to occur to the nearby Didcot to Upton Railway local wildlife site. In conclusion, the CO has no objection to this application, subject to appropriate planning conditions and a contribution to provide mitigation measures to protect Mowbray Fields LNR.

Design and layout

- 6.47 The NPPF sets out that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people. The NPPF also provides that the planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities.
- 6.48 The NPPF goes on to advise that although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are very important factors, securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations. Therefore, planning decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment (paragraph 61).
- 6.49 The design policies of the SOCS (particularly CSQ3) and SOLP policies (particularly D1-D4) echo these requirements.
- 6.50 The layout of the proposed development is to be the subject of a reserved matters application. However, a revised illustrative site layout has been provided and this communicates the key design principles that a subsequent reserved matters application should reflect. This is supported by a detailed design and access statement and addendum which explains the design concepts behind the illustrative layout and how this relates to the surrounding area. These concepts include:
- An enhanced setting to the village when approached along Main Road from the west
 - A sinuous organic layout, that reflects and responds to the character of East Hagbourne's historic core and is sympathetic in scale and character to the neighbouring residential areas
 - Provision of usable and accessible open space
 - Strong green infrastructure and ecological enhancement through a green ribbon of open space along the western boundary and a green corridor through the heart of the development
 - An improved, safe connection to the school playing fields
 - Safe access for all modes of transport
 - 'Active' frontages to streets and public open space
- 6.51 The revised illustrative masterplan includes changes following discussions with the local community including:
- The two storey maisonette style terraced housing arrangement in the north-eastern corner of the site has been replaced with conventional two storey houses with gardens backing onto the existing properties in Harwood Road
 - The row of terraced houses that sided onto the existing properties in Harwood Road, have been replaced with houses that front onto the estate road with gardens now backing onto the existing properties.
 - Additional parking provision for the village hall
- 6.52 The indicative plans show that sufficient public open space (POS) could be provided to meet policy R6 of the SOLP, which requires 10% of the gross site area to be provided as informal open space. The scheme would provide 0.54 ha of public open space with an additional 0.46ha for SuDS. The Design and Access Statement refers to the provision of a generous green ribbon along the western and southern boundaries. An equipped area of play (LEAP) is to be provided within the open space to the south, close to the village hall, which would comply with policy R2 of the SOLP. The formal and informal POS and play areas could be secured with a S106 legal agreement.
- 6.53 Overall the Urban Design Officer (UDO) is satisfied with the revised illustrative

masterplan but has made some suggestions for any detailed layout to ensure a good design. The UDO is content that the site would be able to accommodate the quantum of development proposed.

Neighbour amenity and amenity of future residents

- 6.54 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 and the separation that can be achieved between the proposed dwellings and neighbouring properties, I am of the opinion that the development could be achieved without any adverse impacts on neighbours in terms of light, outlook and privacy.

Flood risk and surface / foul drainage

- 6.55 The application has been supported with a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and Drainage Statement which concludes that the development is not at significant flood risk, subject to the recommended flood mitigation strategies being implemented. The site is identified to be wholly within Flood Zone 1, land considered to be at low risk of fluvial flood risk. There is a minor ditch system along the site frontage which is identified to pose a very low flood risk, although there are anecdotal reports of flooding in the vicinity of the site and towards the village centre. Whilst this feature is considered to pose a low risk to the site, appropriate mitigation measures are proposed through the raising of finished floor levels and profiling of ground levels. No other flood mechanisms are identified to pose a risk to the site.
- 6.56 The surface water drainage strategy proposed will ensure there is no increase in surface water runoff leaving the site when compared to the existing situation. In compliance with the requirements of National Planning Policy Framework. The FRA concludes that subject to the mitigation measures proposed, the development could proceed without being subject to significant flood risk. Moreover, the development would not increase flood risk to the wider catchment area as a result of suitable management of surface water runoff discharging from the site.
- 6.57 The Environment Agency has not commented on the application. The Council's Drainage Consultant had originally raised concerns that surface water drainage works were proposed on third party land. The applicant has however, confirmed that this land is also within their ownership and as such the Drainage Consultant has removed his objection subject to a condition ensuring the implementation of a suitable sustainable water drainage system.
- 6.58 In terms of foul drainage, the submitted foul water and utilities assessment advises that the foul water network has sufficient capacity to supply the development.

Impact on Heritage assets

- 6.59 Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes a statutory duty on local planning authorities to pay special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings. The NPPF sets out that great weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. 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 and Policy CON7 seeks to protect the character and appearance of conservation areas.

- 6.60 A Heritage Desk-Based Assessment has been submitted which advises that no designated heritage assets are located within the site and therefore the proposal would not affect directly any remains of highest significance. This report has also assessed the potential effects of the development upon the significance of designated heritage assets within the surrounding landscape, through the alteration of their settings. With regards to the Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings, located within the villages of East Hagbourne, Coscote and West Hagbourne, it has been established that, due to the combined effects of distance, intervening built form and prevailing vegetation, the site does not comprise part of the settings of any of these designated assets, and the proposed development would not affect their significance in any way. It concludes that the proposed development would therefore result, in terms of the Framework, in ‘no harm’ to the significance of these assets.
- 6.61 It has also been established that the proposed development would introduce only a limited change to the immediate landscape west of East Hagbourne Conservation Area. Such a change would not measurably affect the setting of the Conservation Area and its special character and appearance would be unharmed. The assessment concludes that the proposed development would therefore result, in terms of the Framework, in ‘no harm’ to the significance of the Conservation Area.
- 6.62 The Conservation Officer has commented that the proposed scheme would retain the green setting along Main Road. Historic views of the church from Main Road would not be impacted upon by the proposed development. At reserved matters stage it will be important to ensure that the materials and details of the proposed dwellings are appropriate to this location. As such the Conservation Officer raises no objection to the application subject to conditions to ensure a sympathetic design and layout.
- 6.63 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 located to the north east of an area of Romano British settlement recorded during a pipeline excavation. A Roman settlement was also recorded 1km to the north west of the proposed site consisting of a series of enclosures and stone corn driers. A further area of Roman settlement has been identified during an archaeological evaluation 1km to the north east. A recent find also suggests that further Roman settlement is located in the area. A geophysical survey and a trenched evaluation have been undertaken on the site which has recorded an early Iron Age enclosure and internal pits. This is located on the eastern edge of the site. The County Archaeological Officer has raised no objection to the application subject to a condition requiring a programme of archaeological investigation ahead of any development on the site.

Environmental matters (air quality, contamination and noise)

- 6.64 Policy EP1 of the SOLP seeks to secure mitigation measures to ensure that developments do not have an adverse effect on the health and amenity of future occupiers. Based on the size of the proposed development, basic good practice design should be applied to this site in order to help mitigate against the air quality impacts and to enable future proofing of the development. I have recommended a condition requiring air quality mitigation measures to be agreed.
- 6.65 Policy EP6 of the SOLP sets out the council’s approach to development on

contaminated land. Potential on- and off-site sources of contamination are considered to comprise farming activities and an adjacent railway with contaminants potentially including pesticides, long chain hydrocarbons, heavy metals, PAHs and pathogens. These are considered to pose a potentially low risk to human health and controlled waters. 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 risks are addressed during any development. This can be achieved through condition.

- 6.66 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.

Agricultural Land

- 6.67 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.
- 6.68 A detailed survey of the site has identified the land as being grade 3a which constitutes BMV land and its loss also weighs against the proposal in the overall planning balance.

Infrastructure requirements

On-site infrastructure to be secured under a legal agreement

- 6.69 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 (as set out in paragraph 6.21)
 - delivery of the on-site open space and Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP)
 - a contribution of £170 per dwelling towards wheeled bins for each house
 - a contribution of £134 per 10 dwellings towards street naming and numbering
 - The sum of £3,182 towards the Council's S106 monitoring fee
 - Contribution of £300 per dwelling towards public art
 - Contribution of £1,523 towards mitigation measures to protect Mowbray Fields LNR
 - Contribution of £58,830 towards bus service (Blewbury – Hagbournes – Didcot Service)
 - Travel Plan monitoring fees of £1,240.
- 6.70 The applicant has also agreed to transfer the ownership of the school playing field to either the Parish or County Council. The land is presently leased to the County Council and the transfer of this land would provide security of tenure in the future. The transfer of this land is considered to be CIL compliant given that the proposed development is likely to result in increased use of the playing field by pupils attending the local primary school.

- 6.71 I consider that these contributions / obligations accord with policy CS11 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

- 6.72 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 would not

be harmful to designated heritage assets. 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, East Hagbourne is a small village and provides a range of facilities and services including a primary school, convenience store/post office, public house and village hall many of which are within walking and cycling distance from the site. The village is also close to Didcot which provides a wider range of facilities and services. The Sustrans route adjoining the site provides a walking and cycling route directly into Didcot. Bus services are also available including the 94 and 95 bus service which provides access to the surrounding areas of Didcot, West Hagbourne, Upton and Blewbury. Contributions are also proposed towards the 94 bus service. 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. Approved plans.**
- 2. Commencement - outline with reserved matters.**
- 3. Maximum number of dwellings.**
- 4. Levels (details required).**
- 5. Market housing mix (outline).**
- 6. Sample materials required (all).**
- 7. Sustainable design.**
- 8. Refuse and recycling storage (details required).**
- 9. Fire hydrants.**
- 10. New vehicular access.**
- 11. Vision splay dimensions.**
- 12. Estate access, driveways and turning areas.**
- 13. Cycle parking facilities.**
- 14. Construction traffic.**
- 15. No surface water drainage to highway.**
- 16. Highways – miscellaneous.**
- 17. Landscaping (including hardsurfacing and boundary treatment).**
- 18. Landscape management plan.**
- 19. Biodiversity management plan.**
- 20. Biodiversity enhancement plan.**
- 21. Hours of operation - construction/demolition sites.**
- 22. Archaeology (submission and implementation of a written scheme of investigation).**

- 23. Contaminated land (preliminary risk assessment).
- 24. Contaminated land - remediation strategy.
- 25. Lighting.
- 26. Foul drainage works (details required).
- 27. Construction Method Statement.

Author: Joan Desmond

Email: Planning@southoxon.gov.uk

Contact No: 01235 422600

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