
APPLICATION NO.	P16/S3852/FUL
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION
REGISTERED	19.12.2016
PARISH	Crowmarsh Gifford
WARD MEMBER(S)	Felix Bloomfield Richard Pullen
APPLICANT	Avant Homes Ltd
SITE	Land to the south of Newnham Manor, Crowmarsh Gifford
PROPOSAL	Hybrid planning application for the erection of 100 new residential dwellings including new access road off the A4074, public open space (full application) and the provision of school land (outline application) at Newnham Manor, Crowmarsh Gifford
OFFICER	Katherine Pearce

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This application is referred to Planning Committee for a decision as the views of Crowmarsh Gifford Parish Council differ from the recommendation being made by officers.
- 1.2 The site is located on the edge of Crowmarsh Gifford. It measures approximately 8.3ha in area and is largely flat. The site can be divided into two sections according to its character. The western section of the site contains 56 caravan pitches and some small commercial units and some storage. The section is made up of several 'compartments' created by hedgerows and tree belts. The eastern section of the site is much more open in character and is used for agricultural purposes; However, there is a belt of conifers separating this section into two.
- 1.3 The western section of the site is surrounded by tree belts on the eastern and southern sides, which are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (though the trees to the east are not within the site boundary). There are other protected trees dotted around the site.
- 1.4 To the west of the site is the Old Reading Road, which is residential in character at its northern end where it serves several dwellings and the Crowmarsh Gifford Church of England Primary School. Further down the lane there is a close boarded fence with tall tree and hedgerow behind bordering the site. To the north west of the site is Meadow Lane, a short, narrow line just beyond the boundary vegetation.
- 1.5 To the north of the site is residential development, including Newnham House, a Grade II listed manor house, and its associated garden. The northern boundary is marked by trees and hedgerows. These dwellings are set back from The Street, the main road running through Crowmarsh Gifford towards Wallingford.
- 1.6 To the east of the site is Port Way A4074, the main by-pass road around Wallingford. It is a wide single-carriageway road which changes from a 40mph speed limit to 30mph speed limit alongside the site boundary. On the opposite side of the road is Cox's Lane, which serves around 100 dwellings. The boundary between the site and the A4074 is a high hedgerow. The only break in this hedgerow is for site access to Lister Wilder and then another small commercial estate to the south.

- 1.7 The River Thames is around 780m to the west of the site. The site is wholly within Flood Zone 1.
- 1.8 The site is located in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and an area of archaeological constraint.
- 1.9 The site is identified on the Ordnance Survey Extract attached at **Appendix 1**.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 This is a hybrid application for full planning permission for 100 new dwellings with associated access road and open space, and outline planning permission for land for use by Crowmarsh Gifford Cof E Primary School.
- 2.2 A new access to the site will be created off the Port Way, which involves remodelling the Port Way itself. The current arrangement provides a ghost island for access to Cox's Lane. The proposals would form a staggered junction with Cox's Lane including a new kerbed island in the centre of the carriageway. A staggered toucan crossing would also be provided.

A footpath and cycleway will be provided through the site onto The Street.

- 2.3 The 100 dwellings would be provided in accordance with the following mix:

HOUSING MIX					
Affordable			Open Market Mix		
1 Bed	15%	6	2 Bed	15%	9
2 Bed	15%	6	3 Bed	30%	18
2 Bed	45%	18	4 Bed	40%	24
3 Bed	25%	10	5 Bed	15%	9
Total		40	Total		60

- 2.4 The affordable units are proposed to be located in the northern part of the site. All of the proposed dwellings are two storey. There is a mixture apartments, terraced, semi-detached and detached dwellings. The proposed materials are mostly brick with some timber cladding and knapped flint in lime mortar. Roof tiles will be grey slate or red-brown plain clay tiles.
- 2.5 The application includes approximately 2.5ha of parkland containing two play areas, landscaping planting, formal pathways and an infiltration basin. A further two play areas will be provided outside of the parkland and other area of open space will be provided in the north western part of the site.
- 2.6 In the north-western corner of the site an area of approximately 3800sq metres, which is subject to the outline planning permission, will be provided for Crowmarsh Gifford CofE Primary School to use for parking and dropping off. Vehicular access to this part of the site will be gained from the Old Reading Road. A pedestrian access into the main part of the site is proposed.
- 2.7 The layout can be seen on the plans, which can be found at **Appendix 2** to this report. The proposed access arrangements can be found at **Appendix 3**. All the plans and

representations can be viewed on the Council's website www.southoxon.gov.uk under the planning application reference number.

3.0 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

3.1 This provides a summary of the technical comments on the most recent iteration of the plans and supporting information. Comments from the public and town/Parish Councils summarise all comments made throughout the course of the application.

Crowmarsh Parish Council – Object, in summary:

- Number of proposed dwellings is in excess of the amount of homes allocated to Crowmarsh Gifford. This will put pressure on infrastructure and services in the village.
- The proposed access onto the A4074 is sub-standard, would like a roundabout.

Wallingford Town Council – Object, in summary :

- Premature as it has come forward before Crowmarsh has had an opportunity to write its Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- Failed to assess the cumulative impact of this development on schools, health services, traffic and air quality with reference to recent planning decisions.
- Within an area of outstanding beauty
- Concerns over traffic generation
- Concerns that sufficient infrastructure is not in place.
- Not sustainable and contrary to Policy H4 (iv) and CS11.
- Schools in Wallingford are at capacity and children from Wallingford that attend Crowmarsh Primary School will be displaced. The proposed expansion of the secondary school will only accommodate the proposed growth in Wallingford.
- Wallingford Medical Practice is near capacity already.
- Road junctions on the A4074 in the vicinity of the application are already operating near to capacity. The additional demands on the road network are unsustainable.
- The sustainability reports submitted by the applicant do not address the loss of amenity in relation to schools and medical services.
- The application is contrary to SODC's legal obligations to address the Wallingford Air Quality Management Area, it fails to consider the cumulative effects with other developments in the area.
- The development does not provide a mix of housing that meets the needs of South Oxfordshire.

Chilterns Conservation Board – Objected to original scheme because the development was extending too far south. Subsequent withdrawal of objection as previous points of objection have been addressed. The amended scheme is landscaped and has reduced the impacts on views from the higher AONB footpaths to the east. The scheme provides a substantial area of green infrastructure that references the historic parkland of the past.

Landscape Consultant on behalf of SODC – Comments on the LVIA based on the original submission, in summary:

- The LVIA is consistent with current practice and no fundamental omissions were identified. Queries were raised in relation to:
 - the evaluation of receptor sensitivity, including the internal character of the site;
 - the absence of an explicit assessment of effects on village setting;
 - clarification of the effect on the AONB; and
 - the absence of visualizations

- Low density scheme, which is appropriate to village-edge context. The buildings should be no more than two storeys.
- Further justification is recommended in regard to the relationship to Newnham House and the southern edge of the development.
- The LVIA and the Capacity Study appear to be broadly consistent in terms of the assumed sensitivity of the site, though the overall quantum and density of development is substantially less than assumed in the Capacity Study.
- The degree to which the proposals comply with the landscape requirements of the NPPF depends on the relative weight given to the protection and enhancement of landscape features, against the loss of open countryside that contributes to local character. NPPF 109 and 115 are assumed to be engaged.
- The proposals appear, on balance, to conflict with Local Plan policies G2 and G4. Whether they conflict with C4 depends on whether the entire site is considered to form part of the attractive landscape setting of the village. Similarly, compliance with Core Strategy CSEN1 depends on the judgement made as to the balance between the positive and negative attributes of the development. The design requirements of CSQ3 and CSG1 are probably met.

Oxfordshire County Council Highways – No objection

Initially objected because additional information and analysis was required in relation to the site access. Currently no objection subject to conditions

Oxfordshire County Council Archaeology – No objection subject to conditions

Oxfordshire County Council Education – Comments:

- Expansion of Crowmarsh Gifford CE Primary School and early years provision would be necessary to accommodate pupils generated by the housing. Land is required to allow for the expansion.
- It cannot be guaranteed that the provision of the land as currently proposed would make possible an expansion which would be satisfactory to the School or the County Council. Land immediately adjoining the school site would be preferable but this would require realignment of the Old Reading Road. If this is not possible then the proposed footpath should be realigned to avoid further compromising the school's site.

Oxfordshire County Council Property – Financial contributions required towards local library, central library, Museum Resource Centre, strategic waste management and adult day care. A planning condition is required regarding fire hydrants. The Fire and Rescue Service recommends that new dwellings be constructed with sprinkler systems.

Natural England - No objection, general advice provided regarding the AONB, protected species, biodiversity and landscape enhancements, local sites (such as Local Wildlife Sites or a Local Nature Reserve) and SSSI Impact Risk Zones

SGN Plant Protection Team – Nearest IP mains is along the Old Reading Road. There should be no mechanical excavations within 3m of an intermediate pressure system.

Urban Design Officer – Comments, in summary:

- The link between the Constraints and Opportunities Plan and the proposal has not been addressed. It is not clear how the principles and criteria of the South Design Guide 2016 have been achieved.
- Suggested materials do not strongly enough reflect the materials to be found in the Chilterns.
- It is not clear how the existing landscape structure has been retained/incorporated as part of the proposal. Consideration needs to be given to how the landscaping will work with all the other aspects such as roads, service routes, drainage etc.
- It is not clear how the existing landscape features surrounding the manor are to be preserved or enhanced within the proposal. It would be beneficial to consider providing a green corridor from the manor to the proposed open space to the south of the site.
- A development of up to 100 dwellings would warrant more than one access. The layout should avoid long cul-de-sacs and routes that do not provide a choice of direct and convenient routes. Use stronger perimeter blocks.
- Further consideration of boundary treatments required.
- Make sure to provide overlooking opportunities onto the footpath coming in from Old Reading Road. It would be beneficial to have properties fronting Meadow Lane. Make sure play areas are overlooked.
- Buildings should turn corners and focal buildings should be used.
- Relationship between fronts and back of properties needs addressing in some areas. Check back to back distances and overlooking issues.
- The layout feels road dominated. Car parking should be convenient and close to the households. Non allocated, shared parking is more efficient than designated parking. Rear parking courts should be a last resort.
- What is the rationale behind the open space at the entrance?

Conservation Officer – There will be some harm to the listed building as a result of development within its historic open rural setting, which will compromise the relationship of the manor house to its wider lands. This harm is considered to be less than substantial and the documentation indicates some mitigation. Proposed lighting should be sensitive to the open landscape character of the site.

Countryside Officer - No objection. Surveys didn't reveal any significant populations of protected species. A low population of grass snake was identified and an impact avoidance strategy is proposed. The most important habitats on site are associated with the woodland boundaries, which are largely to be retained. Any losses can be offset by replacement planting. The proposals are unlikely to lead to any indirect impacts on designated sites or off-site populations of protected species. The proposals provide sufficient space to allow ecological mitigation and enhancement so there is no net loss in biodiversity. Two conditions recommended

Forestry Officer – The impact of the Port Way access realignments could be minimised if implemented in accordance with the layout shown on drawing number 11-108/200 September 2017. The impact discussed in the Arboricultural Assessment does not make clear which highway layout it being considered. A plan showing the existing access and the trees, with the proposed access overlaid needs to be produced to ascertain the impact on the existing trees. If these are to be removed then a landscaping plan needs to be submitted prior to approval of the application rather than being left for a condition.

Environmental Health - Contaminated Land – Phase 1 Desk Study identifies potential sources for contaminated land and makes recommendations for intrusive investigations. Therefore two conditions and an informative are recommended.

Environmental Health – Environmental Protection – Disagree with some of the assumptions made in the report, which underestimates the impact on the Wallingford Air Quality Management Area. However, four conditions suggested as mitigation.

Housing Development – The Affordable Housing provision is acceptable in terms of size and type but the clustering of Affordable Housing is not in line with the Council's requirements. Request that some of the units in the north western corner are located more centrally in the site to break up the overly large cluster.

Waste Management Officer (District Council) – No objection

Thames Water Development Control – Confirm that the existing foul sewer network has sufficient capacity to accommodate the proposed foul water discharge from the proposed development. With regard to surface water, is it the responsibility of the development to make proper provision for drainage to ground, water courses or a suitable sewer.

Drainage Engineer – The Flood Risk Assessment provides an acceptable basis for Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) design; however, infiltration capability and potential maximum groundwater levels are particularly important to the SUDs design. Condition recommended.

Neighbour (3) - Support

- There is a need for 1, 2 and 3 bed properties in the area and for affordable houses
- Object to the development but this site is preferable to the other two sites proposed in Crowmarsh Gifford.
- Support the location and scale of development but have serious concerns relating to the proposed road layout changes to the A4074

Neighbour (48) – Object, in summary:

- Road speeds along The Port Way are already dangerous.
- It will be unsafe for pedestrians to cross the road.
- It is already difficult to pull out safely from Cox Lane, particularly at peak times
- Additional traffic will create further delays on The Port Way and an increase in noise and air pollution.
- The road should be resurfaced so that it is quieter.
- Impact on Wallingford AQMA
- Proposed junction is unworkable, a roundabout would be better and it would slow traffic down
- Have the traffic calculations taken into account the new development at CABI and Carmel College?
- Loss of tree screening along The Port Way, which provides some sound proofing. There is a lack of detailed information about this and no mitigation proposed.
- Proposals show the road moving closer to Robert Sparrow Gardens, which will increase road noise impact. The road should move into the site rather than towards Robert Sparrow Gardens.
- The strip between Sheringham House and the A4074 is over a metre narrower than shown in the scheme, which is significant given the strip is 7-10m wide.

- Houses shouldn't be built in the AONB. Why isn't the old Council site being developed instead?
- Impact on wildlife on the site
- Services and facilities couldn't cope with the increase in population, particularly drains, sewers, the school, doctors' surgery
- Recognise that we need houses by why here and why this many?
- Development would contravene the Protection of Military Remains Act 1986.
- Expansion of the school will create more traffic.
- School expansion should occur before the end of the development
- Impact on 3 Grade II listed buildings nearby.
- Fibre optic broadband cable should be available for the new residents and those along Cox Lane.
- The site to the south of the Primary School should be developed instead

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 P16/S3868/SCR – EIA not required (12/12/2016)

P16/S1409/PEJ - (01/06/2016)

Further pre-application advice to P15/S3171/PEJ (application for up to 100 dwellings)

This site has a long planning history, in the main relating to the stationing of caravans on the site. The full planning history can be found on the Council's website.

5.0 LEGISLATION, POLICY & GUIDANCE

5.1 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA):

This proposal does not exceed 150 dwellings but the site area is over 5ha.

Consequently the proposal exceeds the thresholds set in Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011. The site is also within a 'sensitive area' as defined by the EIA regulations and was therefore screened under reference P16/S3868/SCR. The decision, issued 12 December 2016, was that an Environmental Impact Assessment is not required as the majority of issues are considered to be of local significance only and can be examined through the normal planning process.

5.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

5.3 South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (SOCS) Policies:

CS1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development

CSB1 - Conservation and improvement of biodiversity

CSC1 - Delivery and contingency

CSEN1 - Landscape protection

CSEN3 - Historic environment

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

CSS1 - The Overall Strategy

5.4 South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (SOLP 2011) policies:

- C10 - Landscape Features
- C4 - Landscape setting of settlements
- C6 - Maintain & enhance biodiversity
- C9 - Loss of landscape features
- CON – Setting of listed buildings
- CON11 – Protection of archaeological remains
- CON12 - Archaeological field evaluation
- CON13 - Archaeological investigation recording & publication
- D1 - Principles of good design
- D10 - Waste Management
- D12 - Public art
- D2 - Safe and secure parking for vehicles and cycles
- D3 - Outdoor amenity area
- D4 - Reasonable level of privacy for occupiers
- D6 - Community safety
- EP1 - Adverse affect on people and environment
- EP4 - Impact on water resources
- EP6 - Sustainable drainage
- EP7 - Impact on ground water resources
- EP8 - Contaminated land
- G2 - Protect district from adverse development
- G4 - Protection of Countryside
- 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
- T1 - Safe, convenient and adequate highway network for all users
- T2 - Unloading, turning and parking for all highway users

5.5 Supplementary Planning Documents:

South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2016 (SODG 2016)
Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2014-2019

5.6 Draft and Emerging Plans:

Crowmarsh Gifford Parish Council is preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan. It is currently at evidence gathering stage. At this stage the plan carries very limited weight.

South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011-2033:

The emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011-2033 was recently publicised for examination. The responses to the publication are being collated and will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for independent examination. Weight can now be given to the plan; however, the weight to be applied to policies at this stage is dependent on the level of objection received to each policy.

5.7 Other Relevant Guidance and Evidence Studies:

- The Chilterns Design Guide
- Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000
- South Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment
- Landscape capacity assessment for sites on the edge of villages

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

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

- The principle of the development, including:
 - Current policy position
 - Housing land supply
 - National policy position
 - AONB policy
- Matters of detail / technical issues, including:
 - landscape impact,
 - highways
 - design and layout,
 - density, mix and affordable housing
 - heritage impact
 - trees and landscaping
 - noise impact
 - air quality
 - ecology,
 - flood risk and surface / foul drainage,
 - neighbour amenity and amenity of future residents,
- Infrastructure requirements, including:
 - on-site infrastructure to be secured under a legal agreement,
 - contributions pooled under the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Principle of Development

- 6.2 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Section 70 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 provides that the local planning authority shall have regard to the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations. In the case of South Oxfordshire, the most relevant parts of the Development Plan are the Core Strategy which was adopted in December 2012 and the saved policies of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011. Development which is not in accordance with an up-to-date development plan should be refused unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Current Policy Position

- 6.3 This site is not allocated within the development plan for housing or employment development. Policy CSS1 of the adopted Core Strategy sets out an overall strategy for the District, which seeks, among other things, to support and enhance the larger villages as local service centres, while focusing major development at Didcot and the market towns. Similarly, Local plan Policies G2 and G4 seek to protect the countryside from adverse developments.
- 6.4 Crowmarsh Gifford is identified as a larger village within the SOCS. Policy CSR1 indicates that sites will be allocated for housing in the larger villages and that there would be no limit on infill development in these settlements. Infill development is defined in the text supporting policy CSR1 as *“the filling of a small gap in an otherwise built-up frontage or on other sites within settlements where the site is closely surrounded by buildings”*. The site clearly does not fall within these parameters and does not represent an infill site.
- 6.5 Other policies relevant to the principle of development include Core Strategy Policy CSEN1 that seeks to protect the District’s landscape with high priority given to the

AONB landscape and Local Plan Policy C4 seeks to protect the landscape setting of settlements.

- 6.6 The proposal therefore conflicts with the development plan as a matter of principle.

Housing Land Supply

- 6.7 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.
- 6.8 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 mid-point is 775 homes per annum. This is a sizable uplift from the requirement for 547 homes per annum set out in the SOCS.
- 6.9 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.

National Policy Position

- 6.10 Paragraph 49 of the NPPF states *"Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a deliverable five-year supply of deliverable housing sites"*.
- 6.11 A relatively recent Court of Appeal decision considered the meaning of relevant policies for the supply of housing and found that it means all policies capable of affecting the supply of land for housing. Nonetheless the Court emphasised that the weight to be given to policy is a matter for the decision maker.
- 6.12 It is clear that this application is contrary to policies relating to the location of development as set out above, in particular, Policies CSS1 and CSR1. However, as the Council does not have a five-year housing land supply, these policies are not considered up to date. Furthermore, as these policies do not make provision for the higher housing targets identified in the most recent assessment of housing need, i.e. the SHMA, I consider that they hold limited weight. In such circumstances paragraph 14 of the NPPF is relevant and provides 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 NPPF indicate that development should be restricted.*
- 6.13 In relation to the second indent, this includes Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Therefore, the assessment of the site must first reflect on the compliance with AONB policies in the Framework, namely paragraphs 115 and 116.

AONB Policy

- 6.14 Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act) states that a relevant authority in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect land in an area of outstanding natural beauty, shall have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty. This section of the report sets out the planning assessment made in relation to conserving and enhancing the AONB having regard to CRoW Act and the NPPF and development plan policies.
- 6.15 Paragraph 115 states that *“Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in...Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty.”*

Paragraph 116 states that:

“Planning permission should be refused for major developments in these designated areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

- the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;*
- the cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
- any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.”*

- 6.16 Adopted Core Strategy Policy CSEN1 reflects NPPF guidance in providing high priority to the conservation and enhancement of the AONBs. Proposals which support the economies and social wellbeing of the AONBs will be encouraged provided they do not conflict with the aims of conservation and enhancement. Although, as outlined above, recent case law has established that environmental/countryside protection policies which influence the supply of housing land may be considered out of date where there is a housing land supply shortfall, in my view great weight should continue to apply to Policy CSEN1 in view of the AONB location and therefore NPPF paragraph 116 provides that major development should be refused except in exceptional circumstances.
- 6.17 The need for this development arises from the need to provide housing in the District and nationally, particularly Affordable Housing. Policy CSR1 allows for allocations in the larger villages to facilitate their economic and social well-being, which the supporting text states will be delivered through the Site Allocations DPD. The Site Allocations DPD is no longer being taken forward, with the task of allocating sites now falling to Neighbourhood Development Plans and the draft Local Plan 2033.
- 6.18 Subsequent to the adoption of the Core Strategy, work began on the Local Plan: Sites and General Policies, in the stead of the Site Allocations DPD. This included working with the larger villages to identify preferred sites for allocation in their area. For Crowmarsh Gifford, the application site came out as the favoured site by the local community. A recent survey undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan also showed that this site was the favoured site for development, once it had become known that the SODC headquarters site was not available for development.
- 6.19 Table 5f in the draft Local Plan 2033 sets out the number of homes each of the larger villages should be seeking to allocate based on 15% growth, though it is recognised that this figure needs to be balanced with the social, economic and environmental

factors that may impact upon the ability to accommodate development. The figure given for Crowmarsh Gifford is 110 dwellings. The Council's Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) shows that sites around Crowmarsh Gifford can accommodate in excess of this level of development; however, this does not include most of the application site because it is located in the AONB.

- 6.20 Crowmarsh Gifford is surrounded by AONB to the south and east and flood plain to the west associated with the River Thames. Only sites to the north are free from constraints. Therefore in this case, there are alternative sites outside of the AONB that could accommodate the proposed development. However, planning applications for development to the north of the village have previously been refused planning permission, the most recent of which was 4 April 2017 (P16/S3608/O). This is now the subject of an appeal.
- 6.21 For any further development to occur in Crowmarsh Gifford, expansion of the primary school would be necessary. The current primary school site is undersized and therefore additional suitable land will be required to expand the primary school and early years provision. Sites outside of the AONB are not located in a suitable location to allow for the expansion of the primary school.
- 6.22 The application site is located opposite Crowmarsh Gifford CE Primary School and the applicant has offered 0.38ha of land on the site to enable the staff parking and drop off area to be moved from the current site, thereby allowing the school buildings to be expanded on their current site. This would allow the school to expand from 1 form entry to 1.5 form entry. As the school site is surrounded by AONB to the south and east and by built form to the north and west, there is no other way of providing for the expansion of the school other than building in the AONB. A planning application for housing development on the site to the south of the school was recently refused planning permission, largely due to the harmful impact to the AONB (application reference P16/S3665/O).
- 6.23 The initial consultation response from the AONB Board stated that the Board exceptionally did not object in principle to the development of the site because of its part-brownfield status, the results of the Landscape Capacity Assessment, the potential for enhancing the AONB (eg. Through the removal of derelict buildings, shipping containers and outdoor storage) and providing solutions to some existing village problems:

"The Chilterns Conservation Board's view is that CRO6 appears a reasonable site for development, because of its mainly brownfield status, its visual containment and its location opposite the primary school and near the functional centre of the village. CRO7 is more sensitive in landscape terms and its main role in this development should be to provide a well-designed access to the A4074, since accessing CRO6 from The Street or the Old Reading Road appears undesirable in transport and school safety terms. The removal of the unsympathetic line of conifers and provision of additional screening for the Wilder's site could be an enhancement, but on its own CRO7 would be unlikely to receive the Board's support, it is as a key to unlock CRO6 that it provides a limited opportunity. Any housing development on CRO7 should be modest and carefully tested through Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment to ensure that it is not harmful to this nationally designated landscape.

On this basis, the Chilterns Conservation Board, exceptionally, given the status of the site as part-brownfield and the emerging allocation for Crowmarsh Gifford, does not object in principle to development on this site."

- 6.24 The absence of a five-year housing land supply and the provision of homes in itself is not an exceptional circumstance that is in the public interest. However, in this case the site would also provide a public benefit, which would support the expansion of the village, which will allow it to thrive and continue to support the local economy.
- 6.25 Whilst the proposal would provide construction jobs and some local investment during construction, as well as longer term expenditure in the local economy. Housebuilding plays an important role in promoting economic growth but as this benefit would be temporary and equally apparent in any development that is not within an AONB, only limited weight could be applied to this benefit.
- 6.26 This site is the most appropriate for delivering the expansion of the school owing to its proximity and its limited landscape harm. The development of the site will also provide some benefit to the wider AONB designation through the improvement of a degraded landscape and through the removal of inappropriate landscape planting. It would also provide some reconnection of Newnham Manor with its historic parkland setting through the provision of the parkland to the south of the site.
- 6.27 The existing village is very much divided by the A4047, with a pocket of housing to the east of this busy road somewhat separated from the main core of the village. By extending the built development up to the western side of the A4074, the development has the potential to better integrate this pocket of housing into the village to the benefit of the overall social cohesion of the settlement. This would be facilitated by the provision of the proposed toucan crossing.
- 6.28 The justification set out above against the tests in paragraph 116 is very finely balanced. The consideration of the final bullet point will be set out in the following paragraphs and summarised in Section 7 of this report.

Landscape Impact

- 6.29 The site is located in the AONB and therefore great weight should be given to conserving its landscape and scenic beauty. The site was included in the Council's Landscape Capacity Assessment: Sites on the Edge of the Larger Villages of South Oxfordshire 2015. It was assessed as CRO6, which comprises the caravan park, commercial elements and hardstanding, and CRO7, which comprises the remainder of the site in agricultural use. This assessment found that CRO6 has a medium/high capacity for development from a landscape perspective. CRO7 was further split into two sections with the western part having a medium capacity to accommodate development and the eastern part closest to the A4074 having a medium/low capacity to accommodate development with a suggestion that development be contained in the northern part of the parcel and open space to the south.
- 6.30 The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) submitted with the planning application explains that the site does not meet the 'special qualities' of the AONB as defined in the AONB Management Plan. This is due to the use of the site for caravan park and commercial purposes as well as some incongruous landscape planting such as a conifer belt associated with the Lister Wilder development. It found that the site has quite a high level of visual enclosure and there is very limited visual relationship with the AONB. The principle views into the development would be from the east and south, particularly one viewpoint from the Ridgeway, with limited visibility from the north and west. The Landscape Consultant engaged by the Council to review the LVIA didn't identify any fundamental omissions with the assessment. The minor queries raised were addressed through the submission of additional information, and I am satisfied that these have been clarified.

6.31 In terms of mitigation, the proposed development will be set back from the southern boundary, so that it largely follows the suggested development area in the Landscape Capacity Assessment. The development on the edge of the built up area will be of a lower density to soften the built edge of the village as it gradually moves into open countryside. Existing vegetation along the site boundaries will be retained and supplemented by new planting. The coniferous tree belts will be removed and replaced with more native species.

6.32 The applicants have worked closely with the Chilterns AONB Board in drawing up proposals for the site. The AONB Board had concerns with the initial submitted scheme and raised an objection to it. The scheme was subsequently revised and further justification was provided. The AONB Board then withdrew their objection as their points had, on the whole, been addressed. The Board state that:

“The amended scheme is greatly improved and a landscape-led approach has now been taken. Re-shaping the layout, landscaping and materials has reduced impact on views from the higher AONB footpaths to the east. The scheme provides a substantial area of green infrastructure which references the historic parkland of the past. We suggested the use of photomontages from key viewpoints, and are satisfied that the montages produced demonstrate that the development, as amended, is not unduly harmful in terms of impact on AONB views. The Board therefore withdraws our objection.”

6.33 I recognise that any scheme of residential development in this location would give rise to permanent changes in the land use and character of the site. However, the LVIA and photomontages have shown that these will be localised and that mitigation will ensure that the effects are significantly moderated. In my opinion the looser knit at the southern edge of the development, along with the extensive parkland, will provide a softer edge to the settlement. Further to this, as the AONB Board do not object to the proposals.

Highways

6.34 The proposed development includes a new access off the A4074 and some changes to the existing layout of the A4074. The access arrangement will form a staggered junction with Cox's Lane, including a new kerbed island in the centre of the carriageway. At present the road is single carriageway in each direction with a right turn lane for Cox's Lane in the middle. Public comments and the Parish Council have made clear that a roundabout would be a preferable access arrangement as it would slow the traffic on the A4074 and it would allow for easier access from Cox's Lane.

6.35 Oxfordshire County Council has stated that they do not think a roundabout would be appropriate because:

“The predominant movements at the location of the proposed access are north-south along Portway and will remain so after the proposed introduction of the access. Where, highly asymmetric flows occur at a junction, conversion to a roundabout configuration is rarely a useful intervention and would make egress from Cox's Lane at peak periods, no more simple to achieve.

6.36 As part of their additional information, the applicants submitted an Access Advice Note, which further addresses why a roundabout is not proposed. It explains that the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) states that *“Roundabouts should be designed to match forecast demand. They work most efficiently when vehicular flows are reasonably balanced between the arms...”* In the case of the A4074 the majority of traffic would be flowing north/south. At the AM peak hour only 1 in 43 vehicles travelling

northbound would have to give way vehicles on the roundabout. In the PM peak only 1 in 23 would have to give way. In terms of southbound, only 1 in 39 vehicles on the A4074 would have to give way in the AM peak and only 1 in 55 in the PM peak period. These scenarios include the proposed development.

- 6.37 The note explains that where drivers do not usually have to give way on a roundabout they become more complacent when entering the roundabout and just give a cursory glance. Therefore, when drivers are required to give way to a vehicle already on the roundabout drivers are more likely to brake late or accelerate to get onto the roundabout ahead of the approaching vehicle, thus increasing the chance of collision.
- 6.38 Oxfordshire County Council Highways has also explained that an additional roundabout would slow the flow of traffic at this location. The purpose of the A4074 was to take traffic away from the centre of Wallingford, thereby reducing the impact on the Wallingford Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and so they would not wish to see anything that causes significant additional delays on the A4074 to occur.
- 6.39 Another advantage of the staggered crossing is that it allows for the provision of a signalised pedestrian and cycle crossing of the A4074, which currently does not exist. This would provide a safer pedestrian access for the residents of Crowmarsh Hill to reach the village and the school and would better link the two parts of the village.
- 6.40 In my opinion the proposed junction would improve the current arrangement for residents of Cox's Lane because they would be able to cross each section of the carriageway separately. At present, those wishing to turn right out of Cox's Lane to head northbound may have their access blocked by those entering the dedicated central lane from the southbound direction to turn right into Cox's Lane. Under the proposed junction, those leaving Cox's Lane to travel northbound will have priority over those wishing to turn right into Cox's Lane.
- 6.41 A roundabout wouldn't make it any easier for those wanting to turn right out of Cox's Lane to go northbound to pull out of the junction, as they would still need to wait for a break in the southbound traffic. Admittedly it would require those travelling northbound to give way so it would only require crossing of one lane of traffic; however, the situation would be no worse than at present. Given that such an arrangement would be for the benefit of 100 or so dwellings currently accessed off Cox's Lane and the 100 new dwellings, compared to the overall flows of traffic on the A4074, I do not consider a roundabout is necessary.
- 6.42 Further to this, a roundabout requires a huge amount of land-take and would have a much greater visual impact. Given the AONB location, I do not see that a roundabout would provide a benefit to outweigh the additional harm to the scenic and landscape beauty that it would create. I consider it would be an over-engineered solution. I consider the proposed solution to be in accordance with SOCS Policy TSM1 and SOLP Policy T1.

Design and Layout

- 6.43 The proposed layout has been driven by the need to locate the higher density development in the northern part of the site, closest to the existing village, and lower density in the southern part, to soften the village edge. There is one vehicular access into the site though there is pedestrian access through to the village to the north onto The Street and also to the west onto Old Reading Road. Following pre-application discussions with the Parish Council and with OCC Highways Department it was agreed that there would only be one vehicular access to the site, which would be off the A4074.

This was owing to concern over increasing traffic movements along The Street. The Parish Council has invested in traffic calming in recent years along The Street and it was felt that this would be undermined by a vehicular access onto The Street. Bringing an access out onto the Old Reading Road was also not supported because of the impact on safety of those accessing the Primary School. On this basis, I consider it reasonable for one vehicular access to be provided and I welcome the provision of additional pedestrian/cycle links to the village.

- 6.44 The layout shows one main street running through the development with properties accessed from this street. There is also a lower-grade street leading off the main street to several properties in the western part of the site.
- 6.45 There is a substantial parkland located to the south of the site that will contain two play areas, formal footpaths, infiltration basins and landscape planting. The purpose of the parkland is to provide some green space for the development, to recreate the historic parkland of Newnham Manor and to provide a buffer between the edge of the village and the AONB. This exceeds the amount of open space required for a development of this size.
- 6.46 There is an area of green space proposed on the western side of the development adjacent to the land to be gifted to the school. This will incorporate existing landscaping on the site and will include a play area, which is suitable adjacent to the school. There is a small square of open space centrally in the development, providing a break in the built-up frontage. The landscape buffer along the northern boundary with Newnham Manor is an important feature of the development, helping to mitigate the impact of the development on the Manor. This also includes a Local Area of Play.
- 6.47 The northern part of the site is dominated by rear parking courts, particularly the Affordable Housing in the north western section. This is partly because the dwellings have been designed to front onto the road and partly because the density of the area is higher. Whilst rear parking courts are not the preferred parking solution they are necessary in this development to achieve the higher density in the least sensitive part of the site. The dwellings themselves provide active frontages to the street scene so will provide a positive frontage to the street.
- 6.48 Appropriate provision has been made for bin storage and for refuse collection.
- 6.49 The southern section of the site provides strong street frontage, which will provide a positive street scene along the main entrance to the site. Overall I consider the proposed layout to be acceptable and in accordance with SOCS Policy CSQ3 and SOLP Policies D1, D2, and D6. The AONB Board is also in support of the revised layout.
- 6.50 In terms of the detailed appearance of the houses, this has been carefully considered with input from the AONB Board. The dwellings will all be two storey and of vernacular appearance. Corner dwellings (e.g. Plot 35) generally turn the corner with windows on front and side elevations. Boundaries facing onto public areas are to be brick rather than close boarded fence, which will vastly improve the street scene and create more consistency in the built form.
- 6.51 I am satisfied that the dwellings are of an appropriate appearance and that the proposed materials are suitable to the AONB location.

Density, Mix and Affordable Housing

- 6.52 The site quite clearly has a higher density of housing in the northern section, with more smaller units, and a lower density with fewer, larger properties to the south. The applicants explain that this is a 'landscape led' approach, which has developed with the AONB Board to minimise the impact of the development on the AONB. I agree with the principle of a lower density around the southern edge of the development to soften to impact of the built form as a more appropriate setting for the edge of the village.
- 6.53 Whilst this is appropriate in principle, the extent to which this has been achieved has caused concern for the Council's Housing Officer. There is an overlarge cluster of 30 units in the north western part of the site. It is the Council's Housing Policy to aim for clusters of no more than 15 affordable units to ensure better integration across the site. Also, all of the shared ownership units are clustered together between the rented units and the neighbouring market units. A better integration of rented and shared ownership units is ideally sought.
- 6.54 Officers have requested that the applicant take this advice on board and show some of the affordable units more centrally in the site, adjacent to the spine road. This would break up the cluster and ensure better integration across the site. However, the applicant has worked closely with the AONB Board, who have supported the current layout, which focuses the higher density units in the least sensitive part of the site.
- 6.55 Whilst officers would prefer the affordable units to be broken into smaller clusters, the sensitive nature of the site means that there are other issues to consider and weigh in the balance. The number of affordable units provided meets the required standards and the appropriate mix of tenure. I do not consider that this issue warrants a refusal of planning permission in this case.
- 6.56 The mix of market units is very heavily skewed towards larger units. This has been explained to be for several reasons. The AONB location of the site has necessitated a 'landscape-led' approach to the design to ensure the impact on the AONB is minimised. The higher density development has been kept close to the existing village and to the CRO6 part of the site. The remainder of the site has a lower density, which has necessitated the provision of larger units. As many of the smaller units need to be provided as Affordable Housing in order to meet the required mix, this leaves fewer smaller units available for the market housing.
- 6.57 Supporting information submitted by Savills states that, in their experience of the current market of selling new build developments in this location, larger family homes are of greatest demand. This is particularly the case when offered with benefits that would not be available in more urban, high density locations, namely detached properties with large gardens and parking/garages, which incentivises those purchasers to settle in out-of-town locations. The demand for starter homes of one and two bedrooms would be in less demand in this location as these sorts of homes are preferred by those wanting to be near to regular bus routes/railway stations in walking distance and access to more comprehensive facilities.
- 6.58 The applicant has also suggested that, as well as Affordable Housing and CIL, the site will be providing parkland, highway infrastructure work and land for the school. *"When this is considered against the need to provide low density housing across the site, it has been necessary to increase the number of 4-5 bedroom dwellings in order to generate a viable level of return."*
- 6.59 A viability assessment hasn't been submitted so this claim hasn't been interrogated. Whilst it would be preferable to have more smaller units, I consider the sensitive landscape-led nature of the site carries some weight in this situation. On this basis, I do

not consider the mix of dwellings to constitute a reason for refusal of planning permission.

Heritage Impact

- 6.60 The site is adjacent to Newnham Manor, a Grade II listed building. The Manor House itself is located approximately 50m to the north of the site. The site was historically part of the grounds of Newnham Manor as part of its wider parkland setting. Gradually the estate lands have altered from the once open parkland to agricultural land and a caravan park, albeit this is located outside of the main view cone experienced from the listed building.
- 6.61 Paragraph 129 of the NPPF states that *“Local Planning Authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset)... they should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.”* Therefore the impact of the development on the setting of Newnham Manor needs to be considered in assessing the planning application.
- 6.62 The Conservation Officer raised concerns regarding the scheme as originally submitted, stating that the Heritage Statement had not considered any views into or out of the Manor House and its historic parkland or how these areas contribute to the setting of the main house. Moreover, it was felt that an opportunity had been lost to create a development that responds to the characteristics of the site to provide an enhancement to the setting of the listed building rather than screening the two areas from each other. Further details were requested regarding the proposed landscape buffer between the site and the curtilage of the listed building.
- 6.63 It was concluded that overall, there will be some harm to the listed building as a result of development within its historic open rural setting, which will compromise the relationship of the manor house to its wider lands. The Conservation Officer stated that it is clear that the building was designed to take in the views to the south and as such there will be some loss of significance through development here, in particular as a row of housing does align with the existing break in the mature planting of the Newnham Manor garden.
- 6.64 However, the Conservation Officer considered the harm to be less than substantial with regard to paragraph 134 of the NPPF and with more detail on the proposed landscaping it was considered that the scheme could be further mitigated.
- 6.65 In response to this, the scheme was revised to include further planting along the northern boundary and the housing was pulled away from the boundary. The Conservation Officer felt that this would provide some softening to the visual impact of the development on the listed building but further questioned were asked regarding the proposed lighting of the area and the suitability of the proposed landscaping. Overall, the Conservation Officer stated that the assessment of harm as less than substantial remained and that if the case officer is minded to approve the application, they should be satisfied that the steps taken to mitigate impacts and the public benefits delivered outweigh the harm identified.
- 6.66 The submitted Heritage Assessment states that due to the screening effects of the trees along the southern boundary of Newnham Manor, there will be no visual effects on the setting of the house. The site no longer has any appearance of parkland so that

proposed development will not affect the historic contribution to the significance of the house.

- 6.67 I consider that, whilst the chimneys of the Manor are visible above the trees to the south, the conifer planting associated with the Lister Wilder development largely divorces the house from its wider parkland setting. The proposed landscape planting along the northern boundary will not have a materially different impact than the current planting. In addition, the creation of a parkland to the south of the site will provide some recognition of the historic association of the land with Newnham Manor. Whilst 'less than substantial harm' does not equate to a less than substantial objection, I consider that the proposed benefits of the creation of parkland and the landscape planting to the north go some way to mitigating the harm. In addition to this, the provision of 100 homes, including affordable housing, and the land for school parking are substantial benefits. Overall I consider these substantial public benefits to outweigh the less than substantial harm to the heritage asset and the proposals are in accordance with paragraph 134 of the NPPF SOCS Policy CSEN3 and SOLP Policy CON5.

- 6.68 The site is located in an area of archaeological potential, therefore the County Archaeologist has recommended a stage programme of archaeological investigation will need to be undertaken prior to development. The two conditions recommended have been included in Section 8 of this report. The proposals are therefore in accordance with SOLP Policies CON11, 12 and 13.

Trees and Landscaping

- 6.69 The majority of trees within the site are protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) and the site is located within the AONB. Therefore tree cover is important to the character and visual amenity of the site. The TPO trees are concentrated in the northern part of the site and surround the caravan park. A good many of the TPO trees are on the site boundary though there is a belt running through the north western section of the site and a small number of singular trees within the site. The proposals will see the majority of trees on and around the site retained. Some of the trees within the site will need to be removed but this will be mitigated by additional planting.
- 6.70 The Council's Forestry Officer initially raised concerns regarding the impact of the layout on specific trees. The layout was then revised and the concerns largely addressed. The loss of a specific lime tree was considered not to be acceptable. However, I consider that overall there are minimal concerns regarding tree loss on the site.
- 6.71 The Forestry Officer also raised concern regarding the loss of trees on the eastern side of the Port Way, necessitated by widening the highway. The loss of these trees would create a harsh appearance to the main approach to Crowmarsh Gifford. The Forestry Officer considers that the impact of this widening could be minimised by the plans as shown. However, none of the landscaping plans show how or where the proposed mitigation planting will be planted. The Forestry Officer considers this should be clarified before planning permission is granted and not left for resolution through planning condition.
- 6.72 I appreciate the importance of the trees along the eastern side of the Port Way from a visual amenity perspective and it is entirely necessary for mitigation planting to compensate for the loss of any trees. However, planning conditions provide a mechanism for agreeing such landscaping details. It would be preferable to have the information agreed before a planning permission is granted but it is not always possible or timely to do so.

- 6.73 Overall I consider the tree retention and proposed landscaping to be acceptable. More detailed landscaping information should be provided as part of a planning condition to ensure it is suitable and is maintained correctly. This will ensure the proposals are in accordance with SOCS Policy CSEN1 and SOLP Policies C4, C6 and C10.

Noise Impact

- 6.74 Following the submission and initial consideration of this application changes were made to the A4074 that would bring the road closer to the properties on the eastern side of the road, particularly Sheringham House and an adjacent dwelling approved under application reference P17/S1327/FUL.
- 6.75 The Road Traffic Noise Impact Assessment explains that the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges considers a change in road traffic noise of 3 dBA in the long term to be considered perceptible and advises that such increases in noise levels should be mitigated, if possible. The Assessment of the proposed changes to the A4074 show that the new dwelling and some of the garden of Sheringham House would experience an increase in noise of between 1dBA and 2dBA. As this is below the 3dBA threshold no mitigation measures are suggested as required.
- 6.76 The current fencing along the western boundary of Sheringham House and the new dwelling is not specific acoustic fencing. Should it be necessary, acoustic fencing could be used to minimise road noise for the two dwellings. The road alignment will remain largely at its current distance around Sheringham House. The road will move closer to the new dwelling by around 1.6m. As the dwelling is located to the rear of the plot (east), it will not be close to the road. It is at the southern end of the new dwelling's garden that the road will move to its greatest extent, around 5m. However, at this point, the road will still remain around 6m from the western boundary of the plot. As traffic should be travelling at 30mph at this location, I consider a distance of 6m from the road edge to the garden boundary to be reasonable. Overall I do not think the proposals will cause significant harm to the living amenity of the residents of Sheringham House or the new dwelling and the proposals are in accordance with SOLP Policy EP1.

Air Quality

- 6.77 An Air Quality Assessment has been submitted as additional information as part of the planning application. The Assessment specifically considers the suitability of the site for residential development and assesses the impact of the construction and operation of the development itself on air quality in the surrounding area. It also assesses the impact of the changes to the A4074 on air quality. The report finds that the impact of development on local air quality is not considered to be significant. Mitigation measures are suggested in relation to construction, but these are usual practice for development of this nature. It is also suggested that electrical charging points for each dwelling are included.
- 6.78 In relation to the Wallingford AQMA, the report explains that the Wallingford AQMA is located approximately 1km to the west of the site. Owing to the proximity to the AQMA, impacts on The Street, the road leading to Wallingford, were given particular consideration. The report found that impacts from this development on receptors located on The Street are negligible and no significant impacts are expected on the AQMA.
- 6.79 The Council's Environmental Protection Officer does not agree with a number of assumptions made in the report and considers that the development is going to have

an impact on the Wallingford AQMA. Based on the size and location of the proposed development nearby to an air quality management area, the increased traffic associated with the development will contribute to the pollution within the air quality management area, in order to protect public health from the cumulative impact of developments and the impact on the air quality management area, mitigation is required in line with SODC's developer guidance and national guidance.

- 6.80 Paragraph 124 of the NPPF states that "Planning policies should sustain compliance with and contribute towards EU limit values or national objectives for pollutants, taking into account the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and the cumulative impacts on air quality from individual sites in local areas"
- 6.81 In general, the NPPF seeks to promote and favour a low emission approach to development through:
- discouraging high emission vehicles
 - encouraging low emission vehicles
 - encouraging solutions which support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion
 - promote sustainable transport
 - use of smarter technologies to reduce the requirement to travel
- 6.82 Based on this, the Environmental Protection Officer has suggested planning conditions that require electrical charging points for each dwelling, all residence to be provided with sustainable travel packs, all gas-fired boilers to meet a minimum standard of <40 mgNOx/kWh and that all development should provide some form of secure cycle parking/storage.
- 6.83 In terms of impact on the AQMA, any likely impacts would be from vehicles crossing the bridge into Wallingford. The entrance and exit to the site will be located on the A4074 and it is most likely that traffic entering and existing in that direction will use the ring road rather than journeying through the middle of Wallingford. Driving to Wallingford is most likely to take place where residents want to access the services and facilities in the town. Wallingford Town Centre is around 1km from the site, so it is reasonable to expect that people will walk or cycle into town. In conjunction with the mitigation suggested by the Environmental Protection Officer, which will seek to maximise the sustainability of the site and reduce emissions, I consider the proposals to be acceptable from an air quality perspective and the proposals are in accordance with SOLP Policy EP1.
- 6.84 Cumulative impact of developments around Wallingford and Crowmarsh Gifford on the AQMA has been raised by Wallingford Town Council. Cumulative impact was considered as part of the EIA Screening Opinion for the site.

Ecology

- 6.85 The comments from the Council's Countryside Officer provide a full assessment of the ecological impacts:

"The application site does not contain any statutory or non- statutory nature conservation designations.

Surveys for bats, badgers, reptiles and breeding birds conducted during 2016 have not revealed the presence of any significant populations of protected species. A low population of grass snakes has been identified and an impact avoidance strategy is proposed to ensure the species is not harmed as a result of the proposals.

The main habitats are common and widespread and would not be viewed as a significant constraint to the proposed development. The most important habitats are associated with the woodland boundaries which, for the most part are not impacted by the proposals. Where impacts are predicted appropriate replacement planting opportunities are available which should help offset the losses.

The proposals are unlikely to lead to any indirect impacts on designated sites in the local area or impacts on off site populations of protected species. Policy CSB1 of the Core Strategy and paragraph 109 of the NPPF require development proposals to avoid a net loss in biodiversity and to deliver net gains where possible. The proposals (as shown on the proposed Site Plan) provide sufficient space to allow ecological mitigation and enhancement measures to be incorporated into the scheme. The net result of this provides the opportunity to ensure that the completed scheme can deliver a no net loss for biodiversity in accordance with policy CSB1 of the Core Strategy and paragraph 109 of the NPPF.

Conclusion:

The proposals will not have any significant impacts on important habitats or species. The proposed layout has the potential to ensure that the site can deliver a no net loss for biodiversity. In order to secure appropriate biodiversity enhancements and to ensure that appropriate mitigation is in place to protect the small grass snake population the following conditions should be applied”.

- 6.86 The conditions have been included in Section 8.

Flood risk and surface / foul drainage

- 6.87 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.
- 6.88 As is now standard practice, a detailed scheme for the site would need to incorporate a Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDS) compliant strategy to ensure that all surface water run-off is accommodated within the confines of the site and discharged in a controlled manner. As required by the Council's drainage consultant, the details of this could be secured by condition.
- 6.89 With regard to foul drainage, Thames Water has confirmed that the existing foul sewer network has sufficient capacity to accommodate the proposed foul water discharge from the proposed development.

Neighbour Amenity and Amenity of Future Residents

- 6.90 The proposed development will not directly affect the amenity of many dwellings as there are not many dwellings around the periphery of the site. The three dwellings in the north western corner of the site (Langfield House, No, 112 The Street and Walled Garden) will be bordered by land gifted to the school (which is covered by outline planning permission) and by open space. Plot 100 is 13m to the south east of Walled Garden. The dwellings do not directly line up and the only window at first floor will be a landing window. Therefore there will be no issues with overlooking or loss of privacy as part of this application.
- 6.91 Newnham Manor itself is located around 60m from the nearest dwelling. In addition to this, there will be significant landscape planting along the boundary. The Local Area of

Play will be small scale for very young children and therefore will not be a significant source of noise or nuisance.

- 6.92 The residents of Meadow Cottage and No. 9 Meadow Lane will be separated from the development by Meadow Lane and the existing, dense landscape planting with the nearest dwelling over 20m from the former and nearly 30m from the latter.
- 6.93 Hatchery Cottage will be surrounded by the site. It will mainly be surrounded by open space though there will be a part of it adjacent to Plot 57. The dwelling will be approximately 9.5m to the south east of Hatchery Cottage, therefore I do not consider there will be any issues regarding loss of privacy or loss of light.
- 6.94 Overall the proposals are in accordance with SOLP Policy D4.
- 6.95 The garden sizes for the proposed dwellings largely meet the guidance set out in the Design Guide. However, some of the three bed properties have a garden slightly smaller than 100sqm. I recommend that these dwellings have permitted development rights for extensions and gardens removed.
- 6.96 As each dwelling has a private garden space and also access to ample public open space and as the vast majority of dwellings meet the standard, I consider the garden sizes to be acceptable and in accordance with SOLP D3.

On-site infrastructure to be secured under a legal agreement

- 6.97 On-site infrastructure can be secured through a legal agreement under S106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). Such a legal agreement is currently being drafted. Specific items to be included in the S106 are:
- Provision of, and details relating to, Affordable Housing
 - The transfer of the offered land to the County Council for use for the school.
 - Street naming and numbering - £1340
 - Provision of recycling bins - £17,000
 - Provision and maintenance of Public Art – £30,000
 - Provision and management of open space and play areas by management company
 - Monitoring fee - £4,068 (plus provisions for remedial inspections)
- 6.98 As advised by the County Highways Officer, the following site specific highways contributions would also need to be secured under a S106:
- Public transport contribution - £100,000
 - Bus stop infrastructure - £17,192
 - Travel Plan monitoring fee - £1,240
 - Hardstanding and raised kerbs at Home Farm bus stop – estimated £2,500
 - S278 off-site works and Traffic Regulation Orders
 - Monitoring fee for County Contributions

Off-site contributions pooled under the Community Infrastructure Levy

- 6.99 The Council adopted a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) on 1 April 2016. With the exception of the affordable housing, any additional floor space is usually CIL liable at a rate of £150 per sq. metre (index linked). The money collected can be pooled with contributions from other development sites to fund a wide range of off-site infrastructure to support growth, including schools, transport, community, leisure and health facilities.

- 6.10 If the application were to be approved, under the CIL regulations, the Parish Council would receive a proportion of the CIL money. This could be spent on infrastructure projects that are priorities for the community or could contribute towards strategic infrastructure.

7.0 CONCLUSION AND PLANNING BALANCE

- 7.1 The report describes the proposals in full and assesses the proposals against the relevant material planning considerations. This site is within the AONB and is not within a location where new housing would normally be permitted. It does not comply with the development plan but there are two main considerations which indicate that development should be permitted namely the need for Crowmarsh Gifford C of E Primary School to expand and the need for more market and affordable housing.
- 7.2 In assessing the application, I have had regard to paragraphs 186 and 187 of the NPPF which requires Local Planning Authorities to approach decision-taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development where possible. The three strands of sustainable development are set out at paragraph 7 of the NPPF as economic, social and environmental. All these have been considered throughout the report and my conclusions against each of the strands is summarised below.
- 7.3 In assessing the application, I have had regard to paragraph 115 of the NPPF which requires great weight to be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs. As set out in the report, the proposal would cause localised permanent moderate adverse harm to the AONB landscape and great weight is given to this harm. The detrimental effects on the landscape can be moderated by the retention and enhancement of boundary vegetation. Furthermore, as outlined in the report, the proposals provide measures to improve the environment through the creation of a substantial parkland to the south of the site and improvement of a degraded landscape.
- 7.4 I have given weight to the less than substantial harm to the setting of the of the nearby grade 2 listed manor house and to the loss of trees, including those protected by a Tree Preservation Order. However, I consider that sufficient mitigation can be put in place and that this harm is justified in the public interest.
- 7.5 In economic terms, the proposed housing would provide construction jobs and some local investment during construction, as well as longer term expenditure in the local economy. The proposal would contribute towards the objective to significantly boost the supply of housing, consistent with Para.47 of the NPPF, by providing 100 houses in a high quality environment, including 40% affordable units. Against this, the affordable housing is clustered in the northern part of the site and the market housing mix does not does not meet the need for smaller dwellings identified in the SHMA. I consider that some but limited weight should be afforded to these social and economic benefits as there are sites outside the AONB that could accommodate the housing element of the proposal although that would not enable the expansion of the school or the landscape benefits as referred to above.
- 7.6 Other aspects I consider can be mitigated so that they have a neutral benefit/harm include air quality, noise impact, ecology, flooding and highway impact.
- 7.7 Paragraph 116 of the NPPF provides that major developments should be refused planning permission except in exceptional circumstances. However, I have given weight to the exceptional and enabling circumstances of this particular application.

I consider the harm to the environment and landscape to be moderate but outweighed by the benefits of the development.

- 7.8 I consider that all of the above is finely balanced but that overall, placing all of the relevant material considerations in the balance, but particularly the exceptional circumstances of enabling the expansion of the school and improvements to the landscape, planning permission should be granted.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 **Delegate to the Head of Planning to grant planning permission subject to completion of a Section 106 agreement to cover the matters set out in the report and the following conditions:**

1. Commencement of development – full permission.
2. Commencement of development – outline.
3. Submission of reserved matters application for the school site.
4. Approved plans.
5. Sample materials (all).
6. Removal of permitted development rights for extensions for plots 4, 6, 7, 22, 73, 80, 92.
7. Removal of permitted development rights for outbuildings for plots 4, 6, 7, 22, 73, 80, 92.
8. No conversion of garage accommodation for plot 64.
9. Submission of details of landscaping including hard surfacing and boundary treatment.
10. Landscape management plan.
11. Detailed tree protection.
12. Lighting details.
13. Air quality.
14. Contamination phased risk assessment.
15. Contamination remediation strategy.
16. Biodiversity enhancement strategy.
17. In accordance with reptile mitigation and enhancement strategy.
18. Restricted construction hours.
19. Sustainable drainage system.
20. New vehicular access.
21. New estates roads.
22. Estates accesses, driveways and turning areas.
23. Construction management plan.
24. Cycle parking facilities.
25. Roads and footpaths prior to occupation.
26. Residential travel plan to be revised.
27. Travel information pack to be submitted.
28. A Safer Routes to School Study to be conducted
29. Land to be aside for the school in perpetuity.
30. Archaeological written scheme of investigation.
31. Programme of archaeological evaluation and mitigation.

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