

<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	<a href="#">P17/S3711/O</a>
<b>APPLICATION TYPE</b>	OUTLINE
<b>REGISTERED</b>	19.10.2017
<b>PARISH</b>	LEWKNOR
<b>WARD MEMBER</b>	Caroline Newton
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Rainier Developments Ltd
<b>SITE</b>	Land at Watlington Road, Lewknor
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Erection of up to 40 homes, associated open space, local area of play and other infrastructure, with all matters reserved save for that of access. (as amended by indicative layout plans and supporting information received 2 January 2018)
<b>OFFICER</b>	Katherine Canavan

1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The application has been referred to the Planning Committee because the recommendation conflicts with the views of the Parish Council. The objections raised are as follows:

- An estate of houses outside the built limits of the village is contrary to policy, and detrimental to the landscape character.
- Overdevelopment, and contrary to policy CSR1.
- Inappropriate development in a smaller village, which is not classed as sustainable, and lacks public transport links or safe cycle routes. Future residents would be over-reliant on private transport to reach services.
- Out-of-keeping with the character of the conservation area.
- Lack of detail on mitigating surface water run-off.
- The introduction of double yellow lines would damage the landscape setting and displace existing resident parking.
- Lack of archaeological information.

1.2 Overview of site:

The undeveloped site is located on the southern edge of Lewknor and is currently used as agricultural land. The triangular site is bordered by residential development on two of its three sides – Watlington Road and Hill Road, and the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) runs up to the B4009 to the south of the site. Services in the village include a primary school, public park, village hall, pub and the Oxford Tube / London bus service.

1.3 Area designations and site constraints:

- The site lies within the immediate setting of the Chilterns AONB and south-east of Lewknor Conservation Area with a short stretch of the site boundary close to the Conservation Area.
- The Grade II listed buildings associated with Home Farm are located 50m from the site boundary.
- The national trail, the Ridgeway, is 700-900m to the east of the site. Aston Rowant National Nature Reserve lies 900-1200m to the east.
- The M40 runs to the east of Lewknor about 500m from the site. The verges along the B4009 are currently used for parking to access the Oxford Tube into London via the M40.

1.4 A Location plan of the site is **attached** at Appendix 1.

2.0 **PROPOSAL**

2.1 The applicant seeks outline planning permission for a residential development of up to 40 homes with associated open space, local area of play and other infrastructure.

The proposal has been reduced from 50 units to 40 units further to pre-application advice.

The outline application considers access and the principle of development. Landscaping, design (and materials), layout and scale (and height / footprint) will be considered at the reserved matters stage.

2.2 Reduced copies of the plans accompanying the application are **attached** at Appendix 2. Full copies of the plans and consultation responses are available for inspection on the Council's website at [www.southoxon.gov.uk](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk).

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1

Lewknor Parish Council	<p>Objection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An estate of houses outside the built limits of the village is contrary to policy, and detrimental to the landscape character.</li> <li>• Overdevelopment, and contrary to policy CSR1.</li> <li>• Inappropriate development in a smaller village, which is not classed as sustainable, and lacks public transport links or safe cycle routes. Future residents would be over-reliant on private transport to reach services.</li> <li>• Out-of-keeping with the character of the conservation area</li> <li>• Lack of detail on mitigating surface water run-off</li> <li>• The introduction of double yellow lines would damage the landscape setting and displace existing resident parking.</li> <li>• Lack of archaeological information.</li> </ul>
Archaeological services (OCC)	No strong views, subject to conditions
Chilterns AONB Conservation Board	<p>Objection:</p> <p>The number of units, the proposed layout and design of housing, the lack of opportunity to incorporate trees into the site layout, the impact of light spill on dark skies, proposed materials, extension of development beyond the south-western and south-eastern built edges of the village. The proposal is a 5 year housing land supply proposal.</p>
Conservation Officer	<p>No strong views at outline stage.</p> <p>Changes required to materials to allow integration with heritage environment – to be addressed at reserved matters stage.</p>
Countryside Officer	<p>No strong views, following receipt of biodiversity calculation.</p> <p>Biodiversity offsetting contribution to be secured by condition.</p>
Drainage Engineer	No strong views, subject to conditions
Forestry Officer	<p>No strong views at outline stage.</p> <p>Changes required to layout to incorporate suitable landscaping – to be addressed at reserved matters stage.</p>

Health & Housing – Environmental Protection (noise)	No strong views, subject to the implementation of the mitigation measures identified in the Noise Impact Assessment and Air Quality Assessment
Health & Housing – Air quality	[Reference pre-application response] No objections to the principle of development (subject to conditions). A scheme of mitigation will be required, informed by the air quality assessment, as per South Oxfordshire Developers Guidance – Air Quality. Example: Vehicle charging points.
Highways and transport (OCC)	No objection, subject to conditions, and legal agreement to secure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informal crossing on the Watlington Road</li> <li>• Upgrading the kerb to double height HB2 type along the B4009 to restrict vehicles from parking on the footway</li> <li>• Upgrading of the footway to at least 1.5m in width between the east and west bound bus stops on the B4009</li> <li>• Traffic Regulation Orders for double yellow lines at the site access and at the informal pedestrian crossing on Watlington Road</li> </ul>
Housing Development	Following receipt of updated affordable housing mix, no strong views.
Landscape Consultant (on behalf of SODC)	Objection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expansion of village to the south-west and south-east beyond the visual limits of the village - Plots 40 and 27/28 in particular.</li> <li>• The maturing of the planting will not mitigate the harm arising from the proposed extension of the village, loss of open pasture, nor the loss of views to Beacon Hill from Watlington Road.</li> <li>• The most affected part would be at the junction with Watlington Road where the houses would be visible in the middle ground where no built form is visible at the present.</li> <li>• I agree with the LVIA that mature boundaries do enclose this site and separate it from the wider AONB.</li> <li>• It is also more influenced by the settlement than the adjoining open landscapes, with settlement on two of its three sides.</li> <li>• The site relates far more to the settlement and is of a different character to the wider landscape of the AONB and the receiving rural landscape. A moderate to minor effect is therefore a fair assessment.</li> </ul>
Urban Design Officer	No objection at outline stage. The indicative plan shows how the site could accommodate up to 40 dwellings. Some concerns raised regarding design and layout – to be addressed at reserved matters stage.

3.2 Comments were received from 95 local households and are summarised below. The full responses can be viewed on the Council’s website at [www.southoxon.gov.uk](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk).

Principle of development in smaller villages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extends beyond the built limits of the village</li> <li>• Inappropriate level of growth for a smaller village</li> </ul>
--	---

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The development will have a negative social and economic impact on the village</li> <li>• It will set a disastrous precedent for the district</li> <li>• No housing need in this area – risk that the houses will remain empty and a blight on the landscape</li> <li>• The level of growth is contrary to the emerging local plan</li> </ul>
Infrastructure, services and facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The local bus service stops a good distance from the village and is not easily accessible</li> <li>• The school has little additional capacity and no scope for expansion</li> <li>• Inadequate utilities and sewerage network in the village, resulting in over-flowing drains</li> <li>• New residents will have to drive to work, shops and essential services</li> <li>• Additional pressure on doctors and dentists services</li> <li>• Additional pressure on broadband network</li> </ul>
Impact on AONB and landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The development would damage the landscape quality of the AONB, and conservation area</li> <li>• Loss of a greenfield site and pasture land</li> <li>• Increased traffic will increase pollution and noise in AONB</li> <li>• Streetlighting would harm the character of the AONB</li> <li>• The development would be highly visible from the surrounding area</li> </ul>
Overdevelopment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a recognition that Lewknor will have to take some development, and has been proactive with recent development opportunities.</li> <li>• The proposal is however disproportionate to the scale of the village and would extend beyond the built limits.</li> </ul>
Impact on neighbouring occupants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Because of the steep topography of the site, the new houses will create an overbearing relationship with existing properties.</li> <li>• Overlooking to properties along Watlington Road, and loss of daylight</li> <li>• Private and family life encompasses not only the home but also surroundings – development of the site would detrimentally impact private and family life</li> <li>• Disturbance from headlights from residents using the new access into houses opposite, which sit at a lower level</li> <li>• Noise and disturbance from the busy road would affect future occupants</li> <li>• The visual and noise disturbance from the new dwellings will be very disruptive</li> </ul>
Parking displacement and highway safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new access on the southern edge would encourage commuters to park in the village and the new development.</li> <li>• The existing parking problems associated with the Oxford Tube and Airport bus would be exacerbated.</li> <li>• Increase in traffic on narrow roads in the village and increased risk to highway safety</li> <li>• There is already substantial amount of heavy traffic in and around Lewknor and specifically at its junction due to commuters using the Oxford Tube.</li> <li>• Pressure on the main junction, which is already susceptible to accidents</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The introduction of double yellow lines will impact local residents, not commuters, and the footpaths in the development will only serve commuters</li> </ul>
Character and integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor integration resulting in a satellite development</li> <li>• Does not respect the existing settlement pattern</li> <li>• The development does not represent natural evolution of the village, and will dramatically alter the character</li> <li>• The development is proposed at the highest point of the village where it will both dominate views of the village, and block out the views of the Ridgeway to the current residents on Watlington Road and Lewknor Close.</li> <li>• A separate play space will divide the children in the village and not support effective integration</li> <li>• Insufficient mechanism to secure high quality design if site is sold on – the new landowners will seek to change the permission, if granted.</li> </ul>
Flood risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Because the houses would be built on a hill, water will be displaced to the existing properties, resulting in flooding</li> <li>• Existing flood and drainage issues in the village will worsen</li> <li>• Insufficient drainage measures in the form of a 9m attenuation pond</li> <li>• Loss of natural drainage land by paving over the site</li> </ul>
Ecology and biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant pressure on ecology</li> <li>• New street-lighting would disturb wildlife</li> </ul>
Additional matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amended plans do not address residents' concerns</li> <li>• A new play area is not required – it would be better to improve the existing play area.</li> <li>• Loss of views towards the Chiltern Hills (AONB)</li> <li>• Affordable housing not at a price that will benefit first-time buyers</li> <li>• Disruption from construction traffic</li> <li>• Insufficient data in traffic survey</li> <li>• The development does not present any community benefits and would not serve to enhance the village</li> <li>• Increased levels of crime</li> </ul>

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 [P17/S2296/PEJ](#) – Pre-application response provided (01/09/2017)  
Erection of up to 50 dwellings, public open space, locally equipped area of play, sustainable urban drainage and access from Watlington Road.

[P75/N0010/O](#) - Refused (21/03/1975)  
ERECTION OF DWELLINGHOUSES AND GARAGES WITH ROADS AND ANCILLARY SERVICES.

[P55/M0915](#) - Refused (23/02/1956)  
ERECTION OF PRIVATE HOUSES AND ACCESSES.

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 **South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (SOCS) Policies 2012**

CS1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development

CSS1 - The overall strategy

CSR1 - Housing in villages

CSEN1 - Landscape  
CSEN3 - Historic environment  
CSB1 - Conservation and improvement of biodiversity  
CSH1 - Amount and distribution of housing  
CSH2 - Housing density  
CSH3 - Affordable housing  
CSH4 - Meeting housing needs  
CSQ3 - Design

**5.2 South Oxfordshire Local Plan policies 2011**

CON7 - Proposals affecting a conservation area  
D1 - Principles of good design  
D2 - Safe and secure parking for vehicles and cycles  
D3 - Outdoor amenity area  
D4 - Reasonable level of privacy for occupiers  
D6 - Community safety  
H4 - Proposals for houses  
R2 - Provision of play areas on new housing development  
R6 - Public open space in new residential development  
EP4 - Impact on water resources  
EP6 - Sustainable drainage  
EP7 - Impact on ground water resources  
D10 - Waste Management  
C6 - Maintain & enhance biodiversity  
C8 - Adverse affect on protected species  
T1 - Safe, convenient and adequate highway network for all users  
T2 - Unloading, turning and parking for all highway users  
G2 - Protect district from adverse development  
G3 - Locational strategy  
G4 - Development in the countryside and edge of settlement

**5.3 South Oxfordshire Emerging Local Plan 2011-2033**

The draft plan has reached 'Regulation 19' stage and consultation events took place in November 2017 to check the soundness and legislative compliance of the plan. The public responses from this consultation are currently being compiled. Once Regulation 19 is complete, an updated draft Local Plan is to be submitted to the Secretary of State, which is anticipated to be Spring 2018. Although the plan is well advanced, the draft policies in the Emerging Local Plan carry limited weight as they are yet to scrutinized at examination or formally adopted.

**5.4 Neighbourhood Plan policies**

The neighbourhood plan area was designated on 18th October 2017, and the project group are currently in the process of gathering evidence and drafting the plan. At this early stage, no weight can be given to the plan.

**5.5 Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents**

South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2016 (SODG 2016)

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

**National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)**

**6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 The key planning considerations in determining the application are:
- Principle of residential development
  - Impact on the adjoining area of outstanding national beauty
  - Policy weighting

- Sustainable development
- Housing mix and affordable housing
- Highway safety and access
- Urban Design
- Impact on neighbouring occupants
- Additional matters
- Financial contributions and legal agreements
- Reserved matters (Scale, design, landscaping, site layout)

6.2 **Principle of residential development**

6.2i 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.

Policy CSR1 identifies that housing in smaller villages, such as Lewknor, would be limited to individual infill development on sites of up to 0.2ha (equivalent to 5-6 houses).

6.2ii In terms of the district's overarching housing policy, the principle of the scale of development proposed, i.e. up to 40 dwellings, is contrary to core strategy and local plan policy, as Lewknor is not identified as a settlement that would be suitable for this level of development.

6.2iii However, the Council cannot currently demonstrate a five year supply of housing land and therefore the weight afforded to the above policies is reduced. This is considered in section 6.4 of the report.

6.3 **Impact on the adjoining area of outstanding national beauty**

6.3i Policy CS1 of the SOCS repeats the presumption in favour of sustainable development in paragraph 14 of the NPPF. It states that permission will be granted where relevant policies in the Development Plan are out of date unless specific policies in the Framework indicate that development should be restricted. Paragraph 115 of the Framework states that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and AONBs, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. This is one of the restrictive policies mentioned in footnote 9 of the NPPF. Policy CSEN1 of the SOCS gives high priority to the conservation and enhancement of AONBs and requires that regard be had to their settings.

While the site is not within the AONB, its proximity to the sensitive landscape and the likelihood of impact on the landscape setting, is a key consideration for any development on the site. The site is contained on two sides by existing settlement and on the third by the Chilterns AONB and the busy B4009. I agree with the landscape officer that the site is well contained and relates far more to the settlement, being of a different character to the wider landscape of the AONB.

6.3ii In considering impact on the AONB I have had regard to the concerns raised by the Chilterns Conservation Board and the landscape consultant acting on behalf of SODC. Many of these concerns relate to the detail of the proposal: the proposed layout and design of housing, the lack of opportunity to incorporate trees into the site layout, the impact of light spill on dark skies and proposed materials. While these points are relevant to the design, layout and materials, these would be considered at reserved matters stage. Furthermore, the applicant has confirmed that, subject to agreement from Highways, no street lighting is required within the development. The

landscape impact that can be considered at outline stage, and which would be a direct impact of a proposal of 40 dwellings (with access), would not harm the AONB or landscape character.

Similarly, the speculative nature of the proposal constitutes an overarching policy matter, which is addressed in section 6.5.

6.3iii Concerns identified by the landscape consultant, and which relate to outline or 'principle' considerations, are as follows:

- From footpath 277/22 much of the proposed development would lie behind the development on Watlington Road but the roofs would be visible rising above it.
- Of greater concern is the perception of the village expanding beyond its current visual limits to the south-west of the last house on Watlington Road, into the middle ground of the view to Beacon Hill. Plots 40 and 27/28 are beyond the perceived limit of the village.
- The maturing of the proposed planting will not mitigate the harm arising from the proposed extension of the village westwards beyond its current limits; the loss of open pasture; nor the loss of views to Beacon Hill from Watlington Road.
- The most affected part would be at the junction with Watlington Road where the houses would be visible in the middle ground where no built form is visible at the present.

In terms of impact on the wider landscape, the landscape consultant has advised: *'I agree with the LVIA that mature boundaries do enclose this site and separate it from the wider AONB. It is also more influenced by the settlement than the adjoining open landscapes, with settlement on two of its three sides. The site relates far more to the settlement and is of a different character to the wider landscape of the AONB and the receiving rural landscape. A moderate to minor effect is therefore a fair assessment.'*

6.3iv In making a planning judgement on these matters, I have considered the impact of the existing dwellings on Watlington Road, the extent of the proposed development and the proposed landscaping, which is shown on the photomontages. The development would be visible from Beacon Hill but would be set within the village grouping of Lewknor and against the backdrop of the 'white houses' on Watlington Road, and with the M40 in the foreground. Plots 40 and 27/28 would be visible on the approach to the village, and there would be a change to the appearance of the site. However, the enclosed site would round off the edge of the village, and would be softened by natural screening. The change in appearance of the site is acknowledged, but would not in itself alter the landscape character or harm the sensitive landscape character of the AONB. With reference to the long-reaching views, there is the opportunity to integrate the development effectively in the wider landscape and village setting through appropriate materials, layout revisions, landscaping and design – again, at reserved matters stage.

6.3v For these reasons, I am satisfied that the introduction of up to 40 dwellings on the proposal site would continue to conserve the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB, and the detail of the proposal, which will assist in mitigating any residual impact, can be appropriately managed at reserved matters stage.

#### 6.4 **Policy weighting**

6.4i Although the development would be visible from the AONB, it would not result in harm to the AONB or a significant change to the wider landscape, and there is no conflict with paragraph 115 of the NPPF. Having established that the development would not

be contrary to any restrictive policies, the decision-making process should continue in line with the requirements of paragraph 14 of the NPPF.

- 6.4ii Paragraph 14 of the Framework indicates that where 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.

In light of the council's lack of five year supply of deliverable housing sites, the 'tilted balance' set out in paragraph 49 of the NPPF is engaged. Policies CSS1, CSR1 and CSH1 of the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (SOCS) are not up-to-date, and carry reduced weight.

*Para. 49: Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. 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.*

- 6.4iii In establishing whether the principle of development is acceptable, I have afforded weight to the presumption in favour of sustainable development (social, environmental and economic) set out in Paragraph 14 of the NPPF, and carried out the tilted balance act, to ascertain whether there is significant and demonstrable harm that outweighs its benefits.

#### 6.5 **Sustainable development**

- 6.5i Paragraph 55 of the NPPF sets out that to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities such as where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.

- 6.5ii Lewknor is classified as a smaller village in the Core Strategy. The site is on the edge of the built limits of the settlement but within a reasonable distance of the village's facilities: primary school, public park, village hall, pub, bus service. The proposal provides for an improved pathway on the southern edge of the site to the Oxford Tube bus stop and a new crossing on Watlington Road.

- 6.5iii It is acknowledged that the pre-application response to the proposal sets out concerns over the sustainability of the development, given the limited services in the village and reliance on private vehicles to reach wider services. Future residents would be largely reliant on private transport to travel to work, local shops and secondary school education, unless travelling directly to Oxford or London. However, paragraph 55 of the NPPF recognises that this relationship can serve to enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities and that development in one village may support services in a village nearby. This is the case at Lewknor where future residents would have access to Watlington, Princes Risborough, Thame or Oxford for wider services, and as set out in national policy, this interdependency should carry weight in terms of sustainability in such locations.

- 6.5iv Since pre-application advice was provided, the council also has the benefit of the appeal decision at Long Wittenham (Planning reference: P16/S1124/O) to help inform its latest position on residential development in the context of smaller villages. This case considered the matter of sustainability in a smaller village located close to wider services in Clifton Hampden and Didcot. The level of services in the settlement are comparable with Lewknor, although Lewknor is better connected by public transport and Long Wittenham is no longer served by a bus route.

The appeal inspector concluded:

*22. Long Wittenham is a relatively small village with a primary school, a preschool, village hall, public house, restaurant and sports field and pavilion, which are accessible to villagers on foot.*

*23. The village is not directly served by buses and the roads from the village to Clifton Hampden and Didcot do not have continuous lit footways between the settlements.*

*70. The appeal proposal would bring forward up to 36 dwellings which would make a meaningful contribution to addressing the significant shortfall in housing in the District. 40 per cent of these dwellings would be affordable homes. These constitute significant benefits.*

*71. In addition, the appeal scheme would provide economic benefits during construction and through the increase in population which would arise.*

*72. Whilst I give great weight to the conservation of the heritage assets, the total of harm to the heritage assets in terms of the Framework is outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal.*

*74. Set against this harm are the benefits of the appeal scheme already outlined.*

*Overall the adverse impacts identified above do not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the social, economic and environmental benefits of the appeal scheme.*

*Consequently the proposal would represent sustainable development as defined in the Framework, and, material considerations indicate that planning permission should be granted for development that is not in accordance with the development plan.*

[Appeal decision, dated 3 January 2018, Ref. 3169755]

- 6.5v In terms of the scale of the proposal, and the planning matters considered by the inspector, there is a clear comparison between the two sites, the site constraints, level of sustainability and the scale of the outline developments. For this reason I have factored the inspector's assessment and conclusions into the decision-making process. In the interest of consistency across the district, planning weight must be afforded to the elements of appeal decisions which are directly comparable with the case before Members.
- 6.5vi Taking into account the social and economic benefits of the scheme, the level of services and connectivity with nearby larger villages and towns, and weighing up any harm which may outweigh the benefits (considered later within the report), I am satisfied that the development is sustainable and recommend approval on this basis. Furthermore, the provision of 16 affordable dwellings towards the district's need for housing provides a social and economic benefit, and the total 40 dwellings would contribute meaningfully to the 5 year housing land supply.
- 6.6 **Housing mix and affordable housing**
- 6.6i Policy CSH3 requires schemes with a net gain of 11 or more homes to provide 40% of the total number of dwellings on the site as affordable housing. The development comprises a mix of 1-, 2- and 3-bed affordable units, totalling 16. This meets the Housing Development Team's requirements, and responds appropriately to recent Welfare Reform, the under-occupancy charge, and a steer away from the number of one unit dwellings, which limit the opportunity for families to grow.
- 6.6ii The mix, to be secured by s106, is set out below, but with the flexibility to take into account local market conditions, the character of the location, and any updated housing market evidence. The proposal for several bungalows on the site (as indicated on the parameter plan) responds to a need for a mix of accommodation across the district, and also serves as mitigation in terms of lower buildings on the edge of the site and closest to areas of open landscape.

	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed (5 person)	Total
<b>Affordable</b>	2	7	3	12
<b>Shared</b>		3	1	4
<b>Market housing</b>	24 - in conformity with SHMA			24
				40 units

6.7 **Highway safety and access**

6.7i Policy T1 of the SOLP requires that developments provide for:

- a safe and convenient access to the highway network;
- be accessible by public transport and have a safe walking route to nearby bus stops (or new bus stops and appropriate infrastructure should be provided);
- and be served by an adequate road network which can accommodate traffic without creating traffic hazards or damage to the environment.

6.7ii In forming an assessment of the highway impact, the Highway Officer has considered the Transport Assessment, data from the automated traffic count (two surveys), the TRICS online database (trip generation) and junction capacity modelling (Watlington Road and the junction of Watlington Road and the B4009). The results confirm that the existing junction would continue to operate within capacity with the proposed development in place. The scheme would have no significant impact on its operation in terms of queues or delays. The Highway Officer is satisfied from the work carried out, that the proposed development would not represent a severe impact upon the surrounding highway network.

6.7iii The site is located on the western edge of the village of Lewknor, within a reasonable walking distance to local amenities. To reduce the number of vehicular trips by future occupants (directly associated with the development), and in the interest of highway safety, work will be required to improve footways and a provide crossing. The following measures will be required:

- Informal crossing on the Watlington Road
- Upgrading the kerb to double height HB2 type along the B4009 to restrict vehicles from parking on the footway
- Upgrading of the footway to at least 1.5m in width between the east and west bound bus stops on the B4009
- Traffic Regulation Orders for double yellow lines at the site access and at the informal pedestrian crossing on Watlington Road

6.8 **Urban Design**

By virtue of the indicative plan, the applicant indicates how the site could accommodate up to 40 dwellings with associated open space and landscaping. However, the layout in its current form would require further work in urban design terms, as indicated in section 6.12.

These particular matters relate to the layout, materials and overall design of the scheme, as opposed to the principle. Further to the revisions made during the application process, as shown on the indicative plan, the applicant has agreed to continue working with the Urban Design Officer to address the urban design matters and layout. I am satisfied that these design matters can be resolved at reserved matter stage. The anticipated urban design and layout changes would not undermine the deliverability of 'up to 40 dwellings' or the access and amount of open space, which have been established on the parameter plans at outline stage.

**6.9 Impact on neighbouring occupants**

The parameter plans indicate a sizeable separation distance between the existing dwellings and the proposed developable area (50m+). The amenity of existing occupants is safeguarded by natural screening within this buffer zone and in neighbouring gardens. Even taking into account level changes, dwellings on Watlington Road would have a separation distance of 45m+ across the public highway and will continue to be screened by hedging. For this reason, the level of privacy experienced by existing occupants would not be compromised by residential development on the site.

In light of the separation distances and the buffer screening, the proposed 1- and 2-storey heights of the proposed dwellings would not impact the amenity of nearby residents in terms of light and outlook.

**6.10 Additional matters**

**6.10i Ecology and biodiversity**

Policy CSB1 of the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy and paragraph 109 of the NPPF call for planning proposals to achieve a net gain for biodiversity. The biodiversity calculation for the existing habitats on-site and the proposed development establishes a slight loss. The impact can be appropriately mitigated through an offsetting contribution, which will be used to create new habitats elsewhere in the district.

**6.10ii Impact on trees and landscape features**

The Forestry Officer has raised no objection to the development at outline stage. The trees within this site are not protected by a tree preservation order or a conservation area. The proposed access will require the removal of a small section of the hedgerow to provide vision splays, but can be appropriately offset through a suitable landscaping scheme as reserved matters stage.

**6.10iii Heritage and conservation**

There are no heritage designations within the site but the Lewknor Conservation Area boundary lies 10 metres to the northeast of the site, encompassing most of the curtilage of Home Farm which is a grade II listed building. The site itself does not directly contribute to the significance of the conservation area and setting of listed building but forms a backdrop to these heritage assets. The development, which would be visible from the conservation area, has the potential to alter the way these assets are experienced, but this is largely dependent on the materials used. No heritage objection has been raised and the details of the exact material palette can be satisfactorily addressed at reserved matters stage.

**6.10iv Drainage and flood risk**

Advice has been sought from the council's drainage engineer. The following measures will be required to ensure the site drains effectively, there is no displacement of water, and neighbouring properties are not at any increased risk of flooding:

- On-site Foul Drainage details to be submitted by condition
  - Sustainable drainage details, based on the Travis Parker Flood Risk Assessment of October 2017. (Site investigation information, details of future maintenance and management of SUDS features etc).
  - Liaison with Thames Water to secure adoption of drainage measures
- These matters are to be secured by condition and do not serve as a constraint to development.

**6.11 Financial contributions and legal agreements**

6.11i **S106 obligations**

Work has commenced drawing up the legal agreement for the development, which will cover the matters in the table below. I consider that these contributions / obligations accord with policy CSI1 of the SOCS, which requires new development to be supported by appropriate on and off-site infrastructure and services. They accord with the relevant tests in the NPPF as they are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, are directly related to the development, and are fair and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

6.1ii The requirements requested by the Housing Development Team, the county Highways Team, and as listed in the South Oxfordshire 'S106 financial contributions and fees' schedule, are as follows:

Affordable Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 40% of 40 units:</li> <li>• 16 affordable units (mix of affordable rent / shared ownership, and mix as set out in section 6.6)</li> </ul>
Highway safety improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informal crossing on the Watlington Road</li> <li>• Upgrading the kerb to double height HB2 type along the B4009 to restrict vehicles from parking on the footway</li> <li>• Upgrading of the footway to at least 1.5m in width between the east and west bound bus stops on the B4009</li> <li>• Traffic Regulation Orders for double yellow lines at the site access and at the informal pedestrian crossing on Watlington Road</li> </ul>
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of open space – In conformity with green infrastructure parameter plan</li> <li>• Management of open space</li> </ul>
Play space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of 'Local Area for Play'</li> <li>• Management of play space</li> </ul>
Biodiversity offsetting contribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In accordance with biodiversity calculation</li> <li>• To be secured by condition</li> </ul>
Public art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On-site provision to the value of £12,000 as per SODC 'S106 financial contributions and fees'</li> </ul>
Street naming, waste collection, and legal agreement monitoring fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £8362 as per SODC 'S106 financial contributions and fees'</li> </ul>

6.11iii **Community Infrastructure Levy**

The council adopted a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) on 1 April 2016. Based on the current Regulation 123 list, contributions towards education, health, sports / leisure, community and cultural facilities and general highways infrastructure would be collected through CIL. With the exception of the affordable housing, any new build floor space is CIL liable at a rate of £156 per sqm (as per indexing figure January 2017). The floor area would be calculated at reserved matters stage, when the details of the development are provided.

6.12 **Reserved matters**

The following matters will require further detail at reserved matters stage, to be secured by condition. Relevant consultee advice has clarified the detailed matters

that sit outside the remit of outline matters but will need to be addressed at reserved matters stage:

Character and appearance

- Details of materials and finish will be required, having regard to the character, appearance and heritage significance of the conservation area and adjacent listed buildings.
- Details of on-site public art to be submitted

Landscaping

- A more spacious layout is recommended to accommodate longterm planting and to soften the character of the development.

Layout

- A layout which encourages connectivity and intervisibility between the village and the new development is recommended.
- A revised layout should be informed by the existing settlement pattern, grain and historic evolution of the village. This would assist in integrating the new development with the character of the village and avoid an overly urban addition, which risks appearing 'detached'.
- It would also respond more positively to the open landscape character beyond the site boundary, which is of particular importance as the development would form the new edge to the village, and be viewed within the setting of the AONB.
- The footway that runs around the edge of the site does not run continuously through the orchard section at the south western corner of the site, which will be a hindrance to some users of the footway.
- Mitigation measures will need to be designed into the internal layout, to prevent vehicles parking in the scheme for the Oxford Tube.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

7.1i **I recommend that outline planning permission is granted for the following reasons:**

7.1ii Whilst the site is located on the edge of the built up limits of a smaller settlement, which would ordinarily be unable to support such a level of development, in light of the district's 5 year housing supply, the development has also been considered in light of the site's sustainability, relevant restrictive policies and whether there is other harm that outweighs the benefits.

7.1iii Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs, and this planning consideration constitutes a restrictive policy. Although the development would be visible from the AONB and some change to the landscape has been identified, the development would continue to conserve the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONBs and would not result in harm to the AONB or a significant change to the wider landscape. As such, there is no conflict with paragraph 115 of the NPPF.

7.1iv Having established that the development would not be contrary to any restrictive policies, the decision-making process should continue in line with the requirements of paragraph 14 of the NPPF. Both the sustainability of the village and the district's need for housing are material considerations that weigh positively in the planning balance.

7.1v Taking into account the social and economic benefits of the scheme, the level of services and connectivity with nearby larger villages and towns, and weighing up any harm which may outweigh the benefits, I am satisfied that the development is

sustainable and recommend approval on this basis. Furthermore, the provision of 16 affordable dwellings towards the district's need for housing provides a social and economic benefit, and the total 40 dwellings would contribute meaningfully to the 5 year housing land supply.

- 7.1vi Sufficient detail has been provided to establish that 'up to 40 dwellings' and the access can be accommodated on the site. Taking into account the sustainable nature of the development, and having concluded that these benefits are not outweighed by any harm, I recommend the application for approval.

## 8.0 RECOMMENDATION

To authorise the head of planning to grant planning permission subject to:

### 8.1i A. The completion of a s106 agreement securing:

1. Affordable housing.
2. Highway safety improvements.
3. Open space.
4. Play space.
5. Public art.
6. Street naming, waste collection, and legal agreement monitoring fees.

### 8.1ii B. Subject to the following conditions:

1. Commencement - outline with reserved matters [appearance, landscaping, layout, scale].
2. Market split - in general conformity with Strategic Housing Marking Assessment.
3. Archaeological working brief.
4. Archaeological watching brief and findings report.
5. Details of vehicular access.
6. Details of pedestrian accesses.
7. Off-site highways works (ref. section 6.11i).
8. Details of visibility splays.
9. Construction traffic management plan.
10. Travel information pack.
11. Biodiversity enhancement plan and contribution.
12. Details of electrical vehicle charging points.
13. Implementation of mitigation identified in the noise impact assessment and air quality assessment.
14. Foul drainage details.
15. SuDs drainage details.
16. Details of any lighting to be agreed.

**Author:** Katherine Canavan  
**Contact No:** 01235 422600  
**Email:** [planning@southoxon.gov.uk](mailto:planning@southoxon.gov.uk)

This page is intentionally left blank