

Ladygrove East, P19/S0720/O

Questions and Answers for clarification to the Planning Committee 16 March 2022

Q1: Will there be a management fee charged to residents?

In the first instance the open space will be offered to the town council and a commuted sum for maintenance would need to be agreed. This approach aligns with the outcome of the Council's agreed Strategic Property Review.

If the town council decline the developers would revert to a management company, and a service charge would be levied to Ladygrove East (LE) residents. Hence the governance and management of the open space needs to be agreed before any occupations. The Council does not become involved in setting the management fee although we would ensure that the affordable housing is not unduly burdened. Normally, as part of the governance, representatives on behalf of residents are involved in fee setting and management decisions.

Education:

Q2: OCC's preference in February 2021 was for large schools. Is this still the position?

OCC have confirmed that to ensure long term financial sustainability, their preference is for creating schools which can be 2 form entry for primary and at least 6 form entry for secondary, although in many cases these have to grow gradually in line with population, so may start as smaller schools.

The smallest new schools that could operate would be 1 form entry for primary and 4 form entry for secondary, but OCC would only usually open this size of school either because there is the expectation of future growth, or because the scale and distribution of population growth gives no other realistic solution.

Q3: Has thought been given to how families will access the primary and secondary schools on foot or by bike? The Ladygrove perimeter road has a 50 mph speed limit so if the children from Ladygrove East are having to go to school in Ladygrove NE these journeys are likely to be made in the car. Has there been sufficient consideration given to car drop off space in the Ladygrove NE school plans?

Pupils will be able to walk /cycle along Ladygrove Loop and Mersey Way walk to and cross the northern perimeter road to Didcot North East (DNE). We understand the speed limit to the perimeter road is being changed to 40mph. There is a bus service along Abingdon Road presently which travels into the DNE site. When the NPR3 is open, the plan is that the bus service will route along Hadden Hill and then turn up the Ladygrove East spine road, then head north along NPR3, so pupils will be able to travel by bus as well. The school layouts on Didcot North East are incorporating drop off parking.

Q4: The natural choice for parents living at Ladygrove East will be to send their children to All Saints School on Tamar Way. The route will be along the Ladygrove Loop which is safe for walking and cycling. Perhaps financial contributions would be better spent improving and building capacity at All Saints School?

Section 7.3: The contributions for primary and secondary education are intended to be used for facilities on Didcot North East (DNE) or **other schools** to ensure there is overall capacity for the children from Ladygrove East development.

Contributions will be for education and not tied to specific schools, although to increase capacity overall it is OCC's stated preference that the contribution will likely be spent on the planned schools for Didcot North East. Due to parental choice pupils from Ladygrove East may be able to attend different schools, but it is important that capacity is increased generally to accommodate pupils.

Housing numbers:

Q5 SOLP 2035 allocates 642 homes so why are we being asked to approve 750 homes? Because no primary school (6.5) allows 'more land to be available for housing development'.

The housing numbers in the SOLP are derived from the resolution on the previous application in 2006 and are not a cap on development. Since a school (1 form entry) is no longer sought on this site there is an area of 1.32 ha that is no longer required for education. Additionally, there are newer planning policies to apply, particularly on the efficient use of land (DES1 and DES7) and density (STRAT5). The information to date indicates that up to 750 homes should be accommodated alongside the policy requirements for open space, yet the final numbers will be borne out once detailed matters are considered, including biodiversity.

Trees and landscaping: 6.43

Q6: The site is an open field, so no development constraints exist currently beyond physical landscape.

6.9,' The final alignment of NPR3 will be subject to further approval and officers will endeavour that the design fully considers the potential for the retention of both TPO trees.' Can a condition be considered to retain both oak trees?

This site is in close proximity to the North Wessex Downs AONB (Hadden Hill and Down Hill). SOLP Policy ENV1, Landscape and Countryside gives planning weight to the protection of trees in the Countryside. The site in its current state is countryside. There is biodiversity loss. The reported net gain is based on assumptions, such as 75% garden area. Retention of both trees would help with biodiversity.

Being mindful of the 6 tests for planning conditions:

Necessary, relevant to planning, relevant to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise, reasonable in all other respects.

The trees are already protected under TPO, so there is no need for a condition. Officers have impressed upon OCC and the developer that we wish to see both TPO trees retained. The published alignment of NPR3 does involve the removal of the northern tree and it is possible that this tree may not be able to be retained. However, this is not yet decided. OCC / developer will need to demonstrate that all options to keep the tree have been explored.

Q7: Landscaping in the Community Park: Can thirsty trees like willow and oaks be planted? Need to be away from houses and powerlines.

Large canopy trees and species beneficial to the ground conditions will be sought. These details will be determined through conditions (Design Code – Condition 6) and at the reserved matters stages. Trees in streets will be sustained through the use of tree pits (Condition 30).

Leisure, Sport and Recreation: 7.6

Q8: Can leisure facilities in Didcot be developed since the town is taking new development? E.g., pavilion at Edmonds Park, splash park at Edmonds Park, develop leisure facilities at Ladygrove NE, improve Ladygrove Park (trees, benches, youth shelter, refreshment kiosk), Bike Park, Boundary Park.

Projects

All the projects are identified towards facilities in Didcot, including Edmonds Park (football); AGP at Edmonds Park or at Hithercroft, Wallingford; tennis at Edmonds Park or Ladygrove Park; sports hall at Willowbrook Leisure Centre and Birinus school; cricket at North Moreton Cricket club, rugby at Didcot Rugby Club GWP, bowling at Didcot Bowls Club, swimming and health and fitness at Didcot Wave. A leisure facility is not being pursued on DNE, so the other projects for health and fitness and swimming at Didcot Wave for example have been investigated and found to be in need of support.

The development will provide an on site park, play areas incl. youth play. The parkland will be designed in consultation with Didcot Town Council and their proposed bike park has been promoted to the developers. Given the provision of on site open space it is would not be reasonable to request monies towards other parks.

Commercial Space: 3.2 & 6.13

Q9: Noting P16/S3585/PEJ, 500 homes, A1,A3, A4, A5, B1, DIY Store, builders merchants and trade counters with associated infrastructure. Are there still plans to develop Rich's Sidings? Didcot needs commercial use such as this. A lot of residents of Didcot are trade workers, builders, electricians, plumbers, etc.

Policy H2 in relation to Ladygrove East does not promote employment uses. This was explored because the Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan suggested these would be appropriate. However, the Delivery Plan is not a statutory plan and upon further investigation such uses were not considered appropriate for the LE site. Rich's Sidings is allocated for re-development, however the Council is aware of the need and importance of existing uses on the site. The Council's economic development team has been alerted to the need to find alternative sites. There are no current proposals for Rich's Sidings.

Design, Density and Building Heights, 6.11

Q10: 'The application advises that the central part of the site is intended to have a tighter urban grain and higher density to reflect some areas found in the centre of Didcot...' There are car parking problems in the centre of Didcot.

SOLP Policy STRAT 5 expects densities of around 45dph to ensure the efficient use of land, but the policy also recognises the need to respect local character and the need to protect the local environment. In this case the setting of the North Wessex AONB and adjoining residential development will need to be protected. The proposed average density will be around 43dph and so that lower densities can be achieved at the edges, it is accepted that there will be a higher density in the centre and near the facilities, and a range of density will provide more interest and character to the development.

Car parking standards will be determined at reserved matters, when more detail about the housing mix is known. OCC are currently revisiting parking standards. This is a location within easy walking distance of the town centre and walking and cycling will be encouraged over the private car.

Energy and Sustainability Design, 6.26

Q11: Have the requirements of DES 10 been met? Will this be a condition?

Conditions 23 and 24 require the submission of an Energy Statement and verification of implementation. Paras 6.25 and 6.26 state conditions will require that the development meets Policy DES10, including a requirement for carbon reduction for homes of 40%, for homes built after March 2026 to achieve 50%, and after 2030 to achieve 100% and BREEAM excellent standard for the community building.

Transport, 6.31

Q12: 500 homes is a lot before NPR3 is completed. It could cause congestion along Hadden Hill towards Marsh Bridge. This is a major concern of local residents who would like to see NPR3 completed before houses are built.

It is acknowledged in the report that there will be increased congestion. The County highway authority are asking for restrictions on occupations in relation to phased delivery of transport infrastructure, as below, and given the implementation of these schemes the County is satisfied that no objection can be raised.

- 250 dwellings before **completion of HIF infrastructure**: (i) Widening the A4130 from A34 Milton Interchange towards Didcot from single to dual carriageway; (ii) A new Science Bridge over the A4130, Great Western Railway Line and Milton Road into the former Didcot A Power Station site; (iii) A new Didcot to Culham bridge between the A4130 and A415; and (iv) A Clifton Hampden bypass
- 250 dwellings before **A4130/Abingdon Road junction works** (these are secured in permission P15/S2902/O Didcot North East)
- 300 dwellings before completion of **southern NPR3 roundabout and improvement to South Moreton junction, Hadden Hill**
- 500 dwellings before completion of **entire NPR3**

There are recent events in relation to the delivery of HIF and an update will be given to the Committee.

Q13: Re 6.33, there needs to be a shared cycle/footpath across the green space to link the houses to the toucan crossings.

We agree this is necessary and routes internal to the site will be finalised at reserved matters.

Biodiversity, 6.41

Q14: The net gain should be achieved on this site. This is an open field and blank canvas.

Indicatively the proposals are indicating a net gain (2%). Details will not be known until detailed stages – to ensure we have a net gain. However, because it is marginal we are seeking monitoring of the actual on site habitats. A contribution for this is agreed so that Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) can monitor and if necessary, advise that a contribution for off setting is required. This recourse will be in the S106 agreement.

Health Provision

Q15: Have the GPs in the area agreed that the sum requested by the CCG will allow them to increase capacity sufficiently to meet the needs of this development?

It is our understanding that the CCG are still pursuing a new GP practice at GWP. and the CCG have not highlighted any plans to expand existing surgeries. However, the expenditure of the contribution will be flexible so that it can be spent on health facilities to serve the development, so that if the planned project does not progress contributions can be used elsewhere.