APPLICATION NO. <u>P14/S1778/RM</u>

**APPLICATION TYPE** RESERVED MATTERS

**REGISTERED** 17.6.2014 **PARISH** DIDCOT

WARD MEMBER(S) Mrs Margaret Turner
Mrs Denise Macdonald

APPLICANT Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd

PROPOSAL

Parcel DN03BCD of Great Western Park, Didcot
The erection of 247 dwellings, landscaping and
associated infrastructure. An Environmental

Statement was submitted with the outline application (as amended by drawings accompanying letter from Agent dated 29 September 2014 & 16 October

2014).

AMENDMENTS Several

**GRID REFERENCE** 450958/190059 **OFFICER** Natasha Ireland

#### 1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This application has been referred to the Planning Committee at the request of Councillor Denise Macdonald.
- Outline planning permission for the Great Western Park development was granted in July 2008. The development straddles the administrative boundaries of South Oxfordshire and Vale of the White Horse districts and encompasses land within Didcot, Harwell, East Hagbourne and West Hagbourne parishes. The principal part of the development is for a mixed use urban extension of 3,300 new dwellings together with associated local shops and services, leisure, open space and community facilities and associated transport, drainage and utility infrastructure. The outline permission includes access to the site with all other matters reserved for subsequent approval.
- 1.3 Through conditions, the outline planning permission required the agreement of detailed design guidance for the area in the form of Framework Plans and Local Area Briefs. These have been approved and are in place for this phase of the development.
- 1.4 The development is being brought forward in a number of phases as set out in a site wide phasing strategy and development strategy.
- 1.5 This application relates to phases DN03 B, C and D which are within the District Neighbourhood Framework Plan area. The Framework Plan sets out the character guidance and design codes for the development. The application straddles the district and Parish Boundary therefore the same application has also been submitted to Vale of White Horse District Council for determination.

#### 2.0 PROPOSAL

2.1 The application seeks reserved matters approval for 247 dwellings covering access to the phase, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale of the development.

- 2.2 The layout includes areas of open space within the development and the road hierarchy linking into surrounding phases. This part of the overall development includes an important frontage onto Boundary Park which provides the main leisure facilities and forms a key feature of the site. This phase also abuts one of the primary schools within the development which is the subject of a separate application.
- 2.3 The eastern edge of the phase adjoins existing housing in Didcot specifically in Slade Road which runs parallel to the application site and is a mixture of two storey dwellings and bungalows with rear gardens abutting the site boundary.
- 2.4 The overall affordable housing provision for the Great Western Park site is set out within the S106 agreement which accompanies the outline planning permission. The agreement states that not less than 30% of the total number of dwellings on the site shall be affordable housing and that each phase of development should contain a range between 28% 32% of affordable units, provided in groups of no more than 15 affordable units. The application proposes 178 open market homes in a mix of 2-bed, 3-bed & 4-bed dwellings and flats. A provision of 70 affordable units is proposed which equates to an affordable provision of 28.2% which is within the acceptable range.
- 2.5 The plans have been subject to a number of amendments during the process to address concerns in relation to landscaping, detailed design, relationship to adjacent dwellings, consistency with the framework plans, and affordable housing provision and size.
- 2.6 Extracts from the application drawings are **attached** at Appendix 1
- 3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**
- 3.1 At the time of writing, the amended plans were out for consultation therefore where necessary verbal updates will be provided at the meeting.
- 3.2 Didcot Town Council Recommend refusal. "The sewerage system is inadequate. The plans do not show the archaeological trail. No plans have been brought forward to Didcot Town Council for the Wantage Road cycle path and crossings. These 249 dwellings added to the 637 already occupied, and the completion of the road from The Avenue would create access from the while site for 886 dwellings to Wantage Road. It is essential that the Wantage Road proposals for a cycle path and crossings is forthcoming now in order that they can be planned appropriately after discussions with Didcot Town Council and other bodies." Amended plans and information have sought to address some of these concerns and updated comments will be provided at the meeting.

Didcot Ward Member (Cllr Denise Macdonald) has called this application to Committee for a number of reasons, namely: the footpath and cycle way along Wantage Road and crossing should have been implemented before occupation of the 500<sup>th</sup> home and 650 are now occupied. (The trigger relates to occupations served from Wantage Road and not site wide); concern is also raised in relation to sewage infrastructure and the problems experienced in Mendip Heights; and, furthermore, no reference is made to the Pond Barrow within the development and how the public will be informed of archaeological finds within GWP.

Harwell Parish Council – Object to the original plans. "Harwell Parish Council objects to this application as it has concerns about provision of parking in general, and specifically for drop off and access to the primary school, which could lead to dangers for pedestrians and vehicular traffic, deplores the lack of any east-west cycle routes

leading to and from the school, or traversing the development, which could help alleviate some of the parking issues if provided, and has concerns that drainage issues have not been adequately factored into the plans, considering the existing inadequacy of the drainage network." Further information has been provided by the applicants on the above issues along with the amended plans and updated comments will be provided at the meeting.

Oxfordshire County Council – Transport – No objections subject to conditions. The access arrangements accord with the District Neighbourhood Framework Plan and are acceptable. 600 parking spaces are proposed which is acceptable and all properties have access to garages, rear gardens or cycle stores for bicycle storage.

Oxfordshire County Council – Archaeology – All required archaeological monitoring and recording has been completed as part of the outline permission. No further archaeological investigation is required.

Oxfordshire County Council – Ecology – Advice should be sought from Councils in house ecologist.

Environment Agency – Initial objections due to inadequate flood risk assessment and concerns over the attenuation tanks. The flood risk assessment has been updated with increased attenuation for surface water run-off. The proposal is now acceptable and the proposal accords with the overall site wide drainage strategy for GWP.

Countryside Officer – No specific ecological issues in relation to this phase of development.

Equalities Officer – The development should ensure sufficient lifetime homes and the footway/cycleway on main street should follow mobility guidance.

Health & Environmental Protection Team – No objections subject to the acoustic treatments identified within the acoustic report being applied.

Housing Service – Initial concerns over the size of some of the affordable units and amount of open space. Amended plans addressing these issues then reduced the number of units to below the threshold. Further amendments have sought to address this and comments from the Housing Development Officer indicate that the amendments have overcome the concerns with the proposal.

Waste Management Officer (District Council) - No objections subject to appropriate bin storage.

Landscape Consultant - Concerns over the original submission in relation to parts of the layout, boundary treatments along the secondary street, parking within landscaped areas, surface treatments and lack of street furniture details contrary to the Framework Plan. Amended plans seek to address these concerns and updated comments will be provided at the meeting.

Tree Officer – comments included within the landscape consultant response.

Neighbour Representations – 13 letters have been received from existing neighbouring dwellings mainly within Slade Road which runs paralell to the Eastern site boundary raising the following concerns:

- The submitted layout does not accord with the original public consultation which showed a single line of dwellings with long rear gardens between the road and existing houses which would help reduce crime by minimising access for intruders from rear parking courts.
- The density is uneven with differing gardens abutting the boundary.
- The developers should provide a fence along the boundary.
- Rear pathways along the boundary could attract anti-social behaviour.
- The plans do not reflect what was promised along this boundary there are rear and side windows facing the neighbouring houses.
- Parking spaces to the rear of neighbouring garderns will result in noise and disturbance.
- A green space next to existing residents would be preferable.
- The proposed dwellings are too close to the boundary.
- The proposals are too dense and out of character with the surrounding area.
- Adequate measures for drainage should be put in place.
- Where is the historical trail?
- Social housing is located adjacent to existing houses.
- The proposals do not comply with back to back distances.
- An unacceptable flood risk assessment has been submitted (this has now been addressed).
- The fields behind Slade Rd regularly flood.

Three revised comments have been received in relation to the amended plans stating that the plans are an improvement but they would still like a fence to be provided on the boundary (this is being provided by the developers in consultation with each resident), and that the plans have addressed original concerns.

A letter has been received from Karen Waggot in relation to the archaeology on the site stating that the area covered by the application should include part of the history trail including the loctaion of a rare bronze pond barrow. The current proposals for a history trail are inadequate and should include more information boards. A full copy of the response can be viewed on the application file.

### 4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

### 4.1 P14/S0766/RM - Approved (14/10/2014)

Phase 5A (Parcel DN03) of Great Western Park Development consisting of the erection of 94 residential dwellings, associated infrastructure and section of spine road.(as amended by drawings accompanying email from agent dated 10 October 2014, together with additional information received 24 September 2014 and 29 September 2014)

### P13/S3919/RM - Approved (24/04/2014)

Reserved Matters application (following outline permission P02/W0848/O) for the alignment of the carriageway of the Eastern Link Road. As amplified by additional drawing ref: 69-1971-200 Rev: B

#### P13/S1302/RM - Approved (09/10/2013)

Great Western Park Development Phase 2E

Reserved Matters application for P02/W0848/O. Infrastructure works including Landscaping, Drainage, Footways and Street Furniture to Western Boundary, and the Neighbourhood Park, Boundary Park and Local Park (Northern Neighbourhood) (Resubmission of P12/S1716/RM). As amended by Agents letter and drawing received 8th October 2013).

### P02/W0848/O - Approved (18/07/2008)

A mixed-use urban extension of 3,300 new dwellings together with associated local shops & services, leisure, open space & community facilities & transport, drainage & utility infrastructure. As amended by:

Letter from RPS Planning dated 5 December 2005, Supporting Statement November 2005, Environmental Statement and Appendices November 2005, Energy, Conservation and Resource Management Strategy Nov 2005, Transport Assessment November 2005, Design Statement Drainage Strategy dated May 2006, Site plan: 95107/2004/JD/0004/Rev H, Drawings (Junctions): 95017/2005/LDE/001/P3; 95017/2005/LDE/002A Rev P2. 95017/2006/LDE/003 Rev P1, 95017/2005/LDE/004 Rev P3 Drawings (Masterplan): A2933/OPA/01 Rev H; 02/Rev G; 03/Rev H, Supplementary Statement on environmental matters received 6 July 2006, Environmental Management Brief version 3, and Travel Plan dated October 2007.

#### 4.2 Summary of residential development at Great Western Park (September 2014)

Phase	Ref no.	Developer	No. of units (Afford. Units)	Cumulative total (Afford. Units)
Phase 1b(i)	P10/W1150/RM NM	Taylor Wimpey (TW) (and Persimmon) NM allow substitution of housetypes,	218 (66)	218 (66)
Phase 1b(ii)	P10/W1328/RM	David Wilson (DW)	95 (28)	313 (94)
Phase 2a	P11/W0938/RM P13/S0022/NM P11/W2290/NM	Taylor Wimpey (and Persimmon) NMs allow substitution of housetypes, revised mix and increased number within Phase 2a.	259 (76)	572 (170)
Phase 2c	P12/S0997/RM	TW	120 (37)	692 (207)
Phase 3a	P12/S0535/RM	DW	126 (38)	818 (245)
Phase 2d	P13/S0329/RM	TW	20 (0)	838 (245)
Phase DN02A	P13/S0461/RM	TW	154 (45)	992 (290)
Phase NN03 D&E	P13/S2354/RM	Persimmon	166 (53)	1158 (343)
Phase NN03 B&C	P14/S0195/RM	TW	105 (75)	1263 (418)
Phase DN03a	P14/S0766/RM	David Wilson Homes	94 (28)	1357 (446)

#### 5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 South Oxfordshire Core Strategy policies:

CSQ2 - Sustainable design and construction, this policy requires that new devleopment over 200 dwellings should achieve Code Level 4. Great Western Park was permitted in 2008 under the previous Local Plan where this policy did not apply. The S106 agreement attached to the outline planning permission was agreed subject to viability matters and, as such, all dwellings are required to meet Eco Homes 'very good standard'.

CSQ3 - Design should be of high quality and inclusive. This is sought in all of the reserved matters applications and is supported and guided through the specific design guidance for Great Western Park in the form of Framework Plans and Local Area Briefs.

- 5.2 South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 policies:
  - C6 Maintain & enhance biodiversity
  - C9 Loss of landscape features
  - 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
  - D7 Access for all
  - DID2 Didcot West development
  - EP1 Adverse affect on people and environment
  - EP6 Sustainable drainage
  - EP7 Impact on ground water resources
  - T1 Safe, convenient and adequate highway network for all users

South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2008

- 5.3 Great Western Park District Neighbourhood Framework Plan
- 5.4 National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance

# 6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS Background

- 6.1 The outline planning permission and masterplan sets out certain parameters in respect of the GWP development as a whole upon which the EIA assessment was made. Relevant key principles and parameters are set out below:
  - Mix of uses: The District Neighbourhood area includes a major District Centre
    providing the heart of the overall development and including shops, schools,
    community facilities and sports facilities within Boundary Park. There are also
    smaller local centres within the Northern and Southern Neighbourhood Areas.
  - Density: The overall development meets the density set out in the outline application Masterplan with a density of 40dph across the whole site. In line with the Masterplan and Framework Plans and to achieve a varying character within the site, the density will vary within each phase and subsequent parcels. There is no set threshold for density within the Framework Plans that are specific to phases or parcels.

- Mix: The market mix has to meet the outline requirement of a minimum 30% of 1 & 2-bed dwellings across the whole site.
- Affordable Housing: The S106 agreement requires 30% affordable housing and no more than a cluster of 15 affordable dwellings and not be adjacent to other clusters in another parcel/ phase.
- Movements: The site is to have a hierarchy of roads to promote good legibility and a network of green routes linking to open spaces.
- Landscape: A series of open spaces including public urban space is to be provided throughout the development.

Sustainability: The dwellings have to meet the former Ecohomes 'very good standard' or equivalent which roughly equates to Code 3 (which is now mandatory for energy and water). Thirty percent of dwellings have to have renewable energy systems. These requirements are covered and controlled through the S106 agreement and outline conditions.

### **Application Detail**

- This is a reserved matters application for Phase DN03BCD located within the District Neighbourhood part of Great Western Park.
- 6.3 The overall development meets the density and mix set out in the outline application masterplan. As stated above, the average density across the GWP development is 40dph and the density of these particular phases is mainly 38dph rising to 40dph in the area just north of the District Centre and adjacent to the Main Street which form the urban heart of the development. This complies with the guidance set out in the Framework Plan which indicates that residential density should be a medium density at a maximum of 40dph in this part of the site.

#### **Layout and Design**

- 6.4 The District Neighbourhood Framework Plan provides the design guidance for this area of GWP. The Framework Plan is a design manual and gives specific detailed guidance to ensure a varied and coherent character is achieved at GWP. The area within the District Neighbourhood is split into character areas. This current application includes part of the District Centre Core area which fronts Main Street and Boundary Park, both prominent parts of the development. The rest of the application falls within the Boundary Park East character area which again includes frontage onto Boundary Park and also abuts the edge of Didcot specifically Slade Road.
- The design and layout in this application largely follows the principles in the District Neighbourhood Framework Plan in terms of road hierarchy, street frontages and building heights within each character area. The District Centre is designed as a mixed use area with higher density housing hence this part of the phase is 40dph, and creates a defined frontage onto Main Street. Some of the detailed plots have been amended to improve the street frontage in this location particularly on key corner plots where the secondary roads meet Main Street.
- 6.6 The Boundary Park East character area includes boundary park frontage which largely follows the general approach taken within previous approved phases in order to create a cohesive development. Again, detailed plot amendments have improved some key corner plots. This character area also creates the connections from boundary park through to the secondary streets including green fingers which accommodate existing hedgerows. The secondary street which runs parallel to Slade Road was intended to include on plot parking to avoid rear parking courts with dwellings fronting the street with railings. The initial plan was at odds with this with a number of dwellings

positioned at right angles creating side gardens onto the street and inappropriate boundary treatment. Amended plans have sought to address this where possible to create more frontage development and rear parking courts only where unavoidable. Officers consider the current layout acceptable.

- 6.7 Other amendments include additional articulation on the blocks of flats and the provision of a more appropriate level of amenity space for the three blocks of flats in addition to addressing some of the landscaping concerns.
- 6.8 It is considered that the proposal now largely accords with the Framework Plan and is acceptable in design and layout terms.

#### Affordable Housing

6.9 These phases of development makes provision for 70 affordable units in a mix of social rented and share ownership across 1 to 4-bed units. The mix and distribution of affordable housing has been agreed with the Housing Development Officer and has been considered against the wider context of GWP as a whole development. The proposed mix is therefore considered compliant with the requirements of the S106 agreement. Whilst some concerns were raised in relation to unit sizes and amenity space amended plans have sought to address these and the concerns raised by the Housing Development Officer have now been overcome.

### **Impact on Neighbouring Properties**

- 6.10 A number of letters of objection have been received from local residents adjoining the site in relation to the impact on the original submission. This included a number of parking courts adjacent to the common boundary raising amenity and safety concerns. In addition a number of houses were located at right angles and in close proximity to the boundary.
- 6.11 The amended layout, which has resulted in the loss of a unit, has re-orientated the dwellings along this boundary so that they all front onto the street with gardens to the rear, other than plots 213-218 to the northern end of the site. These 6 units were always intended this way in the Framework Plan to front an area of Public Urban Space designed to provide a gateway for an existing pedestrian connection into Slade Road.
- 6.12 By re-orientating these units the relationship to neighbouring properties is significantly improved by ensuring garden lengths of at least 15 metres from the common boundary and back to back property distances well in excess of the design guide standard of 21 metres.
- 6.13 The number of rear parking courts has also been reduced and where necessary, additional planting has been included to provide a noise and visual buffer. The applicants are proposing a 1.8m close boarded fence along this boundary to be agreed with each existing resident. Revised comments received in response to the amended plans to date, recognise the improved relationship of the proposal with the neighbouring houses. The impact of the proposal on existing residents is now considered acceptable.

#### **Highway and Access Considerations**

6.14 Didcot Town Council, together with Harwell Parish Council raised concerns over parking provision and cycle links to the wider area. The proposed plans follow the general road layout and hierarchy set out in the Framework Plan. The County Highway

Engineer is satisfied that the parking provision in terms of allocated and visitor parking is acceptable. The proposal provides 600 parking spaces for 248 dwellings. The scheme includes cycle links along main street which will connect to a new cycle route along Wantage Road. This has been partially implemented but cannot be completed until the Wantage Road Junction works are complete. Currently there is no vehicular connection from Main Street onto Wantage Road.

- 6.15 Concern was also raised in relation to the Primary School drop off traffic. The northern primary school is located immediately adjacent to this part of the development to the south of the dwellings fronting boundary park. The school also sits in close proximity to the District Centre providing the urban heart of the development. The primary school application is currently being considered by the County Council and includes a Travel Plan to try and manage the way in which pupils travel to the school. It is envisaged that the school would largely serve local residents within the GWP development who would have alternative travel options including walking. The main entrance to the school falls within this phase of the development and the parking strategy for the houses has taken this into consideration. The County Engineer has raised no objections to the proposal in this regard.
- 6.16 Concern has been raised by Didcot Town Council and Local Member with regard to the number of dwellings accessed from Wantage Road and that the delivery of the cycle path and pedestrian crossing is over due. There is currently no connection from Wantage Road to the wider development, only phase DN02A which is currently under construction and which falls well below the 500 unit threshold.

#### **Foul Drainage**

- 6.17 The application proposed to link the foul drainage from this phase to the wider GWP foul drainage system which was approved as part of the original GWP drainage strategy. The wider approved strategy included a new length of sewer running underneath the railway line to the north of the site and making a direct connection into the treatment works. The provision of this pipe enables the development to be effectively drained without impacting upon the existing network. Although this original strategy has been agreed, the required works have yet to be implemented.
- 6.18 Thames Water has encountered various difficulties in progressing their strategy reinforcement/ upgrade works which has delayed the implementation of the wider long-term solution. In light of this delay and having a need to improve the existing temporary solution, GWP Consortium have designed and commissioned significant upgrade works to the on-site sewerage network which will manage the flow rates into the wider network. This has included an upgraded pumping station within the northern part of the site and a new pumping station within the southern area into which these current phases would connect. It is understood that these works were completed in August 2014 within the northern area and have the capacity to serve 1200 dwellings. Work has commenced on the southern pumping station which will serve the same purpose and has capacity to serve a further 1200 dwellings.
- 6.19 Officers are working with all parties involved in the foul drainage matter at GWP and there is a general agreement that the long-term solution is at least 2 years away from being operational. To enable development to progress at Great Western Park and in recognition of the Government's agenda for growth, we recognise that the up-graded on-site sewerage network is an acceptable alternative medium-term solution and has been agreed by SSE who have an inset agreement with OFWAT to manage onsite drainage and Thames Water who are responsible for the wider network.

### **Archaeology**

- 6.20 The matter of archaeology is more generally dealt with through conditions attached to the outline planning permission, namely condition 41 which requires the submission of an archaeology mitigation strategy with each phase of development. Although the strategy for this phase of the development has been accepted by the County Archaeologist, recent interest in the archaeological finds of the wider GWP site has led to the production of an additional archaeology and history trail strategy. In addition to submitting the strategy with this application, a further application will be submitted which seeks to vary and amend the strategy accepted under Condition 41 of the Outline permission.
- 6.21 The application has been amended to include the detail of a strategy to provide an archaeology and history trail via a series of information points through the GWP development. It is proposed that a series of 5 information boards be erected along existing and proposed public access routes, including the proposed amenity route to be provided through the Public Art Strategy (PAS). The key objective of the trail is to provide an accessible means of understanding the cultural heritage of GWP.
- 6.22 Following extensive archaeological investigations of the site, the key areas of interest are understood to be:
  - Mesolithic camp-site area represented by a hollow containing worked flint
  - Complete early Neolithic bowl within a contemporary tree root hole
  - Bronze Age roundhouse and pond barrow (located within this current application area)
  - Iron Age hillcrest settlement
  - Late Iron Age and Romano-British farmyards with satellite stock enclosures and small-scale occupation at two areas where the areas were linked by a former trackway
  - Late Roman villa (this has been protected from development)
  - Early Saxon sunken-floored building

Although individually referenced, a number of these sites overlap.

- 6.23 In addition to providing interpretation and information boards within the development, the GWP Consortium have agreed to set up a dedicated website to display the findings at GWP and to report on on-going work to the south of Wantage Road. It is intended that the web-site will provide full details and an accurate story of the archaeological finds and will include links to various reports as and when they are produced.
- 6.24 In light of the commitment of the Developers to provide an archaeological history trail, it is considered that the recent concerns raised by local interested parties have been addressed. The proposed history trail is a clear commitment from the Developers and can be secured through a subsequent application to vary and amend the archaeological mitigation strategy required through condition 41 of the outline planning permission.
- 6.25 Having regard to the above, it is your officers view that the matter of archaeology has been sufficiently addressed and cannot justify a reason for refusal for this phase or any subsequent phase of development given that it goes beyond what was originally required by the County Archaeologists and therefore what is reasonably necessary to mitigate the impact of the development.

#### 7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 All reserved matters applications need to be in general conformity with the GWP design guidance. The application design guidance for this phase is the District Neighbourhood Framework Plan. The current application, as amended, accords with the outline planning permission, the approved masterplan and the associated suite of design documents approved under the outline conditions.

#### 8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1 It is recommended that, subject to receiving no further objections from consultees, planning permission is granted subject to the following conditions:
  - 1. The development shall begin within two years.
  - 2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the schedule of drawings dated 30th September 2014.
  - 3. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied until full details, including a plan, of the means of foul drainage and the storage tanks and accompanying system as referenced in the letter from RPS dated 29<sup>th</sup> September have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
  - 4. Details of tenure mix on the affordable housing units shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
  - 5. The external finishes for the development hereby permitted shall only be constructed in the materials specified on the Drawing No. 69-1997-107 Rev C External Finishes Layout or in other materials which shall previously have been approved by the Local Planning Authority.
  - 6. The garages forming part of the development shall be retained for parking of motor vehicles at all times and shall not be adapted to be used for any other purpose.

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