
APPLICATION NO.	<u>P15/S1880/O & P15/V1304/O</u>
APPLICATION TYPE	OUTLINE
REGISTERED	15.6.2015
PARISH	South: DIDCOT Vale: SUTTON COURTENAY
WARD MEMBER(S)	SOUTH: Alan Thompson and Margaret Turner VALE: Janet Shelley, Reg Waite, Gervase Duffield
APPLICANT	Clowes Developments (UK) Ltd
SITE	Land at former Didcot A Power Station, Purchase Road, Didcot OX11 7DS
PROPOSAL	Mixed use redevelopment comprising up to 400 dwellings (C3), 110,000ms of Class B2/B8 units, 25,000m2 of Class B1 units, 13,000m2 Class A1 units (includes 1,500m2 convenience food store), 150 bed Class C1 hotel and 500m2 of Class A3/A4 pub/restaurant, including link road, related open space, landscaping and drainage infrastructure, together with reservation of land for link road and Science Bridge. Cross boundary application Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire.
AMENDMENTS	Updated EA and Master Plan received November 2015
GRID REFERENCE	450920/191434
OFFICERS	Stuart Walker / Sharon Crawford

SUMMARY

This outline application is brought to the Planning Committee because it is a major cross-boundary application and Sutton Courtenay Parish Council and Didcot Town Council both object to the application.

The main considerations in the determination of this application are:-

1. Principle of the development
2. Retail impact
3. Cumulative impact
4. Use of land
5. Locational credentials
6. Affordable Housing and viability of development
7. Housing Mix
8. Design
9. Amenity
10. Landscape impact and trees
11. Open Space and Landscaping
12. Flood Risk and Surface/Foul Drainage
13. Air quality, noise and contamination
14. Traffic, Parking and Highway Safety
15. Ecology and biodiversity
16. Archaeology
17. Developer Contributions

This report assesses the planning merits of the outline proposal in the context of national and local planning policy, and other material planning considerations.

The outline application proposal will help create jobs and services and address housing

needs in both districts in the absence of a five-year housing land supply in accordance with the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) and local policies. The access and indicative link roads are considered acceptable in the context of location and transport infrastructure.

The proposal presents a satisfactory development subject to detailed consideration of layout, scale, appearance and landscaping at reserved matters stage. The supporting information set out in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Retail Impact Assessment (RIA) address issues of environmental impacts including air quality and noise, retail impact, transport impact, drainage and flooding, ecology, trees, contamination and archaeology. There are no unreasonable undue impacts on the environment, neighbouring amenities or traffic safety. The EIA and RIA have been assessed by external consultants and specialist officers at County and the District Council. The technical issues are considered acceptable subject to conditions.

The report concludes that the proposal is considered to amount to 'sustainable development' compliant with national and local policy and guidance. Whilst limited adverse impacts on trees and woodland ecological habitat on part of the site are acknowledged, on the balance all material planning considerations, the proposal is considered to bring significant economic, social and environmental benefits that outweigh the limited harm. The application is recommended for approval subject to conditions and a S106 legal agreement to secure affordable housing, public open space/play areas and financial contributions to mitigate the impact of the development on local infrastructure.

At the Vale Planning Committee meeting on 27 July 2016, Members supported the recommendation, set out in paragraph 8.1 of this report, to approve outline planning permission.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application site is approximately 46.4 hectares in size. It lies to east of Milton Park and on the western edge of Didcot Town. To the north lies Sutton Courtenay Village and to the south is Great Western Park housing estate. The majority of the site (36.9 ha) lies within Vale of White Horse district with the remainder (9.5 ha) within South Oxfordshire.
- 1.2 The site comprises the former power station land previously housing the cooling towers (demolished in 2014) and used for open storage of coal and spoil in connection with the old power station. Water channels and a railway line skirt around the southern and western edge of the site. The power station closed in March 2013 after 43 years of commercial operations. Didcot B power station is located to the north of the application site.
- 1.3 The site has a significant frontage on to Milton Road to the south, adjacent to the railway line and the A4130. The site contains a large earth bund close to the southern boundary with woodland areas in the southeast corner. To the west lies Milton Park, a 100ha business park forming a key part of the Science Vale employment zone. The main access to the application site is from the roundabout junction off the A4130 and Milton Road referred to as the Basil Hill roundabout. A site location plan is **attached** at Appendix 1.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The outline application proposes a mixed-use development comprising up to 400 dwellings, 110,000sq.m of Class B2/B8 units, 25,000 sq.m of B1 units, 13,000 sq.m of Class A1 units (including a 1500 sq.m convenient food store), 150 bed Class C1 hotel and 500 sq.m of Class A3/A4 pub/restaurant. Only access is detailed with all other matters reserved for full approval at a later stage. The proposal also illustrates areas for open space, landscaping, sustainable drainage and car parking/servicing.
- 2.2 The proposal includes areas reserved for future road connections to facilitate the Science

Bridge and a new road connection into and out of Didcot. These areas of land are outside the application site. The site area within the boundary of South Oxfordshire District Council comprises entirely of housing, which makes up 70% of the 400 homes proposed or 280 units. The remaining 120 homes are located within the boundary of Vale of White Horse, together with all the industrial and commercial uses proposed within the scheme.

- 2.3 The proposal has evolved through pre-application consultations with the Council, statutory consultees and community consultation, carried out prior to formal submission. The latter is detailed below. The illustrative masterplan sets out how the site will be developed and the development will be implemented in 5 phases over a period of 10 years from the end of 2016/early 2017 to estimated completion in 2027. The illustrative masterplan and submitted parameter plan are **attached** at Appendix 2.
- 2.4 **Community and Pre-Application Consultations**
The proposal was the subject of community consultation in January 2015 before the application was submitted to the Council. A press release with information about the proposal, exhibition events and venue were advertised on/in the BBC News website, Oxford Mail, The Herald and Oxford Times, and displayed on the South Oxfordshire and Vale Council web sites. Harwell Parish Council, Didcot Town Council and Sutton Courtenay Parish Council also displayed information on their web sites about the proposal and the exhibition event.
- 2.5 A web site <http://www.didcota.co.uk/> with information about the proposal and facility to comment was launched on 17 January 2015, the same day that a public exhibition was held at Cornerstone Arts Centre in Didcot. Local Councillors, Parish Clerks and the local MP were directly emailed about the event. 204 residents attended the exhibition and 36 comments were received.
- 2.6 The development team engaged with council officers from the County Council and South and Vale District Councils in February 2015 and this followed earlier work on the master plan by all three parties during 2014, where relevant officers advised the applicant on the proposed use of the site and the masterplan layout, including the inclusion of the Science Bridge to conform to adopted and emerging planning policy. Full details of the pre-application consultations and community engagement are set out within the submitted consultation statement. The design process covering the community engagement and pre-application consultation with the council in arriving at the submitted master plan proposal is also covered within the submitted design and access statement. The master plan has been amended further to respond to post-submission consultation replies during the course of the application consideration and assessment process.
- 3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**
- 3.1 Below is a summary of the responses received to the application from statutory consultation carried out by the Councils. A full copy of all the comments made can be viewed online at www.southoxon.gov.uk. A total of 5 site notices (3 within Vale and 2 in South) were posted around the site on the public highway. In addition, the applicant carried out full community consultation prior to the submission of the applications, as set out above. The following is a summary of the response to the Councils' formal consultation process.

Didcot Town Council	<p>Object. Their concerns may be summarised as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian facilities to cross into town are insufficient. • Contamination and lack of clean up • Lack of allotment provision and contribution towards allotments requested. • Science Bridge is essential to bring site forward.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thames Valley Police ability to maintain policing levels within Didcot would be stretched as a result of this development and request contributions to minimise this effect. <p><i>Officer comment: Contributions for allotments and Police have been considered by the S106 officer and are not considered to be CIL compliant. Consequently they are not included. Other issues are addressed within the report in terms of pedestrian facilities and by condition in terms of contamination.</i></p>
Sutton Courtenay Parish Council	<p>Object. Their concerns may be summarised as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffic impact, particularly HGV movement and rat running through the village. Science Bridge should be provided. Pedestrian safety, particularly secondary school children negotiating area to access Didcot schools on foot. Employment should be in line with science vale plans Noise impact from Didcot B power station. Housing should take precedent over industrial buildings and hotel. <p><i>Officer comment: The issues are addressed in the body of the report and by S106 contributions and conditions.</i></p>
Harwell Parish Council	<p>No objection but request the following is given consideration:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Road from link road for heavy traffic inappropriate because it leads to the housing estate and heavy traffic should be kept away from residential homes. Industrial units proposed do not support ethics of Science Vale – at the very least they should have roofs fitted with solar panels.
Neighbours	<p>No responses have been received to date to formal neighbour consultation carried out on both applications within Vale and South Oxfordshire.</p>
Oxfordshire County Council	<p>No objection subject to conditions and S106 contributions towards transport and education infrastructure to mitigate the impact of the proposal as set out below.</p> <p><u>Transport</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> £2,423,746 towards Science Bridge £341,600 towards public transport £26,680 towards Travel Plan monitoring £2000 towards TRO amendment <p><u>Education</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> £2,180,000 towards new primary school £1,764,000 towards new secondary school £159,500 towards SEN <p><u>Community Facilities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> £93,000 towards libraries £128,968 towards adult day care.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £11,205 for administration and monitoring the S106 agreement. <p><u>Archaeology</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No objection <p><u>Economy and Skill</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No objection subject to condition. <p><u>Minerals and Waste</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No objection <p><u>Ecology</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biodiversity enhancement should be sought. <p><u>Cllr. Nick Hards (Didcot West)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broadly support the design and layout but concern expressed about the proximity of residential zone close to railway and roads and impact of noise capacity of locals roads to meet demand. Suggest that no housing is built until and unless Science Bridge and rerouting of A4130 completed.
Network Rail	No objection
Environment Agency	No objection subject to conditions
Thames Water	No objection subject to conditions and informatives to address wastewater infrastructure and water supply capacity.
Natural England	<p>No objection, but advise further consultation with the AONB Partnership.</p> <p>Officer comment: The site is not within the AONB in either district and it is an existing industrial site.</p>
Police Funding	<p>No objection to the proposal but seek financial contributions for police service.</p> <p><i>Officer comment: The contributions sought have been considered by the S106 officer for compliance with the CIL Regulations. The S106 officer has concluded that the police request for contributions is not compliant with the CIL Regulations.</i></p>
Highways England	No objection subject to conditions.
Housing Development	No objection.
Drainage Engineer	No objection subject to conditions
Environmental Protection Team (Noise)	No objection to outline application and propose to consider detailed noise issues at reserved matters application stage.
Environmental Health - Air Quality	No objection subject to conditions.
Environmental Health -	No objection subject to conditions.

Contaminated Land	
Urban Design Officer	No objection subject to detailed comments on layout considered below within the assessment.
Leisure	No objection subject to S106 contributions.
Landscape Architect	No objection in principle but express concern about loss of boundary vegetation on Milton Road
Forestry Team	Do not support the layout because of the loss of trees within the site.
Countryside Officer	No objection in principle. Very few significant ecological constraints present which are likely to have an impact on the proposal.
Waste Management	No objection subject to detailed guidance and S106 capital contribution.
Hammerson plc	Express concern about the sequential testing for the retail element of the proposal and potential impact on the Orchard Centre in Didcot. Suggest conditions to curb trading to minimise the impact. <i>Officer comment: The submitted Retail Impact Assessment is addressed within the report and compliant with the NPPF. Impact on the Orchard Centre has been considered as part of the assessment vetted by the Council's specialist advisors and found to be acceptable. Conditions to address the retail element of the scheme is recommended to maintain this position. The 1500 sq. m local convenient store in the scheme is not considered to detrimentally impact on the vitality and viability of the Orchard Centre.</i>
HSE	No objection.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 [P14/V0385/D](#) - Approved (20/03/2014)

Prior notification for proposed demolition of Didcot A Power Station and all associated buildings and structures.

[P13/V2328/D](#) - Approved (20/11/2013)

Prior notification for demolition of coal handling machinery and associated equipment from the coal offloading and handling yard.

[P11/V2583/SCO](#) – EIA Not required.(09/02/2012)

EIA screening opinion for demolition of Didcot A Power Station

[P09/V2005/HS](#) - Approved (09/06/2010)

Proposed storage (Propane & Hydrazine) and industrial process of these hazardous substances.

5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE:

5.1 South Oxfordshire Adopted Core Strategy 2012 Policies

The overall strategy of the Core Strategy is to concentrate development in the four towns and larger villages, including Didcot. The detailed policies can be viewed on the website www.southoxon.gov.uk. The following policies apply:

CS1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development
 CSS1: The Overall Strategy
 CS11 – Infrastructure provision
 CSDID3: New Housing at Didcot
 CSB1 - Conservation and improvement of biodiversity
 CSEN1 - Landscape protection
 CSG1 - Green infrastructure
 CSH1 - Amount and Distribution of Housing
 CSH2 - Density
 CSH3 - Affordable housing
 CSH4 - Meeting housing needs
 CSM1 - Transport
 CSM2 - Transport Assessments and Travel Plans
 CSQ2 - Sustainable design and construction
 CSQ3 - Design

5.2 **South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 Policies**

G2 - Protect district from adverse development
 G4 - Protection of Countryside
 G5 – Development of previously-developed sites
 C4 - Landscape setting of settlements
 C6 - Maintain & enhance biodiversity
 C8 - Adverse effect on protected species
 C9 - Loss of landscape features
 D1 - Principles of good design
 D2 - Parking for vehicles and cycles
 D3 - Outdoor amenity area
 D4 – Privacy and daylight
 D6 - Community safety
 D10- Waste management
 D12 - Public art
 EP1 - Adverse effect on people and environment
 EP2 - Adverse effect by noise or vibration
 EP6 - Sustainable drainage
 EP7 - Impact on ground water resources
 H4 - Housing sites in towns and larger villages outside Green Belt
 R1 - Outdoor sport or play areas
 R2 - Provision of play areas on new housing development
 R6 – Informal open space
 T1 - Safe, convenient and adequate highway network for all users
 T2 - Unloading, turning and parking for all highway users
 E6 - Loss of employment uses
 CON11-14 - Archaeology

South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2008

5.3 **Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011**

The development plan for this area comprises the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011. The following Local Plan policies relevant to this application were 'saved' by direction on 1 July 2009.

Policy No.	Policy Title
GS1	Developments in Existing Settlements
GS2	Development in the Countryside
DC1	Design

DC3	Design against crime
DC5	Access
DC6	Landscaping
DC7	Waste Collection and Recycling
DC8	The Provision of Infrastructure and Services
DC9	The Impact of Development on Neighbouring Uses
DC12	Water quality and resources
DC13	Flood Risk and Water Run-off
DC14	Flood Risk and Water Run-off
H15	Housing Densities
H16	Size of Dwelling and Lifetime Homes
H17	Affordable Housing
H23	Open Space in New Housing Development
HE10	Archaeology
NE9	Lowland Vale
NE11	Areas for Landscape Enhancement
T1	General Policy on Tourism
T3	Hotels, Guest Houses and Public Houses

5.4 Emerging Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 – Part 1

The draft local plan part 1 is not currently adopted policy. Paragraph 216 of the NPPF allows for weight to be given to relevant policies in emerging plans, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise, and only subject to the stage of preparation of the plan, the extent of unresolved objections and the degree of consistency of the relevant emerging policies with the NPPF. At present the emerging Local Plan housing policies carry limited weight for decision making. The relevant policies are as follows:-

Policy No.	Policy Title
Core Policy 1	Presumption in favour of sustainable development
Core Policy 2	Co-operation on unmet housing need for Oxfordshire
Core Policy 3	Settlement hierarchy
Core Policy 4	Meeting our housing needs
Core Policy 5	Housing supply ring-fence
Core Policy 6	Meeting Business and Employment Needs
Core Policy 7	Providing supporting infrastructure and services
Core Policy 15	Spatial strategy for South East Vale sub-area
Core Policy 16	Didcot A Power Station
Core Policy 17	Delivery of strategic highway improvements within the South East Vale sub-area
Core Policy 22	Housing mix
Core Policy 23	Housing density
Core Policy 24	Affordable housing
Core Policy 33	Promoting sustainable transport and accessibility
Core Policy 35	Promoting public transport, cycling and walking
Core Policy 36	Electronic communications
Core Policy 37	Design and local distinctiveness
Core Policy 38	Design strategies for strategic and major development sites
Core Policy 39	The historic environment
Core Policy 42	Flood risk
Core Policy 43	Natural resources
Core Policy 44	Landscape
Core Policy 45	Green infrastructure
Core Policy 46	Conservation and improvement of biodiversity

5.5 Supplementary Vale of White Horse Planning Guidance

- Vale Design Guide – March 2015
- Open space, sport and recreation future provision – July 2008
- Affordable Housing – July 2006
- Flood Maps and Flood Risk – July 2006
- Planning and Public Art – July 2006

5.6 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – March 2012

5.7 National Planning Practice Guidance 2014 (NPPG)

5.8 Neighbourhood Plans

Paragraph 216 of the NPPF allows for weight to be given to relevant policies in emerging plans, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise, and only subject to the stage of preparation of the plan, the extent of unresolved objections and the degree of consistency of the relevant emerging policies with the NPPF.

- 5.9 There is no neighbourhood plan for Didcot Town but a neighbourhood plan area application for Sutton Courtenay Parish was submitted for consideration on 12 July 2016. Although the neighbourhood plan is developing, it has not been submitted to the Council for Examination. Consequently very limited weight can be given to any policies that may be emerging in the draft neighbourhood plan.

5.10 Environmental Impact Assessment

This is EIA development. The application is accompanied by an Environmental Statement (ES) and an addendum statement. The following areas of potential impact have been addressed:

- Socio Economic Issues
- Landscape and Visual Issues
- Ecology
- Transport
- Air Quality
- Noise and Vibration
- Ground Conditions and Land Contamination
- Drainage and Flood Risk

The EIA has been found to be satisfactory in content and methodology. Individual chapters vetted by specialist advisors are considered within the main planning assessment below.

5.11 Other Relevant Legislation

- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990
- Community & Infrastructure Levy Legislation
- Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010
- Localism Act (including New Homes Bonus)

5.12 Human Rights Act 1998

The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 have been taken into account in the processing of the application and the preparation of this report.

5.13 Equalities Act 2010

In determining this planning application the Council has regard to its equalities obligations

including its obligations under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

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

1. The Principle of development
2. Retail Impact
3. Cumulative impact
4. Use of land
5. Locational Credentials
6. Affordable Housing and Viability of development
7. Housing Mix
8. Design
 - Layout
 - Scale
9. Amenity
10. Landscape Impact and Trees
11. Open Space and Landscaping
12. Flood Risk and Surface/Foul Drainage
13. Air quality, noise and contamination
14. Traffic, Parking and Highway Safety
15. Ecology and biodiversity
16. Archaeology
17. Developer Contributions

6.2 The Principle of Development

Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicated 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.

6.3 The development plan currently comprises the saved policies of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011, the adopted South Oxfordshire Core Strategy 2012, and the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011. Other material planning considerations include the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) the emerging Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031: Part 1 Strategic Sites and Policies, the emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 and supporting evidence.

6.4 The adopted Local Plans have some relevant saved policies (listed in section 5) that are partly or fully consistent with the NPPF. The emerging Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031: Part 1 has been to examination and the Inspector has issued his interim findings, but as modifications are required, the plan carries limited weight. The emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan is in its early stages of preparation and carries little weight.

6.5 In addition, it should be noted that the relevant housing policies of the adopted and emerging Local Plans in both districts hold limited material planning weight in light of the lack of a 5-year housing supply. Consequently, in assessing this proposal, greater weight therefore should be applied to the more up to date NPPF, supported by the PPG.

6.6 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan making and decision taking. For decision taking this means (unless material considerations indicate otherwise) approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay,

and where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, granting permission unless: any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole; or specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted (NPPF, paragraph 14 refers).

- 6.7 The NPPF states that the Government is committed to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity, and ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning authorities are expected to meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century. Therefore significant weight should be placed on the need to support such growth through the planning system. Having a deliverable 5-year housing supply is also considered sustainable in the NPPF.
- 6.8 Policy GS1 of the adopted Vale Local Plan provides a strategy for locating development concentrated at the five major towns with small-scale development within the built up areas of villages provided that important areas of open land and their rural character are protected. In terms of a hierarchy for allocating development this strategy is consistent with the NPPF. Whilst the site is not specifically allocated within either the adopted Vale or South Oxfordshire Local Plan, it is proposed for allocation under Core Policy 16 of the emerging Vale Local Plan 2031, Part 1. This policy supports a mixed use development of B1/B2/B8, retail and residential uses on the site. Given the emerging Vale Local Plan 2031 has now been through Examination in Public stage, and the Inspector's interim findings confirm the provision for meeting business and employment needs is soundly based, Core Policy 16 carries greater weight, and the principle of the mixed use development and quantum of housing proposed is considered acceptable on an existing brownfield site on the edge of Didcot Town.
- 6.9 **Retail Impact**
Paragraph 24 of the NPPF expects local authorities to apply a sequential test to planning applications for retail uses over a 2500 sq. m outside of a town centre and requires a retail impact assessment (RIA). Paragraph 26 of the NPPF requires an assessment to demonstrate the impact on town centre vitality and viability including existing, committed and planned public and private investment in a centre or centres in the catchment area of the proposal.
- 6.10 The applicant submitted an RIA with an addendum report, which considers the impact of the proposed retail uses on surrounding market towns, and specifically the impact on the Orchard Centre in Didcot. External consultants (Bilfinger GVA) employed by the Council to provide specialist advice have assessed the RIA. They have advised the Council that the RIA complies with paragraph 26 of the NPPF. However, conditions are recommended to ensure proposed retail warehousing is put to the intended use and does not undermine the viability and vitality of future developments at the Orchard Centre in Didcot. Subject to such conditions, the retail impact of the proposal is acceptable and compliant with policy.
- 6.11 **Cumulative Impact**
The NPPF does not suggest that populations of settlements should be limited in some way or be expanded by any particular figure, but it does expect housing to be boosted significantly, unless any adverse impacts can be identified that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of meeting this objective.
- 6.12 The applicant has undertaken a cumulative assessment of major housing sites (amounting to a total of 4227 housing units to April 2025) at the following locations in terms of the cumulative traffic impact on the local highway network:

- Great Western Park,
- Didcot North East,
- Ladygrove East,
- Land at Didcot Road,
- Great Western Park,
- Milton Road,
- Land at 9-112 Milton Road

The County Council, as Highway Authority consider the projected traffic movement in the area is within capacity of the local highway network and will be improved by the provision of the Science Bridge, for which contributions are sought from this development.

- 6.13 The impact on services and infrastructure in terms of education and community facilities can be mitigated by S106 and CIL contributions. In terms of other cumulative impacts, the traffic impact on the local road network from the commercial element of the proposal is detailed within the submitted transport statement chapter of the EIA. This has been assessed by County Highways and Highways England to be satisfactory.
- 6.14 Specialist council officers and external consultants have assessed the submitted Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The EIA and its addendum reports are robust and sound, compliant with the regulations, industry guidelines, best practice procedures and legal precedent. Concluding advice from specialist officers is set out above, under the consultation section, and addressed by recommended conditions where further material information is requested for the reserved matters stage that complies with paragraph 206 the NPPF and is expanded within the section headings below. Overall, the cumulative impact of the proposal is considered to be acceptable.
- 6.15 **Use of Land**
This is a former industrial site which is suitable for redevelopment and accords with aspirations to recycle brownfield land for beneficial use. The site is considered suitable for a mix of employment uses and housing provision as set out in the emerging Vale Local Plan 2031, Part 1. The NPPF encourages the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value (paragraph 17). The re-use of the site therefore weighs significantly in favour of the application.
- 6.16 **Locational Credentials**
The NPPF requires the need for travel to be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes to be maximised (paragraph 34). The site is located adjacent to the existing Didcot to Milton Park bus corridor, which includes buses to Abingdon, Harwell and Wantage. The distance between the northern and southern edges of this site is approximately 500m, which is considered reasonable walking distance for most people, as long as suitable access points from the development are delivered directly onto Milton Road, and this is illustrated within the master plan, which will be clarified in more detail at the reserved matters stage to deliver safe pedestrian routes across the site to link up with public transport corridors. It is also anticipated that once the Science Bridge and link roads are delivered bus routes can be diverted through the development to service the resident population.
- 6.17 The proposed pedestrian, bicycle and bus stop provision is considered appropriate to access areas south of Milton Road/ A4130/ roundabout, such as the Stephen Freeman Primary School and existing bus links would provide direct access to Didcot. Additional local services such as a convenience food store, local pub/restaurant, as well as public open space and play areas are envisioned within the master plan for the residential

element of the proposal that estimates a population of approximately 900 residents. New primary and secondary schools planned for Didcot would also cater for the educational needs of the new resident community. With new employment opportunities to be created within the scheme and existing job opportunities in Milton Park, the site is considered to be in a sustainable location.

6.18 Affordable housing & viability of development

Core Policy 24 of the emerging Vale Local Plan 2031, Part 1 seeks 35% affordable housing on all sites capable of three or more dwellings. South Oxfordshire Policy CSH3 seeks 40% on all sites with a net gain of more than 3 dwellings. A tenure mix of 75% social rented and 25% intermediate housing will normally be sought.

6.19 To comply with Vale Core Policy 24 the proposal would need to provide 42 units (32 rented and 10 shared ownership) based on 120 units. For SOCS policy CSH3, the proposal would need to provide 112 units (84 rented and 28 shared ownership). Any change to tenure mix or the percentage of affordable housing will need to be supported by a viability assessment.

6.20 The NPPF (para 173) states that pursuing sustainable development requires careful attention to viability and costs in plan-making and decision taking. Plans should be deliverable and sites and scale of development identified in the plan should not be subject to such a scale of obligations and policy burdens that their ability to be developed viably is threatened. To ensure viability, the costs of any requirements likely to be applied to development, such as requirements for affordable housing, standards, infrastructure contributions or other requirements should, when taking account of the normal cost of development and mitigation, provide competitive returns and ensure the development is deliverable.

6.21 The applicant has produced a viability report to appraise the development proposal. The report is a residual appraisal which assumes present day values and costs, so reflects the viability of the development if it were built out and sold in current market conditions. It identifies the land assembly costs of this proposal are high due to the previous land uses and the associated remedial clean-up costs. As a result the viability appraisal shows that the scheme is unable to be delivered if affordable housing is provided in accordance with Policy.

6.22 The viability report has been independently reviewed by an external viability consultant (Lambert Smith Hampton) on behalf of the councils who confirms the assumptions and inputs used are fair and reasonable, and that the existing site has considerable overheads in terms of clean-up costs.

6.23 Through negotiations, officers have agreed with the applicant affordable housing provision at a rate of 32% with a 40% rent and 60% shared ownership split. This equates to the following:

	South	Vale	Total
Affordable Rent	36	15	51
Shared Ownership	54	23	77
Total	90	38	128

6.24 Officers consider this provision reflects the commercial reality for what is a complex and higher than average risk site with significant site constraints and will enable the scheme to be delivered whilst maximising the percentage of affordable housing. The suggested tenure mix will provide a range of homes for both rent and shared ownership that can make a significant contribution to meeting the housing needs in both districts whilst

maintaining overall viability for this site. Therefore, although this differs from the requirement of policy, financial justification has been provided, which officers have given weight to.

6.25 **Housing Mix**

As this is an outline application, the actual number of dwellings and precise mix that might be accommodated on site is not known at this stage. Notwithstanding, officers will expect any reserved matters applications to closely comply with the April 2014 Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) mix which is the most recent objective assessment of housing need, with an affordable housing mix to complement the expectations of the housing needs team.

6.26 The following affordable mix across the site is currently suggested by the housing development team:

	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed	Total
Affordable Rent	12	28	10	1	51
Shared Ownership	0	54	23	0	77

In terms of general market housing, the estimated requirements would be as follows:

	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed	Total
SHMA %	5.8%	24.2%	43%	27%	100%
SHMA Expectation (unit nos.)	16	66	117	73	272

The details of the housing mix will be included at the reserved matters stage.

6.27 **Design**

The NPPF provides that planning decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment (paragraph 60). It gives considerable weight to good design and acknowledges it is a key component of sustainable development.

6.28 A number of local plan policies seek to ensure high quality developments and to protect the amenities of neighbouring properties (Vale Policies DC1, DC6, and DC9 and South Policies CSQ3 and D1). In March 2015 the Vale adopted its design guide, which aims to raise the standard of design across the district. South Oxfordshire design Guide 2008 also applies.

6.29 The illustrative master plan responds to the constraints and opportunities presented by the site context and identified in the accompanying technical reports. It is in outline form with all matters, except for access, reserved for future consideration, but the blue print of the master plan sets in context the exclusive land use parcels defining the northern industrial edge buffering the Didcot B power station from the southern residential zone, with a central core of commercial retail/office uses to service the residential estate and industrial occupiers within the larger site.

6.30 **Layout**

Whilst this application is presented in outline form, the submission anticipates the development of the Science Bridge link road and the creation of corridors to encourage walking and cycling. The layout is devised around largely fixed road infrastructure laid out

to create a High Street and central Piazza at its heart as a focal point for a new neighbourhood, enhanced with a range of mixed uses. With a residential exclusion zone constraining a large part of the site to the north of the link road, this area is developed for a range of employment uses along with a retail courtyard for the sale of bulky goods. The southern part of the site is dominated by residential development and open space and all parts of the site are linked to the central High Street. The layout is devised to encourage walking and cycling and establishes an urban structure with a legible hierarchy of spaces, landmarks and vistas.

- 6.31 The proposal recognises a significant east / west desire line through the site separate from the main vehicular Science Bridge link and it is proposed to incorporate a new walking and cycling route through the site to enhance permeability from origins and destinations beyond the site. Generous footways and identifiable cycle ways allied to tree planting and soft landscaping will serve to encourage sustainable travel. The proposal also recognises current County proposals to improve cycle facilities along Milton Road and to create links into and beyond the site. The design of streets anticipates the integration of trees and soft landscaping to add visual interest and to reinforce the structure of the public realm defining public and private spaces. The form of the new High Street with vehicular movement along the centre proposes generous tree planting and soft landscaping to either side to identify and enhance generous footways, with these in turn being overlooked by active frontages from a range of mixed uses. The development proposes a vastly enhanced landscape provision integrated into the public realm with a view to enhancing not only biodiversity but also social cohesion, health and well being. The landscaping of the site will also benefit from the sustainable urban drainage features aligned to the diversion of the Moor Ditch drainage channel.
- 6.32 The layout makes provision for parking and servicing and amenity areas, as well as pedestrian and cycle links to cater for the proposed uses to create a sustainable urban community. The residential area is provided with dedicated public open spaces and children's play areas, which are generally in accordance with the Council design principles and standards to achieve a well-designed and attractive environment that meets the needs of future occupiers.
- 6.33 **Scale**
The site can be seen to have two distinct areas defined largely by their designated use. The northern part of the site is set out based on a height parameter not exceeding 25m for the larger footprint industrial buildings and the southern half of the site with a height parameter not exceeding 18m (4 to 5 storeys). The interface between these two zones where buildings abut the public realm, the scale of buildings will set a more human scale commensurate with the space, which they enclose. Buildings will be used to contain space, create reference points for wayfinding and to determinate vistas. The residential element of the proposal will achieve a density of approximately 40 dwellings per hectare (400 units over a residential site area of 10.1 ha) in accordance with district policies to make efficient use of brownfield land on the edge of Didcot Town.
- 6.34 The layout, scale, appearance and landscaping details, particularly for the residential element of the scheme, will be further developed at the reserved matters stage. Overall officers are confident a high quality scheme can be achieved to accord with the NPPF.
- 6.35 **Amenity**
Adopted Vale Local Plan policy DC9 and SOLP policy D4 seek to prevent development that would result in a loss of privacy, daylight or sunlight for neighbouring properties or that would cause dominance or visual intrusion for neighbouring properties and the wider environment. Protecting amenity is a core principle of the NPPF. The spacing of the block

layout within the scheme can be designed to respect minimum distances to achieve a good standard of residential environment in accordance with Design principles DG63-64 of the Vale Design Guide pertain to amenity, privacy and overlooking and to accord with the South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2008.

- 6.36 In terms of neighbouring amenity impacts, the site is surrounded largely by industrial uses, road and rail network and therefore no neighbour residential amenity impacts arise, save for the increase in commercial vehicle movements generated by the proposed industrial and commercial uses, but that should be ameliorated by the proposed improvements to the local highway network and the new Science Bridge to upgrade local connections to the A34, the local network around the western edge of Didcot, Milton Park and Valley Park. Recommended conditions to address noise insulation, air quality and site contamination would alleviate additional environmental impacts for future residents of the development.
- 6.37 **Landscape Impact and Trees**
The NPPF seeks to enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes (paragraph 109). The site lies within the designated Lowland Vale (Policy NE9) and within an Area for Landscape Enhancement (Policy NE11) in the Vale Local Plan 2011. There is no specific designation for the site within the South Oxfordshire Local Plan, but Policy CSEN1 of the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy and Local Plan Policy C9 on protecting the landscape apply.
- 6.38 The Landscape Architect has reviewed the proposal and advises that there is no objection in principle. The character of the area is a large scale industrial complex and the scale and mass of the warehouse buildings up to 25m in height with limited space in between would need further consideration at the detailed design stage in terms of height and relationship with existing adjacent buildings. Concern is expressed about the loss of boundary vegetation particularly on the southern boundary, which would visually open up the site to the railway and Milton Road, which is not a pleasant aspect. The existing vegetation forms a soft edge to the site on the southern boundary. It is considered that the loss of the vegetation would have a visual impact and the advice is to seek the retention of as much vegetation as possible on this boundary, to help integrate the development into the wider area.
- 6.39 The Tree Officer considers that, whilst the trees within the site are not subject to a tree preservation order, the vast majority of the trees are growing on the bunds along the southern boundary adjacent to Milton Road and the main railway line within the site. The south-eastern corner near to the site access road also has multiple good quality trees forming a prominent feature of the landscape, which should be incorporated into the proposal to protect their amenity value. Consequently the removal within the master plan layout cannot be supported.
- 6.40 The Tree Officer's comments are noted. However, the self-seeded woodland and bund bordering the internal railway do not benefit from special designation and comprehensive redevelopment of the site necessitates removal of the railway line and bund, which would require removal of the majority of trees to level the ground and provide housing in this part of the site. However, in mitigation, it is considered that replanting with indigenous semi-matured trees, would compensate for the loss of the trees in the south-eastern corner of the site and along the southern boundary, albeit that this would take a period of time to mature. This would provide a substantial tree border along the southern boundary also integrated with the proposed public open spaces in the scheme. It would provide the landscape enhancements required by Vale Policy NE11, noting that this part of the industrial site within the Lowland Vale designation under Policy EN9 is not characterised by open countryside, comparable to other parts of the Vale or South Oxfordshire.

- 6.41 Whilst it is acknowledged that the removal of the existing railway and earth bund along the southern edge would remove naturally seeded vegetation and woodland, the implementation of this regeneration scheme and the wider benefits for the environment, employment and housing must be weighed against the impact on trees in the areas where they would necessitate removal to accommodate the proposal. On balance, and subject to a programme of landscaping to reinstate trees along the southern border, indicated on the master plan, it is considered that the economic benefits of the scheme outweighs any environmental harm. A replacement landscaping and tree-planting scheme can be integrated into the scheme at reserved matters stage to ensure the proposal accords with adopted policies referred to above. On balance, officers consider the development proposed is acceptable.
- 6.42 **Open Space and Landscaping**
Adopted Vale Local Plan Policy H23 of the adopted Local Plan requires a minimum of 15% of the residential area to be laid out as open space. South Oxfordshire Local Plan Policies R2 and R6 requires a minimum of 10% open space and play areas as part of new residential development.
- 6.43 The proposed residential site area is approximately 10.1ha and the indicative public open space spread across the entire residential area in five distinct areas comprise approximately 2.02ha, which represents 20% provision. This is in excess of the minimum policy requirement. The residential areas are buffered by landscaping strips and swales for natural drainage. It includes pedestrian footpaths and cycle routes to increase connectivity and linkages across the estate, and this responds to comments from the urban design officer, which have been incorporated into amendments.
- 6.44 It is intended that details regarding the landscaping layout will be developed in further detail at the reserved matters stage together with replanting of trees within the development to address the Landscape and Tree Officers' comments. Public open space and play provision, including maintenance, is to be secured within the recommended S106 agreement to ensure delivery. The outline proposal is thus considered to comply with the relevant Vale and South Oxfordshire policies in this regard.
- 6.45 **Flood Risk and Surface/Foul Drainage**
The NPPF provides that development should not increase flood risk elsewhere and should be appropriately flood resilient and resistant (paragraph 103). It states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, amongst other things, preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution (Paragraph 109).
- 6.46 Adopted Vale local plan policy DC9 provides that new development will not be permitted if it would unacceptably harm the amenities of neighbouring properties or the wider environment in terms of, amongst other things, pollution and contamination. Policy DC12 provides that development will not be permitted if it would adversely affect the quality of water resources as a result of, amongst other things, waste water discharge. Policies EP6 and EP7 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan deal with sustainable drainage and protecting ground water resources from contamination.
- 6.47 The submitted EIA chapters dealing with geotechnical issues of land contamination, hydrology, flood risk and drainage, including a flood risk assessment, have been considered by the Environment Agency (EA), and Drainage Officers at South and Vale. In addition, the Leading Local Flood Authority (Oxfordshire County Council) and Thames Water have also considered the proposal in respect of drainage and flood issues.

- 6.48 The EA has no objection to the proposal and recommends appropriate conditions to address site contamination and remediation, including verification. Details of the foul and surface water disposal, as well as flood prevention measures, are to be treated within a sustainable urban drainage scheme (SUDS). County and District Drainage Officers following review of the same technical reports endorse similar conditions. Suitable conditions are recommended to safeguard the environment and the proposal from the risk of flooding and ground water contamination.
- 6.49 Thames Water consider that there is insufficient capacity for the existing waste water and fresh water supply infrastructure to meet the demands of the proposal and request a Grampian condition to deal with these issues. The onus is on the developer to negotiate with Thames Water to resolve the capacity issues to meet the requirement of the conditions to be imposed on this issue. In planning terms, the proposal is acceptable subject to resolution of the foul and fresh water infrastructure to increase capacity.
- 6.50 **Air quality, noise and contamination**
The development has the potential to reduce air quality and produce noise, particularly in the construction phase. A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) is therefore required to control emissions to a suitable level.
- 6.51 In terms of air quality, whilst the development site is not within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), an assessment has produced as part of the ES. It has followed suitable procedures and recommended approaches, and considers both the construction phase and the operational phase. With regard to the construction phase the principle impacts will be from dust which can be managed by a suitable dust management plan (required as part of the CEMP). Air quality impacts during the operational phase indicate that NO₂ levels will not be significantly adversely affected by the development in future years.
- 6.52 The ES also considers the environmental impact of the construction and operation of the scheme in terms of noise and vibration. The main issue is constraints around the proposed residential use. The site is currently affected by noise from the A4130, Milton Road and the railway. The site is also affected by noise from events such as "cold starts" from the Didcot B power station. It is also likely new commercial uses and new roads will have some impact.
- 6.53 The noise and vibration report indicates that a high level of specification of glazing will be needed to achieve the BS8233:2014 "good" standard. Any detailed application will be expected to demonstrate a detailed scheme to achieve this. The Environmental Health Protection team has assessed the application and raise no objection subject to further details being submitted at reserved matters stage to protect the amenity of future occupants of the proposed development. This can be secured by condition.
- 6.54 With regard to contamination, the applicant has provided a contaminated and land quality assessment. The report advocates carrying out further site investigation given the previous uses of the site and intrusive investigations with respect to ground gases are currently ongoing. Given the size of the site, there is the risk of localised areas of contamination and to ensure that any contamination is addressed as part of any development, additional investigation should be undertaken and this can be required by condition.
- 6.55 Subject to the suggested conditions, the proposal is acceptable in terms of air quality, noise and contamination and accords with policy and the NPPF.
- 6.56 **Traffic, Parking and Highway Safety**

Adopted Vale local plan policy DC5 and SOLP policy T1 requires safe access for developments and that the road network can accommodate the traffic arising from the development safely. The NPPF (Paragraph 32) requires decision making to take account of whether:-

- the opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up depending on the nature and location of the site, to reduce the need for major transport infrastructure;
- safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people; and
- improvements can be undertaken within the transport network that cost effectively limits the significant impacts of the development.

Paragraph 32 goes on to state: *“Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe.”*

- 6.57 Site access and traffic generation have been the key considerations in the assessment of the outline application. The transport issues have been scrutinised by County Transport officers in a lengthy process since submission in June 2015. Whilst the strategic considerations relating to traffic impact has formed a lengthy assessment period, County Transport officers and Highways England are satisfied that the development can proceed on the basis of the traffic modelling, local capacity increase, safety and planned improvements to the road network to accommodate the proposal, subject to S106 contributions, S38/S278 highway works and conditions. County state that ‘redevelopment of this site is supported by the County Council as it is an important part of the urban extension of Didcot and wider Science Vale and helps deliver much needed infrastructure in the Science Vale area’. Details of the transport assessment and response from County Transport are available on the Council’s web site.
- 6.58 The site’s sustainability credentials have been discussed above in terms of local connections and public transport. Details of parking provision, servicing, turning areas, junctions and roundabouts are agreed in principle and set out in the design documents to ensure compliance with Council design principles for parking, security and natural surveillance but balanced with generous pedestrian and cycle ways to encourage alternative modes of travel. They are to be considered in further detail at reserved matters stage within the layout and design of the proposal. The outline demonstrates that site access, parking and servicing areas, cycle ways and footpath connections are satisfactory in principle and compliant with policy. This will be further defined, and refined, at a later date for approval.
- 6.59 **Ecology and Biodiversity**
The Countryside Officer has considered the ecological impact of the proposal in the context of the NPPF (paragraphs 117 & 118), local plan policies (Policy CSB1 of the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy) together with the constraints and opportunities the site offers. Whilst not objecting to the proposal in principle, it is considered that the existing woodland in the south-eastern corner (all within South Oxfordshire) forms the main constraint given that the railway and bund to the southern boundary and woodland would be levelled to provide housing and public open space.
- 6.60 However, the re-development also provides opportunities to achieve significant biodiversity enhancement by providing green corridors and links within and across the site. In particular the potential to open up a culverted water course which runs north to south across the site until its confluence with Moor Ditch and the creation of new green corridors across and around the site. Opportunities for creating an interconnected green infrastructure network within the site have been missed and consequently the proposal is not supported by the Countryside Officer based on the indicative master plan, due to the loss of woodland habitats and impact on foraging bats.

6.61 In mitigation, there are opportunities to improve the green infrastructure and biodiversity outcomes, which should be incorporated into the detailed reserved matters application and the Countryside Officer suggests that the southern wooded bund is retained as a natural green corridor and its extension to the west. Additional suggestions are made with regard to the culvert and green infrastructure in the development of the reserved matters design stage with recommended conditions. The loss of the bund and trees have been acknowledged above and the limited environmental harm weighed against the overall benefits of the scheme. Further development for ecological habitats in the reserved matters design stage would help alleviate concerns regarding the biodiversity enhancement and green infrastructure opportunities. On balance, the outline proposal is considered acceptable.

6.62 **Archaeology**

Paragraph 132 of the NPPF confirms that *“When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be”*. Policy HE10 of the Vale Local Plan states that development will not be permitted if it would cause damage to the site or setting of nationally important archaeological remains, whether scheduled or not. Policies CON11 to 14 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan cover the same issue

6.63 The County Archaeologist has considered the proposal and states that the site has been excessively truncated and disturbed by successive developments. It is therefore very unlikely that any archaeological features survive in situ and there is no objection on archaeological grounds.

6.64 **Developer contributions**

The NPPF advises that planning obligations should only be sought where they meet all of the following tests (paragraph 204):

- i) Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- ii) Directly related to the development; and
- iii) Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

Policy DC8 of the Vale Local Plan provides that development will only be permitted where the necessary physical infrastructure and service requirements to support the development can be secured.

Policy CS11 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Core Strategy 2012 requires that new development must be supported by appropriate on and off-site infrastructure and services.

6.65 The PPG provides further guidance on how to apply the tests mentioned above and notes the following:

1. Planning obligations assist in mitigating the impact of development which benefits local communities and supports the provision of local infrastructure.
2. Planning obligations should not be sought where they are clearly not necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.
3. Planning obligations must be fully justified and evidenced. Where affordable housing contributions are being sought, planning obligations should not prevent development from going forward.

6.66 The County Council have identified that the development will increase pressure upon

existing community infrastructure. Therefore contributions have been requested towards increased school places and transport improvements. These are considered to be fair and reasonable.

- 6.67 District provision include contributions towards public art and sport pitch provision. The additional population will increase pressure on existing sport facilities in the locality. It is reasonable to request contributions towards their improvement as no on site provision is being made as part of this proposal. The sums requested are set against planned and costed schemes for new facilities in the locality. The amounts sought are proportionate to this development.
- 6.68 In addition, SODC has adopted CIL charging which came into effect on 1 April 2016. The CIL charge is only liable on the residential element of the scheme, in accordance with the adopted CIL schedule and is estimated to be approximately £1,453,500. A detailed CIL liability calculation will be made when detailed information is available for market housing sizes at the reserved matters stage on floor space figures. It should be noted that CIL does not exempt contributions for site specific infrastructure such as highway works but the CIL would reduce the overall S106 contribution attributable to SODC by the same sum which is payable as the CIL charge, primarily for off-site infrastructure such as education contributions and this would have to be apportioned and calculated for the scheme housing located within SODC.
- 6.69 The following developer contributions have been requested and agreed with the applicant.

Oxfordshire County Council	Vale (120 dwellings & non-residential uses)	South (280 dwellings)	Amount
Science Bridge	£1,615,666	£808,080	£2,423,746
Amendment to TRO to reduce speed limit on Milton Road - as a proportion of cost	£2,000	-	£2,000
Public Transport	£102,480	£239,120	£341,600
Bus Stop Infrastructure (4 new stops)	£20,000	£20,000	£40,000
Travel Plan Monitoring	£24,640	£2,040	£26,680
New Primary School:- Planned at North East Didcot	£660,000	CIL	£660,000
New Secondary School:- Planned at North East Didcot	£525,000	CIL	£525,000
New SEN School planned at Valley Park, Didcot	£50,750	CIL	£50,750
Libraries - Didcot Library	£29,302	CIL	£29,302
Adult Day Care - Didcot Day Centre - Capacity expansion	£3,027	CIL	£3,027
Administration and Monitoring	-	-	£11,205

County Totals	£3,052,865	£1,069,240	£4,113,310
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District Councils	Vale (120 dwellings & non-residential uses)	South (280 dwellings)	Amount
Public art (300 per unit)	£36,000	CIL	£36,000
Street naming	£2,290	£3,018	£5,308
Waste bins (170 per unit)	£20,400	£47,600	£68,000
Swimming pools	£48,546	CIL	£48,546
Sports Halls	£55,614	CIL	£55,614
Artificial Grass Pitch	£8,023	CIL	£8,023
Outdoor Tennis	£25,238	CIL	£25,238
MUGA	£28,336	CIL	£28,336
Health & Fitness	£24,458	CIL	£24,458
Football Pitches	£19,133	CIL	£19,133
Cricket Pitches	£9,358	CIL	£9,358
Rugby Pitches	£4,778	CIL	£4,778
Recreation: Club House/Pavilion	£39,882	CIL	£39,882
Allotment	-	CIL	-
Monitoring/Admin	£6,995	£5,662	£12,657
South CIL charge 190 units x 90m2 x £85 (32% AH)	-	£1,453,500	£1,453,500
District Totals	£329,051	£1,509,780	£1,838,831
Overall Total			£5,952,141

6.70 Officers consider the contributions are fair and proportionate and should be subject to a legal agreement should permission be granted.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 In view of both council's housing land supply shortfall, the NPPF presumption in favour of sustainable development applies and 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" (NPPF paragraph 14). Paragraph 7 of NPPF identifies three mutually dependent dimensions to sustainable development; it should fulfil an economic role, a social role and an environmental role.

7.2 The proposed development would perform an economic role. It would provide employment during the construction phase, which is estimated at approximately 600 jobs. It is also estimated that a further 4,160 jobs would be created at end user stage by the industrial and commercial component of the development. It would also create investment in the local and wider economy through the construction stage and by new residents and their spending at end user stage. This could help secure local facilities or make them more robust. Through increasing the housing stock, it would contribute to

an expansion of the local housing market and could potentially improve the affordability of open market housing.

- 7.3 The scheme would have a social role as it will provide additional housing that the Districts need, together with much needed affordable homes. Whilst the housing mix is a matter to be addressed fully at reserved matters stage, 32% affordable housing provision is agreed and this will contribute to meet demand across both Vale and South Oxfordshire.
- 7.4 The proposal will have some limited environmental implications resulting from localised noise and contamination, landscape harm and ecology impacts, but mitigation can be put in place to address these at the reserved matters stage. On balance, this limited harm is outweighed by the benefits of the proposal.
- 7.5 The proposal has economic, social and environmental benefits. It would also make an important contribution to the need for housing in the Vale and South Oxfordshire. It is considered these significant benefits outweigh the limited harm identified. It will nonetheless be important to address the loss of woodland habitat in the southeast corner of the site and the councils will expect ecological enhancements and green infrastructure in any detailed scheme to alleviate the limited harm.
- 7.6 In conclusion, and in light of the emphasis in the NPPF to boost the economy and significantly increase housing supply, the development amounts to sustainable development. Whilst there will be some adverse effects, these do not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. Consequently, the application is recommended for approval subject to conditions and a legal agreement to secure affordable housing and developer contributions.
- 7.7 **Process – referral to Secretary of State**
The site within the Vale area includes in excess of 5,000sqm of retail floor space and lies outside a designated centre identified in the current local plan. As such, it is covered by the Town and Country Planning Consultation (England) Direction 2009. As the Vale's Planning Committee have resolved to approve the application, it must be referred to the National Casework Unit who will consider whether the Secretary of State's intervention is needed and if necessary, prepare a submission summarising the planning issues for the Secretary of State to decide whether to call in the planning application.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1 **It is recommended that authority to grant planning permission is delegated to the Head of Planning subject to:**

- 1. Referral to National Casework Unit (Vale).**
- 2. A S106 agreement to deliver the infrastructure package.**
- 3. The following key conditions (others may be added):**
 - 1. Approval of reserved matters.**
 - 2. Time limit for submission of reserved matters.**
 - 3. Time limit for implementation.**
 - 4. Approved plans and documents.**
 - 5. Environmental statement.**
 - 6. Site wide construction environmental management plan.**
 - 7. Sample materials required (all uses).**

8. Biodiversity enhancement strategy.
9. Update surveys before any phase of development.
10. Phasing.
11. Tree protection.
12. Levels.
13. Noise protection.
14. Noise mitigation.
15. Hours of operation details.
16. Contaminated land investigation and remediation.
17. Verification of remediation.
18. Culverted watercourse.
19. Sustainable drainage scheme.
20. Foul drainage.
21. Water supply.
- 22 - 25. Retail use restrictions.
26. Ventilation of A3 use.
27. Boundary treatment provision prior to occupation.
28. Connection links prior to occupation of final unit.
29. Restriction on outside storage.
30. Community employment plan.

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