

APPLICATION NO.	P19/S0720/O
APPLICATION TYPE	OUTLINE
REGISTERED	5.3.2019
PARISH	DIDCOT
WARD MEMBER(S)	Victoria Haval Andrea Warren David Rouane
APPLICANT	Bloor Homes & Dare Warwick (Properties) Ltd
SITE	Land at Ladygrove, East Didcot
PROPOSAL	Outline planning application for a residential development comprising up to 750 dwellings (with up to 40% affordable housing provision), public open space comprising green infrastructure, community use, allotments and play areas, pedestrian and cycle links, landscaping and associated supporting infrastructure. Means of access to be determined via Hadden Hill (A4130). Access to NPR3 reserved for later consideration along with all other matters. (As revised by information received 22 January 2021 and updated Parameter Plan and Biodiversity Calculations received 5 May 2021).
OFFICER	Cathie Scotting

1.0 **INTRODUCTION AND PROPOSAL**

The application is for 750 dwellings. In accordance with the Council's constitution an outline or full application that is recommended for approval and falls into the category of a 'large scale major' application (defined as 200 or more dwellings), shall be referred to Planning Committee.

1.1 A location plan is **attached** as Appendix 1. The site itself appears relatively flat however the ground falls gently by about 6m from east to west. Higher ground beyond the site occurs to the east which is within the North Wessex Downs AONB (Hadden Hill and Down Hill) and beyond to the north-east are the Wittenham Clumps. The Hadden Hill golf club is situated directly east of the site at the foot of the AONB. The site is bounded by roads to the south (Hadden Hill) and west (Abingdon Road). Situated south of Hadden Hill is the recent residential development at the junction with Fulscot Road and the Hadden Hill retail park. To the west is the Ladygrove neighbourhood, and to the north the Furlongs including the residential roads of North Bush Furlong, Ruge Furlong, Bayswater Brook, Shinmoor Close, Middle Furlong and The Frith which back onto the site. The site is dominated by a single electricity pylon and the transmission lines travel north-west through the Ladygrove residential area, alongside which is the leisure route, Ladygrove Loop. There are two protected trees within the site and the remainder of the site is grassland with some hedgerows along the boundaries.

1.2 The current application is in outline with means of access from Hadden Hill to be determined. Other matters are reserved including a future access from the east from the forthcoming section of the northern perimeter road for Didcot (NPR3). Following detailed discussions with Oxfordshire County Council the applicant also proposes to construct the southern part of the NPR3.

- 1.3 The application proposes 750 dwellings on a site of 29.4 hectares which incorporates parkland, open space and play areas, a community centre and allotments. The site parameter plan is **attached** as Appendix 2 identifies areas for Residential Development, Green Infrastructure and a safeguarded area for NPR3, which could include residential development. The overall residential development will include 40% affordable housing. The masterplan includes two scenarios, Scenario 1 reflecting access from the NPR3 which related to OCC published road alignment and Scenario 2 which has evolved following discussions with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) on a more likely NPR3 alignment. The site boundary and illustrative masterplan (Scenario 2) is shown below:



Fig 1: Illustrative Masterplan

- 1.4 The site has been allocated for development in successive Local Plans, detailed more below. A resolution to approve 642 dwellings under previous planning applications (P97/S0721/O and P00/S0626/O) was granted by Planning Committee in July 2006. Permission was not issued as the S106 agreement was not progressed by the applicant at this time. Since, in 2018, Bloor Homes secured an interest in the site and subsequently engaged in detailed pre-application dialogue, leading to the submission of the current application.
- 1.5 The current application and Environmental Assessment were submitted March 2019. Additional technical information has been provided at various times since the submission and in January 2021 an updated revised submission was made. The revised submission incorporates updated technical information and revisions to the parameter plan and two illustrative masterplans to address the previous uncertainty of

the exact alignment of NPR3. The stages of submission are listed below and all the relevant plans and documents are listed below in para 1.6.

- March 2019 - Application submitted
- May 2019 – Further drainage information by Abley Letchford Partnership (ALP)
- October 2019 – Letter re drainage by ALP
- July 2020 – Updated Biodiversity Impact Assessment by Ecological Planning |Research Ltd (EPR)
- August 2020: Updated Transport Assessment submitted by ALP
- September 2020: Agent correspondence on overall application. Submission of Parkland Plan
- September 2020: Gas monitoring Information by Wilson Bailey submitted (dated October 2018)
- October 2020: Air Quality Assessment by WYG (now Tetra Tech)
- January 2021: Revised submission incorporating a parameter plan and alternative illustrative masterplans, updated technical information, submission of Energy Statement (White Peak Planning)
- May 2021: Updated Biodiversity Information and Parameter Plan

1.6 The submitted plans and documents in the revised submission (January 2021) comprise:

- Parameter Plan - Drawing P20-3418 03 PP REVC
- Illustrative Masterplan Scenario 1 P20-3418 01_IMP1
- Illustrative Masterplan Scenario 2 P20-3418 02_IMP2
- Phasing Plan - 01 Drawing PhP-01_RevB (March 2019)
- Highway Drawings:
 - Improvements to Hadden Hill / Abingdon Roundabout – Drawing A204-10 P3
 - Non Car Access From A4130 Abingdon Road Plan A204-05 P6
 - Access from A4130 Hadden Hill - Drawing A204-06 P5
 - Emergency Access – Drawing A204-11 P1

1.7 The supporting documents comprise:

- Design and Access Statement Rev A
- Environmental Statement
- Planning Statement
- Transport Assessment, Addendum and Technical Note
- Residential Travel Plan
- Biodiversity Impact Assessment
- Arboricultural Assessment and Method Statement
- Flood Risk and Drainage Strategy Report, Technical Note
- Air Quality Assessment
- Noise Assessment Report
- Energy Statement
- Utilities Statement

2.0 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

2.1 The responses to the application can be read in full under the planning reference number P19/S0720/O on the Council's website: www.southoxon.gov.uk. The table below summarises responses received in connection with the original submission

(March 2019) and the revised submission (January 2021). Consultation responses on additional technical information is referred to where relevant.

2.2

Consultees	Representations
Didcot Town Council	<p>Amended Plans: No objection – Comments</p> <p>Delivery of NPR3 needs to be confirmed before the plans could be progressed. It should be constructed and fully open prior to the commencement of other works. The four pedestrian crossings to the west and south are all necessary.</p> <p>The land is marshy and that it fully expected detailed drainage schemes to be included in further proposals for this land.</p> <p>In order to address the climate emergency and deliver buildings that are in line with the aims of the Paris Agreement – namely net zero carbon across the whole life of a building - the developer should demonstrate a commitment to deliver zero carbon buildings in construction and operational use.</p> <p><i>(Didcot Town Council has additionally provided on comments in respect of on-site infrastructure and this is covered in the paragraphs covering Infrastructure)</i></p>
	<p>Original Plans: No objection – Comments</p> <p>This development is feasible only provided that the Northern Perimeter Road is completed.</p> <p>Attention should be paid to the increased burden the development would have on GP facilities.</p> <p>Access to the nearest school, All Saints, involves crossing a long, fast and straight section of the A4130. A signalled crossing is required by the time the first houses are occupied to allow safe crossing for children.</p> <p>Ladygrove Community Centre is virtually fully booked, meaning additional community centre provision is necessary soon after the development commences.</p> <p>Maintain and enhance biodiversity on one of the most biodiverse areas of Didcot looks to be a challenge for developers.</p> <p>There may be significant archaeology that needs evaluation.</p> <p>Note the concerns raised by the residents regarding flooding and surface water drainage.</p> <p>Social housing should be interspersed throughout the development rather than creating specific sections.</p>
Local Residents	<p>Amended Plans: 9 objections Original Plans: 15 objections</p>
	<p>Policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of conformity with NPPF and Local Plan - proposed number of dwellings keeps changing - proposed number of dwellings exceeds Local Plan - development should be to the west of Didcot <p>Drainage and Flooding:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- need to provide swales and bunds to prevent flooding of existing properties- risk of flooding, area is Hagbourne Marsh- maintenance of SUDs /open space <p>Transport and Access:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- sufficient and safe crossings are provided on Hadden Hill and Abingdon Road, and before occupations- NPR3 should be completed before any dwellings / by 200 dwellings- NPR3 is not necessary- wider highway infrastructure should be completed before any dwellings- attention to specification of paths / cycleways- intensity of traffic on Abingdon Road- speed controls along Abingdon Road and within the site-location of bus stops-access for fire service and refuse vehicles needs to be shown- concerns re air pollution- no proposals for parking <p>Infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- lack of provision of school, pressure on existing schools- question re community use – hall?- DNE schools too far away- lack of GP and dentist capacity- no provision of outdoor sport on site- play areas should be sited in the south west corner away from existing properties- no provision for teenagers / children <p>Design and Layout:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Density is too high- Concern re privacy and loss of light for existing properties- Lack of information on location of affordable housing--Concern for security with open space at rear of existing properties <p>Sustainable Design / Energy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Policy refers to Code for Sustainable Homes <p>Landscape, Trees, Wildlife and Biodiversity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- As within Didcot Garden Town there needs to be more emphasis on landscape and wildlife- Trees and hedgerows should be retained / protected- Loss of TPO (T2) tree unacceptable- Site is valuable for wildlife and birds- No compensatory land for loss of wildlife- A landscape buffer adjacent to existing properties necessary <p>Construction/ Noise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- controls on working essential and not at weekends
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Cllr Sue Roberts	<p>Development should provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 40% affordable housing - solar panels on southern roofs - electric charging points - undergrounding power lines if possible
Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) Transport	<p>Amended Plans: No objections subject to the completion of a S106 and S278 agreement and conditions.</p> <p>Original Plans: Objection. The submitted documents fail to assess the traffic impact and necessary mitigation and as such the proposed development would result in exacerbation of existing congestion and delay on the local highway network, harming the convenience and safety of highway users and adding to environmental impact of vehicle emissions. The proposals fail to provide necessary infrastructure to promote opportunities for modal shift to more sustainable forms of transport i.e. walking, cycling, public transport. Further information requested.</p>
OCC Education	<p>Amended Plans: As per original comments</p> <p>Original Plans: The South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 Policy DID3 envisages a primary school on the site. We are content that all school provision can be made on other sites as set out in our attached Education response, subject to agreeing the relevant contributions. Contributions for education requested including a matrix provision to address the outline nature of the scheme.</p>
OCC Housing	<p>Amended Plans: As per original comments.</p> <p>Original Plans: The need for extra care housing (ECH) in Ladygrove East is set out in the County's Market Position Statement. The County Council request ECH provision on the site within the masterplan. The County would seek a site capable of accommodating a minimum of 60 units plus communal facilities (Use Class C3) covering 1.5 acres of land. The scheme would be mixed tenure affordable rented and shared ownership. All extra care needs to be located on a bus route and near to shops or village centre to allow independent living.</p>
OCC Property:	<p>Amended Plans: As per original comments</p> <p>Original Plans: The proposed development will increase the demands placed on local infrastructure and services. To mitigate the impact of these demands on County Council related infrastructure, the funds will be required through an s106 agreement. Indexed linked contributions sought for Library services, Children & Family services, Health and Well Being (Adult Day Care). We also support provision of an on-site community facility.</p>

<p>Oxfordshire County Council Archaeology</p>	<p>Amended Plans: As per original comments</p> <p>Original Plans: No objection subject to conditions for ensuring the implementation of a staged programme of archaeological investigation to be maintained during the period of construction.</p> <p>The site is located in an area of archaeological interest as identified by an archaeological evaluation undertaken on the site. The evaluation recorded a series of undated gullies, ditches and pits immediately south of a previously recorded Roman settlement site, field system and trackway. A boundary ditch was recorded in the southern part of area along with undated ditches probably representing a field system. It is likely that this field system relates to a middle Bronze Age settlement site previously recorded immediately south of the proposed development area.</p>
<p>OCC Lead Flood Authority</p>	<p>Amended Plans: No objection - suitable pre-occupation conditions should be applied to any approval by the SODC Drainage Team</p> <p>Original Plans: Objection - Drainage Strategy not in line with Local and National Standards, Site within Flood Zone 2. Further information requested.</p>
<p>Environment Agency</p>	<p>Original and Amended Plans: No objection</p>
<p>Drainage</p>	<p>Amended Plans: No objection subject to conditions. Mitigation measures can be incorporated to protect the development from flooding without increasing risk elsewhere. Conditions required.</p> <p>Additional Information May 2019: Holding objection There should be a greater commitment to SUDS within the main development area in accordance with the Environmental Statement and current local and national policy.</p> <p>Previous comments: Objection Further detail and commitment to prevention and source control measures are required at this stage to ensure that a suitable sustainable drainage strategy is in place to suitably manage, treat and control surface water flows prior to discharge to the Ladygrove Brook. mitigation measures can be incorporated to protect the development from flooding considered without increasing risk elsewhere.</p>
<p>SGN (Gas) / Cadent</p>	<p>No objection but notes the proposal is in proximity to utilities apparatus, which may impact, and possibly prevent, proposed activities for safety and/or legal reasons. Advisory notes supplied.</p>
<p>National Grid</p>	<p>Amended Plans: Holding objection – require further information.</p> <p><i>Officer comment: Further information has been sent to National Grid demonstrating that there will be no built</i></p>

	<i>development within the buffer zones. No further comments have been received.</i>
Thames Water	<p>Amended and Original Plans: No objection in respect of foul drainage No objection on surface water provided developer follows sequential approach to disposal. The catchment is subject to high infiltration flows during certain groundwater conditions. The scale of the proposed development doesn't materially affect the sewer network and as such we have no objection. In the longer term Thames Water, along with other partners, are working on a strategy to reduce groundwater entering the sewer network. Thames Water has identified an inability of the existing water network infrastructure to accommodate the needs of this development and request a condition requiring upgrades or a phasing plan.</p>
Health and Safety Executive	HSE does not advise, on safety grounds, against the granting of planning permission in this case.
Countryside Officer	<p>Amended Plans: The development can likely achieve compliance with Policy ENV3 of the SOLP, but previous comments apply. Support proposed funding by TVERC to monitor the condition of the habitats on site and regularly report back to the site management company and local planning authority to ensure that the site delivers the agreed level of biodiversity net gain. TVERC funding and monitoring will need to be secured in the S106</p> <p>Recommends conditions for a Construction Environmental Plan, Biodiversity Enhancement Plan and Landscape and Ecology Plan.</p> <p>Previous comments: Holding Objection – Subject to the submission of revised Biodiversity Impact Calculations.</p>
Landscape	<p>Amended Plans: The proposed Parameter Plan has been updated to reflect the previous landscape comments, but the Parameter Plan and associated Design Guide does not contain enough information to be able to inform a reserved matters application. Additional design work will be required before any detailed applications are submitted to cover the provision and type of POS, Play and building heights. This additional information should be covered in Conditions and potentially in the Section 106 agreement.</p> <p>Previous comments: The revised parameters plan need consistency. It is appreciated that the technical aspects of the northern perimeter road have yet to be fully determined so as to enable</p>

	<p>the second access onto the site to be fixed. However, it is felt that the arrangement and form of the open space indicated in the northern part of the site as shown on the Illustrative Masterplan: Scenario 1, works well from a Landscape perspective.</p> <p>No landscape objection in principle. Holding objection regarding how the overall design responds to the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and the Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan. The proposed development would not cause unacceptable landscape and visual harm to the Wessex Downs and Western Vale Fringes Landscape Character Area of South Oxfordshire District Council nor to the nearby North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The landscape impacts relate to the loss of agricultural land. The most significant visual impact will be from the footpath to the north east of the site located within the North Wessex Downs AONB and from the Wittenham Clumps.</p>
Forestry	<p>Amended Plans: The current proposal is only showing an illustrative site layout and highway routes; however, all master planning needs to have the constraints identified at the outset. As the submitted arboricultural report correctly records the TPO Oaks have considerable arboricultural value, therefore the protected Oak trees are to be considered as a constraint to development. A development design that resulted in the loss of these important trees is contrary to policy.</p> <p>Previous comments: Two mature oak trees on the site are protected by TPO. The submitted layout of the perimeter road (NPR3) results in the loss of T17. There is space to redesign the layout to avoid the loss of the tree. The illustrative layout could be improved to increase the amount of green infrastructure within the residential areas.</p>
Conservation Officer	<p>Amended Plans: No heritage objection. Plan A204-06P5 shows works to provide crossings and a bus stop on the A4130 Hadden Hill roundabout. It is not fully clear if the kerb line is to be moved on the north side of the road or not but please be advised the Grade II listed milestone is very close to the edge of the existing road and changes to the alignment of the kerb or roadway could affect the listed structure.</p> <p>Previous comments: In terms of built heritage assets there is the listed milestone that lies immediately to the south of the application site boundary on Hadden Hill. The Proposed Southern Site Access Arrangements plan indicates that the alterations would not impact the listed milestone. It will be important that during the construction phase there is no impact to the structure. This could be managed with protective fencing if it appears that the works will be close to the structure.</p>

Urban Design	<p>Amended Plans: I can support this application based on the key issues discussed were responded to and where appropriately mitigated through the illustrative design, design rational and present within the design and access statement accompanying the application.</p> <p>Previous comments: Following comments provided for the pre application P18/S2842/PEJ, the outline submission P19/S0720/O takes a good design approach on the key issues relating to character and street hierarchy supported by a good contextual analysis. The proposed design principles accommodate these issues and are clearly shown within the accompanying design and access statement.</p>
Environmental Protection	<p>Amended Plans: No objection subject to condition requiring sound insulation and construction management.</p> <p>Previous comments: Further information requested re construction protection.</p>
Contaminated Land	<p>Amended Plans: No further observations</p> <p>Additional Information September 2020: No further observations on gas monitoring results.</p> <p>Previous comments: I have reviewed the Wilson Bailey Geotechnical and Environmental Desk Study and Phase 1 Ground Investigation Report for Ladygrove East. This report does not identify any land contamination that presents a significant risk to the development. However before I can comment on the findings of this report I will need to review the gas monitoring results.</p>
Air Quality	<p>Amended Plans: No objections subject to conditions</p> <p>Previous comments: No objection subject to conditions in respect of trees, electric car charging, sustainable travel packs, gas boilers and cycle parking.</p>
Building Control	<p>A detailed Energy Statement should be submitted with supporting SAP calculations to demonstrate how the requirements of the policy would be achieved.</p>
Housing Development	<p>Amended Plans: Updated mix and tenure to account for revised SOLP Policy H9 and possible provision of affordable extra care.</p> <p>Previous comments: Suggested mix and tenure plus comments on design of affordable housing.</p>
Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group	<p>Amended Plans: This application directly impacts on existing practices to provide primary care to the increasing population. To allow this to go ahead S106 funding will be required to support the 1,800 people who are expected to occupy these dwellings. A population based contribution of £648,000 (or adapted depending on final mix) is requested.</p>

	<p>Previous comments: We are concerned about the housing growth across the patch and the implications this will have on already stretched health services. At this juncture the OCCG objects to this housing development until we are satisfied there are plans in place to mitigate against this increased pressure</p>
Sport England	<p>Original Plans: Objection - Given the size of the development SE does not object to the principle to making contributions for off-site contributions. However, there is insufficient detail to show how this will be met. No specific projects have been linked to the council's own assessment of their needs, there are no detailed costings or information on whether further planning permission will be necessary. Application does not address how sporting and recreational needs will be met.</p> <p><i>Officer comment- the report addresses proposed contributions.</i></p>
Active Communities	<p>Original Plans: Leisure are seeking a range of contributions for - off-site facilities, as well as recommending running and cycling infrastructure on site.</p>
Thames Police - Funding	<p>Given the scale and significance of the proposal Thames Valley Police consider it appropriate that the developer should contribute towards the provision of infrastructure to mitigate the impact of the development.</p>
Thames Police Crime Advisor	<p>I commend the applicants for providing within their Design and Access Statement (DAS) a specific section on 'Secured by Design Principles', which addresses how they intend to incorporate crime prevention design within the proposals. Further liaison and conditions requested in respect of reserved matters.</p>
North Wessex AONB Board	<p>No response</p>
Didcot Garden Town Team -	<p>Original Plans: Scheme should align with the Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan masterplan principles to prioritise green spaces over roads and car parks. Connectivity for pedestrian, cycle and vehicular routes should be improved, including a connection to the north. A key connection with a street to the north of the site near Shinmoor Close and The Frith should be made.</p> <p>The proposed community park should provide a gateway feature along the public realm at the roundabout and along the frontage of Abingdon Road and A4130.</p> <p>The plan for the community park shows allotments along the frontage of A4130. They should be relocated to a more remote part of the site and a suitable gateway concept should be proposed along the public realm of the park.</p> <p>The Delivery Plan calls for sports fields to be located in the community park. However, given the nature of the existing conditions at the site, this use may be difficult to achieve does</p>

	<p>not seem appropriate. Provision for sports fields elsewhere may be required.</p> <p>The community park amenities and features provide a good variety of experiences for people to enjoy and the integration the significant sustainable drainage feature into the development is welcome.</p>
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3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 P20/S2361/O – Current (not yet determined)

Outline planning application for a residential development comprising up to 250 dwellings (with up to 40% affordable housing provision), public open space, play area, pedestrian and cycle links, landscaping and associated supporting infrastructure and earthworks. Means of access (including separate emergency access) to be determined via Hadden Hill (A4130). With the applicant's agreement work on this application has not been progressed. Effectively it forms a first phase of the comprehensive scheme but raised many issues in respect of the wider masterplan and infrastructure delivery. It was agreed with the applicant not to work on this scheme and concentrate on the overall site and plan a comprehensive development.

3.2 [P18/S2842/PEJ](#) – Pre application advice provided (03/12/2018)

Proposed outline application for circa 700 residential dwellings.

[P16/S3585/PEJ](#) – Pre application advice provided (27/06/2017)

Development of Land at Ladygrove East, Didcot for circa 500 homes and 5.8 hectares of commercial development comprising A1,A3,A4,A5,B1, DIY Store, builders merchants and trade counters with associated infrastructure

[P00/W0626/O](#) - Proposed residential development and associated works. (As amplified by "Statement of Development Principles" which accompanied the letter from the Agent dated 4 April 2006). This application allowed for a larger site area to accommodate NPR3 works to the east of the site. Not determined

[P97/W0721/O](#)

Residential development with roads and open space. (As amplified by "Statement of Development Principles" which accompanied the letter from the Agent dated 4 April 2006). Not determined

[P93/W0178/CC](#) - Approved (16/07/1993)

Construction of single 7.3m carriageway, footpaths and cycleway including new bridge under the Oxford/London Railway line, new roundabout, alterations to existing road, closure of Marsh Bridge and landscaping at the junction of B4016/A4130 at the eastern end of The Broadway, Didcot.

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

4.1 An Environmental Impact Assessment is submitted with the application.

Environmental impacts and mitigation are addressed in the report.

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 **Development Plan Policies**

South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 (SOLP) Policies:

- STRAT1 - The Overall Strategy
- STRAT2 - South Oxfordshire Housing and Employment Requirements
- STRAT3 - Didcot Garden Town
- STRAT4 - Strategic development
- STRAT5 - Residential Densities
- H1 - Delivering New Homes
- H2 - New Housing in Didcot
- H9 - Affordable Housing
- H11 - Housing Mix
- H12 - Self Build and Custom Housing
- H13 - Specialist Housing for Older People
- DES1 - Delivering High Quality Development
- DES2 - Enhancing Local Character
- DES3 - Design and Access Statements
- DES4 - Masterplans for Allocated Sites and Major Development
- DES5 - Outdoor Amenity Space
- DES6 - Residential Amenity
- DES7 - Efficient Use of Resources
- DES8 - Promoting Sustainable Design
- DES10 - Carbon Reduction
- ENV1 - Landscape and Countryside
- ENV2 - Biodiversity - Designated sites, Priority Habitats and Species
- ENV3 - Biodiversity
- ENV4 - Watercourses
- ENV5 - Green Infrastructure in New Developments
- ENV7 - Listed Buildings
- ENV9 - Archaeology and Scheduled Monuments
- ENV11 - Pollution - Impact from existing and/ or Previous Land uses on new Development and the Natural Environment (Potential receptors of Pollution)
- ENV12 - Pollution - Impact of Development on Human Health, the Natural Environment and/or Local Amenity (Potential Sources of Pollution)
- CF2 - Provision of Community Facilities and Services
- CF3 - New Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities
- CF5 - Open Space, Sport and Recreation in New Residential Development
- EP1 - Air Quality
- EP2 - Hazardous Substances
- EP3 - Waste collection and Recycling
- EP4 - Flood Risk
- INF1 - Infrastructure Provision
- INF2 - Electronic Communications
- INF3 - Telecommunications Technology
- INF4 - Water Resources
- TRANS4 - Transport Assessments, Transport Statements and Travel Plans
- TRANS5 - Consideration of Development Proposals

5.2 **Neighbourhood Plan**

Didcot does not have a neighbourhood plan. The Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan has been prepared to inform and guide the strategy for development of the Didcot Garden Town.

5.3 **Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents**

- South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2016 (SODG 2016)
- Developer Contributions SPD

5.4 **National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance**

5.5 **Other Relevant Legislation**

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.

Equality 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 are the following:**

- **Current policy**
- **Masterplan – Access and Movement, Design, Density and Heights**
- **Housing**
- **Energy and Sustainable Design**
- **Transport**
- **Drainage**
- **Biodiversity**
- **Landscape and Trees**
- **Residential Amenities**
- **Environmental Protection**
- **Heritage**
- **Infrastructure - off site contributions and on site provision (Section 7)**

Current Policy

6.2 The current South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 (SOLP) Policy H2 for Ladygrove East is derived from policies in previous Local Plans. Policy DID3 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 proposed the development of 670 homes (40dph), transport infrastructure including the northern perimeter road 3 (NPR3) plus an on-site community park, primary school, community centre and off site contributions. The South Oxfordshire Core Strategy carried over the site allocation in DID3. SOLP Policy H2 refers to a figure of 642 homes further to the positive resolution to grant permission in July 2006.

6.3 Policy H2 in respect of Ladygrove East advises proposals will be expected to deliver a network of public urban spaces and public greenspaces (not less than 8 hectares) with the largest greenspace comprising a local park (not less than 6 hectares) containing an equipped children's play area, open grassland, woodland, wetland, ponds and watercourses located in the southwestern part of the allocated area. Other greenspaces will comprise green corridors in the movement network and buffer zones, containing open grassland, earth mounding and woodland. The buffer zones will be of sufficient width to protect homes from noise generated on major distributor roads and to protect road users from the Hadden Hill golf course.

- 6.4 The application proposes 750 homes on a site area of 29.4 hectares. The application, in the Design and Access Statement identifies a land use budget as follows:

Table 1: Land use budget

Net residential development area	17.68 ha
Community Park	5.72 ha
Amenity open space	2.04 ha
NPR3 and attenuation	3.8 ha
Miscellaneous	0.16 ha
Total	29.4 ha

- 6.5 The amount of housing exceeds the figure in the Local Plan policy. The policy figure is not a cap on development and an increased amount of housing is acceptable in principle provided the provision for open space and community facilities and infrastructure is catered for. A primary school is no longer required on the site (previously identified in earlier policies and the previous application). This has enabled more land to be available for housing development. The open space requirements for this site exceed the usual standards for open space, due to a legacy requirement derived from the 1990's Ladygrove development to the east. A parcel of land owned by SODC on the western side of the site (excluded from the application site), is covenanted to be public open space, and this was purchased with S106 contributions from the Ladygrove development to contribute to the parkland on Ladygrove East. The required local park area is 6 hectares, the total area will comprise 5.72 ha from the application site and can also include land from the 0.7 ha parcel, owned by SODC, thereby in excess of 6 hectares. In addition, there is over 2 hectares of amenity open space thus overall exceeding the specified 8 hectares in policy. In terms of land use, the application complies with the adopted policy, and a condition will be applied to ensure the amount of open space is delivered.

Masterplan

- 6.6 The NPPF and Policy DES1 require a high quality design with specific reference to key principles, especially climate change, biodiversity, the efficient use of resources, design quality of public realm and landscape, access and connections to services and facilities, integration and balanced communities, and comprehensive planning.
- 6.7 Key environmental matters to address through the masterplan are biodiversity, landscape and drainage. The site is currently used for grazing and is prone to water logging, the area was formerly known as Hagbourne Marshes. The North Wessex AONB is situated to the east on rising land from Hadden Hill golf course. The new perimeter road (NPR3) will separate the development site from Hadden Hill golf course and the landscape treatment of the road and the site will be important in mitigating the impact on the setting of the AONB. More on drainage, landscape and biodiversity is set out below.
- 6.8 The parameter plan (Appendix 2) identifies three 'zones' for land use and development:
- 1) Residential Development (including residential dwellings, public open space, children's play provision, landscaping, SUDs, drainage, community facility and ancillary infrastructure. The plan key also refers to allotments however the plan itself identifies the allotments within the Green Infrastructure. Under revisions the allotments were relocated away from the south west corner adjacent to roads into a more central part of the open space.

2) Green Infrastructure (including as required access, public open space, play facilities, allotments, SUDs, drainage, landscaping, retained vegetation of merit and pedestrian / cycle links). The plan key also refers to the community centre however the plan itself identifies the community facility within the Residential Development zone, and it is the latter that is agreed.

3) Land suitable for residential development within the OCC safeguarded zone for the northern perimeter road. This zone also includes retained vegetation along the eastern and southern boundaries and new green corridors. This area will also need to include landscaping.

Access and Movement

6.9 The final alignment of NPR3 will be subject to further details and approval. To allow flexibility for the precise design of the road, an additional parameter plan was submitted to accommodate either the NPR3 alignment that has been subject to public consultation (Scenario 1), or an alternative alignment (Scenario 2) which represents OCC's current thinking. (The final alignment of NPR3 will be subject to public consultation). Both alignment scenarios are within the OCC Safeguarded Zone and broadly follow a similar road orientation however each indicate different locations for the access roundabout from the east and different locations for SUD attenuation features. Crucially Scenario 1 ensures the protection of the southern TPO tree, whereas under Scenario 2 the road comes very close to the tree. Both alignments involve the removal of the northern TPO tree, which is not clear on the plans. However, further discussions have taken place with OCC which indicate the possibility of retaining both trees, as shown in the figure below. The final alignment will be subject to further approval and officers will endeavour that the design fully considers the potential for the retention of both TPO trees. The construction of the NPR3 road will require significant mitigation in the form of tree planting and landscaping and this will form part of the proposals for the road.



Figure 2: Possible alignment of NPR3

- 6.10 Access and Movement is covered in pages 50 and 51 of the Design and Access Statement and some key connections are identified on the parameter plan. The drawings identify vehicular access from Hadden Hill, from the east via the forthcoming NPR3 road, and an emergency access into the north west of the site, along an existing path between Bayswater Brook and rear of properties in North Bush Furlong, which will also provide cycle and pedestrian access. In addition to this access there are four other pedestrian cycle links are shown, one into the south west of the site from the Marsh Bridge roundabout, two from Abingdon Road and from the south either side of the existing Hadden Hill roundabout. A spine route through the site from the Hadden Hill access, would link north to the NPR3 as illustrated under the masterplan scenarios.

Design, Density and Building Heights

- 6.11 SOLP Policy STRAT 5 expects densities of around 45dph to ensure efficient use of land, but also recognises the need to respect local character and the need to protect the local environment. In this case the setting of the North Wessex AONB and adjoining residential development will need to be protected. The proposed average density will be around 43dph. The application advises that the central part of the site is intended to have a tighter urban grain and higher density to reflect some of the areas found in the centre of Didcot whereas the parkland edge and periphery of the development will generally present a lower density.
- 6.12 To achieve these higher densities apartments will be necessary, including 3 storey development. The Design and Access statement (page 52) states that the majority of the development will be up to 2 storeys high with 2½ and 3 storey development generally used for apartments. The density and building heights parameters across the site will be sought by condition, as part of a Design Code, and monitored through reserved matters. It is expected that development in the northern part of the site near to existing residential properties will be of a similar height and density to the existing development. The eastern edge of the site adjacent to the road and closest to the AONB, will need careful landscape treatment and design.
- 6.13 The Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan is a material consideration however it is not adopted planning policy. The masterplan incorporates some of the key principles, e.g. landscaping, location of open space, provision of allotments and community centre. The DGT also envisages commercial space in the south of the site, a local centre within the site, residential frontage onto old Abingdon Road and vehicular links in the north east part of the site. These elements have never been part of the adopted policy requirements and raise the following concerns: compatibility with residential and park amenities, insufficient demand to support retail uses and undermining existing shopping areas, the amount of open space, drainage issues, difficulties in dealing with front and rear public realm and increased traffic movements within existing residential areas. Therefore, the DGT principles for this site have justifiably not been pursued.
- 6.14 The level of detail in respect of the illustrative masterplan does not include scale, heights or density, which would normally be expected at an outline stage, however it is sufficient for officers to consider that a high-quality design and layout can be achieved. It will be necessary to apply detailed conditions in respect of design (including heights, scale, and density) character areas, layout and phasing, that will provide a robust framework for reserved matters. A design code will be required and this will be subject to public consultation to ensure there is further opportunity for input into the parameters of the development.

- 6.15 Concerns have been raised in respect of privacy, loss of light and security. At this outline stage the details are not known, however the Council's Design Guide and the design code will set out guidance in relation to overlooking distances and design for security. Moreover, the reserved matters will provide specific details and these will be assessed in relation to the guidance.
- 6.16 To ensure all the details required for reserved matters referred to above and throughout this report all applications for reserved matters shall include the following information:
- Land use budget as per land uses to monitor the amount of open space
 - An overlay plan showing utilities and services including drainage, utilities, lighting columns and tree planting
 - Parking for vehicles and cycles including construction to meet highway specifications
 - Landscaping including retention of trees and hedgerows and proposed landscaping
 - Levels
- 6.17 Additionally, and where relevant, all applications for reserved matters incorporating residential development shall include:
- Examples of street scenes
 - Plan identifying location and tenure of affordable housing
 - Plan identifying the dwellings that are to provide accessible and adaptable homes
 - Heights and density of residential development
 - Plan identifying garden sizes
 - Plan identifying car parking to serve each dwelling / facility specifications
 - Details of cycle storage for each dwelling and visitor cycle parking
 - Details of electric vehicle charging points
 - Details of electricity sub stations

Housing

- 6.18 The following housing policies in SOLP are relevant:
Policy H9 Affordable Housing
Policy H11 Housing Mix
Policy H13 Specialist Accommodation for Elderly People
- 6.19 SOLP Policy H9 requires 40% of the total housing to be affordable, in a mix of tenures. This amounts to 300 dwellings (40% of 750 dwellings). The County Council have requested an extra care facility of 60 units, to be in an affordable tenure, as identified in the County Market Position Statement. This provision would reduce the general needs affordable housing to 240 dwellings. The Council and the applicants have not come to an agreement on the provision of affordable extra care. The applicants do not specialise in this type of housing and would not deliver themselves. Moreover, the applicants challenge the requirements of the policy in relation to this site. To date the applicant has not agreed to provide this form of housing, and whilst the Council has suggested terms that would allow general needs affordable housing in the event that the applicant could not find a developer, the terms are complex, will require further negotiation and will generate significant resource demands down the line, at the detailed S106 negotiations but moreover in respect of implementation. Ultimately the end result could be the delivery of wholly general needs affordable housing. Officers

have considered the request for affordable extra care and whilst the County do identify a need it is accepted that there is existing elderly persons accommodation being delivered in Didcot including affordable extra care on Great Western Park. Taking into account the delivery of other infrastructure, including the NPR3 southern section, on site facilities and agreement on all offsite contributions (including adult day care facilities and education – see para 7.5), the lack of provision of this type of accommodation, in isolation, is not considered to justify a reason for refusal.

- 6.20 The Housing Development team has suggested a mix for affordable housing which is agreed by the applicants and is set out below. This is based on housing need for affordable rent (40%), social rent (35%) and low cost home ownership (25%), in accordance with Policy H9. The government has introduced First Homes as a type of affordable housing, effective from June 2021 subject to some exceptions. Applications for full or outline planning permission where there has been significant pre-application engagement which are determined before 28 March 2022, will not require a First Homes tenure, although an applicant may seek its inclusion. In respect of all the housing, the space and mobility standards set out in Policy H11 will be secured, and evidence of the provision will be required by condition.

Affordable Mix

- 6.21 Table 2: Affordable housing mix

	Total	1b/ flat	2b/ flat	2b/ mais	2b/ hse	3b/ hse	4b/ hse
Aff rent	120	40	60	20	0	0	0
Social rent	105	0	0	0	60	40	5
LCHO	75	6	14	0	34	21	0

- 6.22 A significant amount of flats / maisonettes are included. Affordable housing must be not distinguishable from market housing. Therefore, in locations where affordable apartments are proposed there must also be market dwelling in apartments. Due to amenity and letting issues, the Council will generally resist apartments above ground floor that could be used by families.

Market mix

- 6.23 The application does not propose a market mix. During discussions on infrastructure assumptions have been used on population projections. A SHMA compliant mix has been agreed by the applicants and such a mix is considered appropriate for this site. This will be secured by condition, as part of the Housing Delivery Document.

Table 3: Market housing: SHMA recommendations

	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed
SHMA	5%	25%	45%	25%
Ladygrove East – 450 market homes (rounded)	22	113	203	112

- 6.24 The phasing plan is **attached** as Appendix 3 submitted with the application identifies initial thoughts for the phasing of housing which align with transport delivery. However, a formal phasing plan will be required to dovetail with housing delivery and also infrastructure delivery, including open space and play areas.

Energy and Sustainable Design

- 6.25 Policy DES8 and DES10 promote sustainable design and require at least a 40% reduction in carbon emissions compared with a code 2013 Building Regulations compliant base case. This reduction is to be secured through renewable energy and other low carbon technologies and/ or energy efficiency measures. The requirement will increase from 31 March 2026 to at least a 50% reduction in carbon emissions and again from 31 March 2030 to a 100% reduction in carbon emissions (zero carbon). Non-residential development shall meet BREEAM excellent standard.
- 6.26 An Energy Statement was submitted in January 2021, following the adoption of the Local Plan. The Energy Statement accepts the need for conditions relating to the requirements of DES 10 but provides no information on the strategy to achieve this. Given that technologies are changing it is acceptable not to be more specific at this outline stage. Conditions will require that the development meets Policy DES10, including a requirement for carbon reduction for homes built after March 2026 to achieve 50%, and after 2030 to achieve 100% and BREEAM excellent standard for the community building.
- 6.27 Representations have been made in respect of Code for Sustainable Homes. This standard no longer exists, has been partially addressed through building regulations but also the Council has adopted the more onerous requirements in Policy DES10.

Transport

- 6.28 Key matters to consider are the ability of the highway network to cater for the development and the provision of sustainable modes of travel. Since the initial highway objection, the applicant and OCC have positively engaged during the course of the application and no matters are outstanding. Key infrastructure proposals for Didcot include the HIF schemes (mentioned below), the Didcot Central Corridor improvements (including Jubilee and Marsh Bridge roundabouts) and the delivery of the northern perimeter road NPR3). From the outset, the development can be served by existing bus services to the south and west of the site on Hadden Hill and Abingdon Road. This is intended to be supplemented by diversion of bus routes into the development upon provision of the appropriate infrastructure.
- 6.29 The Ladygrove East scheme was originally submitted on the basis that a contribution would be made to NPR3. Following lengthy discussions it has been agreed that the applicant will directly deliver the southern portion of the NPR3 including the roundabout and second access to the site on the eastern boundary, the detailed design of which will be a reserved matter. The delivery will be required by S106 agreement and there will be a limit on housing build out until this is complete, as cited below. The detailed design will be agreed through conditions and S278. Direct delivery overcomes a small degree of funding shortfall identified during discussions over an appropriate level of contribution. Direct delivery of part of the NPR3 is therefore a significant benefit.
- 6.30 The County Council has undertaken transport modelling using projected trajectories for housing on the site, other known commitments and the provision of planned highway infrastructure. The highway infrastructure includes the Housing Infrastructure Fund schemes:
- Widening the A4130 from A34 Milton Interchange towards Didcot from single to dual carriageway;
 - A new Science Bridge over the A4130, Great Western Railway Line and Milton Road into the former Didcot A Power Station site;

- A new Didcot to Culham bridge between the A4130 and A415; and
- A Clifton Hampden bypass

Modelling results indicate significant congestion at Marsh Bridge and Jubilee Way roundabouts, which worsen from 2024 to 2029 as traffic flows increase. The model runs also highlighted blocking back from the South Moreton junction towards Marsh Bridge, due to right hand turners.

6.31 Given the above, OCC require further mitigation at the South Moreton junction to alleviate the impacts of right turning vehicles. OCC are seeking works to this junction and the delivery of the southern NPR3 roundabout before the southern portion of the NPR3 road. The entire NPR3 will need to be delivered before more than 500 occupations can take place and there will be the scope for the developer to also directly deliver the northern section. Housing occupations will be limited to:

- 250 dwellings before completion of HIF infrastructure
- 250 dwellings before A4130/Abingdon Road junction works (these are secured in permission P15/S2902/O Didcot North East)
- 300 dwellings before completion of southern NPR3 roundabout and improvement to South Moreton junction, Hadden Hill
- 500 dwellings before completion of entire NPR3

6.32 In addition to the direct delivery of the southern section of NPR3, the County Council has identified the following requirements for transport infrastructure:

Table 4: Off-site contributions - Transport

Transport Infrastructure	Contribution	Indexation
Public transport services	£627,000	RPIx Dec 2010
Didcot Central Corridor Improvements (pedestrian / cycling/ public transport improvements)	£170,000	Baxter July 2021
Off-site Public Rights of Way	£120,000	Baxter July 2021
Traffic calming in Appleford and Long Wittenham related to timing of HIF works	£60,000	Baxter July 2021
Public transport infrastructure (unless in S278/S38)	£35,704	Baxter Dec 2019
Traffic Restriction Order	£5,000	Baxter July 2021
Travel Plan Monitoring	£2,379	RPIx Dec 2020

6.33 The works to be directly delivered by the developer comprise the highway works referred to above and improvements which will benefit pedestrian, cycle and public transport options. **Attached** plans show proposed works on the Abingdon Road (Appendix 4), the roundabout at Hadden Hill and Abingdon Road (Appendix 5) and the alterations to Hadden Hill (Appendix 6).

The overall works include:

- The southern section of NPR3, including the central and southern roundabouts
- Right turn facility at the Hadden Hill/Fulscot Road junction.

- Provision of 4 bus stops – two on Hadden Hill and two on Abingdon Road – to include a shelter, pole and flag, timetable casing and all the necessary hardstanding and ducting
- Access improvement works on the northern stub arm of the Hadden Hill Retail roundabout, to include traffic island widening and the provision of 2m stepped cycle lanes and 2m footway
- Provision of a shared cycle and pedestrian path along the northern side of Hadden Hill from the future NPR3 roundabout to the Marsh Bridge roundabout, (3m bi-directional cycleway and a separate 2m footway), where possible
- Upgrades to the southern side of the Hadden Hill shared use path where necessary (particularly installation of bus stops)
- Improvement works along the eastern side of Abingdon Road that provides a minimum of 2m footway linking the northern pedestrian site access to the Marsh Bridge Roundabout. A shared pedestrian / cycle path to be provided where possible
- Provision of toucan crossings on the Abingdon Road and Hadden Hill.
- Widening of footway on the western side of Abingdon Road from the toucan crossing to the northbound bus stop
- Provision of cycle parking at one of the bus stops on Abingdon Road (this is likely to involve SODC land)
- Provision of cycle parking at the bus stops on the northern side of Hadden Hill
- Bus stops within the site, to serve the new routes

6.34 Overall, it is recognised that conditions on the network are likely to worsen before the implementation of significant transport infrastructure, hence the recommendation to stage and restrict occupations in the S106 agreement. Poor highway conditions are in turn likely to encourage more sustainable modes, particularly walking and cycling. The site is very well located for access to facilities, including shopping to the south and the town centre and facilities on Ladygrove. It is therefore recommended that development be permitted, knowing there will be some increased congestion on the network. This is recommended in view of the need to deliver housing and this long-standing allocated site provides the most sustainable location for development in Didcot.

Drainage

- 6.35 Many concerns have been raised regarding flooding and the ability to provide adequate attenuation. Residents in North Bush Furlong and Rugge Furlong are particularly concerned and photographs have been submitted showing pooling of water near their properties.
- 6.36 The submitted hydraulic study by RPS provides refined surface water flood extents for the site. This confirms slightly larger flood extents than highlighted on Environment Agency surface water flood maps. The results identify that the outfall pipe under the Abingdon Road will act to restrict discharge causing water to pond on site. The study models a 'with development' scenario. This includes cut-off ditches / swales around sections of the site boundary to prevent shallow flow from crossing the developable portion of the site and redirects water to open green soft landscaped areas. The report indicates that flood risk will not increase elsewhere as a result of the development.
- 6.37 The applicant has clarified that proposed ditches / swales will be located within accessible landscape / open space areas between the northern / western boundaries and the new built form to provide sufficient space for future maintenance. In demonstrating the principles, the development platform of the site has been raised in the model by 0.5m. The Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) also confirms that the main

development platform will be raised to reduce the risk from perched groundwater. Further precise level information will need to be provided as part of any detailed design, and this will be required in relation to drainage but also landscaping, trees and built development. Whilst modelling indicates that surface water flows can be manipulated to direct pluvial flow to soft landscape areas, measures should also be included to prevent surface water from spreading onto the adjacent land. The applicant has clarified that the boundary landscaping corridor to the north and north west provides sufficient space for a bund to mitigate against this risk. A bund would need to be sympathetically assimilated into the landscaped areas, and careful attention to the design of this area will be necessary.

Biodiversity

- 6.38 Policy ENV3 requires development to conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity in the district will be supported. All development should provide a net gain in biodiversity where possible. As a minimum, there should be no net loss of biodiversity. All proposals should be supported by evidence to demonstrate a biodiversity net gain using a recognised biodiversity accounting metric.
- 6.39 The main habitat that covers the majority of the site is species poor pasture. The site has been subject to a suite of ecological surveys and the ecological conditions on the site are therefore relatively well understood. The habitat is relatively common and widespread throughout the area and is not a constraint to the proposed development. In addition, there are relatively small areas of wet marshy grassland to the south, developing scrub to the North East and a small watercourse and pond in the centre of the site. The proposals will involve the loss of a significant area of grassland, areas of scrub, hedgerows and wet grassland. Impacts on protected species are limited to potential impacts on grass snake, uncertain impacts on breeding birds and potential indirect impacts on bats from lighting associated with the proposed development. There are no records from the site or surrounding areas that would suggest that the site is likely to have an elevated value for breeding birds, over and above that of surrounding land. The majority of the known impacts on species are capable of being mitigated to an acceptable level and controlled through the submission of further surveys through conditions comprising a Construction and Ecological Management Plan (CEMP), a Biodiversity Enhancement Plan (BEP) and Landscape, and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP).
- 6.40 To establish biodiversity gains / losses a Biodiversity Impact Calculator (BIC) is used. In this case a calculation developed by the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) has been used. The calculated baseline biodiversity value of the site was 67.17 units. Overall, in relation to both masterplan scenarios, the countryside officer considers there will be a small net gain:
- Scenario 1 would deliver a net gain of 1.89 units, or 69.06 units total. This is equivalent to 2.8% net gain.
 - Scenario 2 would deliver a net gain of 1.35 units, or 68.52 units total. This is equivalent to 2% net gain.

The applicant's consider that Scenario 1 would deliver 16.83% net gain, and Scenario 2 would deliver 15.21% net gain, however the countryside officer does not accept the assumptions in the submitted metric assessment, for example, the submitted BIC assumes that building plots will be 75% garden, when previously it has stated that they will be 50% garden. Given the density proposed on the site officers consider it is likely to be the latter. Allotments are accounted as a connected habitat of moderate condition, whereas this is dependent on the on the user of the allotment. Wildflower areas are shown within play areas, which could be an incompatible mix.

- 6.41 Recognising the margin of net gain, the Biodiversity Report (Section 2.13) states that TVERC will be funded to monitor the condition of the habitats on site and regularly report back to the body responsible for management and the local planning authority (LPA) to ensure that the site delivers the agreed level of biodiversity net gain. Any identified shortfalls in the number of units being delivered on site would need to be offset by contributions. The TVERC funding and monitoring and offsetting contributions (if required) will need to be secured in the S106 agreement and linked back in conditions to the relevant Landscape Environmental Management Plan, and a Green Infrastructure parameter plan (or document of similar purpose) to ensure that the amount of habitat creation shown in the supporting Biodiversity Impact Assessment Report is delivered.
- 6.42 As Policy ENV3 does not state a % requirement for net gain, any net gain is policy compliant. Officers advise that it would not be reasonable to refuse this application on the basis that the % net gain is not high enough. The Environment Act has received Royal Assent but there is a period of 2 years post assent for requirements to take effect. As such, the requirement of 10% net gain is not yet in force. Subject to the recommended conditions and the S106 obligations, as highlighted above, the development is considered to comply with Policies ENV2 and ENV3 and the NPPF.

Landscape and Trees

- 6.43 In relation to the landscape character, the site itself is within the Flat Open Farmland Character Type, whilst the Open Rolling Downs are situated to the east beyond Hadden Golf Course. These rolling downs are within the North Wessex AONB. The setting of the AONB is a material consideration and no objection is raised subject to landscape mitigation within the site and along the proposed road (NPR3). It will be important to secure street trees including those with substantial canopies amongst the built form, to meet landscape and climate change objectives. The government has recently promoted tree lined streets in the updated NPPF.
- 6.44 It is noted that the biodiversity offsetting plans indicate wildflower grass in areas which are not practical, for example in play areas and small greens within the housing areas. The wildflower proposals could be redistributed to the same extent to more appropriate areas such as alongside hedgerows and the retain ditch. There are also potential conflicts between proposed woodland and orchard planting and the overhead electricity lines. These matters can be overcome by detailed proposals for landscaping and biodiversity sought by conditions. The development will provide open space in accordance with the policy requirements, the details of the open space and other facilities are discussed under Infrastructure in paras 7.11 – 7.14 below.
- 6.45 There are two protected oak trees on the site which are a positive contribution to the landscape and biodiversity. Based on OCC's published alignment of NPR3, it is evident that this particular alignment cannot avoid the northern tree. Engagement with the applicant concerning a potential alternative design for the southern section of NPR3 has highlighted potential for an alternative route, which shows the retention of the southernmost tree although the alignment is close to this tree. Through further detailed design the applicant and officers will seek to ensure the retention of the southern tree and, if possible, also the northern tree. This will be explored through the detailed design process for reserved matters
- 6.46 The Council has passed a motion (25 March 2021) to explore options for the undergrounding of pylons on strategic sites by 2040. The pylon on Ladygrove East is a dominant, and perhaps, a detracting feature. A buffer zone of 30m sterilises the land beneath from built development and high tree planting. However, the land around the

pylon can be used for informal leisure use including walking, running and also provide space for biodiversity. Investigations have been made with National Grid regarding the undergrounding of pylons. National Grid have advised they would not consider grounding the cables at this site due to the length of the span being relatively short and the need for above ground infrastructure. Facilitating works would involve temporary diversion works, and the erection of two solid sealing end compounds, 25 sqm x 5 m high. There would still be the same buffer zone required restricting built development and tree planting, and in respect of visual amenity within the site, it is arguable whether the loss of the pylon versus the incoming infrastructure would be of benefit. National Grid have confirmed overground pylons are preferable to maintain. Additionally, there would be a huge cost, likely to be in excess of £1 million, which will not have been factored into viability. Crucially and to conclude, the policy for this site, or any other adopted planning policy does not require undergrounding of the transmission lines. The parameter plan and illustrative masterplan(s) comply with the National Grid's buffer zone requirements.

Environmental Protection

- 6.47 Environmental Health officers have noted the potential for noise arising from Hadden Hill and NPR3. Details of noise protection for dwellings affected by noise will need to be submitted with reserved matters. Construction will also bring an element of noise and disturbance and a construction management plan, and a restriction on working hours will be required. There is not thought to be any contaminated land however conditions are necessary to ensure investigations are carried out and, if necessary, remediation takes place.
- 6.48 Measures to control air quality are also sought, these include: electric car vehicle charging points (1 for each dwelling with on plot parking, 1 per 10 dwellings within communal parking areas and provision for the community centre); restrictions on gas boilers; the promotion of measures in the Travel Plan; and tree planting as part of the landscaping and road schemes. Increased working at home also reduces individual car travel and the provision of fast fibre broadband will enable effective home working.

Heritage

- 6.49 A listed milestone lies near the proposed access from Hadden Hill. Details of the access showing the retention and protection of the milestone in the construction of the access are required by condition. The site is located in an area of archaeological interest as identified by the archaeological evaluation undertaken on the site. Conditions are necessary to ensure the implementation of a staged programme of archaeological investigation to be maintained during the period of construction.

7.0 INFRASTRUCTURE

- 7.1 The South Oxfordshire Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Schedule identifies Ladygrove East as CIL exempt. All infrastructure to support this development is to be secured by planning obligations in a S106 legal agreement. Planning obligations need to meet what is known as the CIL tests and be (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. All planning obligations have been assessed and those agreed in the heads of terms meet the CIL tests. Some infrastructure, e.g. electric vehicle charging points, cycle facilities can be secured by condition. Where land or financial contributions are involved the appropriate mechanism is a S106 agreement. All financial contributions will be indexed linked so

that contributions remain at current value when costs were prepared. The S106 agreement will also secure the delivery of affordable housing, as detailed in the paragraphs on housing above. The type of infrastructure required to support this development comprises:

- Transport
- Education
- OCC Property: Libraries, Adult Day Care Services, Children and Family Services
- Leisure: Sport and Recreation Facilities
- Other Infrastructure: Healthcare, Police, Recycling and Waste, Street naming
- Biodiversity Monitoring
- Open Space, Play and Allotments
- Community Facilities

7.2 Transport:

Transport infrastructure is detailed in paragraphs 6.28 - 6.34 above. The direct delivery of the southern section of NPR3 will be secured, plus footpath / cycle connections and toucan crossings. Off-site contributions comprise a total of £1,020,083 towards public transport, the Didcot central corridor improvements, traffic calming in Appleford and Long Wittenham and public footpath improvements.

7.3 Education:

The contributions for primary and secondary education are intended to be used for facilities on Didcot North East (DNE) or other schools to ensure there is overall capacity for the children from the Ladygrove East development. It will not automatically follow that pupils from Ladygrove East will attend schools on DNE, space could be released in schools within Ladygrove as capacity elsewhere increases. The contributions that the County Council are seeking for education facilities relate to pupils of all ages and are listed below:

Contributions: Indexation BCIS TPI 327	
Primary & Nursery Education	£6,856,671
Secondary (including sixth form)	£4,494,225
SEN	£573,665
<i>Total</i>	£11,924,561

7.4 Agreement on these sums has been reached following detailed and protracted discussions over the capacity in schools particularly secondary education and a review of funding by OCC. OCC confirmed their updated position on education contributions on 13 February 2022, following which the Council received written confirmation to pay these sums from the applicant on 22 February 2022.

OCC Property

7.5 Contributions for libraries and social care wellbeing services are agreed by the applicant:

Contributions: Indexation BCIS TPI 327	
Libraries	£170,228
Adult Day Care Services	£203,015

Children and Family Services	£49,521
Total	£422,764

7.6 Leisure, Sport and Recreation Facilities

The nature of the development and site conditions including the electricity pylon and transmission lines and drainage works present a constraint to the provision of on-site pitches. Off-site contributions are required instead of on-site pitches and additionally contributions towards other sport and recreation facilities have been agreed. The contributions will provide the expansion or improvement of nearby facilities that can serve this development, e.g., Edmunds Park, Moreton Cricket Club, Didcot Wave, Willowbrook Sports Centre, Didcot Bowling Club, Hithercroft Sports Park, St Birinus Sports Hall. On site there will be a running track within the open space, which will form an extension to the Ladygrove Loop (via Abingdon Road crossing). Off-site contributions for leisure and recreation are set out below.

Contributions: Base date for RPIX indexation October 2019	
Football	£73,686
Cricket	£35,834
Rugby	£56,427
Outdoor Tennis	£50,000
Outdoor Bowls	£50,000
Sports Hall	£368,181
All grass pitch	£167,798
Swimming	£403,317
Health and Fitness	£14,6507
Total	£1,351,750

Other Infrastructure contributions:

- 7.7 Healthcare: The Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group requested a contribution of £648,000 (BCIS indexation base date January 2021 based on a recognised calculator for health provision relative to population generation. The shortfall in capacity with health services in Didcot is recognised and the sum has been agreed by the applicants.
- 7.8 Police: A contribution of £11,000 (RPIX indexation base date May 2019) for a camera for an automatic numberplate recognition camera on is agreed.
- 7.9 The Council will also secure monies towards recycling and waste, amounting to £186 per property (£139,500), street naming, at a cost of £229 per 10 dwellings (£17,175) and necessary S106 monitoring fees, all to be index linked from March 2022.

Biodiversity Monitoring

- 7.10 It is noted above under the Biodiversity and Landscape sections that the proposals can deliver a net gain however the margins are slight, representing a 2% net gain. Funding to monitor biodiversity gain on site by TVERC and provision to provide biodiversity offsetting is therefore required.

Open Space, Play and Allotments

- 7.11 Policy CF5 for Open Space, Sport and Recreation in New Residential Development indicates there be a minimum of 0.44ha of play and 0.53ha of youth provision and 0.7 ha allotments for the development. The overall amount of open space (8 hectares including 6 ha park) is identified in Policy H2. The Council's Leisure Study advises that there is a shortfall in community provision and this development should provide a community building. The parameter plans indicate a large play space, to include youth provision, to the west of the site close to the crossing to the Ladygrove Loop, plus other smaller plays areas including a LEAP elsewhere on the site. It will be important to ensure that play areas are not within a SUDS attenuation area so they are useable all year round. The main parkland is to be subject of public consultation prior to the submission of reserved matters, in so far as the uses and locations for types of landscape treatment /planting treatment proposed. This is to include engagement with the Town Council on its aspirations for the parkland and the process for this is to be secured in the S106 agreement. Allotments and a community centre are to be provided close to the residential area and foot /cycle ways for ease of access, but also adjoining the parkland. The allotments were moved away from the busy corner of Hadden Hill and Abingdon Road in order that a more tranquil site could be achieved.
- 7.12 Didcot Town Council has shown an interest in taking on the management of on-site facilities comprising the open space including parkland and play areas, the community building and allotments. In terms of policy there is no requirement for a developer to offer or transfer open space / facilities to another organisation. There is however a need to secure maintenance for open space and trees, as supported in the NPPF and set out in Policy CF5. The terms regarding the offer, transfer and maintenance have been discussed with Didcot Town Council. Central to these discussions has been the provision of a maintenance sum. In respect of the open space and play areas the developer proposes that the sum is agreed when the open space is offered for transfer and once the details are known for soft and hard landscaping, equipment and street furniture, and the requisite maintenance plan is approved. This will allow accurate and appropriate costings to be understood which has its merits. On the other hand, there is a risk that terms may not be agreed later down the line. However, there are safeguards that can be put in place in the S106 agreement including consultation on the detail of the proposals and a requirement that maintenance sums must reflect market costs at the time. This is agreed by the applicant.
- 7.13 The community centre will be 300 sq. m in floor area and the site will include servicing and parking, rapid electric vehicle charging points and open space for use by the centre. The developer has agreed a sum for maintenance (£68,000 index linked) and will provide warranties and guarantees for the building, and as usual the developer responsible for all defects within the first year. In respect of all the facilities the Council will secure monitoring fees, that will cover the checking of detailed specifications, inspections of facilities and sign off procedures for practical and final completion. If the town council wishes to take on the facilities they will be consulted on the specifications, be part of the completion sign offs etc. For the community centre alone a sum of £27,500 (index linked) is required for the estimated extent of monitoring and inspections.
- 7.14 The timing of infrastructure needs to be balanced against occupations and sufficient generation of users, particularly in relation to the community centre and allotments which eventually need to be self-financing. In respect of the parkland and large play space this will be provided by 250 dwellings, although some open space and play should be provided earlier on suggested to be before 50 occupations. The allotments are also to be provided by 250 dwellings. The community centre is a little later (350

occupations) so that there would be a good proportion of residents to support the facility.

Pre commencement conditions

- 7.15 Given the outline nature of the scheme and the limited degree of detail associated with this application, many of the conditions are pre commencement. The design code will be subject to consultation as explained above. Some requirements will be phased, i.e. the details being required on a staged basis. The conditions are listed below under the Recommendation.

CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The Ladygrove East site, on the east of Didcot, has been allocated for residential development in successive Local Plans since 1997. Permission for this site is contingent on the delivery of the final section of the northern perimeter road (NPR3) as well as other significant community infrastructure. Whilst there was a resolution to grant planning permission in 2006, agreement could not be reached on the infrastructure package necessary to serve the development, the S106 agreement was not progressed and permission was not forthcoming.
- 8.2 Since 2018 Bloor Homes have acquired an interest in the site and in respect of this current application officers have sought detailed heads of terms for the infrastructure, so that this can be considered by Planning Committee and assist with a swift completion of the legal agreement and issue of permission. Following lengthy and in depth discussions heads of terms for infrastructure have been agreed including transport, education, affordable housing and leisure provision. Details are cited in the report above.
- 8.3 In all other respects the application is considered acceptable. The parameter plans and masterplan whilst light on information do provide a framework for the development subject to the approval of a detailed Design Code for the development. As this code would inform and guide reserved matters this document would be subject to future public consultation. Further information on green infrastructure and biodiversity will also be required to ensure there is a net gain in biodiversity, and offsetting if this cannot be achieved on site. These matters will be secured by obligations in the S106 agreement.
- 8.4 The development will directly deliver the southern portion of NPR3 giving access to the eastern part of the site and provide key strategic highway infrastructure for the town. The amount of occupations will be restricted in relation to the delivery of highway infrastructure including the HIF schemes, South Moreton junction and the entire NPR3 road. Further pedestrian and cycleways routes are proposed and enhanced public transport. The development will have good connections and access to the town and recreation facilities, both on and off site and the site will provide a 6 hectare parkland, which will be provided in the first phases before the occupation of 250 dwellings and will be a valuable asset for Didcot Garden Town.
- 8.5 All housing and the new community building will be constructed to comply with the Council's policies for carbon reduction. Electric vehicle charging points are to be provided. Together with the green spaces, footway, cycling, running tracks the development will assist in addressing climate change. Affordable housing, including accessible housing will be provided in accordance with the Council's policies. The provision of affordable extra care development has been sought by the County Council however the exclusion of this type of housing balanced against all other benefits is not considered to be a decisive factor for rejecting the scheme.

8.6 The proposed development will deliver long awaited housing together with necessary infrastructure for Didcot and the District. The application process has entailed long and detailed discussions with the applicant and the Council's partners, including Oxfordshire County Council and Didcot Town Council, to reach a position that parties can move confidently to the next stages to ensure a high quality and sustainable development.

9.0 RECOMMENDATION

9.1 To delegate to the Head of Planning and the Chair of the Planning Committee the approval of outline planning permission subject to:

A) The completion of a S106 agreement to secure affordable housing and all the infrastructure as outlined in the report, and

B) The following conditions:

1. Commencement - Outline with Reserved Matters
2. Approved plans
3. Land Use budget
4. Submission and Content of Reserved Matters
5. Phasing
6. Design Code
7. Housing Mix and Delivery Document
8. Tree Protection (Detailed)
9. Hours of operation - construction/demolition sites
10. Construction Management Plan (including traffic routes)
11. Archaeology WSI
12. Implementation of Archaeological Work Programme
13. Contaminated Land - risk assessment
14. Contaminated Land - remediation
15. Parameters Plan - Biodiversity (BPP)
16. Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)
17. Biodiversity Enhancement Plan (BEP)
18. Levels
19. Surface Water drainage scheme (each phase)
20. Surface water drainage works (details)
21. Foul Water drainage
22. Surface Water drainage completion
23. Energy Statement
24. Energy Statement Verification
25. BREEAM Excellent - Community Building
26. Hadden Hill Access

27. **New pedestrian access Abingdon Road and Hadden Hill**
28. **Estate accesses, driveways & turning areas**
29. **Landscape Environment Management Plan (LEMP)**
30. **Tree pits design**
31. **Landscaping (including hard surfacing and boundary treatment)**

32. **Landscape Management Plan**
33. **Open Spaces and Play Areas**
34. **Noise**
35. **Lighting**
36. **Green Travel Plans**
37. **Electric Vehicle Charging Points**
38. **Air Quality – Restriction on gas boilers**
39. **Provision of fast fibre broadband**

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