

APPLICATION NO.	P23/S0431/RM
APPLICATION TYPE	RESERVED MATTERS
REGISTERED	23.2.2023
PARISH	WATLINGTON
WARD MEMBER	Freddie van Mierlo
APPLICANT	Redrow Homes Thames Valley
SITE	Land off Cuxham Road Watlington
PROPOSAL	Reserved matters in relation to 70 dwellings, including details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale. Including details required pursuant to conditions 1 (reserved matters); 6 (housing mix); 7 (details to be submitted with reserved matters); 8 (Biodiversity Enhancement Plan); 11 (Pedestrian and Cycle Access); 14 (Lighting) ;15 (CEMP); 16 (Arboricultural matters); 17 (surface water drainage); 18 (foul drainage) and 26 (housing standards) on application P19/S1928/O
AMENDMENTS	As amended by plans and information received 22 May 2023 and 5 July 2023.
OFFICER	Emma Bowerman

1.0 Introduction and proposal

Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out the officer’s recommendation that planning permission should be granted having regard to the development plan and other material planning considerations.
- 1.2 The application is referred to planning committee at the request of the former ward member Anna Badcock, who was the local member for Watlington prior to the recent local elections. Cllr Anna Badcock called the application to planning committee as she considers that *“the proposed housing mix does not reflect local housing needs as reflected by direct requests from current Watlington residents, and the proposals should incorporate more larger homes to reflect these needs.”*

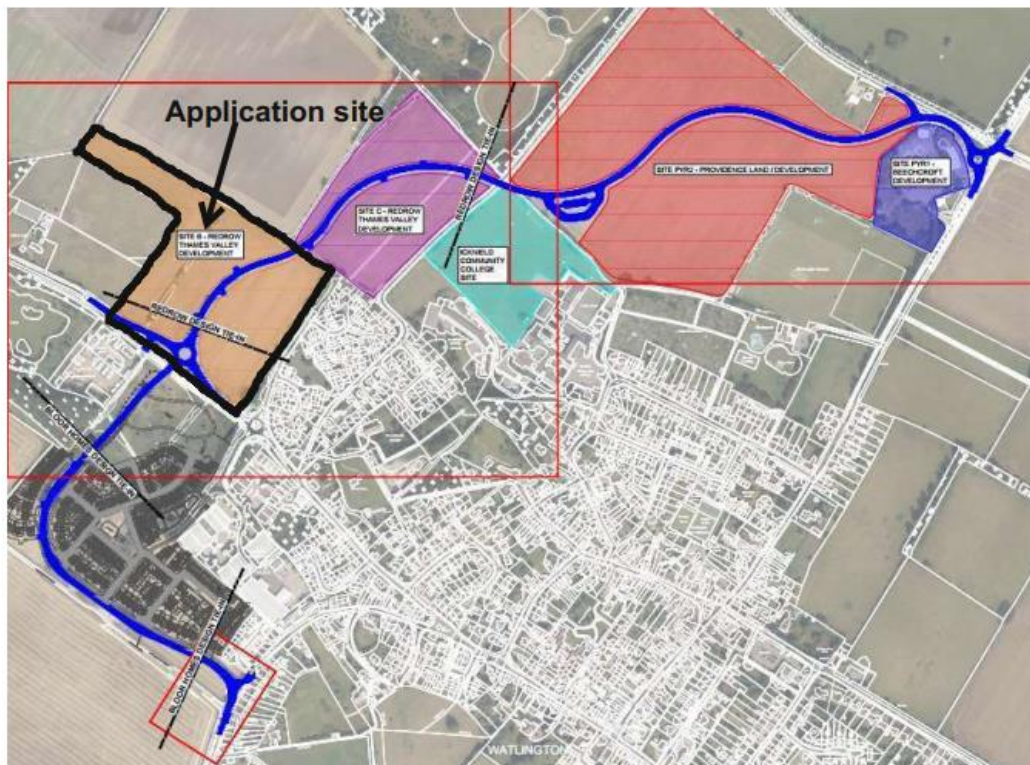
Site description and surroundings

- 1.3 The application site (which is shown on the OS extract **attached** as **Appendix 1**) is a 6.41-hectare irregular shaped agricultural field to the northeast of Watlington. The site borders Cuxham Road on one side and there is an informal vehicular access onto Cuxham Road. Willow Close is adjacent to the southeast of the site and the other sides of the site border agricultural land.
- 1.4 The site is not located within any areas of special designation. The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Beauty (AONB) wraps around the south and east of Watlington and its closest point is 500m from the application site.

- 1.5 There are several heritage assets in the locality. The Grade II Registered Park and Garden associated with Shirburn Castle is 750m to the east of the site. There are several Grade II Listed structures within the grounds and the Castle itself is a Grade I Listed Building. The Castle and grounds are also part of Shirburn Conservation Area.
- 1.6 Pyrton Conservation Area lies 280m to the northeast of the site. The Grade II* listed Pyrton Manor is located within the Conservation Area, along with several other listed buildings. The boundary of Watlington Conservation Area is around 100m to the south of the site. This also contains several listed buildings, with the Grade II* Church of St. Leonard located closest to the site.

Background

- 1.7 The site is allocated for housing in the Watlington Neighbourhood Development Plan 2017-2033 (Neighbourhood Plan) and is referred to as Site B. There is an extant outline planning permission for up to 70 homes on the site and this was approved in January 2022 under application reference [P19/S1928/O](#).
- 1.8 The application site, in combination with several other sites around Watlington and Pyrton, will deliver a relief road around Watlington. This is referred to as the “Watlington Edge Road” in the Neighbourhood Plan and would extend around the town linking Britwell Road to the southwest of Watlington, to Shirburn Road to the northeast.
- 1.9 The provision of the Edge Road sits at the heart of the Neighbourhood Plan as it would divert traffic around Watlington to reduce through traffic in the heavily congested town centre. This would have significant benefits in terms of improving air quality in the town centre and improving the quality of the public realm.
- 1.10 The plan below shows the current proposals for the Edge Road. Some sections of the Edge Road have/will be directly delivered by housebuilders where the road forms an integral part of the housing developments. Oxfordshire County Council will also deliver some sections of the route and have recently undertaken a public consultation on this.
- 1.11 The plan below shows the application site in the context of the other development sites that are involved in the delivery of the Edge Road.



Plan taken from Oxfordshire County Council's [website](#) and annotated to show application site

- 1.12 The county council intend to deliver the roundabout on Cuxham Road, which is shown to the southwest of the application site. The applicant will then deliver the section of the Edge Road through the application site and through the neighbouring site to the northeast, which is in the control of the same applicant, and is known as Site C.

Proposal

- 1.13 Having received outline planning permission in 2022, the application seeks reserved matters consent for the matters of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale. The outline planning permission is the overarching planning permission, and this reserved matters application therefore only considers the details of the development.
- 1.14 The access to the site would be taken from Cuxham Road. A community orchard would be provided on the narrow northwest stretch of the site and a play area would adjoin Willow Close to the southeast. The proposal would provide the following mix of homes:

Bedrooms	1bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	5bed
Market	0	12	19	5	6
Affordable	4	17	7	0	0
Total	4	29	26	5	6

- 1.15 The application is accompanied by many plans, some of which are **attached** as **Appendix 2**. The application is also accompanied by numerous supporting documents. To view all of the plans and supporting documents please [visit the website](#).

- 1.16 The application has been submitted concurrently with a reserved matters application on Site C ([P23/S0433/RM](#)) and some of the documents combine the two sites. The layout plan for the two sites together is reproduced below:



- 1.17 The applicant provided a package of amended plans and additional information on 22 May 2023 to try to address some issues that were raised by consultees. This included an improved landscaping scheme, a Road Safety Audit and updated drainage details. Further plans were submitted on 5 July 2023, and these updated the affordable housing tenure plan and road adoption plan.

- 1.18 The applicant has also submitted details for several conditions that were attached to the outline planning permission. Condition details are dealt with separately from the planning committee process under delegated powers. The details submitted for some conditions do cross over with the reserved matters and where relevant these are referred to in the main body of the report.

2.0 Summary of consultations and representations

- 2.1 A summary of the most recent responses is provided below. To view a full copy of all the comments made including those in respect of previous iterations of the proposals please [visit the website](#).

Watlington Parish Council	Comments

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciate the positive response to many of the concerns raised on the previous plans. However, some concerns remain. • Concern about the impact of the development on the chalk stream on Cuxham Road. It is not clear how much block paving would be used to reduce the impact of surface water runoff to the stream. • The bridleway around the north of the site should give safe, off road, access for authorised users of bridleways (including horse riders, cyclists and pedestrians) from Cuxham Road to Pyrton Lane. The route should be continuous and surface material appropriate. • Concern that the attenuation pond is not shallow enough to enable small mammals which may fall into the water to be able to escape. • Would still like to see some use of render on the new houses. • Pleased to see that the site is assessed as an E1 designation (natural environmental zone) as this classification accords with lighting guidance. • Share the concerns of the Forestry Officer about the possible adverse impact on protected trees of the proposals for the provision of underground services.
<p>Pyrton Parish Council</p>	<p>No comments received</p>
<p>Cuxham with Easington Parish Council</p>	<p>Object</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern about the impact of construction traffic through Cuxham. • Lack of clarity on which highway drawings are to be considered as part of the reserved matters application. • Concerned by the matters raised in the road safety audit. • The Biodiversity Enhancement Plan and Biodiversity Construction Environmental Plan should use the most up to date biodiversity metric.
<p>Shirburn Parish Meeting</p>	<p>Object</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development is not in accordance with the Landscape Capacity Assessment produced in 2015. • Concerns of landscape officer have not been addressed.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development will appear as urban sprawl and countryside will not be protected. • Hedgerow trees should be retained. • Cycleway should not be shared with pedestrians and should be adopted by the county council. • Inadequate space for green infrastructure. • A Scoping Opinion has not been published. • A further period of consultation should take place after the county council have commented on the Road Safety Audit. • Impact of the additional traffic generated by the development and additional traffic attracted to the Edge Road will impact on heritage assets. • Potential damage to trees by construction traffic. • Impact on the setting of the AONB. • Adverse impact of lighting. • Width of Edge Road not sufficient to accommodate HGVs. • A separate cycleway should be provided on both sides of the Edge Road. • The Edge Road should be 20mph with safe crossings along its length. • The Edge Road is not supported by policy and is contrary to the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan as it prioritises motorised transport and would not contribute towards targets in the plan. • No increase in public transport provision. • The Environment Agency should comment on the impact on the Chalk Stream.
<p>Neighbour Representations</p>	<p>Three representations received</p> <p>One in objection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The historic assets in Shirburn will be heavily impacted on by additional traffic. • Trees will be impacted on by construction traffic. • Impact on setting of AONB and dark skies. • Concerns over the design of the Edge Road in relation to HGVs, cyclists and the speed limit. • Edge Road contrary to policies to change to sustainable modes of transport. • The impact on the Chalgrove Brook must be considered. <p>Two with comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Materials should be carefully considered because of views from AONB. • The existing trees could be kept • Native plants should be used

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orchard should be available to whole of Watlington and management responsibilities should be clear. • Drainage should be sensitive to Chalgrove Brook • Lighting should avoid light spill and street lighting should not be positioned near trees. • Scheme should include solar provision and could be integrated with local low carbon schemes. • Use of air source heat pumps supported. • Some of the affordable housing should be terraced.
Chilterns Conservation Board	<p>Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Especially interested in Edge Road impact, i.e. the impact of linear lighting on wider views and setting of Watlington within the context of the AONB. • Amended landscape details provide a much stronger planted tree avenue and is welcomed. • Creation of a dark skies corridor, for ecological enhancement, is welcomed. • Reinforcement of some woodland features welcomed. • Planting to boundaries should be implemented at commencement of development. • The colour palette and roofing materials are suitably muted. • Flint waling is welcome and a condition should be attached to ensure that all flint is hand worked (not pre-cast panels). • Conditions suggested about details of lighting.
Environment Agency	Not able to provide any detailed comments on the application but provided some general guidance about when an environmental permit is required.
Thames Water Development Control	No objection
Plant Protection Team (Electricity and Gas)	<p>No objection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided details on the location of their assets and guidance for working near gas and electricity infrastructure.
Crime Prevention Design Adviser	<p>Objection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to support the application due to concerns in terms of the potential for crime and disorder.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key issues are lack of surveillance in some areas and that some plots have a lack of defensible space. • Recommended a condition requiring the development to achieve Secure by Design accreditation.
Oxfordshire County Council	<p><u>Transport Development Control</u></p> <p>No objection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject to conditions requiring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vehicular access before occupation. - Provision and retention of visibility splays. - Roads associated with each home provided before occupation of that home. - Cycle storage to be submitted and approved. - Electric vehicle charging to be provided - Detailed plan of pedestrian/cycle route connecting to Willow Close to be agreed. - Plan of signage and street markings for streets other than the Edge Road. • Parking levels are appropriate. • Road Safety Audit and Designer’s response are acceptable. • Position of controlled and uncontrolled crossings acceptable. • Plans demonstrate an appropriate level of cycle and pedestrian provision. • The legal agreement attached to the outline requires the Edge Road to be adopted but adoption of other roads will be subject to separate agreement with OCC. • Trees raise some concern with regards to maintenance and interaction with visibility splays, street lighting and drainage. No objection to principle of planting but suggest tree species are not agreed at this stage. • Streetlighting should not be fixed at this stage. <p><u>Lead Local Flood Authority</u></p> <p>Objection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tests for infiltration show that there can be no back garden soakaways. • Area for infiltration in southwest corner could be extended to meet requirements for surface water discharge.
Energy Assessor	<p>No objection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject to imposition of a compliance condition.

Landscape Officer	<p>Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst the amendments have addressed several concerns some issues remain. • Additional planting should be provided around the drainage basin and western play features. • Lack of tree planting on side streets. Trees that are provided are almost entirely in private gardens where there is no guarantee of long-term maintenance. • Open space includes areas of long grass which will be unusable for much of the year. • Some trees will be restricted by root barriers to protect services. Where soil volume is not adequate underground crate systems should be included. • Samples of materials should be provided to ensure that they are subdued recessive colours. • A condition is also required to secure details of boundary treatments and street furniture.
Forestry Officer	<p>Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amendments have addressed previous concerns about tree protection fencing. • Cannot support the application because plans show that routing of cables off-site may affect protected trees. <p><i>Officer note: This application only considers details of the development within the application site boundary. The service routing outside of the site red line boundary is not relevant to the consideration of this application.</i></p>
Countryside Officer	<p>No objection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development will result in a net gain for biodiversity.
Conservation Officer	<p>No objection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stone should be avoided, and the final mix of materials should be agreed by condition. • Lighting appears acceptable and should be carefully designed to respond to the dark skies setting of the site.
Housing Development Officer (Affordable Housing)	<p>Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The submitted information is contradictory and unclear in relation to tenure mix. • The applicant should clarify the mix to address inconsistencies and to provide a mix that

	<p>conforms with the legal agreement attached to the outline permission.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design is indistinguishable from market homes. • Wheelchair accessible plots should be for social rent. • Minimum size requirements met. • Layout achieves requirement to be in clusters of less than 15 but applicant should explore possibilities of greater distribution across site.
Drainage Officer	No objection
Environmental Protection Officer	<p>No objection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject to lighting being implemented and maintained in accordance with submitted details.
Air Quality Officer	No observations
Waste Management Officer	<p>Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plot 25 travel distance from house to bin presentation point would be too far for resident. • Plots 15-17 indicate a presentation point on the refuse strategy and the vehicle to reverse into this section, however the vehicle tracking plan does not indicate this. Ideally collections for these plots should be made by the roadside without a reversing manoeuvre. The presentation point for these plots should be bought closer to the roadside.

3.0 **Relevant planning history**

3.1 [P22/S1303/RM](#) – Withdrawn (07/02/23)

Details of the proposed Spine / Edge Road through Watlington Site B

[P22/S0893/RM](#) - Withdrawn (03/02/2023)

Application for approval of Reserved Matters (access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) following consent granted under reference P19/S1928/O for 70 dwellings (site B). Including details required pursuant to conditions 1 (reserved matters); 6 (housing mix); 7 (details to be submitted with reserved matters); 8 (Biodiversity Enhancement Plan); 15 (CEMP); 16 (Arboricultural matters); 17 (surface water drainage); 18 (foul drainage).

[P21/S1714/PEJ](#) - Advice provided (17/08/2021)

Request for advice to inform reserved matters application.

[P19/S1928/O](#) - Approved (17/01/2022)

Outline planning permission for up to 70 homes with associated open space and sustainable drainage with all matters reserved (as amended / clarified by plans and information received 17 September 2020).

3.2 The relevant outline planning permission on the adjacent site (Site C) is:

[P19/S1927/O](#) - Approved (17/01/2022)

Outline planning permission for up to 60 homes with associated open space and sustainable drainage with all matters reserved.

4.0 **Environmental Impact Assessment**

4.1 The council issued a Screening Opinion for this proposal under reference P18/S3934/SCR in January 2019. This confirmed that an Environmental Impact Assessment was not required as all issues are of local significance only and can be examined through the normal planning process.

4.2 Given the length of time that has passed since the 2019 Screening Opinion was issued, the council has re-screened the proposed development. There are no additional major developments proposed in the locality that the council was not aware of in 2019 and as such, the cumulative impact of development is the same as was assessed in 2019. As with the outline application, an Environmental Impact Assessment is not required for this reserved matters application as all issues are of local significance only and can be examined through the normal planning process.

5.0 **Policy and Guidance**

Development Plan Policies

5.1 The Development Plan consists of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035, which was adopted 10 December 2020, and the Watlington Neighbourhood Development Plan, which was made 23 August 2018.

South Oxfordshire Local Plan (Local Plan)

5.2 The relevant policies are:

STRAT1	The Overall Strategy
STRAT5	Residential Densities
H1	Delivering New Homes
H9	Affordable Housing
H11	Housing Mix
ENV1	Landscape and Countryside
ENV2	Biodiversity - Designated sites, Priority Habitats and Species
ENV3	Biodiversity Gain
ENV4	Watercourses
ENV5	Green Infrastructure in New Developments
ENV6	Historic Environment
ENV7	Listed Buildings
ENV8	Conservation Areas
ENV9	Archaeology and Scheduled Monuments
ENV11	Pollution - Impact from existing and/ or Previous Land uses on new Development (Potential receptors of Pollution)

ENV12	Pollution - Impact of Development on Human Health, the Natural Environment and/or Local Amenity (Potential Sources of Pollution)
EP1	Air Quality
EP3	Waste collection and Recycling
EP4	Flood Risk
INF1	Infrastructure Provision
INF4	Water Resources
TRANS2	Promoting Sustainable Transport and Accessibility
TRANS3	Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Transport Schemes
TRANS4	Transport Assessments, Transport Statements and Travel Plans
TRANS5	Consideration of Development Proposals
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
CF5	Open Space, Sport and Recreation in New Residential Development

Watlington Neighbourhood Development Plan (Neighbourhood Plan)

5.3 As this site is allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan there is a specific policy that covers this development, and this policy is titled ‘Watlington Housing Policy: Site B’ and states that proposals for the residential development of Site B will be supported where they comply with the following criteria:

- They conform to the principles set out in the Watlington Design Guide.
- They are landscape-led and are appropriate for their location within the setting of the Chilterns AONB. All proposals should demonstrate that they have addressed site layout, design, orientation, height, bulk and scale of structures and buildings. In addition, careful consideration should be given to the use of colours, materials and the reflectiveness of surfaces in relation to the proximity of the site to the AONB. Careful consideration should be given to the use of street lights and other forms of external illumination to safeguard the dark night skies of the AONB.
- They provide affordable dwellings to development plan standards.
- They are designed in a way which takes account of heritage assets in the wider locality of the site.
- They provide land to safeguard the route for a re-aligned B4009.
- They allocate land for green spaces for amenity areas and to facilitate biodiversity.
- They provide land for formal and informal recreation use and open space in accordance with development plan standards.
- They create connectivity with the existing Marlbrook development, town centre and the countryside.

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- They are designed so that the built edge of the development blends into the landscape to the north and west.
- They provide for any necessary traffic mitigation measures.
- They deliver a well-balanced mix of housing types, including needs identified in the most recent Watlington Housing Study.
- They include measures to provide resilience to the effects of climate change.

The other relevant Neighbourhood Plan policies are:

P1	Protect and Enhance the Character of Watlington and the Historic Setting of the Town
P2	Transport
P3	Conserve and Enhance the Natural Environment
P5	New Housing Development
P8	Physical and Social Infrastructure

Supplementary Planning Guidance and other relevant Documents

- 5.4
- South Oxfordshire District Council Corporate Plan 2022-2024
 - South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Joint Design Guide 2022
 - South Oxfordshire Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document 2023
 - Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule
 - The Chilterns Conservation Board Chilterns Building Design Guide
 - The Watlington Design Guide 2023
 - Oxfordshire County Council Local Transport and Connectivity Plan 2022
 - Oxfordshire Street Design Guide
 - Manual for Streets

5.5 National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance

Other Relevant Legislation

Human Rights Act 1998

- 5.6 The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 have been considered in the processing of the application and the preparation of this report. The recommendation to grant reserved matters consent has been taken within the scope of normal planning policy and will not detrimentally impinge on the human rights of any person. The recommendation has been made in a legitimate and balanced way.

Equality Act 2010

- 5.7 In processing this planning application, officers have had regard to the council's equalities obligations including its obligations under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The proposal will not cause detrimental harms to any person with protected characteristics and the recommendation has been made in a legitimate and balanced way.

6.0 **Planning considerations**

6.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The relevant development plan policies are outlined above.

6.2 This is a site that has an extant outline planning permission, and the principle of the development is therefore established. The main planning considerations for this reserved matters application are:

- **Housing mix** – affordable and market housing
- **The details of the development** including the reserved matters of access, layout, scale, appearance, and landscaping
- **Residential amenity** – Neighbouring homes and new residents
- **Highway matters and parking**
- **Infrastructure** - Section 106 contributions / obligations and Community Infrastructure Levy
- **Other matters**
- **Conditions on the outline planning permission**

Housing mix

Affordable housing

6.3 A policy compliant level of affordable housing was secured through a legal agreement attached to the outline planning permission. The number of homes required in the legal agreement is reflected in the submitted plans, with 40% of the total number of homes to be affordable housing (total of 28 homes).

6.4 The council's housing development officer raised concern that the tenure split indicated in the 22 May 2023 amendments did not reflect what is set out in the legal agreement. This has now been addressed in the amended plans submitted 5 July 2023. The mix of house sizes also corresponds with the specifications in the legal agreement.

6.5 The affordable homes all have floor areas that exceed the Nationally Described Space Standards, and they are all designed to meet the standards of Part M (4) Category 2: accessible and adaptable dwellings. Four of the affordable homes (14 percent) will meet the standards of Part M (4) Category 3: wheelchair accessible dwellings, which exceeds the minimum five percent requirement in policy H11 of the Local Plan. The proposal will therefore deliver affordable homes that have suitably sized living spaces and are accessible and adaptable for those with specific needs, in accordance with the relevant policy.

6.6 The legal agreement attached to the outline planning permission required the affordable housing to be in clusters of no more than 15 homes and this requirement is reflected in Local Plan policy H9. Although the affordable homes could be spread more evenly across the site, they are in clusters of less than 15 and their distribution is, on balance, acceptable. Subject to a condition to secure the correct tenure mix, the proposal generally provides affordable homes to development plan standards in accordance with Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan policies.

Market housing

- 6.7 Policy H11 of the Local Plan requires a mix of dwelling types and sizes to be provided on all new residential developments to meet the needs of current and future households. The mix of housing should have regard to the council’s latest evidence, monitoring and delivery and Neighbourhood Development Plan evidence. The Neighbourhood Plan requires development on this site to deliver a well-balanced mix of housing types, including needs identified in the most recent Watlington Housing Study.
- 6.8 The council’s latest evidence is the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2014 found a shortfall in smaller units and recommended for most units to be 2 and 3 bedrooms. The table below shows the breakdown of the mix suggested by the Strategic Market Housing Assessment and compares this to the proposal and also to the combined mix across the application site and Site C.

	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed
Mix suggested by Strategic Market Housing Assessment	6%	27%	43%	24%
Proposed mix	0%	28.6%	45.2%	26.2%
Proposed mix combined with Site C (P23/S0433/RM)	5.1%	26.9%	43.6%	24.4%

- 6.9 Watlington Parish Council commissioned a Housing Needs Survey Report in 2021. This aimed to establish the extent of local affordable housing need in the parish and the levels of support for the principle of providing housing for those with local connections to Watlington. Given the scope of this assessment, it is of limited relevance to an assessment of market housing mix.
- 6.10 Watlington Parish Council also commissioned a Housing Needs Assessment in 2022 and the approach used in the Assessment relies on projections based on existing trends. The evidence assumes that existing demographic and occupation patterns will persist into the future and given this approach, the modelling suggests the need for a substantial provision of larger dwellings.
- 6.11 The Assessment acknowledges that the approach “*embeds existing patterns of occupancy which may or may not be desirable.*” It adds that “*affordability is a serious and worsening challenge in the area*” and one way to combat this “*is to ensure that homes come forward which are of an appropriate size, type and density for local residents’ budgets. Continuing to provide smaller homes with fewer bedrooms could help to address this situation*”. The Assessment concludes by saying that that “*there is a need for all different sizes of properties over the plan period.*”

6.12 Based on the above assessment, I am satisfied that the proposed market housing mix has regard to the most up-to-date evidence and will deliver a wide mix of homes that will meet the needs of current and future households. The views expressing a need for more larger homes in the local area are not compatible with the housing policies and demonstrated housing need.

6.13 Seven of the market homes would meet the standards of Part M (4) Category 2: accessible and adaptable dwellings, which meets the minimum 15 percent requirement set out in Local Plan policy H11. And the two bedroom homes meet the Nationally Described Space Standards. The proposal will therefore deliver market homes that have suitably sized living spaces and include some accessible and adaptable homes for those with specific needs, in accordance with the relevant policy.

The details of the development

Access

6.14 The outline planning application included indicative plans for two options for the main access into the site. This is because, at the time when the application was considered, the county council did not have a preferred route for the Edge Road. The two access options that were presented with the outline application are shown on the extracts below:



6.15 The application proposes a priority junction onto Cuxham Road, as shown on the layout plan below:



- 6.16 The highways officer at Oxfordshire County Council has raised no objection to the location and details of this access onto Britwell Road and it is acceptable in terms of highway safety. The location of the access also accords with the indicative alignment of the Edge Road shown in the Neighbourhood Plan and of the two options presented at outline stage, is the option generally preferred by the local community.
- 6.17 The proposed priority junction into the site is positioned in the same location as the roundabout that is proposed to be delivered by Oxfordshire County Council. This roundabout will join up the different sections of the Edge Road that are delivered by housebuilders. The layout of the site has accommodated space for the roundabout, as indicated on the plan below, which shows the priority junction overlaid onto the roundabout:



- 6.18 The roundabout needs to be positioned within the application site to avoid conflict with a watercourse on the opposite side of Cuxham Road and an area of land within Flood Zone 3. Officers at the county council have worked with

the applicant to secure the land needed for the roundabout and this was captured in the legal agreement attached to the outline planning permission. Dependant on the timing of the two projects, the applicant may not need to implement the priority junction if the roundabout is available to access development.

Layout

- 6.19 The outline planning application included parameter plans to inform the detailed layout. Parameter plans indicate the position of built form, structural landscaping, open space, and main movement corridors. The relevant parameter plan from the outline planning permission is reproduced below:



- 6.20 The proposed layout does not precisely reflect the parameter plan as the development is pushed further back from Cuxham Road. This is a necessary change to accommodate the roundabout and is a result of the design of the Edge Road evolving since the plans for the outline application were produced.
- 6.21 The key principles in the parameter plan have been successfully pulled through to the proposed layout. This includes the incorporation of some landscaping around the rural edges of the site, the use of the narrow part of the site to the northwest for growing, and a play area near to the southeast boundary.
- 6.22 The proposed layout is generally arranged in a perimeter block structure, with the fronts of the homes providing a strong outward edge and private back gardens in the centre. This accords with the guidance in the Joint Design Guide. Another positive aspect of the layout is the setback of homes from the Edge Road, as this will help to reduce noise and disturbance for occupiers of these homes. The footpath link around the rural edges is also a positive feature as this will provide residents with an easily accessible short off-road walking route.
- 6.23 The Neighbourhood Plan policy for the development of this site also includes matters that are relevant to layout. There is a requirement to safeguard land for the Edge Road, which the layout clearly achieves. And the layout also meets the requirement to allocate land for green spaces for amenity areas and to

facilitate biodiversity. The council’s countryside officer has confirmed that the development will achieve a net gain for biodiversity.

- 6.24 The proposed layout is designed to take account of the future developments either side of the site and is clearly integrated with the development proposed on Site C. In my opinion, the layout proposed will contribute towards the delivery of a high quality development in accordance with the relevant policies, including policy DES1 of the Local Plan.

Scale

- 6.25 The outline planning application indicated that the development would be two storeys in height, and this is reflected in the proposals. The width and depth of the proposed homes is also acceptable with suitable space provided between and around the buildings. The scale of development is generally reflective of the local area.

Appearance

- 6.26 Extracts from the street scenes submitted with the application are reproduced below to provide an indication of the appearance of the dwellings:



- 6.27 One of the requirements of the Neighbourhood Plan policy for the site is that the proposals conform to the principles set out in the Watlington Design Guide. There are several references in the Watlington Design Guide to materials and the Guide highlights that “*Watlington parish has a wide variety of architectural styles and details that can act as references for new development. In particular, pitched roofs with either slate and plain clay tiles and elevations where brick, render or boarding are predominant*”

- 6.28 Watlington Parish Council have commented that they would like to see some use of render on the new homes. However, the Chilterns Conservation Board have advised that “*render should be discouraged as it is both inappropriate, out of context with Watlington and would be much more visible in the wider view*”.
- 6.29 In my opinion, the muted colours proposed are acceptable as they take account of the relevant guidance in the Watlington Design Guide, which states that “*The choice of colour and finish of materials is an important design factor in reducing the impact of the buildings on the surrounding landscape. Generally very light colours, like white, cream or light grey, and large areas of intense strong colours do not blend well with the rural landscape. Thus, muted and darker tones could be a better option.*” Samples of materials can be secured by condition.
- 6.30 The Design and Access Statement provides a study of the different architectural styles in Watlington and a local contextual analysis. The architectural details proposed are generally reflective of the local vernacular, and the variety in roof forms, porch details and fenestration will add some variation and interest to the appearance of the scheme.
- 6.31 The Watlington Design Guide requires the quality and architectural design of affordable housing to be of a high standard and Local Plan policy H9 adds that affordable homes must be indistinguishable from market homes. In terms of their appearance, the affordable homes will be high quality and constructed from the same materials as the market units, in accordance with the relevant guidance and policy.
- 6.32 In terms of the appearance of the spaces between buildings, the proposals will provide brick and flint walls in locations that are prominent from public viewpoints, such as corner plots and gardens that run alongside roads. The use of brick/flint in these spaces is appropriate as the features will be long lasting and of a high-quality appearance. As suggested by the Chilterns Conservation Board, a condition is necessary to ensure all flint is hand-worked to avoid the use of pre-cast panels.
- 6.33 The ground surface materials will incorporate block paving to help break up the expense of tarmac created by the highway infrastructure. The footpath around the edge of the development will be buff self-binding gravel and this is an appropriate alternative to tarmac in terms of providing a variety of surface materials to improve the appearance of the development.
- 6.34 The Neighbourhood Plan policy for the development of this site also requires the proposals to be designed in a way which takes account of heritage assets in the wider locality of the site. The council’s conservation officer has raised no concerns with the design and appearance of the development and the proposals are acceptable in terms of heritage impact.
- 6.35 In considering whether to grant planning permission, the statutory test in section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act

1990 requires the decision maker to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings. In relation to conservation areas, section 72 (1) of the Act requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of that area. These tests have been considered in the process of recommending that reserved matters consent is granted.

Landscaping

- 6.36 The assessment of landscape impact must be taken in the context that this site has been allocated for residential development through the plan making process. As part of that process, the Neighbourhood Plan assessed sites around Watlington against a range of factors, including landscape impact. In combination with other sites, the application site was determined to be the most appropriate to accommodate growth necessary to meet the housing needs outlined in the Local Plan.
- 6.37 Whilst the site lies outside of the Chilterns AONB, it is within its setting. Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act requires regard to be paid to the purposes of conserving and enhancing AONBs. Policy ENV1 of the Local Plan and paragraph 176 of the National Planning Policy Framework seek broadly similar objectives.
- 6.38 The town of Watlington and its relationship with the surrounding rural areas is visible in the panoramic views from Watlington Hill, which is within the AONB. These views are impressive and much public benefit is derived from this open access National Trust site. Watlington as a settlement nestles within these views and this relationship contributes to the special qualities of this part of the AONB.
- 6.39 Development on the edge of Watlington should therefore be treated with great care as it has the potential to erode and harm the setting of the AONB. This is expressed in the Neighbourhood Plan policy for the site which includes the following four criteria relevant to landscape impact:
- The proposals to be landscape-led and appropriate for their location within the setting of the AONB.
 - The development to be designed so that the built edge blends into the landscape to the north and west.
 - For careful consideration to be given to the use of colours, materials, and the reflectiveness of surfaces in relation to the proximity of the site to the AONB.
 - For careful consideration to be given to the use of streetlights and other forms of external illumination to safeguard the dark night skies of the AONB.
- 6.40 The parameter plans submitted with the outline application showed space for landscaping to be incorporated around the rural edges of the site and, to an extent, this has been reflected in the detailed landscaping scheme. As noted in the consultation responses above, the council's landscape officer remains concerned about some aspects of the proposal and requested that additional planting be added alongside the drainage basin on the western boundary to

help compensate for the narrowness of the planting strip in this location and loss of the tree line within this part of the site.

- 6.41 Amongst other matters, the council's landscape officer also considers that there is a lack of tree planting on side streets. Despite being advised to address the landscape officer's concerns, the applicant chose to not make any further amendments and requested that the application be determined based on the plans submitted.
- 6.42 The overall quality of the development would have been higher if the concerns raised by the council's landscape officer had been addressed. However, although the proposed landscaping scheme could have been improved, I do not consider the development as a whole to be unacceptable because of these matters.
- 6.43 The applicant has incorporated most of the landscape officer's recommendations into the scheme and the planting proposed would help to assimilate the development into the landscape. It is regrettable that further amendments were not forthcoming to provide additional planting, particularly given that this would mitigate for the loss of a line of hedgerows trees within the site. On balance, the scheme achieves the requirements of the relevant policies and, subject to conditions, would conserve the setting of the AONB. Necessary conditions include samples of materials and details of underground crate systems for trees restricted by root barriers to protect services.
- 6.44 Whilst the council's landscape officer is not satisfied with the current submitted Landscape Management Plan, further details can be provided through a new condition.

Residential amenity

Neighbouring homes

- 6.45 Given the separation between the proposed homes and existing neighbouring properties, the layout would not result in any adverse impacts on existing residents in terms of light, outlook and privacy. The facilities on the new development would benefit existing residents as they would be able to utilise the equipped play area, pocket parks and community orchard.
- 6.46 The impact of construction traffic on neighbouring homes/villages is not a matter that can be considered under this application. A condition was attached to the outline planning permission requiring the approval of a Construction Traffic Management Plan and this will determine the route of construction traffic. The traffic movements associated with the occupiers of the development were considered under the outline planning application and were acceptable in relation to any impacts on existing residents.

New residents

- 6.47 The layout of the new homes will meet all the separation distances in the Joint Design Guide. These are:
- a minimum back-to-back distance of 21 metres between facing habitable rooms

- a minimum of 10.5 metres back to boundary
- a minimum of 12 metres back to side
- a minimum of 10 metres front to front

As such, the residents of the proposed new homes will have an acceptable living environment in terms of light, outlook and privacy.

- 6.48 In terms of outdoor space, all the new homes will have the benefit of private amenity space. Most of the new homes (91 percent) will achieve the amount recommended in the Joint Design Guide of:
- at least 40 sqm for one bedroom homes
 - at least 50 sqm for two bedroom homes
 - at least 100 sqm for homes that have three or more bedrooms
- 6.49 Of the six plots that fall below standard, the shortfall is a few sqm for all but one plot. Although the rear garden of plot 14 is around 40 sqm below the recommended standard, this property will have a sizable side garden and easy access to areas of public open space. The proposed layout will therefore provide an appropriate level of outdoor amenity space for future residents of the development.
- 6.50 One of the criteria of the Neighbourhood Plan policy for the development of the site requires the development to provide land for formal and informal recreation use and open space in accordance with development plan standards. The children’s play area meets the size required in the development plan, and the size of the community orchard is in excess of development plan standards for allotments.
- 6.51 The proposals do not incorporate any provision for youth space and, due to the infiltration basins and planting, there will be limited areas for informal play on amenity grassland. Although the proposal does not meet development plan standards for youth space and general amenity space, the site is adjacent to the development on Site A, which will have a large grassed “kick about” area. The recreation ground in Watlington will also be accessible for older children. Future residents of the site will therefore have access to a suitable range of outdoor space for play and informal recreation.
- 6.52 The details of the children’s play equipment need to be submitted under condition 20 of the outline planning permission. In accordance with the council’s Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document, officers will liaise with the parish council and local councillor to establish the most appropriate form of play provision for this site.

Highway matters and parking

- 6.53 The highways officer at Oxfordshire County Council has considered the proposals and, subject to conditions, has not raised any objections as the layout of the Edge Road and adjoining residential streets generally accords with local design guidance, Oxfordshire Street Design Guide and Manual for Streets. The Edge Road will have a 30mph limit as reflected in the submitted plans.

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- 6.54 In terms of cycle/pedestrian safety and connectivity, the controlled crossing point on the Edge Road generally follows the desire line between Willow Close and the community orchard. Subject to a condition to secure an appropriate width and surface, the link through to Willow Close is also acceptable. This creates connectivity with the existing Marlbrook development and town centre, as required by one the criteria of the Neighbourhood Plan policy for the development of the site.
- 6.55 The highways officer has confirmed that car parking levels are appropriate. The cycle stand next to the play area is welcomed but further cycle parking/storage, both on and off-plot, is essential and could be secured by condition. The highways officer has also recommended a condition requiring electric vehicle charging but this is not necessary as it is already required under condition 23 of the outline planning permission. The outline planning permission also included a condition requiring roads associated with each home to be provided before occupation of that home and so it is not necessary to repeat this condition. The highways officer has also requested a condition showing signage and street markings but this level of detail will be provided for the sperate highways agreements and so a condition is not required.
- 6.56 The amended package of plans that were submitted on 23 May 2023 showed the shared cycle and pedestrian route to the southeast of the Edge Road as not being adopted. This conflicted with the requirements of the legal agreement which requires all of the Edge Road to be adopted, including the pedestrian/cycleway. The road adoptions plan has therefore been updated in the 5 July 2023 amendments to correct this. It is noted that highway adoption is subject to separate agreements with the county council. The highways officer has commented that streetlighting should not be fixed or any condition discharged at this stage.
- 6.57 The highways officer has also commented that trees within/overhanging the highway raise some concern regarding maintenance and interaction with visibility splays, streetlighting and drainage. Although he has no objection to the principle of the planting shown, he has suggested that further consideration of the tree species, expected canopies, and maintenance is required, and has recommended that tree species are not fixed at this stage.
- 6.58 Given that landscaping is a reserved matter, approval of the planting details cannot be pushed back to a later date. If the technical audit for the separate agreements with the Local Highway Authority indicate that there is a need to change the approved landscaping, then the applicant will need to apply to the council as the Local Planning Authority for the changes. It is noted that the highways agreements do not supersede the approved landscaping plans.
- 6.59 The highways officer has added that the Road Safety Audit has not considered the streets beyond the Edge Road and its junctions, nor has a swept path analysis been provided beyond those junctions. The highways officer has advised that he has no significant concerns, but the relevant analysis and audit will be required for adoption purposes, and this will need to demonstrate that a 11.6m refuse vehicle can pass an on-coming or parked family car throughout

the development to ensure that the council can access the site for waste disposal.

- 6.60 Although there are several matters of details still to be assessed, these can be considered through the submission of details for conditions. Subject to conditions, I am generally satisfied that the submitted highway layout is acceptable and that the proposals demonstrate an appropriate level of pedestrian and cycle provision, allowing for reasonably direct, safe and secure non-motorised travel. The development is therefore in accordance with the relevant transport policies and takes account of the targets in the Oxfordshire County Council Local Transport and Connectivity Plan 2022 to reduce car trips on the highway network, and to promote active and sustainable travel.

Infrastructure

Section 106 contributions/obligations

- 6.61 The S106 legal agreement that is linked to the outline planning permission secured the following infrastructure:
- The affordable housing.
 - The delivery and management of the open space and play area.
 - Financial contributions towards bin provision and street naming.
 - On-site public art to be delivered through a Public Art Statement.
 - Financial contributions towards infrastructure that is Oxfordshire County Council is the responsible authority, including:
 - Education
 - Public transport (bus stops and bus service)
 - Travel Plan
 - Contribution towards cost of construction of the Edge Road
 - Land for the construction of the roundabout.
 - Highway works including the provision of the Edge Road in the site prior to the occupation of the 40th home or within two years of commencement, whichever is earlier.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 6.62 The development is CIL liable, although relief can be claimed for affordable housing. The money collected through CIL can be pooled with contributions from other development sites to fund a wide range of off-site infrastructure to support growth, including schools, transport, community, leisure and health facilities. Under the CIL Regulations, Watlington Parish Council will receive 25 percent of the CIL collected to spend on infrastructure that is a priority to the community.

Other matters

- 6.63 The Lead Local Flood Authority has raised concerns about the details in the Surface Water Drainage Plan as the infiltration tests show that there can be no soakaways in back gardens. The large below ground soakaway in the southwest corner could be extended to meet the requirements for surface water and as such, a solution could be found which would not require any amendments to the layout.

- 6.64 The applicant has not addressed all the matters raised by the Crime Prevention Design Officer. Although security and safety could have been improved by some simple alterations, such as the addition of windows in side elevations facing roads, further amendments have not been forthcoming. This is not a matter that would warrant refusal of the application.
- 6.65 The concerns raised by the council's forestry officer are based on information that has since been updated or relates to trees that are off site. The services plan shows that the route of a cable may impact on off-site trees that are some distance from the application site. Only development within the application boundary can be considered as part of the application and so this is not relevant. Other legislation is in place to protect trees that are subject to a Tree Preservation Order.
- 6.66 The application is accompanied by a Sustainability Statement, and this demonstrates that the development will achieve a 40 percent reduction in carbon emissions compared with a 2013 Building Regulations compliance base rate. This accords with policy DES10 of the Local Plan and a condition requiring a verification report is required to ensure the relevant measures are implemented. The energy efficiency measures will provide resilience to the effects of climate change, as required by one of the criteria of the Neighbourhood Plan policy for the development of the site.
- 6.67 The Sustainability Statement also outlined that a water consumption of less than 110 litres per person per day will be achieved. This accords with the requirements of Local Plan Policy INF4.

Conditions on the outline planning permission

- 6.68 As referred to in paragraph 1.18, conditions are determined under delegated powers. The details submitted for condition 6 (housing mix), condition 8 (Biodiversity Enhancement Plan), condition 11 (vehicle accesses etc.), condition 16 (tree protection), and 18 (foul drainage) are acceptable. The details pursuant to condition 14 (lighting) and condition 17 (Surface Water Drainage) cannot currently be agreed.
- 6.69 Condition 7 of the outline planning permission required the submission of specific details with the reserved matters application. Some of the required information has not been submitted, or is not acceptable, and it is therefore necessary for further conditions to be added to ensure that these matters can be considered. The details required are cycle parking, refuse strategy, details of street furniture, a plan showing existing and proposed ground levels, and a Landscape Management Plan.

7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1 The application seeks reserved matters consent in respect of the details of access, layout, scale, appearance and landscaping. Although there are some aspects of the development that could have been improved, such as landscaping and the distribution of affordable units, the proposal generally accords with the development plan as a whole.

8.0 **Recommendation**

To grant reserved matters approval for application P23/S0431/RM subject to the following conditions:

1. **Approved plans**

Conditions to be agreed prior to commencement:

2. **Existing and proposed ground levels**
3. **Refuse strategy**
4. **Landscape Management Plan**
5. **Details of street furniture**
6. **Cycle parking**
7. **Details of the shared pedestrian cycle route adjacent to the play area**
8. **Details of underground crate systems for trees where soil volume is not adequate.**

Conditions to be agreed prior to above ground development:

9. **Samples of materials**

Conditions to be agreed prior to occupation:

10. **Verification report for energy measures**

Compliance conditions:

11. **Flint work to be hand laid**
12. **Visibility splays to be provided and retained.**

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