APPLICATION NO. P22/S3126/FUL

SITE Steven Orton Antiques Shirburn Road

Watlington, OX49 5BZ

**PROPOSAL** The redevelopment of part of the site at

Shirburn Road, Watlington for the erection of 25 age restricted dwellings (for people aged 55 and

over), including communal facilities,

landscaping and parking.

**AMENDMENTS** 

APPLICANT Beechcroft Developments Ltd

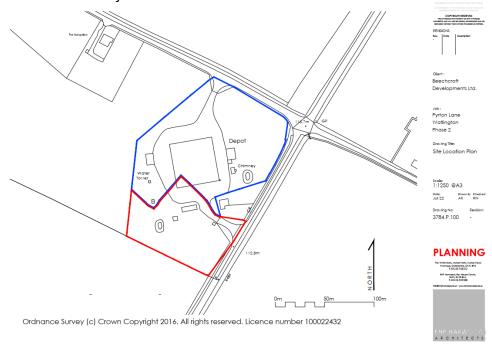
**APPLICATION TYPE** FULL APPLICATION

REGISTERED 16.9.2022 TARGET DECISION DATE 11.12.2023 PARISH PYRTON

WARD MEMBER(S) Freddie van Mierlo OFFICER Katherine Pearce

#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This application is referred to the Planning Committee as the officer's recommendation conflicts with the views of Pyrton Parish Council.
- 1.2 The application site has an area of approximately 0.6 hectares, and forms part of a larger site (outlined in blue on the location plan below) that was previously in use by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and which is located at the corner of the B4009 and Pyrton Lane:



**Site Location Plan** 

- 1.3 Planning permission (P18/S0002/O and P19/S2380/RM) was previously granted for the redevelopment of the wider site to provide 37 retirement apartments, a 3,200 sqm care home, and four units of staff accommodation. That permission has been implemented by the construction of the retirement apartments and staff accommodation. This application relates to the parcel on the site that benefits from permission for a care home, which has not been built. A previous application on this parcel for affordable housing apartments was dismissed on appeal (see paragraph 4.1).
- 1.4 The site is accessed from the B4009. There is established hedgerow and tree cover to the southern and eastern boundaries. There is an existing dwelling ('The Bungalow') between the application site and the B4009, which uses the same access as the application site. The Bungalow benefits from separate planning permission (P21/S2768/FUL) for the demolition of the existing dwelling and its replacement with three new dwellings, which has been implemented.
- 1.5 The land to the north of the site is part of a Grade II Registered Park and Garden associated with Shirburn Castle. There are several Grade II Listed structures within the grounds of the castle, including a church, an icehouse, a rotunda and a statue. Shirburn Castle is a Grade I Listed Building. The Castle and grounds are also part of Shirburn Conservation Area.
- 1.6 To the immediate west of the site is currently open fields, although this site is subject to a resolution to grant outline consent, subject to the completion of a S106 legal agreement, for a development of up to 100 dwellings (P16/S2576/O). Further to the west is the Grade II\* Listed Pyrton Manor and its grounds. Pyrton Manor, and much of the village of Pyrton, fall within Pyrton Conservation Area. There are several other listed buildings within this village.
- 1.7 The land to the east of the site is within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The edge of this designated area is the opposite side of the B4009 from the application site. To the south of the site is Watlington recreation ground.
- 1.8 The application site is within the parish of Pyrton. Pyrton has a Neighbourhood Plan, which was made on 11 April 2019, and so this forms part of the Council's development plan.
- 1.9 The Pyrton Neighbourhood Plan has a site-specific policy for the application site, which is referred to as PYR1. This policy supports the principle of the redevelopment of the former MoD site for residential development, subject to several criteria.
- 1.10 The parish of Watlington borders the south of the site. Watlington also have a made neighbourhood plan, although the Parish Council is undertaking a review of the plan. Amongst other matters, the made Watlington Neighbourhood Plan aims to safeguard land for a re-aligned B4009 to the north and west of the village.

#### 2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 This application seeks full planning permission for 25 retirement units.
- 2.2 The application plans and documents have been amended during the application process in response to consultation comments and officer advice in relation to design and landscape, and to address technical issues in relation to flooding and drainage, ecology and energy efficiency.
- 2.3 The application proposes the erection of four x two storey buildings around an area of communal garden, from which the apartments would be accessed. The buildings would have a generally traditional appearance with pitched roofs and traditional details such as fenestration and porches. The buildings would be finished with a mixture of red and grey brick and flint, with brown tiles to the roof.
- 2.4 The site would use the existing access from the B4009, which serves the remainder of the development. The development would provide 28 unallocated car parking spaces, of which 2 would be disabled parking spaces. The majority of the parking would be provided to the west of the buildings, with 2 spaces adjacent to the main site access. A further area of open space would be provided beyond the car parking to the west. A landscape buffer would be retained between the buildings and the eastern and southern boundaries.
- 2.5 The occupation of the apartments would be restricted to those aged 55 and over, which would be secured through a Section 106 legal agreement.

#### 3.0 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

#### 3.1 **Publicity**

This application has been publicised in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act and the Council's procedures set out in the Statement of Community Involvement.

Below is a summary of the consultation responses received. For the full responses please visit the Council's website and search for the application using the planning application reference number.

## 3.2 **Statutory Consultee Responses**

Representation	Comments	
Pyrton Parish	Objection	
Council	First Consultation:	
	Proposals would not comply with Pyrton Neighbourhood	
	Plan Policy H1 in respect of requirement to consult with local community, provision of affordable housing, density and character; concerns about traffic and accessibility.	
	Second Consultation:	

	Applications provides no social or economic benefit. The	
	care home that already has permission should be built.	
Watlington	No Objection	
Parish Council	First Consultation:	
	Some concerns that care home, with associated community and employment benefits would not be provided; open space provision would be inadequate; car parking is dominant and may impact amenity; EV charging should be provided to all parking spaces; more disabled parking should be provided; energy efficiency measures should be implemented; maintenance of green spaces should include green roofs.	
	Second Consultation:	
	Disappointed that affordable housing would not be provided on site.	
	on site.	
Oxfordshire	No Objection	
County Council		
Highways	No objection subject to conditions requiring provision of	
Authority	access and estate roads; car parking; details and provision of cycle parking; provision of Travel Plan, Travel Information Pack, and CTMP	
	Second Consultation:	
	No objection to reduction in car parking, subject to	
	previously recommended conditions.	
Lead Local	No Objection	
Flood Authority		
(Oxfordshire	Objection – calculations are incorrect	
County		
Council)	Second Consultation:	
	No objection	
Thames Water	No Objection	
	First Consultation:	
	No objection	
	Second Consultation:	
	No objection	
Council Brofess	sional Officer Comments	

## 3.3 Council - Professional Officer Comments

Representation	Comments	
Conservation	No Objection	
Officer	First Consultation:	
	No objection	
	Second Consultation:	
	No further comments	
<b>Ecology Officer</b>	No Objection	

	First Consultation:	
	Update walkover ecological survey required to confirm	
	findings of previous 2020 surveys remain valid.	
	Second Consultation:	
	No objection subject to condition securing scheme of	
	biodiversity enhancements	
Drainage	No Objection	
Officer	First Consultation:	
	Further information required.	
	Tartier information required.	
	Second Consultation:	
	No objection subject to conditions securing submission of a	
Farratus Officer	SuDS compliance report.	
Forestry Officer	No Objection	
	First Consultation:	
	No Objection	
	Second Consultation:	
	No further comments.	
Air Quality	No Objection	
Officer	First Consultation:	
	No objection subject to compliance with recommended	
	measures in submitted Air Quality Assessment.	
	Second Consultation:	
	No further comments.	
Contaminated	No Objection	
Land Officer	First Consultation:	
	Further information required.	
	'	
	Second Consultation:	
	No objection subject to conditions securing the	
	implementation of the approved remediation strategy and	
	regarding unexpected contamination.	
Environmental	No Objection	
Protection	First Consultation	
Officer	No objection subject to condition securing scheme of noise	
Officer	mitigation.	
	mugation.	
	Second Consultation:	
	No further comments.	
Housing Officer	The recommendations of the financial viability assessment	
Tiousing Officer	are accepted in principle.	
	ато ассертва птринстрів.	
Landscape	No Objection	
Officer	First Consultation:	
Cilicei		
	Holding objection – concerns regarding balconies and extent	
	of glazing; lack of separation from southern boundary; extent	
	of massing and built form along southern boundary; open	

	space design and provision; insufficient information on materials; lack of details of lighting required.		
	Recommendations regarding strengthening of southern		
	boundary and additional landscaping and tree planting.		
	Second Consultation:		
	No objection subject to conditions securing details of soft		
	and hard landscaping; boundary treatments and street furniture; lighting; materials; and landscaping management		
	and maintenance.		
Urban Design	First Consultation:		
Officer	Recommendations regarding additional landscaping.		
	Support for material palette.		
	Second Consultation:		
	Recommendations regarding additional landscaping,		
	welcome breaking up of building and greater set back from		
	southern boundary.		
Energy	No Objection		
Assessor	First Consultation:		
	Holding objection subject to the submission of SAP reports		
	for each dwelling.		
	Second Consultation:		
	No objection subject to compliance with the submitted		
	energy statement and submission of verification report.		
Waste	No Objection		
Management	First Consultation:		
Officer	No objection subject to securing of financial contributions towards waste and recycling bins.		
	towards waste and recycling bills.		
	Second Consultation:		
	No further comments.		

# 3.4 Public responses

Representation	Comments	
Oxfordshire	No Objection	
<b>County Council</b>	First Consultation:	
Waste	No objection subject to securing of financial contribution of	
Management	£2,349 towards expansion of Household waste Recycling	
	Centres.	
	Second Consultation:	
	No further comments	
Oxfordshire	No Objection	
<b>County Council</b>	First Consultation:	
Archaeology	No objection subject to conditions requiring the submission	
	and approval of an Archaeological Written Scheme of	
	Investigation, and implementation of a stage programme of	
	archaeological evaluation and mitigation.	

	Second Consultation: Submitted Written Scheme of Investigation is satisfactory. Condition requiring its implementation is required.	
Chilterns Conservation Board	No Objection First Consultation: No objection; recommendation that natural clay tiles are used and additional landscaping to AONB boundaries is secured.  Second Consultation: No further comments.	
NHS Integrated Care Board	No Objection No objection subject to financial contribution towards primary healthcare capacity to be secured by S106.	
Residents and local businesses	1 comment of <b>objection</b> has been received from Beechwood Estates Company Limited:  • Lack of consultation with local residents  • There is a need for a care home in Watlington  • Pyrton is not required to provide housing in SOLP  • Pyrton Neighbourhood Plan allowed for 15-20 houses in the village, and this has been exceeded  • Density is too high  • No affordable housing would be provided  • Lack of accessibility/reliance on private car  • Increase in traffic  • Development would not provide increase in employment opportunities  • Pressure on health care services  • Impact on AONB	

## 4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

	Application Number	Description of development	Decision and date
4.1	P21/S0003/FUL	The redevelopment of part of the site on Shirburn Road to create a new block of 34 affordable apartments for people aged 55 and over.	Refused (25/05/2021) - Appeal dismissed (11/01/2022)
4.2	P19/S2380/RM	Reserved Matters application following Outline approval P18/S0002/O for 37 retirement houses, care home and 4 units of staff accommodation at	Approved (08/07/2020)

Shirburn Road, to consider appearance, landscaping, layout and scale.

4.3 P18/S0002/O

Outline application for up Approved (23/07/2019) to 37 Retirement Units for people aged 55 and

over, provision of a Care Home and 4 staff

accommodation units (all matters reserved for future consideration with the exception of access).

#### 5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 The site does not meet the criteria for Schedule 1 development as per The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. The site is not located in a sensitive area; the proposal does not exceed 150 homes and the site area is under 5ha. The proposal therefore does not meet the thresholds for any category of Schedule 2 development and does not require screening for an Environmental Impact Assessment. An Environmental Statement is not required.

#### 6.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE

- 6.1 National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance
- 6.2 **Development Plan Policies**

South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 (SOLP) Policies:

CF5 - Open Space, Sport and Recreation in New Residential Development

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

DES9 - Renewable Energy

DES10 - Carbon Reduction

ENV1 - Landscape and Countryside

ENV2 - Biodiversity - Designated sites, Priority Habitats and Species

ENV3 - Biodiversity

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 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)

EP1 - Air Quality

EP3 - Waste collection and Recycling

EP4 - Flood Risk

H1 - Delivering New Homes

H8 - Housing in the Smaller Villages

H9 - Affordable Housing

H11 - Housing Mix

H13 - Specialist Housing for Older People

INF1 - Infrastructure Provision

INF4 - Water Resources

STRAT1 - The Overall Strategy

STRAT2 - South Oxfordshire Housing and Employment Requirements

STRAT5 - Residential Densities

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

#### 6.3 Neighbourhood Plan

Pyrton Neighbourhood Plan (PRP)

Pyrton Neighbourhood Plan was made on 11 April 2019. The relevant policies in the Pyrton Neighbourhood Plan are:

BNE1 - Historic Environment

BNE2 – Landscape character

BNE5 - Flood risk and drainage

C2 – Development contributions

H1 - New Homes

H2 – Type of new homes

D1 – Detailed design criteria

SA1 – Former MoD site (PYR1)

Watlington Neighbourhood Plan (WNP)

Watlington Neighbourhood Plan was made on 23 August 2018.

The Watlington Neighbourhood Plan allocates three housing sites in an arc north and west of the town. These will deliver a minimum of 238 new homes over the plan period. The Neighbourhood Plan also safeguards land for an edge road to reduce the volume of traffic in the town centre and lead to an improvement in air quality. The Watlington Neighbourhood Plan policies are not directly applicable to this site as it is outside of its designated area.

#### 6.4 Emerging Joint Local Plan 2041

The Council is preparing a Joint Local Plan covering South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse, which when adopted will replace the existing local plan. Currently at the Regulation 18 stage, the Joint Local Plan Preferred Options January 2024 has limited weight when making planning decisions. The starting point for decision taking will remain the policies in the current adopted plan.

## 6.5 **Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents**

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Joint Design Guide 2022 South Oxfordshire Developer Contributions SPD November 2022

#### 7.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 The relevant planning considerations are the following:
  - The principle of the development
  - Matters of detail/technical issues
    - Design and character
    - Landscape
    - Impact on heritage assets
    - o Housing mix and affordable housing
    - Residential amenity
    - Transport and parking
    - Trees
    - Ecology
    - Flooding and drainage
    - Other material considerations
  - Infrastructure requirements
    - Contributions pooled under the Community Infrastructure Levy
    - o On-site infrastructure to be secured under a legal agreement

## 7.2 Principle of development

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

- 7.3 For the purposes of this application, the Development Plan consists of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 and the Pyrton Neighbourhood Plan (PNP).
- 7.4 Policy STRAT1 (Overall Strategy) establishes the overall spatial planning framework for the District, which includes supporting Smaller and Other Villages by allowing for limited amounts of housing and employment to help secure the provision and retention of services, whilst recognising a need to protect and enhance the countryside. The overall strategy seeks to ensure that all communities thrive, and everyone has access to services within short distances. As such, the locational policies of the local plan direct new development to the most sustainable locations in the district.
- 7.5 Policy STRAT 2 (Housing Requirement) provides the housing requirement for the District in the plan period. SOLP Policy H1 (Delivering New Homes) sets out where residential development will be permitted, which includes on sites that are allocated by Neighbourhood Development Plans. Policy H1 continues to explain that where sites are not allocated in the Development Plan, residential development will only be permitted, inter alia, for specialist housing for older people in locations with good access to public transport and local facilities; or it is on brownfield sites within other villages.

- 7.6 The site is allocated for development by Policy SA1 of the PNP. Policy H13 (Specialist Housing for Older People) lends support to the development of specialist housing for older people in locations with good access to public transport and local facilities.
- 7.7 Policy H1 (New homes) of the PNP states that planning permission will be granted for residential houses at the former MoD site (the application site) at a density that would not have an adverse effect on the character of the area and on the Parish's heritage assets.
- 7.8 Policy SA1 (Former MoD site (PYR1)) of the PNP reiterates that the redevelopment of the application site for residential development, along with associated landscaping and infrastructure works, will be supported in principle subject to a number of criteria relating to environmental and amenity considerations.
- 7.9 Apartments for people aged 55 and over would be considered specialist housing for older people. The development of the site to provide this type of specialist housing, on a site allocated in a neighbourhood plan, on previously developed land, accords with the strategic aims of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan and is supported in principle by policies STRAT1, STRAT2, H1, H13 of the SOLP and policies H1 and SA1 of the PNP, subject to detailed criteria outlined within policies H1 and SA1 of the PNP.
- 7.10 Notwithstanding the in-principle support for specialist housing on the site, as set out in the planning history above, there remains an extant planning permission for the development of a 3200sqm (66 beds) care home (Use Class C2) on the site. Detailed designs for the care home have also been approved through a reserved matters application. This establishes a fallback position which is a material consideration in determining this application.
- 7.11 The considerations for development referenced in PNP Policies H1 and SA1 are set out in the relevant sections of this report. For completeness, the criteria (a to e) in policy SA1 are set out below and I have commented in relation to each criterion in italics:
  - a) Consultation takes place with the local community from the outset and throughout the planning process. Any planning application should explain the nature of the consultation so far undertaken, the percentage of parishioners involved, the views of parishioners, and how those views have been taken into account in formulating a development proposal.

Details of consultation with Pyrton and Watlington Parish Councils and local residents are provided in a Statement of Community Involvement that accompanied the applications for outline and reserved matters consent for the wider site. This describes how meetings took place with the Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Plan groups prior to the submission of those applications. A public exhibition was also held at Pyrton Village Hall, which was attended by around 60 people. This

consultation informed the proposals for which outline and reserved matters consent was granted.

Regarding this particular application, the applicant attended a Pyrton Parish Council meeting during the course of this application to present the proposals and answer questions.

b) Affordable housing will be sought in line with SODC's adopted requirements, subject to viability.

A viability assessment was submitted with the application to demonstrate that it was not financially viable for the scheme to contribute towards Affordable Housing. This was assessed by independent consults who agreed with the outcome of the report. Therefore, on the basis for viability, the proposed development will not contribute towards Affordable Housing.

c) Vehicle access to the site is off the Shirburn Road (B4009), as now.

The development proposed would make use of the existing access into the site from the B4009.

- d) Design and access statement as required by SODC's adopted Validation Checklist, should be prepared and submitted as part of any application. In addition to the statutory expectations for a design and access statement, the statement should:
  - i. Draw on relevant precedents and demonstrate how and why they are related to the proposed development, and how these have influenced the proposal in formulating an appropriate scheme;
  - ii. Include sufficient drawings, photomontages, viewpoints and illustrations to allow a realistic appreciation of the proposal;
  - iii. Explain how and why the building types, scale, appearance and materials have been selected and are appropriate for the environment;
- iv. Demonstrate how the proposed development responds to on-site and surrounding heritage, landscape and environmental opportunities / constraints / designations. In particular, proposals should demonstrate how management of the existing boundary vegetation would maintain the visual containment of the site and lighting management would reduce light pollution from the site.
- v. Demonstrate a prospective net gain in biodiversity on the site through appropriate ecological surveys.

The application is accompanied by a detailed Design and Access Statement. This includes local character analysis and the design rationale for the proposals, and is supported by a range of contextual and axonometric drawings. A Landscape Structure plan shows that boundary vegetation would be retained and enhanced.

An Ecological Assessment accompanies the application, and based on this information it is considered that a net gain in biodiversity can be secured on site through the submission of a scheme of ecological enhancements.

The level of information submitted is sufficient to determine the application and additional details can be secured by conditions.

e) Planning applications must take into account the recommendations of the SODC Landscape Capacity Study (2015) in relation to this site and be accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

The proposal does not accord with the recommendations in the Landscape Capacity Study. The application is accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment which contends that a higher quantum of development than is indicated in the Landscape Capacity Assessment is acceptable. Furthermore the fallback position of the approved care home established the acceptability of a higher quantum of development.

## 7.12 **Design and character**

The design and layout of the proposal can be seen in Appendix 2 (Proposed Site Plan) and Appendix 3 (Proposed Elevations).

- 7.13 Over the course of the application, additional information and amendments were submitted to address initial concerns raised by the Council's Urban Design Officer regarding the design of the proposals. The amendments comprised the breaking up of the buildings into four separate buildings and amendments to the car parking provision and layout to increase landscaping and the useability of open space to the north west. A further set of amendments was submitted to provide further details of materials and additional landscaping.
- 7.14 Policy DES1 (Delivering High Quality Development) requires proposals to use land efficiently, whilst respecting the existing landscape character. Proposals should take into account landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping. The design should respect the local context, working with and complementing the scale, height, density, type and details of the surrounding areas. Policy DES2 (Enhancing Local Character) requires all new development to reflect the positive features that make up the character of the local area and should physically and visually enhance and complement the surroundings.
- 7.15 PNP policies H1 and SA1 set out various criteria in relation to character and design as set out in full above. Policy D1 (Detailed design criteria) of the PNP requires that proposals should ensure high standards and quality of design and sets out a number of specific design criteria, including that development should predominantly have a maximum of two storeys; that designs are generally influenced by the Chiltern vernacular architectural style; that high quality and energy efficient and environmentally sensitive materials are used; and that

development proposals take account of the importance of dark night skies across the parish.

## 7.16 Density

Policy H1 of the PNP specifies that density will be used as a criteria against which to judge whether development would have an adverse effect on the character of the area and the Parish's heritage assets. If the red line area of the current pre-application submission is considered, the proposed development would have a density of 46dph. If the wider site is considered as a whole, taking the proposed development together with the retirement apartments already built on the remainder of the site, the density would be 34.5dph. For context, taken on its own, the part of the site already built out has a density of approximately 30dph.

- 7.17 The development plan should be read as a whole, and the need to comply with policy H1 does not supersede the need to comply with other policies in the Development Plan and the Framework. A balance needs to be struck between the requirements of PNP policy H1, and the need to respect the character of the village and its heritage assets, with the requirements of SOLP policy DES7, and the requirements of paragraph 124 of the NPPF, that development should make an efficient use of land, and SOLP policy STRAT5 that proposals should optimise the use of land.
- 7.18 The Pyrton Neighbourhood Plan contains an assessment of the existing density of dwellings within the village, which ranges between 4.4 and 7.4dph, which is a very low density, characteristic of the dispersed character of the settlement. While it is located within the parish of Pyrton, the site sits outside the established settlement. Regard needs to be had to the fallback position of the outline and reserved matters planning permission for the site, which allows for the development of a single building to provide a 66-bed care home. Regard also needs to be had to the resolution to grant planning permission, subject to the completion of a S106 legal agreement, for the development of up to 100 dwellings on the site immediately to the east of the application site.
- 7.19 Expressing density as dwellings per hectare is a useful metric, although in considering how density relates to character it is also useful to consider other factors such as plot size; garden size, and how dwellings relate to their gardens; parking provision; building height and massing; and provision of public amenity space. As noted above, the development approved under outline and reserved matters consent on the site has a density considerably higher than the village of Pyrton. This was found to be acceptable on balance due to the other factors outlined that contribute to the perception of density. I also note that the density of the approved development does not factor in the approved care home building, which while not being expressed as a number of dwellings would have a substantial built footprint and scale and massing.
- 7.20 I also note that the Inspector for the recently dismissed appeal for the development of a block of 34 affordable apartments, which would have had the same footprint and scale as the approved care home, considered that 'the

density of the proposal is broadly acceptable given the proximity of the site to Watlington and its reasonable levels of accessibility to public transport links'.

7.21 Notwithstanding the lower density characteristic of Pyrton, having regard to all of the above, and noting the established character of the already completed development on the site, it is my view that the development proposed is of an appropriate density.

## 7.22 Layout

The proposed development has been designed to reflect the approved and implemented development on the wider site. The proposed buildings would address the estate road into the site and provide a positive sense of enclosure on entering the site. The buildings would be organised around a central area of shared amenity space, and the orientation of buildings in relation to this area, and the siting of entrances and balconies, would result in a clear distinction between the fronts and backs of the buildings, and between public and private space. I consider that the layout of the proposed development would be acceptable.

#### 7.23 Scale and massing

As noted above, the development proposes four separate apartment buildings, which would be limited to two storeys. The scale and massing of these would accord with the implemented development on the wider site and would appear in keeping with the character that has been established through this development. The proposed buildings would have a scale and massing that would be significantly reduced compared to the consented care home, and in this respect the proposals represent an improvement on the extant consent.

#### 7.24 Character

The amendments to break up the development into four buildings has resulted in a more domestic character that is in keeping with the residential use of the rest of the site. Additional details such as balconies and individual entrances to ground floor apartments also result in a more domestic character. The detailing of fenestration and balconies would add visual interest, and the materials proposed would be in keeping with those used on the wider site, which are appropriate having regard to the local context. Given the AONB and countryside setting, samples of materials will be secured by condition to ensure that they are of an appropriate quality.

7.25 Subject to the recommended condition securing samples of proposed materials, I consider that the proposed development would be acceptable in terms of design and character and would comply with Policies DES1, DES2 and DES7 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035, and with the relevant parts of Policies H1, SA1 and D1 of the Pyrton Neighbourhood Plan.

#### 7.26 Landscape

Policy ENV1 (Landscape and Countryside) protects South Oxfordshire's landscape, countryside and rural areas from harmful development, and states that development will only be permitted where it protects and, where possible, enhances, features that contribute to the nature and quality of South

Oxfordshire's landscapes. It also states that the highest level of protection will be given to the landscape and scenic beauty of the Chilterns AONB. Paragraph 176 of the NPPF seeks broadly similar objectives.

- 7.27 The Pyrton Neighbourhood Plan also contains policies that are concerned with the protection of the landscape. This includes Policy BNE1, which seeks to ensure that the distinctive landscape character of the parish is protected and enhanced.
- 7.28 Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act requires regard to be paid to the purposes of conserving and enhancing the AONB.
- 7.29 Whilst the site lies outside the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) it is very close to the boundary and is inter-visible with it. The site is therefore considered to fall within the setting of the AONB, although the site itself does not exhibit the special qualities of the AONB that would contribute towards its scenic beauty. The site itself does not form part of the countryside but is largely in a countryside setting.
- 7.30 Over the course of the application, additional information and amendments were submitted to address initial concerns raised by the Council's Landscape Officer regarding landscaping and the design of the proposals and the resultant impact on the AONB. The amendments comprised the breaking up of the buildings into four separate buildings and increased separation distance of buildings from the southern boundary; a reduction in balconies facing the countryside edge; amendments to the car parking provision and layout to increase landscaping and the useability of open space to the north west; and additional landscaping and tree planting. A further set of amendments was submitted to provide further details of materials and additional landscaping.
- 7.31 Conditions are recommended to secure details of soft and hard landscaping; tree pits; boundary treatments and street furniture; lighting; materials; and landscaping management and maintenance. Subject to the recommended conditions, landscaping would help to screen the development in wider views, and suitable materials, landscaping and lighting would ensure the appearance of the development is appropriate to the countryside context. These details would ensure that the landscape impact is minimised.
- 7.32 In assessing the landscape impact of the current proposals, regard must be had to the extant permission for a care home on the site. The approved care home is a single unbroken two storey building with a large footprint. Due to it being a single building, its massing and bulk is substantial.
- 7.33 In considering the acceptability of the development benefitting from extant permission, officers noted that the scale of development did not follow the Landscape Capacity Assessment for Sites on the Edge of the Larger Villages of South Oxfordshire, which represented a conflict with one criterion of the site allocation policy SA1 of the Pyrton Neighbourhood Plan. Officers concluded that the development of the site as a whole would have an adverse effect on the setting of the AONB, which it was noted is afforded the highest level of

protection. This harm was considered to weigh against the development in the planning balance, although ultimately it was found that the benefits of the scheme would outweigh the harm that would be caused to the landscape.

- 7.34 As noted, this previous decision is a material consideration in considering the current application. However, the current scheme differs from the consented scheme both in terms of the landscape impact and in terms of the benefits of the scheme. A further consideration is the likely development of adjoining land, which would change the immediate setting of the site, and the way it is perceived from the AONB, significantly. The parcel of farmland that separates the site from the edge of Watlington would be replaced by built development, which would be perceived as an extension to Watlington.
- 7.35 The current proposals for four separate buildings would significantly reduce the massing and bulk of the development when compared to the consented care home. As such, and also having regard to the strengthening of the hedgerow boundary and additional landscaping that would be delivered as part of the proposals, the impact of the proposals on the AONB would be less than that which would have resulted from the consented care home.
- 7.36 The acceptability of the scheme is a matter of balance, but in undertaking that exercise the NPPF makes clear than conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs is a matter of great weight. The landscape harm that would result from the development must be weighed up against the benefits of the development and this exercise is carried out in the planning balance section below.

#### 7.37 Impact on heritage assets

SOLP Policy ENV6 (Historic Environment) requires proposals to take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets. Proposals should be sensitively designed to conserve and, where possible, enhance those assets and designated areas. Proposals should make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness, through high standards of design and use of appropriate materials.

- 7.38 In accordance with Policy ENV7 (Listed Buildings), proposals resulting in less than substantial harm to the significance of a Listed building will be expected to minimise harm, provide justification for harms remaining and identify public benefits. Having regard to Policy ENV8 (Conservation Areas), proposals affecting the setting of a Conservation Area should conserve or enhance its special interest.
- 7.39 Policy ENV9 (Archaeology and Scheduled Monuments) states that development must protect nationally important designated or undesignated archaeological remains and sets out the requirements for assessment, recording and preservation of remains.
- 7.40 Policy BNE1 (Historic Environment) of the PNP requires that heritage assets and their settings should be conserved and enhanced so as to protect their historic significance and importance.

- 7.41 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 of appearance of that area.
- 7.42 There are a number of designated heritage assets in the vicinity of the application site. To the immediate north of the site is the Grade II Listed Shirburn Castle Registered Park and Garden (RPG) and the Shirburn Conservation Area, which covers much of the same area as the RPG. Pyrton Conservation Area lies around 400m to the west and Watlington Conservation Area around 300m to the south.
- 7.43 There are also a number of listed buildings within the vicinity of the site. These include the Grade I Listed Shirburn Castle, Grade II\* Pyrton Manor and Grade II\* Church of St Mary (in Pyrton). The listed building closest to the site is 62 and 64 Shirburn Road, a Grade II listed building in Watlington, some 360m from the site.
- 7.44 Although the application site forms part of the wider setting of Shirburn RPG, the site does not contribute to the RPG's special interest. The significance of Shirburn RPG is derived from the inherent architectural and historical interest of its buildings, notably Shirburn Castle itself, and the deliberately secluded landscape created around them.
- 7.45 There is no inter-visibility between the listed buildings in the RPG and the application site. There is also no historical or functional relationship between the two. As such, I am satisfied that the application site is not an aspect of the wider setting of the RPG and associated listed structures that contributes meaningfully to their significance.
- 7.46 The application site lies beyond, and would be screened by, recently completed development on the site. It is well screened from Pyrton Lane and Shirburn Road by vegetation. I am satisfied that the proposed development is designed and detailed to an appropriately high standard, and suitably high-quality materials can be secured by condition, and as such the development would have a negligible impact on the setting of these nearby heritage assets. The proposed development would not result in any harm to the significance of Shirburn RPG or that of Shirburn Conservation Area.
- 7.47 Pyrton and Watlington Conservation Areas are a greater distance from the application site. Given that the site is secluded from the wider landscape I am satisfied that the additional apartments on the site alongside the recently completed development would have a negligible impact on these heritage assets and cause no harm to their significance.
- 7.48 In terms of the impact on the individual listed buildings in the locality, the development could impact on the setting of Pyrton Manor. This Grade II\* listed

building was architecturally designed to take in the long views of the Chilterns and as such, all its main windows face east towards the application site. However, the intervening land between Pyrton Manor and the application site is subject to an application for 100 dwellings, which benefits from a committee resolution to grant planning permission subject to the completion of a S106 legal agreement (P16/S2576/O). Therefore the development would be perceived beyond this new development, and would also have a negligible impact on the setting of Pyrton Manor.

- 7.49 All of the other nearby listed buildings are sufficiently separated from the site that there would be no impact on their settings.
- 7.50 The County Archaeologist has commented that the submitted archaeological desk-based assessment identifies that the site is located in an area of archaeological interest and potential. The Archaeologist supports the conclusion of the desk-based assessment that a programme of archaeological investigation could be secured via condition. Conditions are therefore recommended requiring the submission and approval of a written scheme of investigation and the implementation of a staged programme of archaeological evaluation and mitigation.
- 7.51 The Heritage Statement is proportionate to the significance of the assets and fulfils the requirements of NPPF paragraph 194 and Local Plan Policy ENV6, and the conclusions of the Heritage Assessment are accepted.
- 7.52 Overall I am satisfied that the significance of heritage assets and the potential impact of development has been suitably characterised in a manner proportionate to the assets' importance. Subject to the approval of details of materials and the recommended conditions relating to archaeology, I am satisfied that the special interest of surrounding heritage assets would be preserved as a result of the development. This would accord with the relevant Development Plan policies which seek to conserve and enhance heritage assets and their settings for their important contribution to local distinctiveness, character and sense of place. This includes policies ENV6, ENV7, ENV8 and ENV9 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan, and also BNE1 of the PNP.

## 7.53 Housing mix and affordable housing

Policy H11 (Housing Mix) requires a mix of dwelling types and sizes to meet the needs of current and future households on all residential developments – this is having regard to the SHMA 2011 market housing mix. The policy also requires at least 15% of market housing should be designed to meet the standards of Part M (4) Category 2: accessible and adaptable dwellings. All 1 and 2 bed market housing dwellings should be designed to meet the Nationally Described Space Standards.

7.54 SOLP Policy H9 (Affordable Housing) requires development proposals to provide 40% affordable housing with a suitable housing mix, type and tenure. The policy states that affordable housing should be provided on site; should be mixed with the market housing; and should be indistinguishable in appearance from market housing and distributed evenly across the site. Policy DES1

- (Delivering High Quality Development) requires that the design of schemes does not differentiate between the design quality of market and affordable housing or the adjacent public realm.
- 7.55 The submitted plans demonstrate that all of the proposed dwellings will exceed the Nationally Described Space Standard. Plots 63-66 have been designed to meet Part M (4) Category: accessible and adaptable dwellings, as demonstrated on the submitted plan. Furthermore, the draft Section 106 Agreement requires that 15% of the dwellings will meet this standard. Regarding the proposed mix, given the nature of the development to enable downsizing, a mixture of 1 and 2 bed properties is appropriate.
- 7.56 The applicant submitted a Financial Viability Appraisal with the application to demonstrate that the scheme could not afford to provide any Affordable Housing on site or make a financial contribution to off-site provision. This report was assessed by independent consultants on behalf of the Council who agree with this conclusion.
- 7.57 The site was purchased in two phases with the application site being bought in the second phase once outline planning permission was secured. The value of the site is therefore based on an Alternative Use Value as a care home, which represents a realistic fallback position that could be implemented. The applicant has decided that whilst a care home operator could be found, it is their preference to keep the site as a cohesive, age-restricted scheme rather than sub-dividing it.
- 7.58 The applicant has explained that the proposed application, whilst it does not provide the 15-20% level of profit suggested by the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) to ensure a scheme is viable, does provide some small profit. This profit means that the proposed scheme is worthwhile developing but not enough to contribute towards Affordable Housing.
- 7.59 The Viability Appraisal Assessment provided by Aspinall Verdi recommends an overage clause could be included in the Section 106 Agreement to capture any profit above a certain level. Officers have explored the option of an overage clause and based on past experience, have concluded that it would not be suitable on this occasion. As the wider site is already under construction, there is unlikely to be a lengthy time between this site receiving planning permission and its implementation. Therefore it is unlikely that the economic and viability considerations associated with the assessment of the application will alter significantly. Given the scale of development, it is likely to be built out in one phase and not over a number of years. On this basis, officers consider that an overage clause is not necessary.
- 7.60 Whilst it may be the Parish Council's preference that the site is developed for the care home as per the existing permission, anyone is entitled to submit a planning application on a piece of land and have it determined by the Local Planning Authority. The Council need to determine the application as submitted and the absence of a potentially preferable alternative development, is in this case, is not a reason to refuse planning permission. It is noted above in respect

of landscape and design, that the current scheme is an improvement and whilst the scheme would not provide the benefit of Affordable Housing, older persons' accommodation is much needed throughout the district, and nationally, as the population ages. Such accommodation provides more opportunities for older people to meet their needs, whilst providing opportunities for downsizing, which frees up family housing. The provision of age restricted units is consistent with the extant permission for a care home, albeit the units will meet a different need within the older persons' accommodation sector.

7.61 The need for elderly persons' accommodation is recognised and summarised in the PPG, which states:

"Why is it important to plan for the housing needs of older people?

The need to provide housing for older people is critical. People are living longer lives and the proportion of older people in the population is increasing. In mid-2016 there were 1.6 million people aged 85 and over; by mid-2041 this is projected to double to 3.2 million. Offering older people a better choice of accommodation to suit their changing needs can help them live independently for longer, feel more connected to their communities and help reduce costs to the social care and health systems. Therefore, an understanding of how the ageing population affects housing needs is something to be considered from the early stages of plan-making through to decision-taking."

#### 7.62 **Residential amenity**

Policy DES6 (Residential Amenity) requires that development proposals do not result in significant adverse impacts on the amenity of neighbouring uses, in relation to loss of privacy, daylight or sunlight; dominance or visual intrusion; noise or vibration; smell, dust, heat, odour, gases or other emissions; pollution, contamination or the use of/or storage of hazardous substances; and external lighting. In addition, Policy ENV12 (Pollution) requires proposals to be designed to ensure they will not result in adverse impacts on the amenity of neighbours. This is both during construction and occupancy when built-out.

- 7.63 There is potential for noise, vibration and disturbance to existing residents during the construction phase of the development. Working hours and deliveries would be restricted through a Construction Traffic Management Plan, which would be secured by condition. Other potential impacts would be covered by separate Environmental Health legislation.
- 7.64 The proposed apartments comply with the separation distances in the Joint Design Guide. Generally the apartments would provide a good standard of accommodation and would benefit from acceptable privacy and outlook.
- 7.65 Noise from the proposed relief road to the north of the site has the potential to impact negatively on the amenity of future occupants. In order to protect residents from unacceptable levels of noise, a noise assessment and scheme of mitigation is required, which can be secured by condition. A planning application for the road is currently under consideration by Oxfordshire County Council with a determination date of 8 May 2024. Therefore there should be sufficient information about the nature of the road for a noise assessment and scheme of mitigation to be carried out.

- 7.66 The closest dwellings are the recently completed apartments on the wider site, and the three dwellings which benefit from planning permission at 'The Bungalow', to the north of the application site. The development also complies with the separation distances in the Joint Design Guide in relation to these dwellings. Given the separation distance of the proposed development from these dwellings I am satisfied that the development would not result in any unacceptable loss of light or impact of overbearing to the dwellings or their gardens, and would not result in any unacceptable loss of privacy.
- 7.67 The residential use is compatible with the existing uses on the wider site, and car movements association with the development would not be detrimental to the amenity of existing residents in terms of noise or disturbance.
- 7.68 Subject to a condition securing a Construction Traffic Management Plan and details of noise mitigation, the proposed development would not have any unacceptable impacts on residential amenity and would comply with policies DES6 and ENV11.

#### 7.69 Transport and parking

Policy TRANS2 (Promoting Sustainable Transport and Accessibility) seeks to ensure new development is designed to encourage walking and cycling; promotes and supports improvements to the transport network and ensures the needs of all users, including those with impaired mobility, are planned for. Policy TRANS5 (Consideration of Development Proposals) requires development to provide adequate and safe access for all highway users, including pedestrians and cyclists.

- 7.70 The proposed development would use the existing access constructed for the recent development on the wider site. OCC highways has requested a condition requiring the implementation of this access, which was approved under the extant consent, prior to the occupation of the new dwellings, however this condition is not necessary as the access has already been constructed and is in use to serve the completed dwellings on the northern part of the site. The development would provide 30 car parking spaces, of which two would be disabled parking spaces.
- 7.71 The site does not benefit from good public transport connections but is within walking distance (approximately 700m) of the centre of Watlington village, which has a range of facilities including local shops, pubs, dentist and post office. A bus service also runs from the centre of Watlington to Oxford city, although this is an infrequent (less than every hour) service. While the site is not a highly sustainable location in terms of accessibility, the principle of residential development has been established through the site allocation in the Pyrton Neighbourhood Plan, and through the outline planning permission for the wider site. To encourage residents to use public transport and active travel, a Travel Plan and Travel Information Pack will be secured by condition.
- 7.72 The application is accompanied by a Transport Statement which provides details of trip generation for the proposed development compared to the consented care home development, for which the traffic and highway impacts

were found to be acceptable. Oxfordshire County Council considers the proposals will not result in a material increase in traffic along the highway network. The proposals are therefore considered acceptable in terms of their impact on the existing access and wider highway network. A condition is recommended requiring the submission of a Construction Traffic Management Plan to ensure there are no unacceptable impacts on the highway during construction.

- 7.73 Oxfordshire County Council Parking Standards require the provision of up to 1 space per dwelling for 1-beds and up to 2 spaces per dwelling for 2-beds. The provision of 30 unallocated car parking spaces would comply with these standards. The standards also require the provision of electric vehicle charging points to at least 25% of parking spaces, where spaces are unallocated. This can be secured by condition.
- 7.74 Oxfordshire County Council Parking Standards also require the provision of 2 spaces per bedroom to each dwelling. For this development this would equate to 84 cycle parking spaces. Given the development is to be age restricted, it is unlikely that dwellings would be occupied by more than two people, and many are likely to be single occupancy. The age demographic for units such as this is usually 70s and over and therefore a lower level of cycling than for an unrestricted occupancy is reasonable. The Oxfordshire County Council Highways Officer is satisfied that the 38 cycle spaces shown on the plans is sufficient, and I concur.
- 7.75 Subject to the recommended conditions and informatives, the Highway Authority do not have any objections to the proposed development. I am satisfied that the proposals would make suitable provision for car and cycle parking, and would not result in any unacceptable highway impacts. The proposals would comply with policies TRANS4, TRANS5, and TRANS7 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.

#### 7.76 **Trees**

Any development proposals must be compliant with SOLP Policy ENV1 (Landscape and Countryside), Policy ENV5 (Green Infrastructure in New Developments), Policy DES1 (Delivering High Quality Developments) and Policy DES2 (Enhancing Local Character). Proposals must also be in accordance with paragraph 131 of the NPPF, Joint Design Guide and BS 5837 2012 (Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction).

7.77 There are no protected trees within or adjacent to the site. The proposals would necessitate the removal of three trees, one of which is dead, one of which is a Category 'C' holly tree, and one of which is a Category 'B' semi-mature field maple. The loss of these trees to facilitate the development is considered justified, and would be mitigated by proposed replacement planting. This comprises extensive tree planting within the landscaped buffer and open space, and also strengthening of the existing hedgerow boundary to the east. Conditions are recommended requiring the implementation of the proposed planting and the submission and approval of details of landscape management.

- 7.78 With the exception of the trees identified to be removed, the development would not result in harm to, or compromise the longevity, of retained trees. In order to ensure retained trees are adequately protected during construction, compliance with tree protection measures will be secured by condition.
- 7.79 Subject to the recommended conditions the proposed development would not have any unacceptable arboricultural impacts and would comply with Policies ENV1, ENV5, DES1 and DES2.

## 7.80 Ecology

Policy ENV1 (Landscape and Countryside) protects the landscape and countryside of the district from harmful development. Policy ENV2 (Designated Sites, Priority Habitats and Species) affords the highest level of protection to designated sites, habitats and species. Policy ENV3 (Biodiversity) requires all development to provide a net gain in biodiversity using a biodiversity accounting metric.

- 7.81 Through the previous outline planning permission (P18/S0002/O) it was established that the site was of low ecological value and there were no habitats or protected species that presented a constraint to development. A biodiversity offsetting contribution was secured for the outline consent under condition 14, and this has been discharged (P20/S4006/DIS). A biodiversity enhancement plan was also secured for the wider site under condition 4 reserved matters consent P19/S2380/RM and discharged under P20/S4006/DIS.
- 7.82 The current application is supported by an ecological appraisal based on surveys conducted in September 2020, although the findings of these surveys have been verified with update walkover surveys carried out in July 2022 and an update Briefing Noted from November 2022. On this basis, officers are satisfied that the development would not have a harmful impact on protected species or priority habitat and would comply with Local Plan Policy ENV2.
- 7.83 The site is also required to achieve a net gain in biodiversity. Given the low baseline ecological value, and opportunities for enhancements within the wider areas of landscaped grounds, I am satisfied that a net gain could be achieved on site. Accordingly a condition is recommended requiring the submission of a scheme of biodiversity enhancements. Subject to such a condition the development would achieve a net gain for biodiversity and would comply with Local Plan Policy ENV3.

#### 7.84 Flooding and drainage

Policy EP4 (Flood Risk) requires proposals to minimise the risks and impact of flooding. Policy INF4 (Water Resources) states that all development proposals must demonstrate that there is or will be adequate water supply, surface water, foul drainage and sewerage treatment capacity to serve the whole development.

7.85 A site-wide surface and foul water drainage scheme was approved via discharge of conditions (P20/S4458/DIS) as part of the planning permission for the wider site. This drainage network has been built in accordance with the

approved details. The application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment, which details the already-built drainage scheme and demonstrates that the current proposals have been designed to be accommodated within this network. A condition is recommended to secure implementation of the approved drainage. A further condition is also recommended to require the submission of a SuDS Compliance Report prior to the occupation of the development.

7.86 Subject to the recommended conditions, the proposed development would make appropriate provision for the management and disposal of surface and foul water, and would not result in any flood risk on or off the site. The proposals would comply with policies EP4 and INF4 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.

#### 7.87 Other material considerations

Policy DES7 (Efficient Use of Resources), Policy DES8 (Promoting Sustainable Design) and Policy DES9 (Renewable and Low Carbon Energy) seek to mitigate the impact of any development proposals on the environment. In addition, Policy DES10 (Carbon Reduction) requires proposals for new dwellings to achieve at least a 40% reduction in carbon emissions compared to a code 2013 Building Regulations compliant base case. The Building Regulations were updated in 2022, and the equivalent reduction in relation to this base case is 9%.

- 7.88 The application is accompanied by an energy strategy that indicates that a 13% reduction in carbon emissions compared to a 2022 Building Regulations base case would be achieved. This would be achieved through the use of Air Source Heat Pumps for each dwelling. Conditions are recommended requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the measures detailed in the energy strategy and the submission, prior to the occupation of the development, of a verification report to demonstrate that the measures have been implemented. Subject to compliance with these conditions the development would comply with Policy DES10.
- 7.89 Policy EP1 (Air Quality) seeks to protect public health from the impacts of poor air quality. The application is supported by an Air Quality Assessment. The proposed development falls just outside Watlington Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). The results of the assessment indicate that NO2 and PM10 concentrations would meet air quality objectives and the anticipated increase in pollutant concentrations is likely to be negligible. No targeted mitigation is required, however the assessment recommends that measures such as provision of cycle storage and installation of electric vehicle charging points are implemented to reduce emissions from the development. These measures are required to comply with highway policies and will be secured by conditions. Subject to the recommended conditions the development would not result in any unacceptable air quality impacts and would comply with policy EP1.
- 7.90 Policy ENV11 (Pollution Impact from Existing and/or Previous Land Uses on New Development (Potential Receptors of Pollution)) states that development will not be permitted if it is adversely affected by pollution, and that

development on contaminated land will not be permitted unless the contamination is effectively treated by the developer to prevent any harm to human health and the natural environment. The wider site has been subject to investigation which identified risks of contamination from asbestos and Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons. A remediation strategy was prepared, which has been implemented on those parts of the wider site that have already been developed. Subject to a condition securing the implementation of the remediation strategy, and a condition setting out requirements for the remediation of any unsuspected contamination, the development would not give rise to any risks from contamination and would comply with policy ENV11 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.

7.91 Policy EP3 (Waste Collection and Recycling) requires proposals to provide adequate facilities for sorting, storage and collection of waste. The proposed development would make provision for the storage of adequate bins to serve the apartments, and the stores would be located conveniently for collection by refuse vehicles. Vehicle tracking has been submitted to demonstrate that a refuse collection vehicle can access the development for collection. A financial contribution of £196 per dwelling is required towards the provision of new bins to serve the development. Oxfordshire County Council have also requested a financial contribution of £2,349 towards the expansion of Household Waste and Recycling Centres. Subject to these financial contributions being secured through a S106 agreement, the development would make adequate provision for the storage, collection and disposal of waste and would comply with Policy EP3.

## 7.92 Infrastructure requirements

Off-site contributions pooled under the Community Infrastructure Levy
The Council adopted a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in 2016, and
adopted a revised charging schedule in January 2023. This sets a rate of £225
per square metre (index linked) on residential development in this location. The
development will be liable to pay a CIL balance of £525,825.

- 7.93 Infrastructure to be secured under a legal agreement
  - A Section 106 Agreement is required to secure the following infrastructure (index linked):
    - Provision of recycling/refuse bins £5,300
    - Street naming and numbering £804
    - District Council S106 monitoring fee £940
- 7.94 A S106 would also contain an obligation that the 25 'age restricted' dwellings are retained as 'retirement housing'. The following obligations would appropriately restrict the use of the development:
  - That future occupiers/owners are aged 55 or over
  - That evidence is provided to demonstrate that owners/occupiers are over 55
  - That the site is managed by a company that specialises in retirement housing

- 7.95 In relation to the functions that they administer, Oxfordshire County Council has sought the following contributions to directly mitigate the impact of the development:
  - Contribution towards the expansion and efficiency of Household Waste Recycling Centre capacity - £2,349
  - S106 monitoring fee
- 7.96 Comments were received from Oxfordshire Integrated Care Board, who have responsibility for the provision of primary care in the district, requesting a financial contribution towards the provision of healthcare. This was received prior to the revised CIL charging schedule coming into effect in January 2023, which introduced a requirement for CIL to be paid for retirement housing. CIL is levied at the point at which the application is determined, so the development is now liable to pay CIL. Monies collected through the CIL fund, amongst other infrastructure can be spent on healthcare provision in the district. Therefore, given the development is liable to pay CIL, this would mitigate the impact of the development on health services, and it is not necessary for a financial contribution to be secured towards this.
- 7.97 I consider that these contributions/obligations accord with Policy INF1 (Infrastructure Provision) which requires new development to be supported by appropriate on and off-site infrastructure and services. All contributions are index linked to ensure that they represent up to date costs.
- 7.98 I also consider that the contributions accord with the relevant tests in the NPPF as they are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, are directly related to the development and are fair and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development. The financial contributions would also comply with the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended).
- 7.99 The age restriction is justified due to the specific design of the development which has resulted in some infrastructure not being provided, for example play areas for children and young people, and contributions towards education provision have not been requested.

#### 7.10 Pre-commencement conditions

Pre-commencement conditions have been kept to a minimum in accordance with advice in NPPG. Conditions to be discharged prior to commencement relate a construction traffic management and construction method statement. The wording of all of the conditions has been agreed with the applicant.

## 8.0 Other Relevant Legislation

8.1 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.

8.2 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.

8.3 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 In considering this application, due regard has been given to the likely effect of the proposal on the need to reduce crime and disorder in accordance with Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. In reaching a recommendation, officers consider that the proposal will/will not undermine crime prevention or the promotion of community safety.

#### 9.0 PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The Pyrton Neighbourhood Plan supports the principle of the redevelopment of the site for residential development. As such, there is no overriding conflict with the Development Plan in terms of principle. Furthermore, the principle of residential development on the site was established through the granting of outline consent for the wider site, which remains extant.
- 9.2 However, the scale and extent of development exceeds the recommendations in the Landscape Capacity Study. In this respect, the proposals have not fully taken into account the recommendations of the Study, which is a specific requirement of Pyrton Neighbourhood Plan Policy SA1 for the redevelopment of the site.
- 9.3 Overall the proposals would enhance the character of the site, however the increase in built development would have an adverse impact on the setting of the AONB, albeit limited, and lesser than that of the consented scheme. The residual harm to the setting of the AONB weighs against the development.
- 9.4 The benefits of this development include the provision of 25 units of a specialist type of residential accommodation, to help meet housing needs in the District. Weighing against this is the lack of provision for Affordable Housing. However, the need for elderly persons' accommodation in the District, and nationally, is acute, in meeting the demands of an aging population. I therefore still consider the benefit of these dwellings to attract significant weight. The development would also provide jobs during construction, and some limited employment once operational in the form of management, albeit a reduced level of employment compared to the consented care home. I consider that significant weight should be attached to the benefits that would result from the grant of planning permission.
- 9.5 The proposal would result in the efficient beneficial reuse of a brownfield site and this needs to be balanced against the planning aim to protect the countryside, particularly designated AONBs. Overall, I consider that the significant benefits of the development would outweigh the harm that would be caused to the landscape.
- 9.6 When considered against the Development Plan as a whole, I am satisfied that the proposal represents a sustainable form of development and is acceptable. Subject to the recommended conditions, I recommend that planning permission is granted.

#### 10.0 RECOMMENDATION

That **PLANNING PERMISSION** for **P22/S3126/FUL** is **GRANTED** subject to the completion of a S106 agreement for the infrastructure contributions and obligations identified in the report and the following conditions (full wording in Appendix 1):

- 1. Commencement within three years
- 2. Develop in accordance with approved plans
- 3. Sample materials to be submitted
- 4. Tree planting in hard surface areas
- 5. Landscaping scheme to be submitted
- 6. Landscape Management Plan to be submitted
- 7. Archaeology to be carried out in accordance with approved WSI
- 8. Noise mitigation to be submitted
- 9. Construction Method Statement to be submitted
- 10. Construction Traffic Management Plan to be submitted
- 11. Cycle parking
- 12. Tree Protection as approved
- 13. Biodiversity enhancements to be approved
- 14. Car parking provided as approved
- 15. Vehicle electric charging points to be submitted
- 16. Travel Plan and Travel Information Pack to be submitted
- 17. SuDS compliance
- 18. Development to be carried out in accordance with Remediation Strategy
- 19. Confirmation of any unsuspected contamination
- 20. Energy Statement and carbon reduction measures and Verification
- 21. Details of external lighting
- 22. Surface water drainage as approved
- 23. Foul water drainage as approved

Contaminated Land Informative CIL Informative S106 Informative

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# **Appendix 1**Recommended Conditions (full text):

Sequence	Description	Details
1	Commencement 3 years - Full Planning Permission	The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.
		Reason: By virtue of Sections 91 to 95 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
2	Approved plans *	That the development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the details shown on the following approved plans
		Location Plan 3784 P 100
		Proposed Site Plan 3784.P.201 Rev G
		Proposed Coloured Site Plan 3784.P.202 Rev. E
		Proposed Floor Plans Plot 42-51 3784.P.203 Rev. E
		Proposed Elevations Plots 42-51 3784.P.205 Rev. F
		Proposed Roof Plan Plots 42-51 3884.P.204 Rev. B
		Proposed Elevations and Floor Plans Plots 52- 56 3784.P.206 Rev. E
		Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations Plots 57- 62 3784.P.207. Rev C
		Proposed Elevations and Floor Plans Plots 63- 66 3784.P.208. Rev C
		Bin Store Elevations and Floor Plans 3784.P.210. Rev. B
		Proposed Contextual Elevations 3784.P.211 Rev. D
		Proposed Parking Plan 3784.P.212 Rev. E
		Proposed Public Open Space Plan 3784.P.213 Rev. E
		Proposed Materials Plan 3784.P.214 Rev. F
		Proposed Ground Floor Site Plan. 3784.P.216 Rev. E

		Proposed Surfacing Plan 3784.P.218 Rev. C
		Proposed Enclosure Plan 3784.P.219 Rev. C
		Landscape Structure Proposals 17-59-PL-250 Rev. G
		Detailed Planting Sheet 1 17-59-PL-251 Rev. E
		Detailed Planting Sheet 2 17-59-PL-252 Rev. E
		Detailed Planting Sheets 3 17-59-PL-253 Rev. E
		except as controlled or modified by conditions of this permission.
		Reason: To secure the proper planning of the area in accordance with Development Plan policies.
3	Sample materials required (all)	Prior to the construction of any building above slab level samples of all materials to be used in the external construction and finishes of the buildings within the development hereby permitted shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
		Reason: In the interests of the visual appearance of the development in accordance with Policies DES1 and DES2 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.
4	Tree pits design	That all trees to be planted within hard surface areas shall be planted in the first planting season after the first use of the buildings. The tree/s must be planted into site specific tree pits. The tree pits are to be a crated pit design that incorporates technology that will enable tree/s to successfully grow in hard surface environments. The pits must provide the significant quantities of growing medium required to allow the trees to become established and grow on to maturity, sustaining the trees in a healthy condition and allow for ease of maintenance. Details of the tree species and the tree pits shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development above slab level on the site. In the event of any of the trees so planted dying or being seriously damaged or destroyed within 5 years of the completion of the development, a new tree of a species first approved by the

		Local Planning Authority, be planted and properly maintained.
		Reason: To help to assimilate the development into its surroundings in accordance with Policies ENV1, DES1 and DES2 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.
5	Landscaping (incl hardsurfacing and boundary treatment)	Prior to the construction of any development above slab level a scheme for the landscaping of the site, including the planting of live trees and shrubs, the treatment of the access road and hard standings, the provision of boundary treatments and street furniture shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include schedules of new trees and shrubs to be planted (noting species, plant sizes and numbers/densities), the identification of the existing trees and shrubs on the site to be retained (noting species, location and spread), any earth moving operations and finished levels/contours, and an implementation programme. The scheme shall be implemented prior to the first occupation or use of development and thereafter be maintained in accordance with the approved scheme. In the event of any of the trees or shrubs so planted dying or being seriously damaged or destroyed within 5 years of the completion of the development, a new tree or shrub or equivalent number of trees or shrubs, as the case may be, of a species first approved by the Local Planning Authority, shall be planted and properly maintained in a position or positions first approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.  Reason: To help to assimilate the development into its surroundings in accordance with Policies ENV1, DES1 and DES2 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.
6	Landscape Management Plan	Concurrent with the submission of comprehensive details of the proposed landscape works in accordance with condition 5, a maintenance schedule and a long term management plan (for a minimum period of 20 years), for the soft landscaping works shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Landscape Management Plan shall include:

		a) Details of long term design principles and objectives. b) Management responsibilities, maintenance schedules and replacement provisions for existing retained landscape features and any landscape to be implemented as part of the approved landscape scheme including hard surfaces, street furniture within open spaces c) A plan detailing which areas of the site the Landscape Management Plan covers and also who is responsible of the maintenance of the other areas of the site. d) Summary plan detailing different management procedures for the types of landscape on site e.g. Wildflower meadows, native or ornamental hedgerows.  The schedule and plan shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed details and programme.
		Reason: To help to assimilate the development into its surroundings in accordance with Policies ENV1, DES1 and DES2 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.
7	Archaeology Programme of Evaluation	Following the approval of the WSI dated 4th February 2024, 4th March revision, by Thames Valley Archaeological Services (Ref: SRW22/144 overall), no development shall commence on site until the agreed staged programme of archaeological evaluation and mitigation has been carried out by the commissioned archaeological organisation in accordance with the approved Written Scheme of Investigation. The programme of work shall include all processing, research and analysis necessary to produce an accessible and useable archive and a full report for publication which shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority within two years of the completion of the archaeological fieldwork.  Reason: To safeguard the identification, recording, analysis and archiving of heritage assets before they are lost and to advance understanding of the heritage assets in their wider context through publication and dissemination of the evidence in accordance with Policy ENV9 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2025 and the NPPF.

8	Scheme of Noise Mitigation	No development above slab level shall take place until a detailed scheme for protecting the residents of the development from the external noise environment of the area, including the proposed Watlington Relief Road, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
		The scheme itself shall be designed, specified and constructed so that the sound insulation performance of the structure and the layout of the dwellings is such that the indoor ambient noise levels do not exceed the values detailed in Table 4 of BS 8233:2014 "Indoor ambient noise levels for dwellings". Furthermore external amenity areas should also be assessed as part of the detailed scheme.
		Thereafter the development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with such approved scheme which shall be completed before any part of the accommodation hereby approved is occupied, unless the Local Planning Authority otherwise agrees in writing.
		Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of the proposed development in accordance with Policy ENV11 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.
9	Construction Method Statement	A construction management plan detailing measures to be taken to protect nearby residents from noise and dust shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of any construction or demolition works. The hours of operation for such works shall be restricted to 8:00 am - 6.00 pm Monday to Friday and 8.00 am - 1.00 pm on a Saturday. No work shall take place on Sundays or Public Holidays without the prior written authority of the Local Planning Authority.
		Reason: To ensure that the development is not unneighbourly in accordance with Policy DES6 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.
10	Construction Traffic Management	A Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development. The approved CTMP shall be implemented prior to

		any works being carried out on site, and shall be maintained throughout the course of the development.  Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to mitigate the impact of construction vehicles on the surrounding highway network, road infrastructure and local residents, particularly at morning and afternoon peak traffic times and in accordance with Policy TRANS5 of the
11	Cycle Parking	South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.  Prior to the commencement of works above slab level, details of cycle parking facilities secured, undercover and laid out in accordance with the Oxfordshire County Council's adopted standards, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the agreed cycle parking shall be provided before first occupation and maintained and retained at all times for the use of the development.
		Reason: To encourage the use of cycles as a means of transport in accordance with Policy TRANS5 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.
12	Arboricultural Method Statement implementation	The tree protection details as shown on the 'Ruskins Tree Consultancy Arboricultural Statement Ref: 0822-10097 Rev1Dec 2022' hereby approved shall be put in place prior to any on site works including demolition and thereafter retained in situ for the duration of construction.
		Reason: To safeguard trees which are visually important in accordance with Policies ENV1, DES1, and DES2 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.
13	Biodiversity Enhancements	Prior to the commencement of the development above new slab level, details (including specification, position, height, orientation, etc.) of a scheme of biodiversity enhancements for the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. A minimum of two bat boxes and two bird boxes shall be provided on each new structure, in suitable locations. Thereafter, the development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and all

		enhancements provided onsite prior to first occupation.
		Reason: To secure biodiversity enhancements on site, in accordance with Policy ENV3 of the SOLP and the NPPF.
14	Provision of Turning Areas and Car Parking	Prior to the first occupation of any dwelling, the car parking shall be provided in complete accordance with the details hereby approved. Thereafter the car parking spaces shall be retained unobstructed except for the parking of vehicles associated with the development at all times.
		Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to ensure the provision of off-street car parking in accordance with Policy TRANS5 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.
15	Electric Vehicle Charging Points (details required)	Prior to the first occupation of any dwelling hereby approved, a scheme to provide 25% of the car parking spaces hereby approved with Electric Vehicle Charging Points shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the Electric Vehicle Charging Points shall be implemented prior to the occupation of the development and retained in perpetuity.  Reason: To ensure sustainable forms of transport in accordance with Policies TRANS5, ENV12 and EP1 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.
16	Green Travel Plans	Prior to the first occupation of any dwelling, a full and detailed Travel Plan and Travel Information Pack shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved documents and the approved Travel Information Packs issued to each resident upon first occupation.
		Reason: To promote travel to and from the site by walking, cycling and public transport in the interests of sustainability and in accordance with Policy TRANS4 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.

17	Surface Water Drainage compliance report	Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby approved, a SUDS Compliance report prepared by an appropriately qualified Engineer must be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. This must suitably demonstrate that the sustainable drainage system has been installed and completed in accordance with the approved scheme (or detail any minor variations). This report should as a minimum cover the following;
		1) Inclusion of as-built drawings in dwg and pdf format,  2) Inspection details of key SUDS features such as flow controls, storage features and volumes and critical linking features or pipework undertaken, with appropriate photographs and evidence of inspections incorporated,
		Details of any remediation works required following the initial inspection,     Evidence that that remedial works have
		been completed, and 5) Confirmation of details of any management company set up to maintain the system.
		Reason: To ensure the proper provision of surface water drainage and to ensure flooding is not exacerbated in the locality in accordance with Policy EP4 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.
18	Contaminated Land - Linked Conditions (2)	The development shall not be occupied until the remediation strategy hereby approved (ST Consult Remediation Strategy and Verification Plan Shirburn Road, Watlington Oxfordshire JN1320 5 January 2021) has been carried out in full with respect to this application site and a validation report confirming completion of these works within the application site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
		Reason: To ensure that any ground, water and associated gas contamination is identified and adequately addressed to ensure the safety of the development, the environment and to ensure the site is suitable for the proposed use in accordance with Policy ENV11 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.

19	Unsuspected Contaminated Land Condition	The developer shall confirm in writing to the Local Planning Authority the presence of any unsuspected contamination encountered during the development. In the event of any contamination to the land and/or water being encountered, no development shall continue until a programme of investigation and/or remedial works to include methods of monitoring and certification of such works undertaken. Where land contamination investigation/remedial works are required this must be carried out by a competent person in accordance with current government and Environment Agency Guidance and Approved Codes of Practice such as Land Contamination: Risk Management 2020 and BS10175:2011 +A2:2017 'Investigation of potentially contaminated sites' and submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.  Reason: To ensure that any ground, water and associated gas contamination is identified and adequately addressed to ensure the safety of the development, the environment and to ensure the site is suitable for the proposed use in accordance with Policy ENV11 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.
20	Energy Statement Verification	No dwelling shall be occupied within a building until all of the carbon reduction energy efficiency measures are fully implemented for the dwellings within that building in accordance with the approved Energy Statement (Resi Resolve, August 2022, Rev. 0). A Verification Report shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and approved in writing prior to occupation of the building. The Verification Report shall demonstrate (with photographic evidence) that the approved energy efficiency measures have been implemented for all of the dwellings in that building. These measures shall be retained and maintained as such thereafter in accordance with the Energy Statement and Verification Report.  Reason: To ensure high standards of sustainable design and construction in accordance with Policy DES10 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.

21	External Lighting - Basic	No external lighting shall be installed on the site other than in accordance with details which shall first have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Details shall include location of the external lights and product specification.  Reason: To protect the appearance of the area, the environment and wildlife, and local residents from light pollution in accordance with Policies ENV1, ENV2, ENV3 and ENV12
		of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.
22	Surface Water Drainage Implementation	The surface water drainage scheme shall be implemented in complete accordance with the 'Glanville Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy 20 Dec 2022 Issue 4' and 'Glanville Response to LLFA & LPA Drainage Comments Issue 3 20 Dec 2022' prior to the occupation of the development hereby approved.
		Reason: To ensure the proper provision of surface water drainage and to ensure flooding is not exacerbated in the locality in accordance with Policy EP4 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.
23	Foul drainage implementation	The foul water drainage scheme shall be implemented in complete accordance with the 'Glanville Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy 20 Dec 2022 Issue 4' and 'Glanville Response to LLFA & LPA Drainage Comments Issue 3 20 Dec 2022' prior to the occupation of the development hereby approved.
		Reason: To ensure the proper provision of foul water drainage and to ensure flooding and pollution is not exacerbated in the locality in accordance with policy EP4 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.
24	INF21 - Contaminated Land	The Oxfordshire Contaminated Land Group - s Planning Advice Note provides advice on carrying out a Contaminated Land Risk Assessment, and Remediation and Validation Reports. The Planning Advice Note includes Check Sheets and a Completion Certificate, which can be completed to confirm that each stage of the Contaminated Land Risk

		Assessment and Remediation Report has been carried out.
25	CIL-Planning permission or reserved matters approval (South)	The development to which this permission relates is liable to pay the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) as set out in the South Oxfordshire District Charging Schedule. Upon planning permission, a Liability Notice will be issued to the nominated person/company liable for CIL. The person/company liable for CIL must submit a commencement notice to the Local Planning Authority BEFORE development commences (CIL Form 6). The Local Planning Authority will send a Demand Notice to the person/company liable for CIL when the Commencement Notice is received. FAILURE TO FOLLOW THE CIL PROCEDURES COULD RESULT IN SURCHARGES AND THE LOSS OF ANY EXEMPTION RELIEF IF ENTITLED. Guidance on CIL is available on the planning portal website http://www.planningportal.co.uk/cil or the council's website http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/cil together with the process for paying CIL.
26	S106 Informative	This planning permission should be read in conjunction with the Section 106 Legal Agreement between South Oxfordshire District Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Beechcroft Developments Limited, Lisa Estates (Watlington) Limited, Close Brothers Limited dated X.