

APPLICATION NO.	P13/V0401/O
APPLICATION TYPE	OUTLINE
REGISTERED	23.2.2013
PARISH	SUTTON COURTENAY
WARD MEMBER(S)	Gervase Duffield
APPLICANT	Redrow Homes South Midlands
SITE	Milton Road Sutton Courtenay, OX14 4BT
PROPOSAL	Demolition of no. 44 Milton Road to create access, residential development of site for up to 70 dwellings, including vehicular access, pedestrian and cycle links, public open space, landscaping and drainage
AMENDMENTS	Supplementary reports / information submitted
GRID REFERENCE	449721/193036
OFFICER	Stuart Walker

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This application seeks outline planning permission for a residential development for up to 70 dwellings. Only access is due to be considered at this stage. Layout, scale, landscaping and appearance are reserved matters.
- 1.2 The 2.9 ha site lies on the north side of Milton Road to the rear of the road frontage properties. It comprises a grassed field enclosed by hedgerows and some inter-spaced trees along the north and west boundaries. The east and south boundaries adjoin the rear gardens of residential properties fronting Milton Road and Southfield Drive. Access is proposed from Milton Road by the removal of no. 44 Milton Road and the creation of a new access road. Overhead electricity lines cross the south east corner of the site.
- 1.3 Local facilities in the village are focused at the northern end and comprise a primary school, a village hall, post office, local shop, and public houses. The local sports ground lies to the east of the central area of the village off Old Wallingford Way, and there are other recreational and fitness facilities at Milton Park to the south. Sutton Courtenay parish itself has approximately 1,007 households and an estimated population of 2,421 residents.
- 1.4 The application comes to committee because the application is a departure from the development plan and a high number of objections have been received along with an objection from Sutton Courtenay Parish Council.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The proposal is a major development and is contrary to the housing supply policies of the development plan and has been publicised on this basis.
- 2.2 The proposal is for the residential development of the site with up to 70 dwellings (following the demolition of the existing property for the new access road) together with roads, footpaths and associated parking areas, landscaping, amenity space, and open space.
- 2.3 The proposal of up to 70 dwellings across the 2.9 ha site would result in a density of 24 dwellings per hectare. The layout, mix and design of the dwellings will be considered

under the reserved matters application. However, 40% of all dwellings built would be affordable units, spread in groups throughout the site and 15% of the site will be publicly accessible open space (0.45ha).

- 2.4 This proposal would result in an estimated additional 168 residents (based upon district-wide average household figures), which represents approximately a 6.9% increase in the parish population. When added to the planning application for 34 dwellings on the adjacent land to the west, considered by committee on 8 May 2013, (ref P13/V0233/FUL), this would result in a total increase in population of approximately 10.3%.
- 2.5 The following documents have been submitted in support of the application and are available to view on the council's website:
- Planning statement
 - Design and access / justification Statement
 - Flood risk assessment
 - Archaeological and heritage statement
 - Archaeological geophysical survey
 - Arboricultural statement
 - Transport statements
 - Services report
 - Noise and air quality assessment
 - Outline ecological appraisal
 - Bat emergence survey
 - Landscape and visual impact appraisal
 - Framework travel plan
 - Sewer impact study
- 2.6 The applicants have been in discussion with council officers and others to agree levels of financial contribution towards off-site services which this proposal (through the increase in population and the activities they generate) would add to the use of, and securing on-site facilities such as public open space and affordable housing. Financial contributions cover facilities and services such as waste collection, street name plates, public art, education (primary, secondary, sixth-form and SEN), library and museums, waste management, social and healthcare, fire and rescue, highways and transport, police equipment, and local recreational facilities.
- 2.7 A site location plan is **attached** at appendix 1. Extracts from the application plans are **attached** at appendix 2 along with a technical note responding to third party comments.

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 **Sutton Courtenay Parish Council** – Object

A copy of the parish council's comments is **attached** at appendix 3.

3.2 **Milton Parish Council** – Object:

“Milton Parish Council considers that this application should be refused. Milton village currently suffers from the inadequate road infrastructure associated with Milton Park and the A34 interchange and any additional car movements can only add to the problems. Milton Parish Council is also concerned about the flood risk posed by further housing. Ginge Brook is currently unable to cope with water levels - frequently flooding and indeed closing Footpath 5. Any disturbance of the water table will surely make things worse.”

3.3 Drayton Parish Council – Object

“Drayton Parish Council is concerned about the impact that the above development(s) would have on its residents and would ask the District Council to take the following representations into account. As you will know Drayton Parish Council is in the process of preparing a neighbourhood development plan (Drayton2020). Its vision is to ensure the long-term sustainability of the village...”. The District Council (see the 2011 Local Plan) acknowledges the car dependency of the villages, a point that applies equally to Drayton and Sutton Courtenay. Whilst Drayton's NDP is at an early stage and Sutton Courtenay may not yet have decided to prepare one, the principle of sustainability is raised to the level of a 'presumption' in the NPPF. Both the developments off Milton Road would appear to be very car-dependent due to the lack of facilities and employment within the village, and also bus services that would appear to be even poorer than those serving Drayton. In these circumstances a significant level of car traffic will be generated some of which will impact on Drayton, and the road network used by Drayton residents; driving, cycling and on the local buses. No permission should be granted without contributions being made to both commercial and subsidised services so as to ensure that the congestion on the local transport network is not exacerbated. Contributions towards improvements to the local cycle network would also be justified to mitigate the increase in traffic that would be likely to occur even if the bus services were improved. Sutton Courtenay Parish Council should be consulted on what other local services could be enhanced to improve the sustainability of the village so that reasonable contributions could be sought from this development should it receive planning permission. The District Council should also be concerned, even were the location to be made more sustainable, that the houses themselves would be constructed to a standard in accordance with the NPPF and carbon reduction targets consistent with the Climate Change Act 2008.”

3.4 Local residents – A total of 100 representations had been received from local residents at the time of writing this report, all of which object. The objections are made on the following grounds:

- Increased traffic leading to safety issues and additional road congestion
- The site is subject to flooding with inadequate drainage
- Increased pressure on local infrastructure
- Erosion of the village's rural character
- Cumulative impact on the village which has limited facilities
- Issues of noise pollution and impact on air quality and lighting
- Loss of an open field which is a habitat for wildlife
- Impact on archaeology

3.5 Keep Sutton Courtenay Rural – Object

The group has submitted its objections in the form of a report against this proposal and a proposal on adjoining land (application reference no. P13/V0233/FUL). In addition the group has commissioned and submitted two reports dealing with the application's transport assessment and flood risk assessment as follows:

Review of Transport Assessments (March 2013 – Capita Symonds)
Sutton Courtenay FRA Evaluation (February 2013 – Hydro-GIS Ltd)

Both of these reports have been sent to consultees who advise the council on these matters.

3.6 Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) – Object

“CPRE Oxfordshire objects to this application on the grounds that it would lead to

unsustainable development of the village of Sutton Courtenay. Sutton Courtenay is a pretty riverside village with a strong sense of community. However, rapid and significant expansion of the village threatens to overwhelm local services and facilities, and puts at risk its current green setting. CPRE notes that applications for 160+ houses have already been approved within the village. Further development within this short time period will not be sustainable. In particular, our concerns are: 1. The density of the proposed development is too great. For example, it will lead to cars from the new development right next to gardens of existing houses. 2. Traffic problems will be created, in particular at key 'narrowings' which are already bad such as Culham Bridge, Milton Heights, Harwell Road. 3. Surface water flooding is already a problem and additional hard surfacing will exacerbate this. 4. Appropriate infrastructure for sewage is not in place. In addition we note that both this and the current application for further housing at a different point on Milton Road will swallow up some of the remaining green land around the village. If housing is required, the imminent potential of brownfield land becoming available at the Didcot A site would be an alternative option which should be considered in the first instance.”

- 3.7 **County Highways** – No objection, subject to conditions and contributions.
- 3.8 **Landscape Architect** is concerned that, as the site is visible from the public footpath to the west, a significant landscape screen is required on the west boundary to soften and screen the development from this direction
- 3.9 **Arboriculturalist** no objection subject to an arboricultural impact assessment and arboricultural method statement.
- 3.10 **Countryside Officer** following the submission of bat activity and bat emergence surveys, no objection“
- 3.11 **Natural England** – Standard advice regarding protected species applies.
- 3.12 **Environment Agency** – Standard flood risk advice applies as the site lies within flood zone 1 and, therefore, it is not a high risk location. Standard advice on surface water flooding has been provided and this can be incorporated into a planning condition.
- 3.13 **Drainage Engineer** “the additional drainage information that has now been provided establishes, in principle, that an adequate drainage system may be provided. I therefore withdraw my holding objection on this application subject to a detailed drainage strategy for both foul and surface water being developed and approved prior to any commencement and in accordance with the flood risk assessment and Thames Water's sewer impact study. The detailed design of the surface water drainage system shall be undertaken based on a full assessment of the hydrological and hydro-geological conditions of the site.”
- 3.14 **Thames Water** – An initial investigation has identified an inability of the existing water supply and waste water infrastructure to accommodate the needs of this application. If planning permission is granted, Thames Water recommends a 'Grampian' condition is imposed requiring a drainage strategy to be completed.
- 3.15 **Environmental Health** – No objection
- 3.16 **Design and Conservation Officer** “There are no designated heritage assets on the site. The site is visually fairly well contained with existing development to the south and east. The sustainability of the site could be enhanced if access for pedestrians and cyclists could be provided from the eastern boundary of the site to the village. It is

encouraging that the existing landscape features on the site are to be retained. Any open space provision should be located so that it provides an attractive usable space that enhances the development. The detailed design of the access road should be appropriate to its location within a rural village.”

- 3.17 **County Archaeologist** “Should planning permission be granted, the applicant should be responsible for implementing a programme of archaeological work. This can be ensured through the attachment of a suitable negative condition.”
- 3.18 **Housing Services** no objection subject to affordable housing being provided in accordance with the council’s policies/
- 3.19 **Equalities Officer** – Requires storage areas for wheeled bins so that they are not left on the pavement to cause obstruction to pedestrians and wheelchair users. A contribution towards the shopmobility scheme in Abingdon is requested.
- 3.20 **Waste Management Team** – Requires storage areas for wheeled bins per plot to be provided with collection points clear of parking areas and financial contribution for supply of bins.
- 3.21 **Lesiure Services** – Maintenance of open space areas should be clarified and secured either by adoption by the parish council or through a management company.
- 3.22 **Thames Valley Police** – No objection subject to proposal achieving ‘secured by design’ accreditation. Financial contributions required towards the provision of infrastructure.
- 3.23 **County Funding Officer** – Financial contributions required.

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 [P83/V1848](#) - Approved (13/07/1983)
Single storey extension to provide lounge/diner, kitchen and garage together with internal alterations. 44 Milton Road, Sutton Courtenay. NR 966/83

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 **Vale of White Horse Local Plan**

- GS1 - Developments in Existing Settlements
- GS2 - Development in the Countryside
- DC1 - Design
- DC4 - Public Art
- DC5 - Access
- DC6 - Landscaping
- DC8 - The Provision of Infrastructure and Services
- DC9 - The Impact of Development on Neighbouring Uses
- H11 - Development in the Larger Villages
- H13 - Development Elsewhere
- H16 - Size of Dwelling and Lifetime Homes
- H17 - Affordable Housing
- H23 - Open Space in New Housing Development
- NE9 - The Lowland Vale
- NE11 - Areas for Landscape Enhancement

5.2 **Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)**

Residential Design Guide – December 2009

Sustainable Design and Construction – December 2009
Open space, Sport and Recreation Future Provision – July 2008
Affordable Housing – July 2006
Planning and Public Art – July 2006

5.3 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – March 2012

The National Planning Policy Framework confirms there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and within the overarching roles that the planning system ought to play are a set of 12 core planning principles, the following of which are directly relevant to this application:

- i. Be genuinely plan led
- ii. Not simply be about scrutiny, but be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives.
- iii. Always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.
- iv. Take full account of flood risk.
- v. Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.
- vi. Take account of and support local strategies to improve health, wealth, and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.

5.4 In delivering sustainable development, the framework sets out a variety of detailed guidance and the following sections are directly relevant to this application:

- i. Supporting a prosperous rural economy – promoting the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages
- ii. Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes – housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development and that relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered to be up to date if a five year supply of deliverable sites cannot be demonstrated.
- iii. Requiring good design – achieving high quality and inclusive design to contribute positively to making places better for people.
- iv. Promoting healthy communities – planning positively for the provision and use of community facilities along with access to high quality open spaces.
- v. Meeting the challenge of climate change and flooding – managing risks through suitable adaptation measures to ensure flood risk is not increased elsewhere.
- vi. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment – minimising impacts on biodiversity through adequate mitigation.
- vii. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment – recognising heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance.

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

National advice

6.1 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The NPPF is clear that councils should grant planning permission where the development plan is absent, silent or the relevant policies are out of date. This is unless any adverse impacts would so significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposed development when assessed against the policies of the NPPF as a whole (Para 14 refers).

6.2 The current lack of a five-year supply of housing sites in the district is due to the lack of delivery of new housing by developers, rather than an under-supply of allocated housing land. This lack of delivery is primarily due to delays in the progress of some

major allocations due to the economic downturn and bringing forward the council's new local plan. This lack of a five-year housing land supply requires some flexibility in line with the NPPF when assessing applications that do not accord with local plan policy.

- 6.3 This approach is necessary for a limited time, and is aimed at identifying sites suitable to address the housing shortfall whilst meeting the relevant sustainability and design criteria of the NPPF.
- 6.4 It is clear this application is contrary to local plan policies GS2 and H11. However, whilst the council does not have a five-year housing land supply, these two policies are inconsistent with the NPPF. Therefore, the council must assess the proposed application on its site-specific merits and whether, under the NPPF, it is a sustainable form of development.
- 6.5 This assessment needs to balance the desire of the council to assess the scheme through a strategic sites allocation process against the NPPF tests, which primarily relate to location, design, landscape impact, drainage, and highway safety.

Use of land

- 6.6 Paragraph 111 of the NPPF states, “*planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.*” The site is presently agricultural land, so it is not brown field land. This green field site lies in the open countryside, albeit on the edge of Sutton Courtenay. Thus, the development of the site for housing is contrary to Policy H11. However, as indicated above, this is not a restricting factor given the shortfall in housing land.

Sustainability credentials

- 6.7 Sutton Courtenay is one of the larger villages within the district and scores within the top 20 in the village hierarchy. The location of the residential site is considered to be reasonably close to the range of services and facilities available within the village. In addition, the NPPF puts strong emphasis on housing being used to further enhance rural vitality and the proposal would help to ensure the long term provision of existing facilities. Officers consider the proposed site is a sustainable location for housing development.

Cumulative impact considerations

- 6.8 Using the latest population figures available to the council, this development will increase the population of Sutton Courtenay by approximately 168 people. This represents a 6.9% increase in the population of the village, given the latest census data. The number of dwellings would result in an increase of 6.9% in the existing parish housing stock. Provided suitable contributions are secured for on-site and off-site services and infrastructure to offset the impact of the development, the proposal is considered capable of being accommodated in the locality without detriment.
- 6.9 As mentioned above committee members will be aware there is another proposal still pending determination on land adjacent to this site for 34 dwellings, also accessed from Milton Road (ref P13/V0233/FUL). Combined together, the two sites represent a 10.3% increase in housing stock. Local concern over the amount of new housing within the village is acknowledged. However, officers consider this addition to the population of the village is not large enough to warrant refusal on such grounds, when weighed against the need to address the housing land supply shortfall and to the sustainability credentials of the village.

Access arrangements

- 6.10 The site would be accessed off Milton Road from the south. Following the receipt of

amended plans to widen the site access road to 5.4m, the means of access to the site is acceptable. Some off-site highway improvements would also be required and can be secured through legal agreements / conditions.

- 6.11 Local concern has been expressed that the proposal would cause traffic congestion especially due to the level of traffic using the road from Milton village to the west. However, there are no objections from the County Engineer on traffic generation or highway safety grounds. This takes into account the additional transport assessment report submitted by the Keep Sutton Courtenay Rural residents' group (KSCR).

Visual impact - layout, scale, appearance and landscaping

- 6.12 Paragraph 109 of the NPPF says that "*the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment*". The site is located within the countryside adjacent to an existing built up area of the village. It is visually well contained and the council's landscape architect is of the view that, subject to planting on the west boundary, the local landscape will not be harmed by the proposed development.

- 6.13 In terms of treatment of the western boundary, this can be dealt with at the reserved matters stage with a view to minimising the impact of the development on wider views from the footpath network. In terms of the impact on the views from existing nearby housing this is considered to be acceptable. Although these properties currently enjoy an open outlook across the site, the protection of a private view is not a material planning consideration.

- 6.14 The NPPF is explicit in seeking a high quality outcome for good design in terms of layout and building form as a key aspect of sustainable development. Whilst scale, layout, appearance and landscaping are reserved matters, the illustrative framework plan showing housing areas and accessibility routes within the site provides a residential arrangement offering active street frontages and good visual linkages to the proposed open areas and pedestrian routes. The 24 dwellings per hectare density is considered acceptable within the context of the locality and the proposed scale of dwellings (as stated in design guide) being no more than 2.5 storeys, with the majority being two storeys is acceptable.

Impact on the residential amenity of neighbours

- 6.15 The framework layout indicates the development proposed would not have any harmful impact on the residential amenity of adjacent properties in terms of overshadowing, light pollution, general noise and disturbance, over-dominance or loss of privacy. Similarly it is considered that properties adjoining either side of the new access road would not be adversely affected through noise and disturbance to a degree that would warrant refusal of the application, given the width of the plot. Officers also consider a development observing the various principles of the design guide can be satisfactorily achieved at the reserved matters stage.

Heritage Assets

- 6.16 The framework states that account should be taken of the desirability to sustain and enhance heritage assets. Whilst the proposal has no impact on the village conservation area or listed buildings, archaeological remains have been found within the locality. Following initial comments from the county archaeologist, a field evaluation has been undertaken which has revealed a dense concentration of undated postholes, pits and gullies masked by a cultivation horizon associated with the ploughed out ridge and furrow, in the field. A rim of Saxon-Norman pottery was also recovered. The county archaeologist confirms that sites of this period are relatively unusual and therefore of considerable importance and should planning permission be forthcoming, a further programme of archaeological investigation work is required to address the

significance of the heritage assets. This can be secured through ‘Grampian’ style conditions.

Drainage and flooding issues

- 6.17 The site is considered large enough to deal with surface water without causing surface water runoff to the highway or onto neighbouring properties and can be controlled through planning conditions. The council’s drainage engineer has raised no objection subject to conditions.
- 6.18 Thames Water has identified a capacity issue with the existing sewer system and the applicants are in continuing discussions with them on the appropriate drainage strategy to overcome the technical / engineering issues with the existing system. If satisfactorily resolved, the issues can be properly addressed by imposing conditions on the permission. An update on this issue will be given at the meeting.

Affordable housing

- 6.19 The affordable housing requirement has been confirmed by the applicant to be workable as part of the scheme and the council’s housing officer has no in principle objection to the proposal. Officers are confident a satisfactory mix, tenure and distribution of affordable housing across the site can be achieved at the reserved matters stage to comply with policy H17.

Social infrastructure

- 6.20 Concerns have been raised that existing social and physical infrastructure within the village could not cope with the proposed increase in population resulting from this proposal. However, contributions can be secured to offset the impacts arising from the development. The applicant has agreed to the principle of addressing these needs through contributions which can be secured through a section 106 legal agreement.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 This outline proposal does not accord with the development plan and has been publicised as a departure. However, in the light of the current shortfall in the council’s five year housing land supply, the proposal’s location adjoining an existing larger village with close availability of services and facilities should be afforded appropriate weight. As the proposal would result in a sustainable development in terms of its relationship and proximity to local facilities and services, the principle of the proposal is considered to accord with the NPPF.
- 7.2 In site specific terms, the proposal is not considered to be harmful to the landscape character of the area, the residential amenity of nearby properties, any local heritage assets, highway safety or flood risk and, therefore, given the current housing land shortfall, it complies with the NPPF.
- 7.3 In addition, the scheme can be delivered within one year, making a measurable contribution to help address the current housing land shortfall. A condition requiring the commencement of development within one year of the date of the grant of planning permission is recommended and is acceptable to the applicant.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 **It is recommended that the decision to grant planning permission be delegated to head of planning in consultation with the chairman and vice-chairman subject to:**

1. Completion within the agreed PPA period of section 106 agreements for on-site affordable housing provision, on site open space provision, contributions towards off-site facilities and services including highways works, education

improvements, waste management and collection, street names signs, public art, library and museum service, social and health care, fire and rescue, police equipment, local and area hub recreational and community facility improvements.

2. The following conditions, including the requirement for the commencement of development within 12 months from the date of the issue of planning permission to help address the immediate housing land shortfall:

1. Time limit (12 months)
2. Reserved matters to be submitted (within 6 months)
3. Approved plans
4. Maximum number of dwellings (70)
5. MC2 sample materials
6. LS1 landscape
7. LS4 trees
8. LS5 retain existing hedgerow / trees on north boundary
9. LS6 – maintenance of open space / play Areas
10. Boundary details to public areas to be walls
11. Plot curtilages to exclude existing landscaping / landscaped areas
12. Grampian drainage detail condition
13. HY2[I] - access in accordance with plan
14. Parking to accord with adopted standards
15. RE11 - garage accommodation
16. Development in accordance with travel framework plan
17. Construction traffic management plan
18. Scheme of archaeological Investigation
19. Contamination
20. Ecology mitigation in accordance with submitted report

Informatives

1. Affordable housing to be spread across the site
2. S278 agreement required for highway works
3. Planning obligations

8.2 If the required section 106 agreements are not completed in a timely manner and so planning permission cannot be granted by the determination deadline of 12 June 2013, in accordance with the agreed PPA, it is recommended that authority to refuse planning permission is delegated to the head of planning in consultation with the chairman and vice-chairman.

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