
APPLICATION NO.	P13/V1040/O
APPLICATION TYPE	OUTLINE
REGISTERED	15.5.2013
PARISH	HARWELL
WARD MEMBER(S)	Margaret Turner Reg Waite
APPLICANT	Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd & Poplar Farm Partnership
SITE	Alder View Land South of Grove Road Harwell Oxfordshire, OX11 0EF
PROPOSAL	Outline planning application for a residential development comprising up to 65 dwellings with associated highway works, landscaping and infrastructure improvements.
AMENDMENTS	None
GRID REFERENCE	448885/189415
OFFICER	Mark Doodes

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application site measures 2.78Ha on a rectangular plot to the west of the village of Harwell. Harwell is defined as a “Larger Village” in the Vale settlement hierarchy. The site is divided symmetrically by a line of tall mature Alder trees, an equally pleasant row of alder trees lies to the west. The trees are very distinctive and contribute greatly to the area.
- 1.2 The site is a mix of agricultural land and improved grasslands. The site is located north of the existing primary school and Grove Road itself forms the boundary to the north. The site is naturally enclosed by hedges and trees.
- 1.3 The site is not near to a conservation area and contains no listed buildings, and is not covered by any other special designation. Harwell contains access to public transport, a village hall, a limited number of shops and a primary school. Also of note is that Harwell is located close to large employment sites and the A34 national road, which means the site and village are reasonably sustainable.
- 1.4 The site is not part of any strategic housing allocation, making this application a departure (from the local plan) application and it has been advertised as such.
- 1.5 A location plan is **attached** at appendix 1, noting the attenuation pond area to the west of the site, which is within the applicants control.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 An outline application for up to 65 new homes is proposed with the means of access submitted at this stage. All other matters, including the layout, landscaping, scale, form and general appearance of the development, will be the subject of future reserved matters application(s). An indicative layout has been submitted purely to demonstrate that the quantum of development can be accommodated within the site confines.
- 2.2 Access to the site is proposed to be from Manor Green, by means of an engineered T-junction to an access road into the proposed estate. For the avoidance of doubt, the Public Open Space area, to be adopted by the Parish, is above 15% of developable

site area.

2.3 The breakdown of units proposed are;

14 x 2-bed (of which 11 are affordable)
 29 x 3-bed (of which 12 are affordable)
 22 x 4-bed (of which 3 are affordable)
 Total 65 units of which 26 are affordable (40%)

Of the affordable units 75% of these will be rental and the remainder will be shared equity through a suitable approved landlord scheme, such as Sovereign Vale.

2.4 The applicants have been in discussion with officers and others to agree a level of contribution towards off-site services which this proposal will generate through an increase in population of approximately 143 new residents. Contributions cover facilities and services such as waste collection, street naming and numbering services, public art, education, library and museums, waste management and sports facilities.

2.5 Extracts from the application plans are **attached** at appendix 2.

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 Harwell Parish Council – Support the application and raises a number of points to do with highway safety and the principle of expanding the village. A full copy of their response can be found **attached** in appendix 3.

Neighbours – 13 letters of objection have been submitted. Grounds for objection are highway safety, overcrowding at the local school, damage to trees and wildlife, effect on character of the area, drainage and questioning the need for new homes in the area.

Thames Water Development Control – Recommend sewage and fresh water conditions. However Thames Water have a statutory legal duty to provide adequate fresh water, therefore this condition has not been applied to the report.

Oxfordshire County Council – No objection subject to the following financial contributions:-

Science Vale UK	£177,905
Education (secondary)	£352, 448
Education - Special Needs	£15,328
Library	£16,660
Museum	£980
Waste Infrastructure	£12,544
Health and Social Care	£13,200
Admin Charge	£3,750
Total	£582,015

Note also a holding objection on drainage grounds in support of the Vale’s drainage engineer.

Thames Valley Police - No objections subject to S106 contributions for equipment.

Crime Prevention Design Adviser - No strong views, the applicant has a strong track record is applying the principles of “Secure By Design”.

Waste Management Officer (District Council) – No objection.

Housing Dev. (South Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse DC) – Welcome the additional affordable housing, however the team would prefer to see some one bed units provided and some four bed units. The applicant has agreed to the four bed units but not the single units. Housing Officers accept this response. No objection.

Drainage Engineer (Vale of White Horse District Council) – Holding Objection on technical points relating to drainage and surface water issues.

Landscape Architect - Vale of White Horse DC - No objection, but did note a number of matters all of which can be addressed through the reserved matters stage and revolve around the screening of the scheme using soft landscaping as well as some urban design matters to be considered at a later date.

Young People's Co-ordinator - No objection, but noted that provision for older teenagers should be taken into account in the area.

Conservation Officer Vale - No objection.

Forestry Team (Vale of White Horse) – Recommended the use of conditions to protect the roots of the tall trees on the site, and to protect the overall contribution made by the trees to the area.

Summary of S106 Contributions at the District Level.

Affordable Housing	On site provision
Street Naming & Numbering	£1,500
Public Art	£30,000
Health Facilities	£26,169
Sports Facilities	Circa £80,000 TBC
Legal Fees	Circa £3000
Total	£140,669

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 None.

5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE

5.1 Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 policies;

The local plan was adopted in July 2006. The following relevant policies have been considered to be saved by the Secretary of State's decision of 1 July 2009 whilst the new local plan is being produced:

- DC1 - Design
- DC10 - The Effect of Neighbouring or Previous Uses on New Development
- DC12 - Water Quality and Resources
- DC13 - Flood Risk and Water Run-off
- DC14 - Flood Risk and Water Run-off
- DC3 - Design against crime
- DC4 - Public Art
- DC5 - Access
- DC6 - Landscaping
- DC7 - Waste Collection and Recycling
- DC8 - The Provision of Infrastructure and Services
- DC9 - The Impact of Development on Neighbouring Uses

GS2 - Development in the Countryside
H11 - Development in the Larger Villages
H13 - Development Elsewhere
H16 - Size of Dwelling and Lifetime Homes
H17 - Affordable Housing
H19 - Special Housing Needs
H23 - Open Space in New Housing Development
NE9 - The Lowland Vale

5.2 *Supplementary planning guidance*

Residential design guide (December 2009)
Sustainable design and construction (2009)
Open space, sport and recreation future provision (July 2009)

Affordable housing – provides further guidance in relation to the local plan policy H17.

Planning and public art (July 2006)
Sites over 0.5ha should provide a contribution towards public art in accordance with local plan policy DC4.

5.3 *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – March 2012*

Paragraphs 14 & 49 – presumption in favour of sustainable development
Paragraphs 34 & 37 – encourage minimised journey lengths to work, shopping, leisure and education
Paragraph 47 – five year housing land supply requirement
Paragraph 50 – create sustainable inclusive and mixed communities
Paragraph 57, 60 & 61 – promote local distinctiveness and integrate development into the natural, built and historic environment
Paragraph 99 – flood risk assessment
Paragraph 109 – contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment
Paragraph 111 – encourage the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed
Paragraph 119 – the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not override protected species and habitats
Paragraph 126-134 – Historic assets and environment

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 *Principle of the proposed development*

At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Within the context of the NPPF, planning permission should be granted where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, unless any adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposed development when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole (paragraph 14). This report, therefore, focuses on site specific issues and consideration of whether the specifications of the NPPF are satisfied in terms of providing sustainable development to help address the current shortfall in the five year supply of housing land.

6.2 The current lack of a five year land 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 has primarily been caused by delays in progressing some major allocations due to the economic downturn and the delay in bringing forward the new

local plan. The current lack of a five year housing land supply requires some flexibility in line with the NPPF in the consideration of planning applications which do not accord with current local plan policy. This approach is by necessity of a time-limited duration and is aimed at identifying suitable development sites to address the housing land shortfall whilst still meeting the relevant sustainability and design requirements as set out in the NPPF.

- 6.3 The application is contrary to local plan policy H11, and would add a further circa 6.6% to the number of dwellings in Harwell (based on 2011 ONS statistics showing 979 homes in the area; excluding any recent permissions). This increase is considered to be acceptable and not place any unacceptable strain on local facilities, this view is echoed by the LEA who require no contributions to the adjacent primary school. Furthermore, whilst the council does not have a five year housing land supply policy H11, which refers to developments of "...not more than 15 units..." are inconsistent with the NPPF. The proposed development, therefore, needs to be considered on its site specific merits and, in particular, in relation to its sustainability as defined by the NPPF. In this instance, the site, and indeed the village, is considered by officers to be suitable to accommodate such growth, sustainability.
- 6.4 Harwell is one of the larger villages within the district and scores within the top 20 in the village hierarchy. The location of the application site is considered to be sustainable as lies within reasonable walking distance of the main village facilities and is adjacent to the school. In addition, the NPPF puts strong emphasis on permitting new dwellings to further enhance rural vitality. For these reasons, and those set out in section 1, the principle of the proposal is considered to be acceptable.
- 6.5 *Visual impact – layout and landscape setting*
Paragraph 109 of the NPPF states that: "the planning system should contribute to, and enhance, the natural and local environment". The site in question is agreed by landscaping officers and the parish to be clearly seen within the context of the village itself and forms a natural annex to the village, being open countryside on just two of four sides. Landscaping officers have placed much emphasis on the tall trees both within and along the western edge of the site. Of note is that a small number will need to be removed, however it is considered that such an impact is acceptable when considered on the whole. The built form, based on the indicative layout, will be largely constrained by the trees, being the dominant natural feature and is set back from the main road by a modest landscaping buffer. The density of 23 dwellings per hectare is considered acceptable at this location.
- 6.6 *Visual impact – design and appearance*
Good design in layout and building form is a key aspect of sustainable development and the NPPF is explicit in seeking a high quality outcome. The indicative layout retains and maintains the existing field boundaries to the site. Planning conditions can secure the retention of the existing hedgerows and the important trees and so ensure these important and established features are included within the reserved matters submission. With a density of 23 dwellings per hectare, the public open space can be provided at 15% of site coverage without any major alterations to the layout as submitted. Officers are confident that a high quality development can be achieved with good garden sizes and public open space provision.
- 6.7 *Access and parking*
The site will be accessed off the Manor Green. An initial holding objection was made by the County Highways Officer which has been removed subject to revised drawings. Parking provision meets the required standards and in any event will be the subject of a future (reserved matters) application. Issues of traffic generation, access and parking,

therefore, are considered to be acceptable. Various public rights of way issues have been raised, all of which can be controlled by condition.

- 6.8 The location of the site is close to a small range of existing facilities, the ongoing viability of which will be improved by the new customers from the new development. Such facilities are accessible on foot and bicycle, within a 10 minute walk. Therefore, there will be no automatic dependence on cars to access such services.
- 6.9 *Impact on neighbours' residential amenity*
The illustrative layout shows deep rear gardens along the eastern boundary and the retention of existing trees and hedgerows. Although layout is a reserved matter, it is considered that a detailed layout can be designed to ensure the development would have an acceptable impact on the amenity of the residents along Manor Green and Westfield and other nearby streets, many of whom it is accepted, presently have views out across third party open countryside.
- 6.10 *Drainage and flooding issues*
The site is not located within a floor plain and is considered large enough to ensure that through the use of a Sustainable Urban Drainage Scheme (SUDS) and other technical drainage features could ensure the development will not cause any net increase in surface water run-off compared to the existing situation. No slab level change is proposed. A balancing pond is proposed some distance from the development site to the west. Thames Water advice is that there is insufficient sewage capacity available in the area and therefore a formal report/study has been commissioned by the applicant, the results of which are not available at the time of writing. An update on this matter will be provided to committee. No objections are raised on drainage or flooding grounds by the Environment Agency, however the council's drainage engineer has a holding objection until some technical and detailed matters are agreed. Officers consider a satisfactory resolution can be achieved and an update on this matter will be reported to committee.
- 6.11 *Heritage assets*
The NPPF requires regard to be had of any nearby conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological sites, or ancient monuments. There is no conservation area close to the site. The archaeological report submitted with the application confirms there are no significant archaeological remains within the site and, therefore, no conditions relating to this matter need to be imposed.
- 6.12 *Social infrastructure*
Concern has been raised from nearby residents that the physical infrastructure within the village could not cope with the increase in the village population that would result from the proposed development. However, it is noted that Oxfordshire County Council, as the local education authority, does not object to the application, and there is considered to be potential to expand the school in the future, due to its layout and plot size. Agreement has been reached in principle to secure a financial contribution towards improving local school accommodation.
- 7.0 **CONCLUSION**
- 7.1 The proposal does not accord with the development plan and has been publicised as a departure. However, in light of the quality of the application and in the context of the current shortfall in the five year housing land supply, the proposals are considered acceptable on the basis of the following:
- Sustainability – The site is adjacent to the village with good access to roads, public transport, schooling, employment, main roads, sports facilities and shops

within a reasonable distance.

- Character - the site is adjacent to the built-up area of the village and will clearly be seen within the context of this from only approach to the village the works will impact upon, Grove Road. The site is also naturally contained on all sides and the key character trees will be retained and remain clearly visible. As a result, there will only be a limited landscape impact.
- Contribution to the five year land supply shortfall - The provision of 65 new residential units will make a notable contribution, and this has been assigned weight accordingly in reaching this recommendation.

7.2 The proposal will result in a sustainable development and will not harm any heritage assets the character of the area, highway safety, and local drainage (subject to liaison with drainage engineer), therefore, it complies with the NPPF and the retained policies of the local plan.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the decision to grant outline planning permission be delegated to the head of planning in consultation with the committee chairman subject to:

- 1. The prior completion of a section 106 agreement within a deadline of three months to complete for on-site affordable housing provision, contributions towards off-site facilities and services including highway works, education improvements, waste management and collection, street naming and numbering, public art, library and museum services, social and health care, sports and recreation improvements, public transport provision and commuted sum for the maintenance of the public open space;**

The following conditions, including the requirement to commence development within one year of the date of the committee resolution to help address the immediate housing land shortfall:

- 1 : TL2 - Time limit Outline (12 months) Reserved Matters within 6 months**
- 2 : Approved plans and documents.**
- 3 : Submission of Reserved Matters - General**
- 4 : UNI landscape**
- 5 : LS4 trees**
- 6 : Boundary Treatments**
- 7 : Ecology – Works carried out in accordance with report from AAE.**
- 8 : Drainage**
- 9 : Construction traffic**
- 10 : Travel info packs**
- 11 : Access visibility**
- 12 : Parking**
- 13 : Materials**
- 14 : Refuse bin storage**
- 15 : Thames Water plc surface water condition**
- 16 : Drainage - Thames Water**
- 17 : Public Rights of Way – All works submitted in advance and agreed in writing.**

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