

*Proposed Housing Site, Policy H3.****Timbmet Site, Cumnor Hill, Chawley Botley***
REVISED DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE**Background**

Following the comments received in response to the publication of the Supplementary Planning Guidance at first deposit stage, amendments have been made to the guidance as set out below. In general terms these amendments highlight how important it will be for the development to have regard to green belt and SSSI issues and the wider setting of the site. The need for surveys of the site's existing features and nature conservation value is emphasised. Reference is made to the role development can play in enhancing existing and creating new habitats and the use of indigenous tree and plant species in the landscaping scheme. Particular attention is drawn to the surface and foul water drainage issues which had been of concern to local people.

1.0 Site Description

- 1.1 The site the subject of this supplementary guidance, the Timbmet Chawley Works, comprises a total area of some ~~8.0 hectares (20 acres)~~ **7.4 hectares (18.3 acres)** with a frontage to Cumnor Hill. To the north east are the dwellings in Hurst Lane. To the southwest are the car showrooms of Lexus, Saab and Jaguar with, at the rear, Timbmet's own offices. The site extends back behind this frontage development into the countryside and a wooded area of higher ground called Hurst Hill.
- 1.2 The site comprises the premises of Timbmet who are timber merchants. There are a number of buildings and sheds on the site of varying methods of construction and age and areas of open storage of stacks of timber. In places, towards the rear of the site, the storage areas are right up against the surrounding wooded areas.

2.0 Development Guidelines**General**

- 2.1 Although the site totals some ~~8.0 hectares~~ **7.4 hectares (18.3 acres)** of land, approximately ~~3.0 hectares (7.4 acres)~~ **2.6 hectares (6.4 acres)** of this is within the Oxford Green Belt and the North Vale Area of High Landscape Value (AHLV) and part of the site is designated an area of special scientific interest (SSSI). These designations are shown on the attached plan. The general character of the area to the south of the site is open countryside with farming on the unwooded areas.
- 2.2 That part of the site fronting Cumnor Hill which is not in the Green Belt or designated as a SSSI is proposed to be developed for housing. The southern part of the site which is within the Green Belt should be restored to open space with access for the public as appropriate but ensuring that the status of the SSSI is not compromised. Particular care will be needed ~~where the SSSI boundary is close to the proposed housing area.~~ **Redevelopment, which must be planned comprehensively,** will involve the removal of the existing large buildings, sheds and open storage areas and will improve the visual amenities and openness of the Green Belt. See plan.

Green Belt

- 2.3 The site is generally surrounded on its eastern, southern and western sides by the Oxford Green Belt. The design of the scheme should ensure that the visual

amenities of the Green Belt are not injured by development which might be detrimental by reasoning of its siting, materials or design.

SSSI

- 2.4 The boundary of the Hurst Hill Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) encroaches across the south eastern side of the site. The SSSI site is a classic area for the study of mosses and liverworts. The lichen flora also include species which are uncommon in Oxfordshire. The Council has also been advised that the site is host to great crested newts. As an SSSI, the site is of national importance and its sensitive nature and integrity should be respected and protected by the design of the scheme. Further guidance is included in local plan chapter 'Natural Environment'.

Housing

- 2.5 Government planning guidance on Housing (PPG 3) includes giving priority to re-using previously developed land in urban areas and advising local planning authorities to make the best use of land and to seek developments at between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare. The site is proposed to be developed at an average density of 40 dwellings per hectare (16 dwellings per acre). A total of some 180 dwellings has been assumed for the site.
- 2.6 In line with Local Plan policies H15 and H16, the development of the site gives an opportunity for widening housing opportunities. These policies require;
- at least 50% of the dwellings should have two bedrooms or less,
 - 10% of the dwellings should be designed for people with impaired mobility,
 - 50% of the dwellings should be affordable to local people.
- 2.7 Affordable housing is taken to be that which caters for local people who are unable to buy or rent a home, suitable for their needs, on the open market.
- 2.8 The type and size of the affordable housing will need to be discussed with the Council's Housing Services prior to the submission of a planning application. The affordable housing should be distributed evenly across the site and indistinguishable in appearance from market housing.

Design

- 2.9 The Council will expect new housing to be of a high standard of design. Local Plan policy DC1 sets the Council's requirements in more detail and confirms that new development should take into account local distinctiveness and character. The resulting development should not adversely affect those attributes that make an important and positive contribution to the character of the locality.
- 2.10 Acceptable materials are likely to include either slate or tile roofs with walls of brick and/or render. However, materials should be discussed with the Council at the pre-application stage.
- 2.11 Through Local Plan policy DC2 the Council will require consideration to be given to measures to conserve energy and the use of other resources , including passive solar design (which involves influencing the layout, design, orientation and shelter of buildings), the use of energy efficient technologies and measures to conserve the use of water. The Council will expect all or some new dwellings on the site to be built on the EcoHomes 'very good' rating. Consideration of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) will also be required. See also paragraph 2.29 below.
- 2.12 The design and layout of new buildings and the spaces between them should be arranged to increase security and deter crime as required by Local Plan policy DC3.

Additionally, consistent with policy DC5, arrangements must be made for secure covered cycle parking for each dwelling.

- 2.13 Local Plan policy DC7 seeks to ensure that there are opportunities for re-use and recycling of waste, for example by making provision for facilities such as wheel bins, adequate space to sort recyclable waste in the home, home composting, water butts and grey water schemes.
- 2.14 Development will not be permitted if it would harm unacceptably the amenities of neighbouring properties, as detailed in Local Plan policy DC9. Particular care will be needed in the north east of the site which abuts a listed building at 33 Hurst Lane.

Transport

- 2.15 A Transport Assessment should accompany the planning application to inform the way in which the highway issues are addressed. It should include details on the historical use of the site and the associated traffic levels and types.
- 2.16 Modifications to the existing Cumnor Hill access geometry are likely to be necessary to reflect the revised Oxfordshire County Council *Residential Road Design Guide* published February 2003. Visibility splays of 4.5 by 120 metres would be appropriate. This may require vegetation clearance. . Any access must comply with Local Plan policy DC5. Vehicular access will need to be discussed with the County Council as the highway authority prior to the submission of a planning application. The existing street lighting at the site entrance is also likely to require upgrading.
- 2.17 The existing alternative access to the site in the site's western boundary will be closed off.
- 2.18 Footpaths and cycle links will need to be provided within the site and to link to the surrounding networks.
- 2.19 The redevelopment of the site should be designed to ensure the creation of a 'Home Zone' to help make the streets safer and improve the quality of the street environment.
- 2.20 Financial contributions are likely to be sought towards local highway infrastructure and public transport infrastructure (bus shelters etc.) improvements. These will be included in a Section 106 Obligation.

Parking

- 2.21 Car parking will be required to conform with the County Council's current standards.

Amenity Areas

- 2.22 Adequate open space with regard to amount and type must be provided, see policy H23. This is based on the standards of the National Playing Fields Association, see below, which are expressed per 1000 people. Play spaces should be safe, suitably equipped and landscaped, and a commuted sum must be provided for their maintenance.
- Children's play space, 0.6 – 0.8 hectares (1.5 – 2.0 acres). To include equipped playgrounds and informal kick-about areas which are safely accessible on foot to the user
 - Informal recreation, There are no generally accepted standards covering this provision. Much will depend on the nature and context of the development.

- Generally, 15% of the proposed residential area should be laid out as open space to provide for children's play and informal recreation.

Landscaping

- 2.23 Areas of landscaping will also be required to help assimilate the development into the surrounding natural environment, minimise the development's impact on the visual amenities of the Green Belt and its appearance in the wider setting of the Chawley neighbourhood. Landscaping is covered by Local Plan policy DC6 and should include hard and soft elements taking into account existing important landscape features on the site and the need to maximise opportunities for nature conservation and wildlife habitat creation. The leylandii hedge along the northern boundary should be removed. Particular care will be needed where the SSSI boundary abuts the proposed housing area.
- 2.24 A survey of existing features will be required from the developer. Such a survey will be expected to include accurate positions of existing trees and shrubs, their condition, height, stem diameter, extent of canopy, species, details of other aspects of the site's ecology (see also section below) and site contours.

Nature Conservation

- 2.25 Under local plan policy NE1, the Council will require the applicant to carry out an ecological appraisal to establish the likely impacts of the development on the nature conservation value of the site and whether any protected species will be affected. Developers will be encouraged to enhance existing habitats and incorporate the provision of new habitats in their proposals, for example, through the use of indigenous tree and plant species in the landscaping schemes. In its consideration of development proposals, the Council will be looking to see how any habitats within the development site relate to the surrounding area, e.g. the ponds in the south of the site, so that, where possible, development proposals complement existing habitats.
- 2.26 Where it can, the Council will grant aid appropriate schemes e.g. for the restoration or creation of ponds and suitable woodland projects.

Public Art

- 2.27 The Council will seek the provision of public art which makes a significant contribution to the appearance of the scheme, or the character of the area or the local community. The Arts Council has recommended 1% of the scheme's contract sum should be set aside for this purpose.

Infrastructure

- 2.28 In line with Government guidance {circular 1/97 (Planning Obligations)}, the Council expects developers and landowners to provide for infrastructure and services made necessary by their development.
- 2.29 The foul and surface water flows from the site will drain into a local system which, because of existing circumstances, can result in localised flooding off-site. The details relating to the site's development will need to include drainage schemes which adequately deal with this issue. To ensure the appropriate surface and foul and water drainage of the site, these matters will be covered by conditions to the planning permission.

Legal Agreement

- 2.30 The prior completion of a Section 106 obligation will be required covering social housing, the provision of public open space together with an area of children's play equipment and a commuted sum for future maintenance, public art, and appropriate financial contributions towards local highway infrastructure, public transport infrastructure, education and library facilities improvements.

Advice on Planning Applications

- 2.31 Developers are advised that planning applications will be assessed against all the relevant policies in the local plan and they are advised to refer to the plan in detail in the preparation of a development scheme. The Council would welcome early discussions on the scheme before a planning application is submitted.