

APPLICATION NO.	P12/V0299/O
APPLICATION TYPE	OUTLINE
REGISTERED	27.2.2012
PARISH	GROVE
WARD MEMBER(S)	John Amys Sue Marchant Kate Precious
APPLICANT	Persimmon Ltd And Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd
SITE	Land At Grove Airfield Denchworth Road Grove Wantage Oxfordshire
PROPOSAL	Outline application for residential development of about 2,500 dwellings with associated services and facilities including secondary school, primary schools, local centre (including uses falling within use classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1, C2, D1 and D2), open space including community park, and the realignment of Denchworth Road to the south. As amended by description and additional information from agent/applicant dated 23/10/2012.
AMENDMENTS	24 October 2012
GRID REFERENCE	439014/189403

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The outline planning application for the development of 2,500 dwellings with associated infrastructure at Grove Airfield was submitted in February 2012. The development is supported by Policy H5 of the adopted local plan 2011, which allocates the land as a strategic housing site. Since its submission, officers have carried out all the appropriate consultations, assessed the scheme and been in negotiations with the applicants Persimmon Ltd. and Taylor Wimpey Ltd. around the details of the scheme and what it can afford to deliver in terms of required infrastructure and affordable housing.
- 1.2 The application is in outline with all matters reserved for future consideration with the exception of the proposed highway improvements to the Denchworth Road (also referred to as the southern access road) to the south of the site. Whilst the detailed design and appearance of the development will be dealt with at the reserved matters stages, the form and scale of the built development is defined at the outline stage by the proposed parameter plans submitted with the application and by the Design and Access Statement which includes Appearance and Layout Frameworks. These Frameworks inform the design and layout of future phases of the development.
- 1.3 The scale of development requires an Environmental Impact Assessment under Part 10 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 and the application is accompanied by a detailed Environmental Statement.
- 1.4 This report seeks to assess the planning application against the national and local planning policy framework and other material planning considerations.
- 1.5 The application is presented to Planning Committee with a recommendation to permit

the development subject to the heads of terms of the Section 106 Agreement and list of conditions set out at the end of this report. The planning agreement will also include detailed phasing and triggers for infrastructure provision and the aim is to complete the agreement for signing by all parties at the end of March 2014. To achieve this, the District and County Councils are proposing to produce one joint agreement and the first draft of this document is currently being prepared by Burges Salmon, solicitors.

- 1.6 The recommended package of infrastructure is set out in appendix 12 of this report. heads of terms result in a proposed package of infrastructure for the development equating to approximately £19k per dwelling, and in the order of 35% affordable housing (of which 30% is affordable rented and around 5% shared ownership).

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The application site lies immediately west of the village of Grove. It forms the major part of a former World War 2 airfield and is identified as a strategic housing allocation in the adopted Vale of White Horse District local plan 2011. The site falls within the boundaries of Grove parish and extends to approximately 141.13 hectares, of which the area of built development amounts to some 64.7 hectares. The northern boundary of the site adjoins open agricultural land, while the western boundary is delineated by agricultural land and Grove Technology Park. Downsview Road defines the southern boundary of the site, with Denchworth Road and Newlands Drive defining the boundary to the east. The existing rugby and football playing pitches lie to the east of Denchworth Road and a skate park and part of the former Wilts and Berks canal are also located in this area.

- 2.2 The majority of the site is now in agricultural/paddock use. On the ground its wartime use as an airfield is now difficult to detect. However, aerial photographs of the site clearly show the distinctive lines of the former runways. The site is predominantly flat with low numbers of trees. Hedgerows commonly define field and paddock boundaries. No public footpaths or bridleways cross the site.

- 2.3 Newlands Drive and the existing village of Grove form a clear boundary along the majority of the eastern side of the site with the remainder delineated with the rugby and football playing pitches that lie to the east of Denchworth Road. A skate park and part of the former Wilts and Berks Canal are also located in this area.

- 2.4 A location plan is **attached** at appendix 1.

3.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 3.1 This is an outline planning application for the erection of up to 2,500 dwellings and associated infrastructure. All matters of detail are reserved for future consideration with the exception of the works proposed to improve and re-align the southern access road (Denchworth Road), which are fully detailed. The application is supported by an environmental statement, parameter plans, a design and access statement, a planning statement, an illustrative master plan, a landscape strategy, a services assessment, a landscape and ecology management plan, a sustainability statement, a statement of community involvement and a construction environmental management plan.

- 3.2 The application proposes a local centre, two primary schools, a secondary school, sports pitches and pavilion, a community park, formal and informal children's play areas and other areas of open space, including an ecologically sensitive area known as the ecology park. The local centre is proposed to be located to the west of Newlands Drive and will be centred around a new civic space. It will contain a range of buildings to

include: a community centre which will be home to a mix of community uses, retail floor space; office floor space; a library, a place of worship, one of the primary schools and car parking. The local centre will be a short walk from the secondary school and an 80 bed extra care housing (ECH) unit with resource centre.

3.3 The Environmental Statement (ES) describes the development and includes the parameter plans on which the development has been environmentally assessed. It also sets out the policy context for the proposal. In terms of the assessment itself, the following areas of potential impact have been addressed: ground conditions/contamination; landscape; ecology; cultural heritage; traffic and highways; public rights of way; hydrology and hydrogeology; noise air and vibration; socio-economic impacts including retail impact assessment; waste; cumulative impacts of the scheme with other developments, a non-technical summary and a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).

3.4 The Design and Access Statement (DAS) sets out the design principles and parameters for the development. It provides a vision for the development and explains the design process that has led to the development of the illustrative master plan and the proposed character areas within the scheme. The vision for the development is to create a distinctive, high quality, mixed use sustainable place that will incorporate references to the historic airfield, maximise opportunities to integrate with existing Grove (physically, socially and economically) and incorporate green infrastructure consisting of high-quality multifunctional green spaces. The DAS provides details on the location of development; densities; scale; green infrastructure; sustainability; access and movement; car parking; public art; phasing; principles for the appearance and the likely layout of the housing and the school sites.

3.5 Copies of the illustrative master plan and parameter plans are **attached** at appendix 2.

4.0 CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

4.1 This section of the report provides a brief summary of comments received to the application. Where appropriate, more detailed summaries and full comments are attached as appendices to the report.

4.2 **Grove Parish Council** has commented as follows:

- object that the Northern Link Road is not included in the application site and consequently the amount of traffic which will have to pass through the village;
- object to there being only two accesses onto Newlands Drive;
- the line of the southern access road (SAR) impacts on the an existing training pitch and this facility needs to be replaced;
- concerned about traffic levels on SAR, Cane Lane and Newlands Drive not properly catered for;
- there should be a pedestrian crossing across the SAR (bridge or underpass) to the new sports pavilion;
- concern about age of surveys informing the application;
- wish to see code for sustainable homes level 4;
- Parish wishes to control all communal facilities in the development;
- concern about density of development along Newlands Drive;
- may be a need for additional allotments;
- need for a floodlit training area to west of SAR;
- dispute traffic figures relating to Oxford Lane/A338 junction;
- how will new footpath/cycleway across Mably Way be achieved?

- remain concerned about flood risk;
- on safety grounds the SAR should be completed prior to start of work on main site;
- concern about HGVs using A417 through Wantage.

A full copy of Grove Parish Council's representations are **attached** at appendix 3.

4.3 **Local Ward Councillor Kate Precious** – clarifies that the following comments are made without prejudice to consideration of the application:

- Newlands Drive needs footpaths on both sides of the road;
- it is regrettable that we cannot insist on the Northern Link Road being provided earlier;
- a reduction in social housing shouldn't be a deal breaker; more concerned about a reduction in community facilities;
- has the impact on the existing road network been properly assessed?
- very important that the new development is integrated into the existing village via the footpath network;
- wish to see the ward members and Parish Council fully involved in discussions regarding the details of the scheme and that any outline planning permission is robustly conditioned.

A more detailed summary of these comments is **attached** at appendix 4.

4.4 **Local County Councillor Zoe Patrick** – comments as follows:

- there are serious concerns about local employment opportunities for a development of this scale. Most existing residents in Grove commute to work by car as public transport services are poor. This also leads to parking congestion;
- new bus routes will add too much journey time due to lack of accesses from the development onto Newlands Drive. This will discourage use;
- the main roads serving Grove are already congested;
- many residents are concerned about drainage issues especially after the 2007 floods;
- most people in the area want a greater proportion of family homes;
- development needs to provide adequate open and green spaces;
- to aid integration, the local centre needs to be located near existing Grove. This also applies to the primary and secondary school;
- the developers have to be legally bound to provide the necessary infrastructure.

A more detailed summary of these comments is **attached** at appendix 5.

4.5 **Wantage Town Council** – proposing a joint working party with Grove Parish Council to ensure that services and facilities are not duplicated and to ensure Wantage does not suffer loss of services.

4.6 **Denchworth Parish Council** – express major concerns:

- increased traffic through village; area already congested and road to Denchworth narrow and hazardous; this is a major safety issue. Roads cannot take the extra traffic which will be generated by this and other developments in the Grove/Wantage area and will exacerbate an already poor situation;
- railway bridge has sharp bend and poor visibility;
- increased risk of flooding. Over past years the village has been completely cut off

and the new development can only make this worse. Land in the area has a high water table;

- drainage patterns on the site mean that the railway embankment forms a natural dam where a lake will form in extreme conditions, thereby flooding the road. Drainage and flood prevention scheme inadequate;
- reduction in water pressure which is already low in the village;
- insufficient employment in the area which means people will have to travel to work by car causing pollution and congestion;
- concern that infrastructure insufficient for number of houses planned.

A more detailed summary of Denchworth Parish Council's comments is **attached** at appendix 6.

4.7 **East Hanney Parish Council** – summarised as follows:

- the Parish is strongly opposed to the size of the development. No local need;
- no provision for employment means people will have to travel to work by car. A338 does not have the capacity;
- new road needed linking A338 to A34;
- existing infrastructure cannot absorb the number of new houses and people;
- construction traffic should be kept off Newlands Drive;
- Denchworth Road south requires a cycle path;
- much of the traffic to the site will be forced past existing schools;
- NLR and Wantage Eastern Link Road should be constructed at the same time as the development starts;
- no link from site to the A417 which means traffic will travel through East Hanney; this will also have a detrimental impact on the conservation area?
- the Council has very real concerns about surface water drainage retention on the site.

A more detailed summary is **attached** at appendix 7.

4.8 **West Hanney Parish Council:** considers that the application should be refused for the following reasons - houses not needed; flooding; traffic; pollution plus many others.

4.9 **Representations from local residents** – A total of 120 third party representations have been received to the application. 95 raise objection to the proposal, 30 make observations and five support the proposal. The objections made are summarised below with a fuller summary **attached** at appendix 8:

Highways and Access

- The county council need to consider this plan in conjunction with a wider study of problems in Oxfordshire. Objection to the inadequate road infrastructure provision. Current road network is poorly maintained and will not be able to cope.
- Application should include a western bypass from Mably Way to A417 before works commence on site. Denchworth Rd, A338 and A417 are already at capacity and are totally inadequate to cater for extra traffic.
- Lack of roads to link to existing main roads will result in traffic travelling through the village (Grove) which would create danger for parents and children.
- With no northern link road (NLR) all construction traffic will come via A338 or from the convent roundabout in Wantage along Denchworth Road.
- Construction traffic should be kept off Newlands Drive, which seems impossible given the current plan.
- Denchworth Road is the main route for children cycling to secondary school and

should have a cycle path included in its upgrade.

- NLR and Wantage eastern relief road should be in place as soon as possible and should at least be started at the beginning of the development. Omission of NLR from plans infers the developers have no intention of providing it.
- A bridge is required to join the old playing fields with the new.
- Use of SAR alone during construction of first 1500 dwellings is unacceptable and inadequate.
- Routes leading to the site are not suitable for heavy loads and increased level of traffic from new residents.
- Only two access points for the development is insufficient.
- How will the centre of Wantage and its car parking cope with 5000 additional cars?
- Access to the site only from the SAR will cause a bottle neck at the Savile Way junction. This area will become an accident black spot.
- Mably Way roundabout already hugely congested with long queues of traffic.

Flooding/Drainage

- The Airfield is subject to flooding and plans for surface water drainage are not adequate. Where is the evidence that the proposed development will not adversely effect flood risk in the area?
- Grove and East Hanney have been severely affected by flooding in 2007 and there is a fear that this development will increase this risk.
- Letcombe Brook does not have the capacity to take further surface water drainage. The development of this site will result in the loss of a large area that used to absorb surface water.
- How can one be confident that the attenuated reductions will not turn out to be over optimistic?
- Concern about the effect that the development will have on the road between Denchworth and Grove which floods badly following periods of heavy rain and is sometimes impassable.
- Local drainage patterns mean that water from the site pools by the railway embankment and in extreme conditions this will form a lake and cause flooding of the road. As there is no outlet under the railway, where will all the water go?
- The site is well known as boggy marshland and any development will be knee deep in water if the 2007 floods are repeated.

Other infrastructure

- How will the massive water supply required for the development be sourced given the increasing pressure on the nation's water reserves.
- Local services are already stretched and won't be able to cope with a huge population increase. Train services to London are already saturated and car parking at Didcot station is already at capacity.
- Telephone/communications infrastructure is already sub-standard. Similar comments probably apply to gas and electricity.
- How will medical and dental services cope?
- The existing library has finance issues so who will run the new facility.
- Grove railway station unlikely to ever be reopened so all traffic will have to rely on the roads.
- There is no local hospital or ambulance station.
- Can there be a new building for a place of worship?

Design

- The design is totally out of keeping with existing village with positive disadvantages to people living to the east of Newlands Drive. Villages do not have 3 and 4 storey

houses.

- Objection to grid layout of small blocks. Cul-de-sacs connected by footpaths as per existing Grove would work better and provide safer environments for children.
- Density of housing too high and much higher than existing Grove. The tallest buildings on the site will overshadow Newlands Drive and existing Grove and are out of character with the area. 3 or 4 storey houses should be provided within the development, not adjacent to existing dwellings. Overlooking, loss of privacy and extra noise for houses on Newlands Drive.
- Fears that car parking on the site will be inadequate.
- Density and massing of new development will have an overbearing effect on existing Grove. Development should be moved away from Newlands Drive.
- The new open spaces will only benefit the new and not existing residents.
- The development is too close to Churchward Close.

Employment

- Question if there is enough local employment for new residents, particularly at this time of economic downturn.
- Placing such a large amount of housing in one place completely ignores the local demographics and employment requirements of the Vale.
- The type of housing to be provided on the site will not meet the need of future employees at Harwell Campus and surely the new housing at Didcot will meet this need. This site is therefore not sustainable.

Affordable Housing

- Should go to local people.
- Is it appropriate for these families to be placed in a small village with limited facilities and few local jobs?
- The affordable housing will take overspill from larger city estates.

Environmental

- Grove will be subject to 10 years of construction vehicles. Residents near the SAR will take the brunt of all the disturbance and be subjected to noise, traffic, pollution and inconvenience.
- Disruption for 15 years is unacceptable.
- Increase in air and light pollution.
- No suitable remediation shown for the sites contaminated land (military waste).
- Sustainable Homes Code level 3 too low – should be level 4 at least.
- Poisonous chemicals identified on the site will introduce life threatening health risks to locals and construction workers.

New local centre

- The new centre will have a harmful impact on Grovelands and may result in shops closing because of the competition.
- New shops will not be central to existing Grove and will result in residents driving to the new centre.
- The local centre should move in order to be an optimum distance from Grovelands and Millbrook.
- There seems to be inadequate car parking for the primary school and local centre.
- The local centre too big, especially with the growth of internet shopping.

Ecology

- The development will result in the loss of skylarks which nest on the land, a globally threatened species.

- The level of detail of drainage and ecological mitigation unexpected and welcome.
- There are barn owls on the site.
- The airfield is home to all sorts of wildlife which will be lost.

General

- Choice of site poor because of restricted access to major trunk roads.
- Vast majority of local residents opposed to plans.
- The scale of this 'urban extension' in a rural village location is totally inappropriate.
- Council's housing policy needs to be scrapped and looked at again.
- The development is too large for Grove and will create a commuter only village spilling huge amounts of vehicles onto existing overcrowded roads.
- Undemocratic that Wantage/Grove should have to absorb so much new housing in comparison with the rest of the district.
- There is no infrastructure in place to support the development.
- Open space generous and welcome provided it has adequately planned and funded management/maintenance.
- Crime will rise.
- No mention of a new place of worship.
- Development will harm the character of the area.
- Building should be moved beyond field next to Newlands Drive.
- Airfield is of historic interest and should not be built on.
- The local authorities have a duty of care to existing local residents and this development will have a severe adverse impact on the quality of life for people in Wantage and Grove.
- Empty houses in the wider area should be utilised before new building is allowed.
- Development will join Wantage and Grove.
- Provision of new all purpose leisure centre should be included.
- Brownfield sites should be used before greenfield and there is unlimited space in the north of the country for new houses.
- The real need for housing exists around Oxford not Grove.

4.10 Those supporting the application made the following comments:

- Welcome the development but realise that there may be many issues to solve.
- Feel strongly that the development should have a Christian centre for the Grove Free Evangelical. The Church currently meet in North Drive primary school.
- Support and welcome the change and hope it helps to forge a productive and promising future for the many current and prospective residents and for Grove as a place.

4.11 Those making observations on the application made the following comments:

- Disappointed that the developers only propose code level 3, which shows no ambition. In addition, homes should be orientated to allow solar panels to be used in the future.
- The development (all of the housing) should be used to alleviate the housing shortage in Oxfordshire, not further afield.
- Consideration should be given to increased traffic flows around the site and the impact of the Stockham Farm development.
- Wish to see a charity shop in the local centre and this could tie in with the Council's requirement for a community worker.

4.12 **Oxfordshire County Council** – no objection subject to securing the necessary infrastructure requirements to support the development in respect of: Education; one 2 form entry and one 1 form entry primary school and one secondary school with sixth

form, temporary educational provision and special education needs; children's centre; library; co-location of integrated youth support; adult learning and early years services; strategic waste management; county museum resource centre; social and health care (day resource centre); and highway and transport (local highway improvements and contributions towards bus services and strategic infrastructure such as the Wantage Eastern Link Road).

Full comments (which are split in to highway and non-highway infrastructure requirements) are **attached** at appendix 9. Please note that some of the figures have been amended and the fire service contribution has been removed altogether.

- 4.13 **County Archaeologist** – Two phases of archaeological field evaluation have been undertaken within the application area. One area is identified where archaeological features were revealed; these included linear features, ditch termini and gullies dating to the late prehistoric and Romano British periods. Further evaluation will be required to fully define the area of activity. The other areas appeared both truncated and disturbed by the construction of the airfield. We would recommend, should planning permission be granted, that a condition be attached requiring that a staged programme of archaeological investigation is undertaken within a specific area of the site. The level and extent of the mitigation will be based on the findings of the evaluation. Recommend two conditions.
- 4.14 **Natural England** – “Having considered the information provided and the potential environment impacts resulting from the proposal upon the designated sites at Hackpen Hill Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Hackpen, Warren & Gramps Hill Downs Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Whitehorse Hill SSSI, Natural England considers that this application is unlikely to have implications for the above sites. The proposals highlight that the site supports a range of protected species. These include breeding birds, great crested newts, common lizards, bats, brown hares and badgers. The results of ecological surveys should be referred to your in-house ecologist for assessment. In addition, protected species licences may be required. The North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is within 2 km of the application site and an assessment of the impact on its natural beauty, local character and distinctiveness should be included in the Environmental Statement. With regard to access, recreation and green infrastructure, Natural England would encourage any proposal to incorporate measures to help encourage people to access the countryside for quiet enjoyment. The development should seek to secure measures such as reinstating existing footpaths and the creation of new footpaths and bridleways is to be encouraged. The local planning authority should consider the inclusion and/or design of green infrastructure within this proposal. In respect of the Hedgerow Regulations 1997, our records indicate that there may be a number of hedgerows present on site. Hedgerows are protected under the Hedgerow regulations 1997 and it is against the law to remove or destroy certain hedgerows without permission from the local planning authority. The local planning authority will assess the importance of the hedgerows using criteria set out in the regulations. With regard to biodiversity enhancements, the council should consider securing measures to enhance the biodiversity of the site from the applicant if it is minded to grant permission.”
- 4.15 **Thames Water** – Waste comments. Following initial investigation, Thames Water has identified an inability of the existing wastewater infrastructure to accommodate the needs of this application. Should the local planning authority look to approve the application, Thames water would like the following ‘Grampian’ style condition imposed: “Development shall not commence until the drainage strategy detailing any on and/or off site drainage works has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in consultation with the sewerage undertaker. No discharge of found surface

water from the site shall be accepted into the public system until the drainage works referred to in the strategy has been completed.”

Water comments: Thames Water recommend the following informative be attached to this planning permission: “Thames Water will aim to provide customers with a minimum pressure of 10m head (approx 1 bar) and a flow rate of 9 L/minute at the point where it leaves Thames Water’s pipes. The developers should take account of this minimum pressure in the design of the proposed development.”

Supplementary comments: previous impact study was funded for this site in 2008, this will need to be updated by the Developer to take into account changes in the network that may have occurred since. Better advice can be given once the drainage strategy for the development has been issued and early contact with Thames Water Developer Services Department is recommended.

- 4.16 **Environment Agency** – has no objection to the application subject to the inclusion of 7 conditions. Its formal response is **attached** at appendix 10.
- 4.17 **CABE** – “Unfortunately, due to limited resources, we are unable to review this proposal.” However, it should be noted that CABE did review the Airfield Master plan in 2008 which informed the illustrative master plan submitted as part of this application.
- 4.18 **Crime Prevention Design Advisor** – no comments received.
- 4.19 **Diocese of Oxford** – Currently reviewing existing resources in order to establish its priorities and determine how best to respond. Wish to work with the local authority and developers to provide pastoral care freely and readily to all. Shared spaces: we would support a master plan that demonstrates how services can combine to provide multi-use accommodation and thereby their greater viability in cost terms, and would welcome a discussion on this. Welcome the provision of a place of worship and would welcome this being incorporated into the community facility or school.
- 4.20 **Thames Valley Police Authority (TVP)** – TVP requests additional policing infrastructure required to serve the proposed development. In addition to developer contributions, TVP also requests that the master plan be amended to provide a direct pedestrian/cycle link between the proposals and the proposed new Wantage police station at Grove Technology Park. The TVP submission sets out the policy context for the request for contributions referring to both national and local policy. It states that policing is essentially a population driven service. The likely additional population of 6000 people generated by the development represents an 80% increase in the population of Grove. Most recent data indicates that within the Grove area, TVP officers respond to 1478 incidents per year. The projected increase in population arising from the application proportionately equates to the number of incidents increasing to 2660 annually. Flowing from this TVP requests: 1) a contribution of £162,000 to fund an extension of Wantage police station to accommodate the additional staff requirement; 2) and additional marked police car at a cost of £42,300 (£13,200 initial cost and £5,820 per annum for five years for ongoing retention of the vehicle); 3) funding for one automatic number plate recognition camera at a cost of £11,000, and 4) £171,140 (based on an initial start-up cost of £6,140 plus an annual charge of £33,000 per year) for the funding of a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) for five years to serve the proposed new community at Grove Airfield.
- 4.21 **Sport England** originally objected to the application but amended comments awaited as a result of their principal concerns having been addressed by the applicants. Their original comments were as follows: “The playing field or playing fields which would be

lost as a result of the proposed development would be replaced by a playing field or playing fields often equivalent or better quality and of equivalent or greater quantity, in a suitable location and subject to equivalent or better management arrangements, prior to the commencement of the development.” The information provided appears to show that the training pitch that will be lost will be replaced on the other side of the new relief road (Denchworth Road). This means that it may be less safe and easy for users to access, particularly children. Sport England therefore considers that this provision is not of an equivalent to that existing. The rugby club has suggested a solution to the re-provision would be to bring into use some land to the north of the existing pitch this additional land would allow for a pitch to be relocated 90 degrees and therefore remain in a similar position to that existing is this something the applicant is willing to consider? With regard to other facilities, Sport England was unable to find any new information relevant to the concerns we raised regarding other sports facilities including indoor sport provision. Should your council be minded to grant planning permission for the development then in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Consultation)(England) Direction 2009, and the DCLG letter of 10 March 2011, the application should be referred to the National Planning Casework Unit.

- 4.22 **Equalities Officer** – Pleased to see that the buildings and public realm will be accessible to everyone. With regard to public transport please ensure curbs at bus stops are the correct heights for accessible buses. Please ensure that the local centre is wheelchair accessible. The DAS states that pedestrians and cyclists will share a 3m wide pavement along the southern access road; please ensure that there is a clear division such as a white line for visually impaired people. This comment is also valid for the proposed works to Newlands Drive. With regard to parking in the local centre please ensure that 6% are accessible parking bays and a further 4% are enlarged standard spaces. Please ensure accessible play equipment is provided in areas for play. I would encourage the developer to follow Sport England's guidance on accessible sports facilities which includes guidance on pavilions and clubhouses.
- 4.23 **Grove Rugby Football Club** – The new line of southern access road cuts off part of floodlit training ground shared with the football clubs. Crossing the Denchworth Road to access a training pitch on the other side of the road will be problematic, particularly as it will be used as the access for many years for construction traffic. A more direct line to the west of the electricity sub-station would save two assets – the floodlit training ground and the parking in the adjacent lay-by. It would also cause less disturbance to established housing.
- 4.24 **Grove Challengers Football Club** – The alterations to the southern access road will directly affect the designated football training ground. This is a thriving club and the offer of temporary training grounds on the other side of the road is not sufficient compensation for the loss of the existing facility. Three years ago the Club built its own clubhouse on land leased from Parish Council next to the training ground. This facility will be obsolete in many ways if separated from the clubhouse. Parents and children as young as five will have to cross this busy fast road on a blind bend. Older children (10+) who would normally make their own way to the training ground may be faced with crossing the road unattended. Furthermore, much preparation will have to be done to make this land useable. We do not wish to halt the development but we wish to ensure that the club is not detrimentally affected.
- 4.25 **HarBUG (Harwell Bicycle Users Group)** - Welcomes the proposed network of cycle routes within the development, as detailed on drawing 9603, but feel there need to be more cycle access points in order for the development to be well-connected with off-site cycle networks and off-site destinations. We would like any signage to be planned as part of a wider Science Vale/Wantage & Grove cycle network so that signs are

standardised and signed to other parts of Grove and Wantage as well as destinations internal to the development. The ES refers to various pedestrian crossings and footpath improvements. HarBUG would wish to see these as joint cycle/pedestrian crossings. In addition we would like to see an additional pedestrian/cycle access point at the west of the site to allow a route to Grove Technology Park, an additional pedestrian/cycle access point at the south west of the site, and provision for cyclists crossing the Mably Way roundabout.

- 4.26 **Countryside Officer (ecology)** – précised comments as follows: “The site has been subject to a number of surveys which has sought to identify the main ecological constraints. Where constraints have been identified, proposals for mitigation and compensation have been developed. In general terms the site is of low ecological value although there are several areas of great interest associated with specific habitats such as ponds and areas of scrub. The main ecological constraints which have been identified are: populations of great crested newts; a population of badgers; populations of farmland and ground nesting birds, and populations of reptiles. The surveys which were carried out to inform the ES were conducted between 2006 and 2010. As a result the most up-to-date survey information will be over two years old. However the habitats on-site have not changed significantly since the surveys were conducted and as a result the potential impacts of the development, particularly on protected species, are unlikely to have significantly changed. Species such as badgers are very mobile and may move around the site to new areas, however, there will be an opportunity for the survey information and mitigation proposals to be updated when the reserved matters application is submitted. I am therefore satisfied that the survey effort to date should be sufficient to allow an in principle decision to be issued in respect of the outline application.
- With regard to great crested newts, these have been found in the former Wilts and Berks Canal to the south of the site and small populations into ponds in the northern half of the site. There should be no direct impacts on the old canal and the ponds fall within the area described as the ‘Ecological Park’. Outline proposals for mitigation are included in the submitted paperwork and further detailed mitigation proposals will be required before the reserved matters application can be considered. For each reserved matters application updates should be conducted for those species which are relevant to the area. I therefore recommend a condition which would have to be complied with for each phase of the development.
 - Regarding the orientation of houses, as a general rule houses should be designed to face onto areas of public open space, nature areas etc for the most part this is as illustrated however there is one area of housing which is adjacent to the rural edge ecological corridor to the west of the site where the houses appear to back onto the open space.
 - Management of the ecology park and rural ecology buffer: the proposed mitigation for the ecological impacts of the scheme has two areas specifically designed to provide mitigation for ecological impacts; the ecology park and the rural ecology buffer. These areas include great crested newt pond, main badger sett and retained and newly created habitats designed to offset some of the negative impacts of the development. The area also provides a functional element being designed as one of the main areas for providing surface water and flood attenuation through various SUDs features. This area needs to be successfully managed and this will be dependent on three things: 1) a well thought out management plan designed to maximise the areas of ecological value balanced against the use of the areas for informal recreation; 2) proper resourcing of the management of the area to ensure that the management regimes specified in the management plan can be implemented, and 3) the body responsible for managing the ecology park and rural buffer will need to be identified and involved in the design of the management plan and agree appropriate commuted sums if necessary.

This body should have access to the skills and appropriate machinery to allow the agreed management to be implemented. As it is likely that the county council will be adopting the SUDs features they will also need to be involved in any negotiations over the management plan and contributions.

Section 106 contributions: The ES identifies the application site as home to a diverse breeding birds assemblage which includes a number of species of conservation concern. The ES identifies the loss of suitable undisturbed open farmland and arable habitats for agricultural specialist species as being an impact which cannot be fully compensated for within the application site. The applicant has therefore accepted the need to provide contributions through section 106 agreement towards securing long-term compensation for agricultural specialist bird species habitat which will be lost as a result of the development proposal. In consultation with the RSPB, a sum of £147,100 has been identified.

In addition to the section 106 requirement, a condition is also recommended requiring the submission of a protected species mitigation plan, plus a number of informatives.

However, the local wildlife trust is unlikely to take on the ecology park and buffer area. Broadly happy with the Landscape and Ecology Management Plan Framework. Suggests conditions.

- 4.27 **Landscape Architect** – No objection to the scheme in principle. Remains concerned about certain elements of the scheme such as the visual impact of the development on Newlands Drive, Churchward Close, the proposed illustrative earthworks plan and wishes to see this conditioned as part of any planning approval. Full comments **attached** at appendix 11. Please note that some of the issues raised have been addressed by the Further Information submitted in support of the application in October 2012.
- 4.28 **Arboricultural Officer** – There are no significant trees on the application site.
- 4.29 **Conservation Officer** – Satisfied that the DAS expresses the origins of the design of the scheme and provides sufficient design guidance for future reserved matters applications for the site.
- 4.30 **Letcombe Brook Project** – summarised as follows: suspect that in the long term much of the significant wildlife interest in the site will decline. Various safeguards need to be put in place to ensure the ecological interest on the site. Who will manage the areas of ecological interest? This requires specialist input. A working party should be established to include the landowner, ground maintenance company, ecological adviser, VWHDC or monitoring body and residents. Need to consider the potential impact of residents living close to the ecological areas. The ecological management plan would need to identify and include: a practical and budgeted implementation programme with annual monitoring and enforcement (who will do this?); a detailed long term budget for managing the areas; the monitoring and re-surveying of protected species.
- 4.31 **AONB Officer** – Pleased to see that the impact of the development on the AONB has been considered. Given the context of the site, the impact on the AONB will not be significant. Suggests conditions regarding materials, lighting and maximum height of buildings.
- 4.32 **Economic Development Officer** – Economic development is supportive of this

application because it fits with the Vale's strategic objective: building the local economy. It will directly improve the vitality and viability of one of the Vale's market towns – Wantage and strengthen existing service provision in the settlement of Grove. Specifically the project is supported for the following reasons: the development would support on-site jobs, and also significant numbers of indirect and induced job creation through the local spending impact of 2500 households; and the provision of local housing to support future expected employment growth in the district.

People living in this new development are expected to work locally in Grove or Wantage or to be employed in Science Vale UK and the wider district area. There is also a recognition of the employment opportunities that will occur as this development takes place and a recommendation to establish a local labour and training scheme to capture the employment and training opportunities for local people.

- 4.33 **Environmental Health Officer** – The Geo-Environmental Appraisal report has not highlighted the presence of significant quantities of contamination that would adversely affect the proposed developing of the site. However due to the size of the site there is the risk of localised areas of contamination which have not been identified, subsequently additional intrusive investigation should be undertaken in order to investigate specific ground conditions for individual development plots. I would therefore recommend that a contaminated land planning condition is applied.

Air quality Assessment: the assessment appears to be comprehensive and follows an appropriate methodology. Dust: There is potential for significant dust impact during the construction phase, particularly for the receptors closest to the site boundary. How this issue is addressed is contained in the Construction Environmental Management Plan which forms part of the ES. Noise Impact Assessment: this assessment appears to be comprehensive and follows an appropriate methodology. Receptors have been identified in Princes Gardens and Churchward Close which are predicted to have significant impact from increased road traffic noise. Recommends condition.

- 4.34 **Waste Management** – requests funding for the provision of litter and recycling bins and facilities at a total cost of £442,100.

- 4.35 **Drainage Engineer** – The submitted flood risk assessment (FRA) and supplementary addendum is sufficient in demonstrating the principles of the proposed drainage strategy and I have no objections subject to:

1. The Environment Agency raise no objections to the proposed development;
2. Oxfordshire County Council and Thames Water, as respective adopting authorities of the surface and foul water systems raise no objections to the proposed development; and
3. The detailed drainage strategy is developed in accordance with the FRA and supplementary addendum and the detailed scheme for any phase is submitted and approved prior to any works commencing on site

- 4.36 **Arts Development Officer** – The calculation for art in the local plan and SPD is £150.00 - £300.00 per unit of housing (depending on the visible impact of the site being developed) with either 1 –1.5 percent of the build costs contributed for commercial space (or £10.00 per square metre). It would appear that we are looking at £375,000 to £750,000 for the scale of development. To provide some sense of parity Great Western Park (3,300 units with retail, schools and community space) contributed £640,000. The work has to be on site with artworks publicly accessible – visible in public areas and the artwork is usually owned and maintained by whoever owned the land it sits on. Payments can be staged according to the build schedule. The district council can host

and manage the project with the developers involved or vice versa. I know that the applicants had commissioned a Public Art strategy led by Andrew Cross in 2008 and it would be good to build on this work.

- 4.37 **Network Rail** – Objects to the proposal. The proposed development of 2500 dwellings, secondary school and primary schools will significantly increase the use of the level crossing which cannot be looked on favourably by Network Rail and feel a footbridge at this location is the safest way forward to remove the risk to users of the level crossing. For information this line of route has up to 140 passenger trains and 30 freight trains a day and the line speed in this location is 125mph for passenger trains which is likely to be increasing to 140mph when the railway is electrified in 2016. We would also advise that you are obliged to consult with HM Railway Inspectorate.
- 4.38 **Housing Development and Regeneration** – comments incorporated in Planning Considerations Section of report.
- 4.39 **Grove Parish Church** – with the active support of our sister parishes in the Vale Benefice we write to show commitment to the building of a new community building and have should be supported by the S106 agreement. One of the driving forces is the desire amongst all to nurture and support ministry in the new housing. The Grove churches have a strong track record of providing support to the local community, both within purpose-built churches and within multiuse buildings. We feel strongly that the proposed infrastructure should offer facilities for Christian groups to meet on Sunday and run community groups e.g. youth clubs during the week. We are enthusiastic to engage more fully in the process and are eager to ensure that our input has sufficient detail to develop recommendations concerning the section 106 agreement. As a significant local stakeholder with an obligation to serve the whole parish and benefice we are keen to work with you to facilitate strong church involvement supporting the community's development.

5.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 5.1 There is no planning history relevant to this proposal.

6.0 PLANNING POLICY & GUIDANCE

6.1 National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012. It sets out the Government's planning policies for England. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. In achieving this objective, the Framework does not seek to change the statutory status of development plans as the starting point for decision making. However, this is predicated on the basis that local development plans are up-to-date or that existing policies are in conformity with the NPPF and that in the case of housing policies, the local planning authority can demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites.

- 6.2 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Framework does not change the 2004 Act in this respect but the weight to be given to existing policies will depend on the degree of consistency with the NPPF, i.e. the closer the policies in the plan to the framework, the greater weight that may be given.

- 6.3 Annex 1 the NPPF states:

“For the purposes of decision-taking, the policies of the local plan should not be

considered out of date simply because they were adopted prior to the publication of this Framework.

- However, policies contained in this framework are material considerations which local planning authorities should take into account from the day of its publication. The framework must also be taken into account in the preparation of plans...

- In other cases and following this 12 month period, due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with this framework (the closer are the policies in the plan to the policies in the framework, the greater weight that may be given)."

6.4 In addition to the above, the following paragraphs of the NPPF are considered relevant to the consideration of this application:

- Paragraphs 8, 14 & 49 – presumption in favour of sustainable development
- Paragraph 32 – promoting sustainable transport
- Paragraph 47 – five year housing supply requirement
- Paragraph 50 – create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities
- Paragraph 56 – good design
- Paragraph 69 & 70, 73 – promoting healthy communities
- Paragraph 95 – Building sustainability
- Paragraph 99 – flood risk
- Paragraph 109 – contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment

6.5 **Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011**

The Vale of White Horse local plan was adopted in July 2006. In July 2009, the Secretary of State's saved the majority of policies within the plan for development management purposes after the formal lifetime of the plan had expired. The saved policies comprise the development plan for the area and are therefore the starting point for determining this planning application.

6.6 With the publication of the NPPF, the Local Planning Authority undertook an assessment of the saved local plan policies for consistency with the Framework. This concluded that to a significant extent the saved policies of the Plan were consistent with the policies set out in the NPPF and can therefore continue to be relied upon for development management decision making. Reference will be made to the conformity or otherwise of each relevant local plan policy listed below.

6.7 Policy H5 of the adopted local plan specifically relates to the Grove Airfield strategic housing site. The consistency assessment deems this policy to be fully consistent with the NPPF. It requires the development to:

- provide about 2500 dwellings to 2021 (of which 500 dwellings would be built by 2011, 1000 between 2011 and 2016 and 1000 between 2016 and 2021);
- a mix of dwelling types and sizes in accordance with policy H16;
- provide 40% of dwellings to be affordable housing;
- provide housing suitable for the elderly;
- provide a mixed use local centre accessible to all with local shops and retail services including a supermarket, pharmacy, post office, public house cafe or wine bar; a primary school, an indoor community sports hall and hard-surfaced areas for sport, a library, small premises within class B1, live work units, residential uses on the floors of the local centre; primary civic space including a paved pedestrian area and public garden, facilities for preschool children, parking for cars etc., closed circuit TV;

- a community centre of at least 1400 sq metres;
- a second primary school;
- a secondary school;
- facilities for teenagers;
- a network of open spaces linked by safe convenient pedestrian and cycle routes to include a) equipped and informal children's play areas, civic spaces (about 3 ha);
- playing fields for outdoor community sport (about 11.25 ha);
- community park (about 23 ha);
- structural landscaping areas (about 12.5 ha);
- a public art project or projects;
- measures to encourage the efficient use of energy and water and other resources;
- surface water drainage works;
- a network of footpath cycle paths roads and bus routes and associated provision within the site with connections to existing and future networks;
- the realignment of Denchworth Road or an alternative road south of Grove to Mably Way;
- a new road from the site to the A338 north of Grove to be started early in the second phase of development and completed before the 1500 dwelling;
- financial contributions for off-site provision of footpaths and cycle track links and road improvements; the provision of improved public transport services, and enhancing existing infrastructure services in Grove and Wantage including Wantage swimming pool, fire station and the restoration of the former Wilts and Berks canal.

- 6.8 Policy GS1 of the adopted local plan provides a general location strategy to concentrate development within the five main settlements within the District, with small scale development in other villages covered by policies H11 (larger villages), H12 (smaller villages), and H13 (countryside). This policy is deemed to be consistent with the NPPF in respect of housing development except in the smaller settlements which may not meet sustainability tests.
- 6.9 Policy GS2 indicates that outside built up areas, new building will not be permitted unless on land identified for development or is in accordance with other specific policies. This policy is deemed to be consistent, in part, with the NPPF.
- 6.10 Policy DC1 of the adopted local plan requires new development to be of a high design and quality in terms of layout, scale, mass, height, detailing, materials to be used, and its relationship with adjoining buildings. This policy is deemed fully consistent with the NPPF.
- 6.11 Policy DC3 promotes crime deterrent and prevention in building design and site layout. This policy is deemed fully consistent with the NPPF.
- 6.12 Policy DC4 requires sites of 0.5ha or greater to contribute to public art to significantly contribute to the scheme or the area. This policy is deemed fully consistent with the end the NPPF.
- 6.13 Policy DC5 requires safe and convenient access and parking and suitable access from the public highway. This policy is deemed fully consistent with the NPPF.
- 6.14 Policy DC6 requires hard and soft landscaping to protect and enhance the visual amenities of the site and surroundings and to maximise nature conservation and wildlife

habitat creation. This policy is deemed fully consistent with the NPPF.

- 6.15 Policy DC7 requires necessary waste storage and collection arrangements to be in place. This policy is deemed fully consistent with the NPPF.
- 6.16 Policy DC8 requires necessary and essential infrastructure is provided to the site. This policy is deemed fully consistent with the NPPF.
- 6.17 Policy DC9 seeks to ensure development will not unacceptably harm the amenities of neighbouring properties and the wider environment. This policy is deemed fully consistent with the NPPF.
- 6.18 Policies DC13 and DC14 relate to the water environment and require flood risk identification, assessment, and appropriate mitigation; and to limit surface run-off of water into the surrounding water system. These policies are not deemed to be consistent with the NPPF.
- 6.19 Policy H15 requires housing densities in the five main settlements (including Grove) to be 40 dwellings per hectare and 30 per hectare in other locations. This policy is deemed to be fully consistent with the NPPF.
- 6.20 Policy H16 requires about 50% provision of housing to be two-bedroom or less for schemes of more than 10 dwellings and 10% should meet lifetime homes standards. This policy is deemed to be consistent, in part, with the NPPF. However, paragraph 173 of the Framework states that policy burdens should not be placed on developments where viability is threatened.
- 6.21 Policy H17 requires 40% provision of affordable housing for schemes of more than 15 dwellings. This policy is deemed fully consistent with the NPPF.
- 6.22 Policies HE9, HE10 and HE11 relate to archaeology and require appropriate investigation to protect any identified findings from damage and if significant to enable preservation in situ if practicable. These policies are considered to be fully consistent with the NPPF.
- 6.23 Policy NE4 covers sites of nature conservation importance and the need to protect valued habitats. This policy is deemed to be fully consistent with the NPPF.
- 6.24 Policy NE6 says that new development will only be permitted within the North Wessex Downs AONB if the natural beauty of the landscape will be conserved or enhanced. This policy is deemed to be fully consistent with the NPPF.
- 6.25 Policy NE9 of the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan refers to the Lowland Vale and that development in the Lowland Vale will not be permitted if it would have an adverse effect on the landscape, particularly on the long and open views within or across the area. This policy is deemed to be fully consistent with the NPPF.
- 6.26 Policy NE11 of the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan seeks to protect the character of areas from development in the urban fringes and important open gaps between settlements. This policy is deemed to be fully consistent with the NPPF.
- 6.27 Policy L3 makes provision for green corridors that enables a visually open nature and ecological benefit. This policy is deemed not consistent with the NPPF and should not be relied upon in determining this application.
- 6.28 Policy L14 protects the character, setting, and the restoration potential of the Wilts and

Berks canal and to ensure that the recreational potential is facilitated. This policy is deemed fully consistent with the NPPF.

6.29 Policy L15 protects the alternative new route of the canal from development. This policy is deemed fully consistent with the NPPF.

6.30 **Supplementary Planning Documents & Guidance (SPGs and SPDs)**

The following adopted SPGs and SPDs are relevant to the consideration of this application:

6.31 Residential Design Guide – December 2009

Sites for 10 or more dwellings are subject to guidance on design and layout.

6.32 Sustainable Design and Construction – December 2009

Code for Sustainable Homes guidance to achieve level 3 and working to level 4 by 2013.

6.33 Open space, Sport and Recreation Future Provision – July 2008

Advice for the provision and maintenance requirements for open space areas.

6.34 Affordable Housing – July 2006

Provides further guidance following on from policy H17.

6.35 Planning and Public Art – July 2006

Sites over 0.5ha should provide a contribution towards public art installations in line with Policy DC4.

6.36 Former Airfield west of Grove – Development Principles and Guidelines – July 2006.

7.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

The Principle of Development

7.1 The Grove Airfield site has been allocated as a strategic housing site in the adopted Vale of White Horse District Local Plan since 2006. Saved policy H5 of the plan sets out in detail the requirements of the development and the Council considers this policy to be fully compliant with the NPPF. The current application contains all the important key components set out within the policy as described in the Planning Statement accompanying the application. There is, therefore, no policy objection to the principle of this development on this allocated site.

7.2 In addition to policy H5, supplementary planning guidance (SPG) for the site was adopted in July 2006. This explains in greater detail the principles set out in policy H5 and provides advice to guide the layout, design, balance and mix of uses on the site.

7.3 In accordance with policy H5 and the SPG, the outline application comprises: up to 2500 dwellings; a local centre to include a range of shops, community services and facilities; a secondary school; two primary schools; sports facilities; the Community Park; formal and informal children's play areas and civic open spaces and road and public transport system.

7.4 There are a limited number of criteria set out in policy H5 that are not provided for in the submitted scheme in the manner envisaged by the policy. These are addressed under the appropriate planning considerations sub-headings below, but include housing mix; the level of affordable housing proposed; an indoor community sports hall; live/work units; and the restoration of the Wilts and Berks Canal. One criterion is no longer required as part of the scheme and this is the provision of closed circuit television

because the monitoring of such a facility can no longer be supported by local providers.

Housing Land Supply

- 7.5 Grove Airfield is identified as a strategic housing site in the adopted local plan and therefore plays a significant role in the provision of a five-year housing land supply for the District. As such, it is very important that it comes forward for development, but in a suitable and sustainable manner with all the required infrastructure provision. The allocation at Grove Airfield is also crucial to the delivery of other proposed housing development in the area required to meet some of the future housing needs of the District.
- 7.6 In April 2013, the Council calculated its five-year housing land supply as approximately 4.4 years, inclusive of a 20% housing supply buffer. The allocation at Grove Airfield forms part of this supply calculation, with 300 homes identified as coming forward by 2017/2018.

Housing mix and viability

- 7.7 Saved local plan policy H16 requires that 50% of the housing provision on the site shall be two bedroom units or less. However, the Council has found this policy to be only partly consistent with the NPPF in situations where it may have an impact on the viability of a development.
- 7.8 With regard to the development at Grove Airfield, the developers raised the issue of providing a policy compliant housing mix on the site as a threat to the viability of the overall scheme at an early stage in negotiations with the authority.
- 7.9 Given the experience of the Great Western Park development at Didcot, officers at both the district and county agreed that the viability of the Grove Airfield scheme would need to be independently assessed. To this end, an independent consultant, BNP Paribas, was jointly commissioned in 2009/10 by both councils and the developers to inform and advise on all aspects of the viability of the scheme.
- 7.10 One of the first inputs to be tested as part of the initial viability of the scheme was housing mix. Two scenarios were tested: a policy compliant housing mix scheme, i.e. one that provided 50% one and two bed units, and a ‘developers preferred’ housing mix. The results suggested that a policy compliant housing mix was unlikely to be flexible enough to produce a viable scheme and consequently it was agreed that the ‘developers preferred mix’ should be used as the basis of future assessments.
- 7.11 For reference the policy compliant mix and developers preferred mix are shown in the tables below:

Mix 1 Policy Compliant Mix

Mix 1	1	2	3	4
RENT	150	300	188	112
SO	50	175	25	0
OPEN MARKET	125	450	500	425
TOTAL	325	925	713	537
50% CHECK		1250		1250

Mix 2 Developer’s Preferred Mix

Mix 2	1	2	3	4
RENT	150	300	188	112
SO	50	175	25	0
OPEN MARKET	75	300	600	525
TOTAL	275	775	813	637
50% CHECK				2500

7.12 As is evident from the table above, the developers preferred housing mix lowers the number of one and two bed units and increases the number of three and four bed houses. However, the overall mix still provides a good variety and range of dwelling sizes on the site and more closely replicates the balance of housing found in the existing village.

7.13 In the wider context of housing mix, it is also worth noting that much of the new housing development in Wantage town centre over the last decade has been provided in the form of 2 bedroomed flats. Therefore, having regard to nature of the mix proposed and the wider pattern of development in the local area, officers are of the opinion that the proposed developers preferred housing mix is acceptable on the application site.

Housing density

7.14 Saved local plan policy H15 requires development on the site of at least 30/40 units per hectare (dph). The SPG for Grove Airfield refers to an average density of 40 dwellings per hectare but acknowledges that densities will vary across the site with the highest being around the local centre, with lower densities on the edge of the development.

7.15 The proposed housing density varies across the site and is shown on the Parameter Plan 4 – Density Plan (Appendix 2), with the higher density areas to the north-west and south-east of the local centre reaching up to 55dph. In these areas, the development will include some two and a half and three storey buildings. On the edges of the site and where the development fronts onto large areas of open space, the density of development reduces to up to 35dph, with buildings predominantly two storeys in height excepting some feature buildings at two and a half storeys. It should be noted that the housing densities referred to relate to the proposed developable land.

7.16 Elsewhere, and beside Newlands Drive, the development will have densities of up to 45dph and again will be predominantly two storeys in height.

7.17 The local centre will be designed with buildings that are predominantly three storeys in height with some focal buildings rising to four storeys.

7.18 Concern has been expressed by the Parish Council and local residents about the density of the proposed housing adjacent to Newlands Drive (up to 45 dph) because it will be higher than the existing development on the other side of the road. This area to the west of Newlands Drive will have a density of between 35 dph and 45 dph. The lowest in this range equates to the average density of the existing development to the east of Newlands Drive. There will be flexibility, therefore, at reserved matters stage to produce a detailed scheme that that will address the issue of density whilst having

regard to the need to make the best use of the developable land.

- 7.19 To conclude, the proposed housing density corresponds with policy and the SPG for the Airfield and is considered acceptable.

Affordable housing and viability

- 7.20 Committee will be aware that meeting housing need is one of the Council's Corporate Priorities and key to achieving this priority is the provision of affordable housing. Policy H17 states that 40% of the housing to be provided will be expected to be affordable to local people who are unable to rent or buy a house on the open market.
- 7.21 Officers conclude that adherence to this policy is all the more essential when we consider the additional requirement to provide affordable housing to support the growth of jobs in Science Vale. The council's housing allocations policy has been revised to reflect an enhanced priority for working people. This is a response to employment growth projections that will result in a significant increase affordable homes required for working people. Given over 80% of workers will be earning under £40,000 per annum, a majority are likely to be seeking to locate in the Vale and they will need affordable housing.
- 7.22 Consequently negotiations on the scheme have been predicated on the expectation that, subject to viability, the council's policy will be achieved.
- 7.23 The Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) 2008, updated in 2011, concludes that: "The scale of need continues to strongly justify the affordable housing target of 40%". The continuing need for a tenure split of 75% rented accommodation to 25% intermediate housing (for example shared ownership) set out in the VoWH supplementary planning guidance (SPG) is also confirmed.
- 7.24 However, the viability assessment undertaken by the applicants and councils has shown that factors such as construction costs, the likely size and sales values of the open market housing, the profits presumed from the scheme, infrastructure package, phasing of delivery of infrastructure in the development mean that the provision of 40% affordable housing would have an impact on the viability of the scheme. Officers calculations conclude however that the scheme is viable with 35% of the sites delivered as affordable housing with a tenure split as per the SPG.
- 7.25 The applicants have not accepted this and have offered a review mechanism which will allow the level of affordable housing to be reassessed as the scheme is built out. The concern of officers with this proposal is that once a reduced figure has been established, it would be difficult to claw back more affordable housing at a later date.
- 7.26 The officer recommendation to permit the scheme is therefore based on affordable housing provision of 35%. The applicants have recently offered phased implementation of the affordable housing equating to approximately 32% across the total development. Officers recommend that outputs from the next phases of working with the applicants on triggers and phases for infrastructure and development delivery may put the viability in a more positive position and increase the percentage of affordable housing.
- 7.27 Officer's also recommend that not less than 30% of the whole site must be delivered as affordable rented housing and will be delivered as 30% of each phase of development. Flexibility is therefore restricted to the balance of the delivery of 5% of the whole site to be developed for shared ownership. This flexibility acknowledges the contribution that the government's home ownership assistant initiatives are currently making in helping first-time buyers and others access the private housing market.

- 7.28 Within the overall percentage negotiations have been predicated upon the conclusion that, whatever percentage of affordable housing is ultimately deliverable, the tenure mix range of property types and sizes addresses the needs of the district as closely as possible.
- 7.29 The updated HNA recommends that 15% of affordable rented homes have one bedroom, 45% have two bedrooms, 25% with three bedrooms and 15% with four bedrooms. For the intermediate housing (most likely to be provided as shared ownership) the guidance provided was for 20% one bedroom properties, 70% with two bedrooms and 10% with three bedrooms to reflect the bulk of demand.
- 7.30 The Local Plan highlights the need for the Grove Airfield site to include housing provision for older people and the updated HNA acknowledges the need to make provision for specialist accommodation for the elderly people.
- 7.31 One example of specialist accommodation is extra care housing (ECH) where residents live independently in self-contained homes with support available when needed. Officers propose that the Grove Airfield site will include an extra care housing scheme of up to 80 units, including 20 units of shared ownership in accordance with the SPG. The provision of one and two bed affordable homes within the ECH section of the scheme will contribute towards the overall provision of small affordable units on the site.

Highways and Transport

- 7.32 The application is accompanied by a full transport assessment which forms part of the Environmental Statement.
- 7.33 The application is also accompanied by a Travel Plan Framework with the objective of reducing car based trips and increase walking and cycling. This sets out how a travel plan will be produced for the site with the involvement of site users.
- 7.34 The main highway access into the development will be from the south along the improved and partially realigned Denchworth Road or southern access road (SAR). This is the only part of the planning application that is the subject of detailed consideration at this time.
- 7.35 The improvements to the road include upgrading the Mably Way roundabout, the provision of a 6.5 metre wide carriageway and a 2.5 metre footpath/cycleway along its length. The road will be further widened in two places to the south of the substation to allow for pedestrian refuge crossings and speed control features. The line of the road will be altered to by-pass the electricity substation to its east. Part of the old line of the road will remain in situ to act as a haul road for construction traffic into the site and afterwards as access to the new sports pavilion and playing pitches on the application site. The remainder of the old road to its junction with Cane Lane and Newlands Drive will be restricted to pedestrian/cycle use only.
- 7.36 The lay-by to the east of Denchworth Road will also be retained.
- 7.37 The Parish Council has expressed concern that there is no specific pedestrian access shown from the existing playing pitches and clubhouses to the new pavilion on the proposed development. The applicants have been unable to show such a crossing as part of the application because they do not control a strip of land between the application site and the SAR at this point. However, it is proposed that the Section 106 agreement will make provision for monies to be made available to provide direct pedestrian and cycle access to the SAR at this point and at other points around the

edge of the development in the future, including a link to Grove Technology Park. Whilst this may not be an ideal scenario, it is not the subject of an objection to the scheme from the highways authority.

- 7.38 The improved SAR will rejoin Cane Lane and the southern end of Newlands Drive to the east of the existing junction and prior to this, a new spur will be provided onto Cane Lane for traffic travelling east.
- 7.39 A new access point will be created as Newlands Drive curves northwards. This will provide access to the secondary school and first phase of the completed housing development. The local centre and first primary school have a new access onto Newlands Drive opposite Savile Way.
- 7.40 No further vehicular accesses are proposed into the development from Newlands Drive. Instead access from the development north of the Savile Way junction will be via the main north/south route within the development, which will be extended northwards (as the first part of the northern link road) to join the existing Denchworth Road. The Parish Council and local residents have raised the lack of additional access onto Newlands Drive as a concern. This is due to land ownership issues which mean that the applicants are not in control of some of the land that adjoins the western edge of Newlands Drive. However, the highways authority is satisfied that the submitted scheme is acceptable in highway and access terms. As above, further new pedestrian/cycle links will be provided where possible across Newlands Drive.
- 7.41 Newlands Drive will be an important interface between the new development and existing Grove and it is proposed that that road will be traffic-calmed to reduce traffic speed and ensure safe pedestrian/cycle access.
- 7.42 With the exception of the spur from the north of the development to the Denchworth Road referred to above, the route of the proposed northern link road is not included within the red line of the application site.
- 7.43 Policy H5 requires the road to be provided before any more than 1,500 dwellings have been built on the site, but the majority of the land over which the road will run is not under the control of the applicants. It is, therefore, proposed to secure the provision of the northern link road with the use of a Grampian condition, i.e. a condition that will prevent the erection of more than 1,500 dwellings without the northern link road being completed. There is evidence that Grampian conditions have been used in similar situations in other schemes elsewhere in the country and advice from senior counsel suggests that this is an acceptable method of securing the road before the final phase of development.
- 7.44 The scheme has been designed to accommodate a bus service from the very early stages of development. It is important that a bus route is established early on in the development of the site to ensure that buses are seen as a viable mode of travel for future residents.
- 7.45 As referred to above, construction traffic will be taken off the southern access road, south of its junction with Newlands Drive and Cane Lane via a haul road leading into the site. This will keep construction traffic away from existing residential properties on the southern boundaries of existing Grove, thereby reducing congestion and disturbance.
- 7.46 In addition to on-site provision, the application also proposes a number of off-site highway improvements to junctions in the vicinity of the site that have been identified as

being impacted by the development. There are, therefore, proposed highway improvements to the A338/A415 (Frilford) junction, the A338/Steventon Road junction at East Hanney, the A338/Grove Park Drive junction, the A338/Oxford Lane junction, the A338/Mably Way junction and the Denchworth Road/Challow Hill junction. A highway contribution is also required for the provision of the Wantage Eastern Link Road (WELR). Off site works will also be undertaken to improve pedestrian and cycle provision. A list of all these works can be found in the highway authority's response to the application **attached** at Appendix 9.

- 7.47 Highway issues, along with drainage and flooding, have been the subject of much local concern about the proposed development. This stems from the view that the local highway network will be unable to cope with the extra traffic generated by the proposal. However, the county council, as highway authority, is satisfied that with the road improvements and mitigation measures proposed, the new development can be sustained by the local road network as proposed to be improved.
- 7.48 The submission also addresses the issue of improving local public rights of way and pedestrian and cycle access beyond the boundaries of the site.
- 7.49 The proposal is considered to comply with Policy DC5 and no objections have been raised to the scheme by Oxfordshire County Council as Highways Authority.

Drainage and flooding issues

- 7.50 The planning application is accompanied by a detailed Flood Risk Assessment (FRA).
- 7.51 The majority of the site lies within the catchment of the Childrey Brook and the associated tributaries, including the Woodhill Brook. To the north of the site, the Childrey Brook conveys flows generally in a north easterly direction passing close to West Hanney, approximately 3 km downstream. The whole site lies within flood zone 1 and outside the 1 in 100 and 1 in 1000 flood plains of the nearby watercourses.
- 7.52 It is proposed that the development will provide a multi-tier SUDs water management system. The tiered water management system will allow the development to provide three stages of water treatment, thereby minimising flood risk in times of heavy rainfall while reducing pollutants within the storm water run-off. This will ensure that the development has no adverse effect on the wider hydrology of the area.
- 7.53 The system has been designed to control the storm water run-off from the site at a rate which is 32% lower than current run-off rates from the undeveloped site.
- 7.54 The proposed SUDs scheme has also been appraised for the potential effects of climate change over the lifetime of the development, and the output calculations show that the proposals will accommodate potential increases in rainfall. With regard to foul water, this will be conveyed in a northerly direction to the Wantage sewage treatment works north of Grove. This has capacity for the proposed development and discharge into the Letcombe Brook from the works can be suitably controlled to safeguard acceptable water levels in the Brook. The level of discharge into the Letcombe Brook will be controlled and monitored by the Environment Agency.
- 7.55 Along with highways issues, potential flooding and drainage problems arising from the development have generated the largest number of objections to the scheme from the Parish Council and wider local community. However, the FRA and related documentation contained in the ES have been assessed in detail by the Environment Agency (EA), who accept its findings. The EA has confirmed that it raises no objections to the scheme subject to the imposition of conditions.

Design and DAS

- 7.56 The outline application is supported by a detailed illustrative master plan, parameter plans and a Design and Access Statement (DAS). Whilst the master plan provides an strong indication of how the development of the site may come forward, the submitted parameter plans and parts of the DAS will be ‘fixed’ at the determination at outline stage and have a material impact on the form and character of future reserved matters application for the site.
- 7.57 The master plan (**attached** at appendix 2) has been drawn up after many years of discussion with the district and county councils, and was reviewed by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) in 2008.
- 7.58 The master plan shows the location of the all the built development within the application and all associated open space and facilities. The community park and sports pitches, with associated pavilion, are located in a wide band to the south of the site, retaining the open ‘gap’ between Wantage and Grove. The proposed secondary school is also located in the southern part of the site close to Newlands Drive. The first primary school (two form entry) and new local centre are located on the western edge of the development beside Newlands Drive, opposite Savile Way.
- 7.59 The second primary school is located to the west of the secondary school adjacent to the boundary with Grove Technology Park. To the north-west of the site is a substantial area of open space which forms the ‘ecology park’. This covers the area of land currently inhabited by badgers and great crested newts and extends to the edges of the application site to the north and west to allow wildlife access to the countryside beyond. It will also provide an area of informal recreation for future occupants of the development.
- 7.60 Another important area of open space runs along the axis of one of the old airfield runways which bisects the site from the community park in the south-west to north-east. This provides not only recreational and children’s play areas but also serves as part of the proposed SUDs network. It is also proposed to create a high mound or hillock at the southern end of this feature which from the top will provide views along the length of the old runway. Further formal children’s play areas are scattered around the site (indicated by the red and blue dots).
- 7.61 The DAS is a substantial document which contains design principles for the development relating to density, scale, access and movement, green infrastructure, sustainability, vehicular access points, car parking, the Newlands Drive interface, public art strategy, legibility, phasing, and principles for the primary and secondary school sites.
- 7.62 The proposed housing will fall into three main character areas, ‘Urban Core’, ‘Park Place’ and ‘Rural Edge’, which in turn are subdivided into sub-character areas. Each character area is accompanied by an Appearance and Layout Framework Plan, which sets out in detail what character attributes (including scale, materials, fenestration, parking and boundary treatment) each area and sub area should have.
- 7.63 The Urban Core character area is located adjacent to Newlands Drive, north of the proposed secondary school. This area contains the highest density of development and is divided into three sub-areas - the local centre, the runway and core areas.
- 7.64 The second character area is Park Place. This located in the south-eastern section of the site to the west the secondary school, and incorporates the second primary school.

This is divided into three sub-areas - runway intersection, runway corridor and urban form.

- 7.65 The third character area is the Rural Edge which is located to the west/north-west of the site and is divided into three sub-areas - rural street, rural edge and core areas.
- 7.66 The local centre is located in the central position within the development close to existing Grove. It will provide a pedestrian friendly environment, with a car free area, as well as car parking for the commercial and community uses. The centre is also located adjacent to a two form entry primary school.
- 7.67 The DAS and appearance and layout framework plans have been reviewed by the conservation officer and is considered to be robust enough to inform the design, layout and character of the development at the reserved matters stages.

Landscape Impact

- 7.68 The present day landscape character of the site is predominantly open farmland with some semi-enclosed and enclosed farmland to the north-west. There are some trees and hedgerows on the site and these have been retained where practical. This character will clearly change as a result of the development.
- 7.69 The landscape strategy for the site has sought to address areas of significant impact identified in the landscape assessment submitted as part of the ES; and some re-assessment was made as part of the submission of further information in October 2012.
- 7.70 The development will not have a significant impact on the North Wessex Downs AONB to the south of Wantage and the open gap between Wantage and old and new Grove will be retained with the predominantly undeveloped community park and playing pitches area.
- 7.71 The impact of the development on the most sensitive parts of the development as identified by the Landscape Officer will need to be addressed when full details are submitted at the reserved matters stage. To aid this, it is recommended that conditions covering these areas are attached to any planning permission.

Sports facilities and playing pitches

- 7.72 In accordance with policy H5 of the local plan, the application includes approximately 11.25 ha of land for sports pitches with a new 6 changing room size pavilion to serve these. As proposed, the pitches will include: two senior football pitches; two junior football pitches; two training pitches; two mini football pitches; two mini rugby pitches, two senior rugby pitches; two junior rugby pitches and a cricket square.
- 7.73 Policy H5 also requires the provision of a community sports hall with hard surfaced areas for sport. In pre and post application discussions with the applicant, it was envisaged that this facility would be provided as a joint facility with the secondary school. However, this is much more difficult and complicated to achieve than originally thought. Thus, officers are recommending the a contribution be made instead to a similar amount to the proposed replacement Wantage Leisure Centre in lieu of providing the sports hall on the application site.
- 7.74 Similarly, a contribution is sought for a sports and recreation hub to enhance the indoor sport and swimming pool and related pay as you go sports facilities within the local Wantage/Grove area by way of a new pool within the replacement sports and recreation leisure centre. This contribution would therefore cover swimming, indoor sport, tennis and artificial grass pitch provision.

- 7.75 A small contribution is also requested for the enhancement (and maintenance) of the existing skate park in recognition of the extra use this facility will attract as a result of the development.
- 7.76 The re-alignment of the southern access road results in the loss of the corner of a floodlit training area at Wasbrough Field used by the both the rugby and football clubs. The NPPF is clear at paragraph 74 that existing playing fields should not be built on unless the loss is replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location. As a consequence of this, the applicants have been in discussion with the clubs and the council regarding the best way to address this issue. As a result, it has been agreed that one of the football club's current playing pitches at Wasbrough Field will be re-located to the application site at the earliest possible time and that the pitch which is 'freed up' will become the new floodlit training area.

Maintenance of the community open spaces and facilities

- 7.77 Grove Parish Council has recently reaffirmed its long held wish to maintain all the common areas of open space and community facilities within the proposed development.
- 7.78 In addressing the likely cost of maintaining these areas, the applicant has approached management companies to derive the likely cost. This has then been fed into the viability assessment. It is anticipated that the Section 106 will require the handing over of the open spaces and community facilities along with the provision of funds to enable their maintenance by the Parish Council or failing that a management company. The quality and level of maintenance required for all areas will be set out in detailed specifications in the agreement.

The Community Hub Building

- 7.79 Policy H5 requires a new community building to serve the development of no less than 1400sq metres. Policy H5 also requires a library, facilities for pre-school children, youth facilities, and related community infrastructure.
- 7.80 In negotiations it has been proposed to pull the contributions for the social and recreational support services into a 'community hub' which it is hoped will be managed by the Parish Council. The precise package is subject to further development work with the Parish Council. The question of how youth support will be delivered is also subject to clarification with the key users and operators of youth activities and youth support in the area.
- 7.81 This building will be the focal community facility in the new local centre and it is envisaged that it will include a wide range of community facilities including a: library, children's centre; café and kitchen; parish council offices and meeting rooms; adult learning space, flexible multi use hall; space for multi faith worship, space for pre-school children; an information centre and possibly an area for teenagers.
- 7.82 The community hub building will play a pivotal role in integrating the new and established communities. To this end and subject to timing, the community development worker, who will be funded for a five year period once the development begins to be occupied, will also be located in the hub.
- 7.83 Taking into account the changing ways that the community facilities and services are likely to be provided over the life of the Grove development, the negotiations for Section 106 contributions for social, community, recreational and leisure activities have pooled the normal per house contributions for the services proposed to enable one multi-

purpose Community Hub to be provided. Some detailed feasibility work has been carried out in consultation with the Parish Council to ensure the Community Hub will be sustainable in the long term. The Parish are very supportive of the proposal.

Education

- 7.84 In accordance with local plan policy H5, the proposed scheme includes the provision of a 9 ha. site for a secondary school and two 2.2 ha. sites for two primary schools; one 2FE and one 1FE. The developers have indicated that they would propose to construct the two primary schools to the County Council's specification, the details of which will be contained in the Section 106 agreement. The site for the planned secondary school will be given to the County Council along with a contribution from the scheme towards the funding of the new school.

Phasing

- 7.85 A phasing plan has been submitted with the application which shows three main phases of development. Phase 1 will include 500 dwellings, the southern access road, connections with Newlands Drive, and the first primary school. Phase 2 will include 1000 dwellings, the secondary school and the local centre. Phase 3 will include the last 1000 houses and the second primary school. A copy of the phasing plan is **attached** at appendix 13.
- 7.86 However, within each phase there will be sub-phases and it is these smaller areas that are likely to form the basis of future reserved matters applications.
- 7.87 It is envisaged that the build rate for the development will be approximately 250 units a year, although this number may be less in the first years of the development. The detailed phasing plan and triggers for infrastructure will be built into the Section 106. The applicants have also agreed to set up a Delivery Board to enable the confident delivery of this scheme in partnership with the District, County and Parish Councils.

Sustainability

- 7.88 This scheme is for mixed use development which should enable a sustainable lifestyle for the people living in the new development. That will be good local services, and access to local jobs and to the wider employment opportunities in Science Vale UK and beyond. The overall planned environment of the area will be managed to achieve its long-term sustainability and a positive contribution to the quality-of-life in this new part of Grove and the wider Wantage area.
- 7.89 With regard to construction, the adopted SPD " Sustainable Design and Construction" December 2009 requires all developments of 10 or more houses built in the district after 2013 to be Code level 4 plus 10% renewable energy on site.
- 7.90 The proposed scheme proposes Code level 3 and 10% renewable energy. The applicants have identified that the cost of moving from Code level 3 to Code 4 is an estimated additional £3700 per dwelling. This figure is questioned by the Council's Climate Change Officer, who has queried the cost of the components required to reach Code level 4. However, it is not disputed that the Code 4 will be more expensive to provide than Code 3 and this additional cost has been considered in the context of the wider viability assessment of the site.
- 7.91 All non-residential buildings will be built to BREEAM Very Good.
- 7.92 Having regard to this and the policy advice in the NPPF, there is an expectation to achieve sustainable development and, amongst other things, that local planning authorities should "when setting any local requirement for a building's sustainability, do

so in a way consistent with the Government's zero carbon buildings policy and adopt nationally described standards". Therefore, it is not considered appropriate to require Code 4 but to rely on the incremental changes that will be made to building regulation requirements as the development progresses. This will be built into the build costs of the new homes. Over the lifetime of the scheme it is also hoped that there will be an opportunity for some new models of housing delivery that might achieve higher environmental performance.

Ecology

- 7.93 There is ecological interest on the site, mainly in the form of badgers, newts and ground nesting birds. However, subject to the imposition of conditions and a contribution to offset the impact of the development on the loss of habitat for ground nesting birds off-site, the applicants have addressed the issues relating to ecology with a satisfactory scheme of mitigation.
- 7.94 In consultation with the RSPB, the council's ecologist is recommending a contribution of £147,100 to mitigate the impact on ground nesting birds and this has been agreed by the applicants and will form part of the Section 106 requirements.

Air Quality, Noise and Contamination

- 7.95 The development has the propensity to reduce air quality and noise, particularly in the construction phase. However the Environmental Health Officer is happy that adherence to the mitigation principles outlined in the draft Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will control emissions to a suitable level. A condition is suggested to this effect.
- 7.96 With regard to traffic noise, an acoustic fence, mechanical ventilation or a quiet road or speed restriction will be required in the environs of Princess Gardens to reduce external noise to below 55dBLAeq, 16hr.
- 7.97 It is accepted that there will be no significant impacts on local air quality and this is predicted to remain well below national air quality objectives.
- 7.98 With regard to contamination, the geo-environmental appraisal has not highlighted the presence of significant quantities of contamination that would adversely affect the proposed development of the site. However, given the size of the site there is the risk of localised areas of contamination and thus additional intrusive investigations should be undertaken to investigate specific ground conditions for individual development plots and it is suggested that this is dealt with by condition.

Wilts and Berks Canal

- 7.99 Saved local plan policies L14 and L15 protect the character, setting, and restoration potential of the Wilts and Berks canal and ensure that the recreational potential of the canal is facilitated and protects the alternative new route of the canal from development. Policy H5 states that financial contributions will be sought to help, amongst others, the restoration of the canal.
- 7.100 The alternative line of the canal crosses the site just to the north of the Mably Way roundabout at the southern end of the southern access road (Denchworth Road).
- 7.101 Due to the wider viability issues surrounding the development and because very little of the canal route falls within the application site, it is recommended that the area that is affected, i.e. works to improve the SAR near the Mably Road roundabout, be conditioned to ensure that they do not further prejudice the alternative line of the canal and its future regeneration.

Archaeology

- 7.102 This has not been raised as a major issue on the site but it is recommended that a staged programme of archaeological investigation is undertaken within each specific area of the site prior to the submission of reserved matters. The level and extent of the mitigation required will then be based on the findings of the each evaluation.

Public Art

- 7.103 The application includes a public arts strategy to be developed. This needs to be developed in detail prior to the submission of the reserved matters applications.
- 7.104 Following viability negotiations, officers are requesting a reduced contribution of £250,000 for the whole development. The applicants wish to offer £150,000, however, the former sum has already been reduced by almost half and a lesser sum is not considered appropriate to adequately cover public art provision on a site of this scale.

CIL compliance

- 7.105 The Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010 came into force in April 2010. The regulations now require S106 obligations to meet the following three CIL tests. These are that all requirements/contributions are:
- necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
 - directly related to the development; and
 - fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
- 7.106 It is considered that all the S106 requirements which form part of the recommended S106 package below meet the three statutory tests and are CIL compliant.

Section 106/Infrastructure Package

- 7.107 The District and County Council has put together a package of S106 contributions which meet the requirements of the development, are in line with the Council's requirements and adopted policies and meet the requirements of the Community Infrastructure Regulations. The package is set out in detail under the following broad headings:
- Outdoor sports and green infrastructure;
 - Indoor sports hub sport and leisure space;
 - Community hub incorporating the social, community, recreational and welfare requirements listed below of the new development;
 - Other community infrastructure such as waste, police, health and public art;
 - Education;
 - Strategic highways and transport;
 - Local labour and training, and
 - Monitoring costs.

- 7.108 In more detail, at the district level, officers are seeking a Section 106 package to the value of £49 million. The district level commitments are set out below. The table **attached** at Appendix 12 sets out the various commitments:

- 1) outdoor sports and green infrastructure;
- 2) contributions towards a new Leisure centre;
- 3) ecological mitigation;
- 4) the provision of the community building;
- 5) support for youth engagement in the new development;
- 6) a sum for public art;
- 7) a sum for Thames Valley Police;

- 8) funding for a community development officer for 5 years;
- 9) a contribution for additional cemetery provision;
- 10) a sum to provide footpath/cycle links across land on the boundaries of the site which is currently ransomed;
- 11) a sum to provide refuse and other bins and recycling facilities;
- 12) a contribution towards development monitoring costs, and
- 13) a contribution towards local labour and training.

7.109 Oxfordshire County Council are seeking contributions and/or the provision of:

- 1) Contributions towards a secondary school on a 9 ha site;
- 2) one 2FE primary school on a 2.2 ha site;
- 3) one 1FE primary school on a 2.2 ha site;
- 4) a contribution towards special educational needs;
- 5) a contribution towards adult learning, early learning and early intervention or a space within the community building;
- 6) the provision of a community library;
- 7) the provision of a children's centre in the community building or primary school and designed to enable joint use of spaces;
- 8) a contribution to a Resource centre (social and healthcare) to be integrated with ECH;
- 9) strategic highway infrastructure and contributions including bus service provision;
- 10) infrastructure and funding contribution towards the reduction, re-use and recycling of waste;
- 11) a contribution to the county museum resources to support the new community;
- 12) extra care housing (80 bed scheme to be provided as part of the affordable housing provision on the site);
- 13) a non-transport contribution bond.

7.110 It will be noted that the value of the district and county obligations combined are anticipated to be approximately £49 million. The payment of some of the above contributions will be staged and the specifications and triggers for each will be incorporated within the Section 106 agreement. This will be one single joint legal agreement between the landowners, developers, Vale of White Horse District Council and Oxfordshire County Council.

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The development of a strategic housing site at Grove Airfield with up to 2500 new homes with associated major infrastructure provision has been enshrined in local planning policy since 2006. Its delivery forms an important part of the Council's five-year housing land calculations.
- 8.2 However, the Airfield development also represents the largest strategic development site that the Vale has considered and it is therefore important that in making a decision to approve this application, the Council is confident that it can secure the quality of development and the necessary infrastructure required to support it now and in the years to come and therefore ensure that this is a sustainable development.
- 8.3 Extensive negotiations have taken place with the Council, the County and the applicants regarding S106 requirements and other factors which affect the viability of the scheme. In the current economic climate, and notwithstanding the saved planning policies which may suggest to the contrary, officers believe that a S106/infrastructure package that delivers in the region of 35% affordable housing and infrastructure provision/contributions as listed above and attached (which equates to approximately

£49 million in total or £19k per dwelling) will achieve an acceptable level of facilities on and off site to support the development and its new occupants.

- 8.4 In considering the application, due regard has been given to the representations received from statutory and other consultees and local residents. These have been taken into account in assessing the overall scheme, negotiating amendments and improvements and they have informed the S106 requirements listed above.

9.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

- 9.1 **1. That outline planning permission be granted subject to the provision of, in the order of, 35% affordable housing on the site (of which 30% shall be affordable rented) and the completion and signing of a S106 agreement to secure the following infrastructure (as set out in appendix 12):**

- **Outdoor sports and green infrastructure;**
- **Indoor sports and leisure hub;**
- **Community hub (incorporating the social, community, recreational and welfare requirements of the new community);**
- **Other community infrastructure;**
- **Education;**
- **Strategic highways and transport;**
- **Local labour and training scheme, and**
- **District and County Council monitoring costs.**

9.2 **And subject to conditions to include:**

1. Reserved matters submission to cover all aspects of development
2. Reserved matters – time limit
3. Approved plan numbers
4. Environmental statement/mitigation
5. Materials – samples
6. Boundary treatments
7. Slab levels
8. Noise levels
9. Construction traffic
10. CEMP
11. Landscaping
12. Environment agency conditions
13. Environmental health conditions
14. Surface water drainage
15. Ecology
16. Archaeology
17. Northern Link Road
18. Treatment of Burson Land
19. Phasing
20. Land budget
21. Design and access statement (including design coding as appropriate)
22. Allotment provision and timing
23. Works to ditch outside application site
24. Total amount of housing numbers
25. Housing mix
26. Lifetime homes
27. Code of construction practice
28. Hours of construction
29. Provision of replacement pitch

30. Hours of operation for the non-residential development
31. External lighting
32. Thames Water condition(s)
33. Section 38 and/or 278
34. Access for construction vehicles
35. Restriction of residential occupation until infrastructure provided
36. Restriction on non-residential occupation until infrastructure provided
37. Timing of bus service provision
38. Code levels residential
39. Code levels non-residential
40. Rainwater harvesting
41. Location of local recycling sites
42. Recycled material for highways
43. Bin stores
44. Bicycle storage
45. Ducting for broadband
46. Fire hydrants
47. Waste management plan
48. Travel Plan
49. Public art strategy
50. Wilts and Berks canal condition
51. Restricted access to ecology park
52. Earthworks plan
53. Details of service corridors
54. Phasing of green infrastructure
55. Landscape and ecological management plan
56. Location of construction compounds
57. Green buffer to Churchward Close
58. Use of variety of Architects throughout scheme
59. Network Rail level crossing signing.

And informatives as required.

- 9.3 **2. The delegation to the head of planning the decision to switch between the use of planning condition or clauses within the Section 106 Agreement to achieve the agreed infrastructure package and other outcomes in line with this decision;**
- 9.4 **3. And that the Committee agree to set up a Development Delivery Board to support the delivery of the development in the Grove area.**