

<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	<a href="#">P14/V0130/O</a>
<b>APPLICATION TYPE</b>	OUTLINE
<b>REGISTERED</b>	20.1.2014
<b>PARISH</b>	CHILTON
<b>WARD MEMBERS</b>	Margaret Turner Reg Waite
<b>APPLICANT</b>	G H King & I A King Trust
<b>SITE</b>	Land adjacent to Manor Close, Chilton, Oxfordshire
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Outline application for erection of 15 dwellings with associated means of access, car parking and landscaping. (As clarified by Thames Water Sewer Impact Study accompanying agent's email of 7 July 2014).
<b>AMENDMENTS</b>	One – Additional Information – as above
<b>GRID REFERENCE</b>	449056/186153
<b>OFFICER</b>	Peter Brampton

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### SUMMARY

This application is referred to planning committee as Chilton Parish Council recommends refusal, and twenty letters of objection from residents have been received.

The proposal is for outline planning permission (all matters reserved apart from access) for the erection of 15 houses on land adjacent to Manor Close, with a new access taken from Townsend

The main issues are:

- The location of the site outside the built up limits of the village, contrary to policy
- Whether the site is a sustainable location for new housing submitted in response to the five-year housing supply shortfall
- Whether the proposal will have an acceptable impact on the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in which it falls
- Whether the proposal will impact on highway safety
- Whether the proposal will impact on the foul drainage network
- How the development will be affected by the proposed A34 slip roads
- Whether the lack of public open space within the site is acceptable

The application is recommended for approval.

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application site is a single field on the northern edge of Chilton, adjacent to the existing edge of the settlement. The field is around 1 hectare in size and is currently used for grazing. It is “L” shaped, wrapping around the back of the current edge of Chilton, which is Manor Close.
- 1.2 Along the northern boundary of the site runs Hagbourne Hill, which runs down into the junction that allows access going south onto the A34. The site lies adjacent to the proposed location of the north facing “off-slip” of the A34, which is a strategic priority for the County Council and the Vale of White Horse as part of a suite of transport infrastructure improvements associated with the Science Vale Oxford Enterprise Zone. These same works will also provide a north facing “on-slip” to the A34 allowing

easy access from Chilton to Didcot, Abingdon and Oxford.

- 1.3 The residential development to the south is typically two-storey and traditionally proportion, being of brick and tile construction. Generally, the density of development in this part of Chilton is low, reflecting the rural setting of the village, which falls within the North Wessex Downs AONB.
- 1.4 Chilton is one of the district's smaller villages, due to the low amount of facilities within it. The Town and Villages Facilities Study Update February 2014 confirms that Chilton benefits from a church, a pub, a village hall (within the church), a mobile library and recreation facilities. It also "scores" ranking points due to its bus service and proximity to employment (i.e. Harwell Science Campus). However, this update does not include Chilton primary school, due to its distance from housing in the main village.
- 1.5 The application comes to committee as Chilton parish council recommends refusal, and as twenty letters of objection have been received.
- 1.6 A location plan is **attached** as Appendix 1.

## 2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 This application seeks outline consent for the erection of 15 houses on the site. All matters are reserved except for means of access. The Housing mix has been amended to reflect the requirements of the council's housing team (see Para 3.16). This will create a mix of 1 one-bed, 4 two bed, 6 three-bed and 4 four-bed properties.
- 2.2 An indicative site layout has been provided, that shows the houses on the southern part of the site, relating to the Manor Close development. The new houses are either side on, or back onto the rear elevations of properties on Manor Close, with the exception of Plot 15, which is part of Manor Close itself. Plots 1-14 will be accessed from a new access onto Townsend.
- 2.3 The Design and Access Statement confirms that the development will consist of detached and semi-detached dwellings of two storeys in height. The dwellings will have pitched roofs at traditional pitches. The Design and Access Statement confirms the roofs will be clay tiles, with walls consisting primarily of brick, with render, timber cladding and natural stone used to add interest reflective of the area.
- 2.4 Thirty-three parking spaces will be provided, including four visitor spaces. The layout indicates a turning head for larger vehicles. The indicative layout does not include any formal public open space, with a commuted sum offered to improve the facilities at the local recreation ground, which lies nearby, accessed from Townsend.
- 2.5 During the processing of the application, the applicant has instructed Thames Water to undertake a sewage impact study, given initial consultation responses both locally and from Thames Water about the capacity of the sewer network in the village.
- 2.6 Financial contributions towards off-site services are required to mitigate the impact of the additional residents who will occupy the proposed development. As well as ensuring affordable housing is achieved on site, the applicants will provide financial contributions to a number of infrastructure requirements. The contributions currently requested can be summarised thus. They are the subject of further negotiations with both the county and district council.

2.7 **County Council Agreement**

- Science Vale Oxford UK Transport Infrastructure - £41,055
- Primary Schools - £57,910
- Secondary Schools - £144,585
- Special Educational Needs - £3,066
- Library Infrastructure - £3,825
- Day Care - £3,300
- Waste Infrastructure - £2,880
- Youth Support - £992
- Museum Resource Centre - £225
- Adult Learning - £464

2.8 **District Council Agreement**

- Sports and Recreation - £33,332
- Public Open Space maintenance contribution - £39,855 (Proposed to be off-site)
- Waste Collection - £2,550
- Chilton Parish Council contributions – TBC

2.9 Extracts from the applications plans are attached as **Appendix 2**. Documents submitted in support of the application, included the design and access statement, flood risk assessment and transport statement are available on the council's website.

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 **Chilton Parish Council** – Strongly objects to the application on primary grounds of conflict with the planned A34 slip road project, sewer capacity, the unsustainable nature of the development, the impact on the AONB, density, neighbouring impact and highway safety. The full response of Chilton Parish Council is **attached** as Appendix 3.

3.2 **Neighbour Representations** – One letter of support for the application has been received. 20 letters of objection have been received. The main objections can be summarised thus:

- Site lies outside the built up limits of Chilton
- Chilton has already borne large-scale residential development in response to the district's housing supply shortfall
- Development would set precedent for village
- Fifteen houses on the site represents overdevelopment
- The visual impact of the development will impact on rural character of village
- Increased vehicle movements onto Townsend will endanger highway safety at an already difficult junction
- Uncertainty over how A34 slip road project will impact on this development
- Existing sewers already regularly overflow – cannot cope with more housing
- Insufficient capacity at local school for more pupils
- Not enough local amenities for new residents to use
- Increased noise disturbance for existing Manor Close residents and for new residents from A34 slips
- Increased overlooking of Manor Close properties
- Loss of outlook to Manor Close properties
- Loss of wildlife habitat
- Incorrect land ownership shown

3.3 **Oxfordshire County Council Highways** – No objections subject to conditions relating to access, visibility, parking, turning and construction traffic management and financial contributions to Science Vale UK transport strategy and provision of pedestrian routes

- 3.4 **Oxfordshire County Council Archaeologist** – No objections
- 3.5 **Oxfordshire County Council Education** – No objections subject to financial contributions to primary, secondary and SEN education
- 3.6 **Oxfordshire County Council Property** – No objections subject to financial contributions to libraries, day care, waste infrastructure, youth support, the museum resource centre and adult learning
- 3.7 **Oxfordshire County Councillor Stewart Lilly** – No objections
- 3.8 **Drainage Engineer** – No objections subject to condition requiring prior agreement to surface and foul drainage strategy
- 3.9 **Landscape Architect** – *“The proposed site located on the northern edge of Chilton is well treed on three sides. The trees although significant within the landscape provide little visual screening in the winter. It is good to see in the Design and Access Statement that the majority of the trees will be retained and the woodland belt will be enhanced by planting a native understory including evergreens.*

*On the Illustrative Masterplan, page 36 of the DAS there is mention of an acoustic fence and visual barrier along the northern boundary. But there is no information of size, location or extent of this fence. It would be helpful to have some idea what is proposed along this important boundary.*

*The layout provides a much more acceptable edge to the village in landscape terms with the houses facing north onto the new access road and the rear gardens backing onto the existing houses.*

*This is a prominent site on the edge of the Chilton and will become more visible if the new slip road from the A34 is constructed. It will be important to ensure that the proposed tree retention plans and landscape scheme will complement the development and this entrance to the village.”*

- 3.10 **North Wessex Downs AONB Unit** – *“The North Wessex Downs AONB Unit note that this site is outside the settlement boundary and would normally have warranted refusal on that basis alone. However, due to the 5 year housing supply problem and lack of any Core Strategy in place in this Local Authority area, it leaves sites of this nature vulnerable to development (despite being in the countryside of a nationally protected landscape).*

*Although there may still be reasons in certain cases where landscape impact will be considerable and again refusal is warranted, it is accepted in this case that the site has some merits (in landscape terms) for use as a small housing site as an extension to the village. Therefore subject to clear conditions to protect existing landscaping and provide new landscaping (and care over external materials, layout and design) and the requirements of the Council's Landscape Architect are met, the North Wessex Downs AONB raise no objection in this case in terms of impact on the wider AONB landscape.”*

- 3.11 **Natural England** – No objections, encourages the views of the local AONB board are sought
- 3.12 **Environment Agency** – No objections
- 3.13 **Thames Water** – No objections following completion of Sewer Impact Study

- 3.14 **Countryside Officer** – No objections subject to pre-commencement condition regarding biodiversity enhancement measures
- 3.15 **Equalities Officer** – No objections
- 3.16 **Housing Officer** – No objections, subject to provision of 6 affordable units in mix of 1 x one bed, 4 x two bed and 1 x three bed, to meet size requirements
- 3.17 **Leisure Department** – Requests financial contributions as outlined in Section 2. Identifies lack of public open space within development but highlights potential for equivalent financial contribution to local recreation ground
- 3.18 **Crime Prevention Design Adviser** – General comments about Secured by Design supplied.
- 3.19 **Health & Housing - Air Quality** - No objections
- 3.20 **Health & Housing - Environmental Protection Team** – No objections subject to mitigation measures in noise assessment being implemented in construction

#### 4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 None

#### 5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

##### 5.1 **Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 policies;**

- GS1 - Developments in Existing Settlements
- GS2 - Development in the Countryside
- DC1 - Design
- DC3 - Design against crime
- DC5 - Access
- DC7 - Waste Collection and Recycling
- DC8 - The Provision of Infrastructure and Services
- DC9 - The Impact of Development on Neighbouring Uses
- H11 - Development in the Larger Villages
- H13 - Development Elsewhere
- H15 - Housing Densities
- H16 - Size of Dwelling and Lifetime Homes
- H17 - Affordable Housing
- H23 - Open Space in New Housing Development
- NE6 - The North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

##### 5.2 **Emerging Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2029 Part One**

##### 5.3 **Supplementary Planning Documents/Guidance (SPD/SPG)**

- Residential Design Guide – December 2009
- Open space, sport and recreation future provision – July 2008
- Affordable Housing – July 2006
- Flood Maps and Flood Risk – July 2006

##### 5.4 **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – March 2012**

- Paragraphs 14 and 29 – presumption in favour of sustainable development
- Paragraphs 34 & 37 – encourage minimised journey length to work, shopping, leisure and education
- Paragraph 47 – five year housing supply requirement
- Paragraph 50 – create sustainable inclusive and mixed communities

Paragraphs 57, 60 & 61 – promote local distinctiveness and integrate development into the natural, built and historic environment

Paragraph 99 – Flood risk assessment

Paragraph 109 – contribution to and enhancement of the natural environment

Paragraph 111 – encourage the effective use of land

## 6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

### *Current policy position*

- 6.1 This scheme is contrary to Policies GS2 and H12 of the Local Plan, which restrict development on unallocated greenfield sites and housing developments outside the smaller villages of the district. Thus, ordinarily, the council would only consider the potential development of this land through the local plan process given the site's size and location. However, the council must assess this application on its own merits.

### *Principle of development*

- 6.2 The NPPF is clear that council's should grant planning permission where the development plan is absent, silent or the relevant policies are out of date, unless any adverse impacts significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposed development when assessed against the policies of the NPPF as a whole (Para 14 refers).
- 6.3 Paragraph 47 of the NPPF confirms the need for a council to have a demonstrable five-year supply of housing land, with a 20% buffer to accommodate a persistent under-supply of housing land. It is well documented this council does not currently have this five-year supply and has persistently under-delivered on housing. This lack of a five-year housing land supply requires some flexibility in line with the NPPF when assessing applications that do not accord with local plan policies.
- 6.4 It is clear this application is contrary to local plan policies GS2 and H12. However, whilst the council does not have a five-year housing land supply, these two policies are inconsistent with the NPPF. Therefore, the council must assess the proposed application on its site-specific merits. However, it is important to note that, given the AONB location, the presumption in favour of sustainable development within the NPPF is not engaged. The NPPF only allows major development within the AONB in "exceptional" circumstances. Therefore, the central assessment at the heart of this proposal is the balance between the need to provide additional housing within the district against any harm the proposal will cause to this designated landscape.

### *Emerging policy position*

- 6.5 The emerging Local Plan Part One confirms Chilton is a smaller village within the South Eastern Vale sub-area. The emerging policy is that only small-scale residential development, to meet local needs, will be allowed within the built up limits of the smaller villages of the district. Development outside the built up limits of the smaller villages will need to be allocated through the Local Plan or by a neighbourhood plan. Any development will need to be adjacent to, or well related to, the existing built up area of the settlement. Nonetheless, the emerging Local Plan has only very limited weight at this stage, so the overriding definition of sustainable development remains that of the NPPF.

### *Use of land*

- 6.6 The land has mostly recently been used for the grazing of livestock. The Planning Statement identifies that the most recent Soil Survey of England and Wales rates the site as a mixture of Grade 2 and Grade 3 agricultural land. The NPPF identifies the need to protect the best and most versatile agricultural land from development. However, this survey is relatively broad. Furthermore, as the applicant states, the small

and awkward shape of the field, the access and the proximity to existing housing count against the site as suitable for modern farming. It is considered the loss of this small field from agricultural production would not justify a refusal of outline planning permission.

*Sustainability credentials*

- 6.7 The site immediately abuts Manor Close, which is the current edge of the village. This single field lies neatly between this existing residential development and Hagbourne Hill, which acts as a natural break between the village and the A34 beyond. Hagbourne Hill and Townsend act as clear boundaries to the development that contains it close to the existing village. Furthermore, the proposed development would not project significantly further northeast into open countryside than the existing village, with Limetree Farm projecting marginally further. As such, it is considered this field relates reasonably well to the existing village and is an acceptable location for new housing given the policy situation outlined above.
- 6.8 Furthermore, the site is well related to the facilities of the village. The Town and Village Facilities Study uses roads to measure distances to local services. Using this approach, the new houses will be amongst the closest in Chilton to the primary school, which lies on the other side of the A34 (circa 900 metres). (It is noteworthy this approach excludes footpaths). The site is around 550 metres from the Rose and Crown public house – a relatively easy walk. Crucially, the site lies within 200 metres of All Saints Church, which also acts as a village hall, and within 300 metres of the main recreation ground serving the village. Therefore, the site is well related to all the facilities in the village, boosting its credentials as a sustainable housing site.
- 6.9 It is also important to consider the wider position of Chilton in relation to the rest of the district. In this respect, the site is well placed. On the opposite side of the A34 lies Harwell Science Campus. This is one of the key employment sites in the Vale of White Horse and forms a cornerstone of the Science Vale Oxford Enterprise Zone. Residents of this site could access the Campus reasonably easily on foot or bicycle.
- 6.10 Furthermore, the site's proximity to the A34, which links southern Oxfordshire to Oxford, Reading and many other towns and cities is an important factor. From Chilton, Milton Park is around a 15-20 minute drive and is another key employment site within the Enterprise Zone. As this site lies close to the heart of the Enterprise Zone, the applicants have agreed to pay proportionate financial contributions to the associated transport infrastructure package to the County Council. As outlined in Section 1, one of the key infrastructure improvements will be the provision of north facing slip roads for the A34 at Chilton. The residents of this development would benefit from this project.
- 6.11 Given the demand for additional housing in the district, how the site relates to the existing village, the proximity of the site to local services, the enterprise zone and the major road networks in the area, this site is considered a suitable location for housing development when assessed against the NPPF.

*Cumulative impact considerations*

- 6.12 Using the latest population date available to the council, this development will increase the population of Chilton parish by 36 people. This represents approximately a 4% increase in the population of the parish, which is not considered significant.
- 6.13 However, it is important to be mindful of the other permitted major developments in the area. Currently, work is nearing completion on a scheme of 275 houses on the site known as Chilton Fields. Combined, these two schemes will bring 699 people into the parish, representing a 79% increase in the parish population. Of course, the vast

majority of these additional residents will reside at Chilton Fields, but this increase does highlight the need to secure appropriate financial contributions from this development to mitigate its impacts on local services and ensure the overall increase in the population is managed sustainably.

- 6.14 In particular, it is important to note that Chilton primary school will be at capacity once the Chilton Fields development is complete. Therefore, the financial contribution from this development to primary schools will go towards the direct expansion of Chilton Primary School. This is something Oxfordshire County Council believes can occur on the existing site of the school.

*Affordable housing and housing mix*

- 6.15 The applicant has indicated their acceptance to the requisite affordable housing provision on the site. This is 40% to accord with local plan policy, in a mix as outlined in Para 3.16. This provision will be secured through a legal agreement should the recommendation of approval be agreed.

- 6.16 The indicative housing mix will have to alter to meet this affordable housing requirement. Currently, there is an under-provision of smaller units on the site (five out of fifteen) The council's Housing Needs Assessment indicates that half of the dwellings on any housing site should be two bedrooms or else. Therefore, the detailed reserved matters application will need to alter this mix slightly to include more small units. Any deviation from the required mix will require justification.

*Visual impact – landscape, layout, design and appearance*

- 6.17 The NPPF is explicit in seeking a high quality outcome for good design in terms of layout and building form, seeing as a key aspect of sustainable development. Paragraph 109 states, "*the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.*" The NPPF confirms that "*Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty.*" It goes on to say that, "*Planning permission should be refused for major developments in these designated areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest.*" Policy NE6 of the Local Plan states, "*Development within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will only be permitted if the natural beauty of the landscape is conserved or enhanced.*"

- 6.18 The site benefits from strong boundary planting on three sides. These trees are significant within the landscape, but provide little visual screening in the winter. The Design and Access statement recognises this constraint and proposes to retain these trees and introduce new evergreen planting underneath the canopies of the trees. This is welcomed by the council's landscape architect. This new planting will also need to screen the acoustic fencing proposed to shield the development from the noise of the A34. Details of this relationship will be for the reserved matters application to finalise. Such planting can also be used to replace the rather unattractive close-boarded fencing at the corner of the site, close to the Townsend/Hagbourne Hill junction.

- 6.19 One particular advantage of this proposal is the opportunity to provide a much more acceptable edge to the village in landscape terms than the existing Manor Close. The development proposes an active frontage onto Hagbourne Hill, where currently Manor Close turns its back on this important entrance route to the village. Thus, close-boarded fencing is currently clearly seen in winter when passing this part of the village. This arrangement is much more desirable in urban design terms.

- 6.20 The construction of the new A34 slip road will potentially be a major constraint for the reserved matters application to address. The use of retained trees, new planting and



sensitive boundary treatments will be crucial to ensuring the development successfully integrates into this important interface between the A34 and the village of Chilton.

- 6.21 In terms of the impact on the AONB itself, it is noteworthy that the local AONB board agrees with the council's landscape architect that this proposal offers an opportunity to enhance this particular edge of Chilton. The AONB board is right to highlight the importance of landscaping and boundary treatments and these will be covered by the reserved matters application.
- 6.22 Therefore, the balance between the NPPF requirements to provide a five year supply of housing and the need to protect the AONB remains critical to the recommendation. It is considered that, whilst within the AONB, the existing site is not a particularly crucial part of it, and does not play an integral role to the character of the AONB. This is noted by the local AONB board. Furthermore, this relatively small-scale proposal represents an opportunity to enhance the role the site plays within the AONB through new planting and the active frontage onto Hagbourne Hill. On this basis, it is considered that this particular development can be supported, as the benefits of new housing in the area, plus the potential enhancement to the AONB in the vicinity, will overcome the in-principle objection within the NPPF to major development within the AONB.
- 6.23 In terms of layout, this is largely influenced by the proximity to the A34 (and the potential slip roads). To ensure the noise impacts of this road is not too severe on the amenity of future residents, the houses are all positioned in the southern portion of the site. This also works well in terms of relating the development to the existing village. The single access road runs around the front of Plots 1-14, providing parking and turning space for the development. Those areas closest to the northern boundary will be reserved for landscaping. Given the awkward shape of the site, its constraints, and the relatively small scale nature of the development, this layout is considered acceptable.
- 6.24 Fifteen dwellings on this one hectare site are considered appropriate given the edge of village location. The proposal for two-storey housing using traditional materials and design approaches is also acceptable. These details will be for the reserved matters application to confirm.
- 6.25 Overall, despite the sites location beyond the built up limits of Chilton, within the AONB, it is considered this development will not cause any material harm to the character of the landscape or the immediate area. In fact, the proposal offers an opportunity to enhance this entrance to the village.

*Public Open Space*

- 6.26 Policy H23 requires this development to provide 15% of the residential area to be laid out as public open space, as the scheme provides 15 dwellings and is over half a hectare in size. This is a policy that is normally applied strictly to development proposals submitted in response to the five year supply shortfall, as they are generally relatively unconstrained greenfield sites. However, with this particular proposal, no formal open space is provided, with a commuted sum to enhance existing off-site public open space offered as mitigation. Consideration has been given to whether a deviation from this policy is acceptable in this instance.
- 6.27 As outlined in the previous section, the layout of the scheme is relatively fixed, due to the proximity to the A34. This pushes the housing back to the southern boundary, with the access road (to adoptable standards) running along the northern front of these houses. Given the unusual shape of the site, this only leaves a relatively small band of space beyond the access road. This narrow strip will have to accommodate new

planting and the acoustic fence necessary to shield the noise from the A34. Consequently, there is little room left over for formal public open space in line with council standards. This narrow strip could not be adapted to provide usable open space, and even if it were, the enjoyment of it would be harmed by the proximity of the A34.

- 6.28 Thus, the only likely solution to achieve 15% public open space on the site would be to remove some of the units. Fewer units would make it more difficult to insist on compliance with Policy H23, as the threshold for public open space is 15 units or a site of half a hectare or more. Furthermore, what public open space that could be achieved would likely have to sit between units, and would be a relatively small area. It is doubtful such an area would be used in the manner Policy H23 intends.
- 6.29 Another aspect of whether a commuted sum to public open space is whether it could be spent close enough to the development to be of benefit to new residents. In this case, it could, as the site lies within 300 metres of the Chilton recreation ground. This ground has a good range of amenities for children and adults alike, with a hard surface court for ball games, a toddler area, an 8-13 years play area, swings and slides and a football pitch. All of these facilities could be easily used by residents of the new housing. Furthermore, this is a large area where a commuted sum could easily be spent to enhance the offering of the recreation ground. It is entirely possible that new facilities here would enjoy greater use than if they were provided within the application site itself.
- 6.30 For these reasons, it is considered a deviation from Policy H23 can be justified in this particular instance. This is a small development, and so, relatively, 15% of the site given over to public open space would be quite a small area that may not be used in the manner the policy intends. It is likely to be of more benefit to existing and new residents alike if the existing nearby recreation ground is upgraded. Therefore, it is recommended that the commuted sum for maintenance of the policy required area of public open space within the development normally requested is passed over to improve facilities at Chilton recreation ground.
- 6.31 Coupled with this, it is considered there is space within the development to provide a small area of children's play. This can be secured by condition to ensure that the development is not completely without any formal play space.

*Surface and foul drainage*

- 6.32 The applicants have provided a full flood risk assessment with the application, which includes a surface water drainage strategy for the site. The council's drainage engineer has confirmed this is acceptable in principle. A Grampian condition is necessary to ensure the prior agreement to a detailed surface water drainage strategy before work starts on site. This strategy will need to be SUDS compliant to prevent water draining onto the highway. The County Council Drainage team have raised concerns about the appropriateness of a swale contained within the site. Further details of this, or an alternative solution, will be covered in the SUDS scheme required by the condition.
- 6.33 Thames Water initially identified capacity issues in the foul sewer network. In response, the applicants have worked with Thames Water to undertake a sewage impact study to understand the issues involved. The report concludes *"the existing foul network has sufficient capacity downstream of the proposed connection manhole to accept the proposed development flows. The additional flow from the development site does not cause any significant increase in predicted flooding or surcharge on the sewer network. Therefore, improvements to the network will not be required."* On this basis, Thames Water has now withdrawn their objection to the application.

- 6.34 However, the council's drainage engineer has confirmed local objections which state the existing sewer network regularly floods. It is believed this is primarily caused by the ingress of surface water and ground water into the network. Thames Water is understood to be aware of this issue, but is not requiring it to be addressed by this development. It is the case that this development cannot be expected to bear the costs of fixing an existing problem with the sewer network. If Thames Water considers that no improvements to the foul network are necessary to meet the requirements of this proposal, a refusal on foul drainage grounds cannot be maintained by the council. However, given the known issues with the sewers in Chilton, a comprehensive Grampian condition is necessary, requiring the applicant to confirm their foul drainage strategy prior to works commencing.

*Highway Safety*

- 6.35 The impacts of additional cars using the Townsend/Hagbourne Hill junction, and the proximity of the new access to this junction, has been the source of local objection. However, the applicants have provided a Transport Statement, which has been assessed by the Highways Authority at Oxfordshire County Council, who has confirmed no objections on highway safety grounds.
- 6.36 The overall level of additional vehicular movements has been found to be within the capacity of the local road network. The proposed access can achieve appropriate visibility splays, and its proximity to the Townsend/Hagbourne Hill junction is not considered an issue. Works within the highway will be covered by a Section 278 agreement with the County Council Highways Authority. This agreement will also cover the provision of additional footpaths to link the development into the existing footpath network to encourage walking to the school, Harwell campus and other facilities.
- 6.37 The detailed layout will need to show the road, turning head and car parking meets County Council standards. Pre-commencement conditions will cover this aspect of the scheme.
- 6.38 There is no indication the provision of the north facing slip roads to the A34 will have an impact on this development assimilating into the highway network without causing material planning harm.

*Noise*

- 6.39 As outlined previously, the proximity of this site to the A34 (and the new slip roads) has been a constraint on the layout. The applicant has provided a noise report in response to this, which has been updated to reflect predicted noise levels from the new slip roads. This report indicates that, with the provision of double glazing to all houses, and the provision of solid boundary treatments at certain points across the development, the predicted noise levels will be within the standards applied by this council. The council's environmental health officer has confirmed no objections to the scheme, subject to a condition requiring the mitigation measures outlined in the report to be incorporated into the construction of the housing. This condition is recommended.

*Other issues*

- 6.40 The applicants have provided an arboricultural report with the application. This confirms that, taken individually, many of the trees have little value. However, those along the western and northern boundaries have group value, acting as a strong screen to the site, as discussed in previous sections. There are also some valued trees on account of their stature and positive landscape contribution.
- 6.41 Crucially, the trees of value are largely situated around the perimeter of the site and the potential for conflict with the indicative layout is limited. Therefore, it is considered a

pre-commencement condition requiring the prior agreement to tree protection measures is necessary and commensurate to the risk to important trees.

- 6.42 A habitat survey accompanies the application and provides a number of suggested biodiversity enhancement measures. The council's countryside officer has agreed these measures to be appropriate, with further details required by pre-commencement condition.
- 6.43 A number of neighbours along Manor Close have raised concerns about increased overlooking from the new houses, and a loss of outlook. Currently, these properties enjoy an uninterrupted view across the application site, with many having low-level fencing along their rear boundaries to maximise this view. However, it is important to note there is no right to a view across private land so the council can only seek to preserve a reasonable level of amenity for existing residents. To that end, the indicative layout shows that the side to rear distance for Plot 1, and the back to back distances for Plots 2-15 accord with the residential design guide, which requires 12 metres and 21 metres respectively. Given this, there can be no objection to the impact of this proposal on neighbouring amenity. However, the reserved matters application will need to show in detail the relationship between the new houses and Manor Close.
- 6.44 The council's contaminated land officer has recommended a condition requiring the applicants to undertake a contaminated land investigation prior to work commencing on site. However, there is no record of contamination on the site and so it is considered such a condition would be unduly onerous and not justified.
- 6.45 The Crime Prevention Design Advisor recommends a condition requiring Secured By Design to be achieved. This will be an issue at reserved matters stage.

## 7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 This proposal does not accord with the development plan and so the council has advertised it as a departure. However, in light of the current shortfall in the council's five year housing supply and national guidance in such situations, the proposal is considered acceptable given the following:
- Character – The site can appear as a natural extension to the village, with the potential to enhance this edge of Chilton through the introduction of new planting and the provision of an active frontage onto Hagbourne Hill. As such, it will have an acceptable impact on the wider landscape, which falls within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
  - Sustainability – Although Chilton is a smaller village in itself, when assessed against the Local Plan criteria, the site is well located to access the facilities of Chilton and also the employment opportunities of Harwell Science Campus, and the A34. Accordingly, it is a sustainable location for new residential development when assessed against national guidance
  - There are no technical concerns regarding highway safety, flood risk, drainage, ecology, trees and the amenity of existing and future residents.
- 7.2 The proposal would result in a sustainable development in terms of the relationship and proximity to local facilities and services. Importantly, this site is in a single ownership and the applicant has agreed the provision of affordable housing to meet local requirements and this makes the site deliverable within eighteen months. This makes a measurable contribution to help address the current housing land shortfall. A condition requiring the commencement of development within eighteen months of the date of the grant of planning permission is recommended and is acceptable to the applicant

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that outline planning permission is granted subject to:

**1. A S106 agreement with both the County Council and District Council in order to secure contributions towards local infrastructure and to secure the affordable housing.**

**2: Conditions as follows:**

**1 : Commencement - 6 months after reserved matters approval**

**2 : Reserved matters submitted within 1 year of outline consent**

**3 : Approved plans**

**4 : Tree Protection to be agreed**

**5 : Drainage Details (Surface and Foul) to be agreed**

**6 : Biodiversity enhancement measures to be agreed**

**7 : Car Parking Spaces to be agreed**

**8 : Turning Space to be agreed**

**9 : Construction traffic management plan to be agreed**

**10 : Childrens' Play Space to be agreed**

**11 :Roads to OCC specification prior to dwelling construction**

**12 : Visibility Splays as specified**

**13 : Access only to and from Townsend**

**14 : No Drainage to Highway**

**15 : Noise mitigation as approved**

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