

APPLICATION NO.	P14/V0576/O
APPLICATION TYPE	OUTLINE
REGISTERED	26.3.2014
PARISH	GROVE
WARD MEMBER(S)	John Amys Sue Marchant Kate Precious
APPLICANT	Gleeson Strategic Land and JJ Galagher Ltd
SITE	Land west of Bellinger's Garage Station Road Grove, OX12 7PN
PROPOSAL	Residential development comprising the erection of up to 75 dwellings including access.
AMENDMENTS	Supplementary reports / information submitted
GRID REFERENCE	440525/190830
OFFICER	Stuart Walker

SUMMARY

The application is referred to committee as Grove Parish Council object to the scheme.

The proposal is for up to 75 dwellings to the west of Bellinger's garage off Station Road.

The main issues are:

- The application has been submitted ahead of the adoption of the emerging local plan to address the Council's five year housing supply deficit.
- The site is considered a sustainable form of development and accords with the NPPF.
- The scheme can be accommodated without harm to the character of the area.
- The access and parking provision are considered acceptable.
- The proposal would have no harmful impact on neighbouring uses.
- The applicants have addressed the concerns of the council's drainage engineer and the environment agency and therefore subject to conditions the development can be accommodated without having a harmful impact on the local drainage network or flooding.
- Section 106 contributions would help mitigate the impact of additional households on local facilities and infrastructure and the scheme includes 40% affordable housing.

The recommendation is for approval subject to the completion of S106 agreements with the county council and the district council, and planning conditions.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This application is an outline submission to consider the principle of a proposed development for up to 75 dwellings, together with the means of vehicular access into the site. Layout, scale, landscaping and appearance are reserved matters.

1.2 The 3.02 ha site lies to the west of Bellinger's Garage on the north of Grove. It is part of a wider strategic site known as 'Monks Farm, Grove' which is identified in the emerging Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031, Part 1 for up to 750 dwellings. 133 of these dwellings were granted outline consent in February 2014 under application

P12/V1545/O and it is proposed to access the application site through this earlier scheme via two new southern access points. The site itself comprises a grassed field enclosed by hedgerows interspersed with trees on its northern, southern and eastern boundaries. To the west lies further agricultural land leading to the Letcombe Brook.

- 1.3 The application comes to committee because the application is a departure from the development plan and Grove Parish Council has objected to the proposal.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The proposal is for the residential development of the site with up to 75 dwellings. An illustrative layout has been produced which demonstrates the development as proposed is capable of being accommodated on the site in a satisfactory manner with a mix of housing together with roads, footpaths and associated parking areas, landscaping, amenity space, and open space. A preliminary framework plan has also been submitted to demonstrate how this proposal would form a coherent part of the wider strategic proposals for Monks Farm.

- 2.2 The layout, mix and design of the dwellings will be considered under the reserved matters application. However, 40% of all dwellings built would be affordable units, spread in groups throughout the site. Over 15% of the site will be publicly accessible open space (1.02ha). In addition, new and enhanced wildlife habitats around the Letcombe Brook are proposed.

- 2.3 The following documents have been submitted in support of the application and are available to view on the council's website:

- Planning statement
- Design and access statement
- Transport statement
- Flood risk assessment
- Landscape and visual impact assessment
- Arboricultural survey
- Ecological assessments
- Archaeological assessment
- Contamination assessment
- Noise assessment

- 2.4 The applicants have been in discussion with council officers and others to secure on-site facilities such as public open space and affordable housing and to agree levels of financial contribution towards off-site services to mitigate the impact this proposal will have on those services through the increase in population. The following contributions have been requested:

Vale

- Waste bin provision – £12,750
- Art – £22,500
- Street naming – £1,110
- Recreation – £166,299
- Public Open Space maintenance - £120,362
- Parish allotment – £705
- Parish cemetery – £755
- Parish play equipment – £1,145
- S106 administration and monitoring - £15,000

County

- Transport (Science Vale) – £177,855.75
- Transport (Public services) – £63,562.50
- Education (towards expansion of primary school capacity) – £449,636
- Education (Secondary Schools) – £427,500
- Education (Special Educational Needs Schools) – £12,262
- Community Infrastructure (Library, youth support service, waste management, museum resource centre, adult learning, day care / resource centre) – £52,706
- S106 administration and monitoring – figure awaited
- Travel plan approval and monitoring - £1,240

2.5 A site location plan is **attached** at appendix 1. The illustrative layout plan and preliminary framework plan are **attached** at appendix 2 along with a technical note responding to third party comments.

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 **Grove Parish Council** – Objection: “This development should NOT be considered separately as it is part of the proposed larger Monks Farm allocation in the new Draft Local Plan. This application is too soon and should be rejected until the Local Plan is approved. If the Monks Farm allocation is then accepted as part of the Local Plan then that would be the time to submit an application. Isolated development from the remainder of the village as there are no road links and the current footpaths are not suitable for cycles, pushchairs, mobility scooters etc. Paragraph 8.17.10 of the Inspectors report dated February 2006 in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011, relating to Monks Farm site, states of this area ‘It is also relevant to note that the objection site is slightly further away from the higher order services available in Wantage town centre and that direct access to the existing shops, schools and community/health facilities in Grove, whilst convenient on foot and by cycle, is unlikely to be possible by road without the demolition of existing houses in the areas to the north of Oxford Lane to provide new road access. In my view, this may well act as a deterrent to future social and economic linkages and inhibit efforts to integrate any new community with the existing one’. We fully agree with this and suggest that this alone is enough to reject this application at this time. Access onto the A338 is not practicable in the current form especially if as indicated it is the eastern end of the airfield development northern link road. The Northern Link Road to the Airfield Development should not go through this development but be positioned further north to link in with the roundabout adjacent to the Williams F1 facility. Part of this proposed development is located in Flood Zone 1. There is no SUDS shown on the plan and therefore this council has to assume that the public open space (POS) shown to west of this development will be used for SUDS.”

3.2 **Local residents** – Two letters of objection and one letter of comment have been received from local residents at the time of writing this report. The objections are made on the following grounds:

- Increased traffic leading to safety issues and additional road congestion
- Inadequate access onto A338
- The site is subject to flooding with inadequate drainage
- Increased pressure on local infrastructure
- No areas proposed for children to play
- Lack of travel plan

3.3 **Wantage and Grove Campaign Group** – “We note that an application for an adjacent part of this site was approved in February 2014 but that no application for reserved

matters on this site has been received. Is this an example of land-banking by the developer? Surely existing permissions should be progressed prior to further applications being submitted? We further note that the application for the adjacent site includes the following conditions: No development shall commence on site (including preparation ground works) until a detailed scheme for the surface water and foul water drainage strategy of the development, incorporating sustainable urban drainage system (SUDS) principles, together with an assessment of the hydrological and hydro-geological context of the proposed development, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Surface water drainage to ground, water courses or to a suitable sewer should be provided to take account of storm water flows that are attenuated or regulated into the receiving public network through on or off site storage. Given the amount of standing water on these two sites in the last few months we would hope that the planning officers appoint an expert hydrologist to ensure that the amounts of water on the site can be managed without impact on the already stressed water systems north of Grove.

“The planning committee has now recommended applications for approximately 5000 homes in Wantage and Grove for approval with no detailed infrastructure plan in place for increases in capacity for the A338 and A417 roads to areas of employment, primary school places, GP Services, drainage and sewerage services, accident and emergency services and leisure services. The Planning Minister has confirmed that planning officers must take infrastructure requirements into their decisions, and that they must ensure that infrastructure is provided to support new developments, and any infrastructure constraints should be considered when assessing suitability of sites. No further applications should be recommended for approval without these infrastructure plans being in place with detailed infrastructure development plans matching the build out plans for all new and outstanding applications.”

3.4 Development Policy Team – “The site forms part of the proposed strategic allocation for up to 750 dwellings, as set out in the Draft VOWH Local Plan 2029 Part One, published for consultation in February 2013 (since updated to extend the new plan period to 2031). On this basis, the principle of development on this site is supported, providing that it can be demonstrated that it is being comprehensively and holistically master planned as whole, and clearly shown to meet the policy requirements set out in the emerging Local Plan. It is disappointing to see an application for the second phase of development submitted on this site ahead of the emerging Local Plan. The Pre-Submission (Regulation 19) consultation is expected to be published for consultation in the autumn of this year and it would clearly be preferable for an application to follow the anticipated adoption in 2015. However, the site in question does form a discrete parcel of land and so residential development can be considered to be consistent with policy, providing:

i) the application clearly illustrates that the development does not prejudice the delivery of the wider proposed allocation;

ii) clearly demonstrates how it contributes towards and supports the delivery of a comprehensive package of infrastructure across the wider site (again, as set out in the emerging plan); and

iii) clearly demonstrates how the site forms an integral part of the wider master plan in accordance with the views of a comprehensive range of consultees.

It is considered essential that any further proposals across the wider proposed allocation are brought forward as a single application, with the exception of the North Grove Link Road being considered separately.”

3.5 **Oxfordshire County Council** – no objection subject to conditions and legal agreement securing the necessary infrastructure requirements to mitigate the development in respect of: transport, education, community infrastructure and service delivery. The officer technical advice is **attached** at Appendix 3.

3.6 **Landscape Architect** “Work has been progressing to develop an overall masterplan for Monks Farm and it now seems regrettable that this site is being put forward separately for planning permission at this stage. This is an outline application and as such landscape, layout, scale and appearance will be determined later as reserved matters. However the general approach to retaining and enhancing the existing trees and hedgerows is acceptable. The majority of the open space to the west of the development will be required for SUDs and as such will not provide much usable amenity space for a development of this size.”

“Following my earlier comments, I have looked at the proposed drainage option 1, a combination between swale and attenuation basin. As long as sufficient access across these features is provided into the POS and links are also provided southwards towards phase 1 west of these SUDs features, I have no objection.”

3.7 **Forestry Officer** – “The information recorded in the letter dated 27 June 2014 from the agent accords with my discussion with the arboricultural consultant insofar as the tree issues are concerned. I advise that the arboricultural matters could now be dealt with by condition.”

3.8 **Countryside Officer** “I have assessed the ecological information submitted in support of this application and I have visited the site. The council has been involved in pre application discussions with developers of the overall Monks Farm site for some time now and we were beginning to establish some basic principles and understandings of how a master plan for the site may be developed. It seems slightly odd therefore that the developer is now bringing forward small areas of the overall site which do not appear to be part of a comprehensive master plan for Monks Farm. I strongly recommend that this approach is resisted as without establishing an overall vision for the site it is difficult to make an assessment of the overall merits of each parcel of and which is brought forward and its collective impacts on habitats and species within the area.

“ Comments on the current scheme: The application is supported by a good level of ecological information which provides a good basis for understanding the ecological impacts of this proposal. The main habitats of interest on this site are the Letcombe Brook and the hedgerows along the northern and eastern site boundary. The Letcombe Brook is a chalk stream and a priority habitat under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. The brook provides habitats for water voles, otters and various bat and bird species and the majority of the protected species recorded in the site surveys are associated with the brook and surrounding habitats. The main habitats along the Letcombe Brook are buffered from the housing proposals by an area of green space shown on the illustrative layout. Approximately half of this green space will be taken up by a SUDs attenuation pond which is illustrated in appendix A of the Drainage Strategy and Flood Risk Assessment, much if the remainder of this area is proposed to be planted with scrub, wet grassland and meadow habitats as a buffer for the Letcombe Brook. As a result of the above the proposed development provides virtually no useable public open space (when it is viewed in isolation from the wider Monks farm site). I have no ecological objections to the proposed development provided the habitats associated with the Letcombe Brook and its corridor can be protected and enhanced through the implementation of a planning permission. I note that the Letcombe Brook Project has

provided some very helpful comments on the proposals particularly related to the restoration and subsequent management of the brook corridor. If this application is to be granted planning permission then I recommend that the conditions are imposed.”

- 3.9 **Environment Agency** – Initial objections as part of the site is within flood zone 2. However following the submission of a revised flood risk assessment with an indicative layout which locates all of the proposed attenuation features outside of the 1 in 100 year plus climate change allowance flood extent, the EA has withdrawn their objection subject to conditions.
- 3.10 **Drainage Engineer** – Initial objections in relation to the location of the site in flood zone 2 however after the withdrawal of the EA objections, no objections are raised to the proposal and the drainage scheme subject to details (by condition).
- 3.11 **Thames Water** – no objection.
- 3.12 **Environmental Health**
Protection Team – “I have reviewed the noise report submitted in support of the application and it is apparent that the noise impacts on the development can be adequately controlled with suitable mitigation in place. As this is an outline application It is proposed that the detail of noise mitigation can be dealt with as reserved matters.”
- Contaminated land – “I would recommend that should planning permission be granted a contaminated land condition is applied to ensure that any ground, water and associated gas contamination is identified and adequately addressed to ensure the safety of the proposed development, the environment and to ensure the site is suitable for the proposed use.”
- 3.13 **Urban Design Officer** “I have an in principle objection to looking at this area in isolation without the benefit of a masterplan for the wider area.”
- 3.14 **Housing Services** – Comments are incorporated in the planning considerations section of the report.
- 3.15 **Letcombe Brook Project Officer** – “Last October 2013 the Letcombe Brook Project met with VWHDC planners, developers and the environment agency (as below) to discuss the Habitat Walkover Survey report on the Letcombe Brook, Grove undertaken in April 2013 by the Letcombe Brook Project. The LBP commissioned Vaughan Lewis, Windrush AEC Ltd to undertake the survey and assessment following the anticipation of the potential planning application for a major housing development at Monks Farm, north of Grove. As the Letcombe Brook is a priority habitat as a chalk stream with protected species it is important to protect it as much as possible. The guidelines and proposals in this report were designed restore the brook and mitigate and alleviate where possible the increase in disturbance and pressure for access on the brook. This report would help inform the design of more detailed landscaping plans. Following a site visit I have detailed the works required here for this section. However we are concerned that this proposal should not be considered dis-aggregated as this site clearly forms a part of a much wider potential development area described as Monks Farm. The site needs to be considered as part of the wider Monks Farm proposals and should not be isolated. As an ecological corridor with protected species the Letcombe Brook will be impacted individually and collectively by these developments so that they should not be considered in isolation. An environmental impact assessment should be carried out to assess and mitigate the effects of the proposal as it would be if the master plan for this area is developed. Opportunities for restoration of the brook and its corridor, and protection for protected species will be lost if these sites are considered in

isolation. Restoration of the Letcombe Brook aims: To promote the preservation and restoration of the brook as a priority habitat and ecological network and to protect and enhance the protection and recovery of priority species populations (watervole and otter) under the 2006 NERC Act and the 2012 NPPF. Hankinson Duckett Associates Ecological Assessment recognises that the Letcombe Brook is the habitat of highest ecological interest associated with development of the site, of district importance with protected species water vole and otter and those measures should be taken to reduce the potential effects of informal recreation. 1.0 Implementation 1.1 The following restoration and enhancement works will enhance the ecological of the brook here and should be incorporated into a landscape plan for the restoration of the brook. The Letcombe Brook Project recommends that a detailed restoration and maintenance plan is drawn up in consultation with the LBP officer. 1.2. The Letcombe Brook Project could undertake these works on behalf of the landowner/developer to ensure that they are carried out as required as previously undertaken on sites along the Letcombe Brook. 2.0 Letcombe Brook ownership It is important to identify who the legal riparian landowner will be up to the middle of the brook. Landowners adjoining the watercourse have certain rights and responsibilities towards the river. It is important to clarify this so that we and the Environment Agency can identify the landowner in the future to carry out maintenance such as removing obstructions such as fallen trees. 3.0 Restoration works A field visit was undertaken on 22 April 2014 and the works required to restore the brook here are: 3.1 Water vole and bat surveys to be undertaken prior to works (including construction of outfall). 3.2 Clear fallen trees from across the brook 3.3 Remove agricultural rubbish, metal work and litter from the banks 3.4 Pollard/coppice selected trees along the bank 3.5 Plant marginal vegetation such as pendulous sedge, iris, sedges etc 3.6 Fence off brook with stock netting These measures are required to increase light into the brook to encourage emergent and marginal vegetation and promote dappled shade. The fencing will discourage people entering this area, deter dogs and thereby further reduce disturbance. 4.0 Maintenance will be required by the riparian owner of the brook such as rotational coppicing of trees to promote dappled shade to avoid complete shading by the canopy, removing litter, fallen trees and other obstructions. The environment agency's booklet Living on the Edge a guide to the rights and responsibilities of riverside occupation provides important information for riparian owners. 4.1 A short and long term maintenance plan to be drawn up in consultation with the Letcombe Brook Project."

- 3.16 **Waste Management Team** – Requires storage areas for wheeled bins per plot to be provided with collection points clear of parking areas and financial contribution for supply of bins.
- 3.17 **Lesiure Services** – “Of great concern is that there is no comprehensive master plan for the Monks Farm wider strategic housing area, and this site is part of the wider area. The design and access statement (Mar 2014) in Section 2.4 on strategic site assessment sets the development within the context of the wider north Grove strategic development area “The detailed design and disposition of the wider site, the location of school(s) and employment is yet to be determined”. The leisure s106 calculations are given above, and whilst some off-site contributions (e.g. swimming pools and sports halls) would be for off-site provision, others can be expected to be for on-site provision on this application site and/or within the wider Monks Farm area. It is noted that a previous application showed pitches on the site (refused on appeal apparently for employment land need issues not suitability for playing pitches). It is important to note that there is a requirement for playing pitches to be located out of the floodplain and on relatively flat ground. Also playing fields sites should normally accommodate more than one pitch, and so playing fields (including ancillary areas) occupy typically in excess of 2 ha. Schools which also have their own need for pitches also occupy large land areas. Without this being dealt with at this stage there is a risk that what amounts to piecemeal

development at “Monks Farm” strategic housing development area will not provide some of the essential sports and leisure and other infrastructure and so will not be a sustainable development. A wider master plan for the wider area including this site needs to be drawn up and show how playing fields which take up large land areas (and other on-site play, youth and sports uses) are to be planned in and accommodated. Without an acceptable wider master plan submitted as part of this application, and that has a robust planning protection, that shows how these large land areas can be delivered, then this application should be seen as premature, unsustainable and advise that it be withdrawn or not granted outline permission.”

3.18 **Thames Valley Police** – No objection subject to proposal achieving ‘secured by design’ accreditation.

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 [P12/V1545/O](#) - Approved (11/02/2014)

Outline application for residential development of up to 133 dwellings with associated access.

[P12/V0024/SCO](#) – EIA not required (09/02/2012)

Development of land at Monks Farm

[P01/V0992/O](#) - Refused (05/11/2001)

Residential development and ancillary open space together with means of access. (site area 3.89 hectares)

[P00/V1123/O](#) - Refused (16/07/2001) - Refused on appeal (20/12/2001)

Residential development and ancillary open space together with means of access.

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 Adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 policies;

GS1 - Developments in Existing Settlements

GS2 - Development in the Countryside

H10 - Development in the Five Main Settlements

H13 - Development Elsewhere

H16 - Size of Dwelling and Lifetime Homes

H17 - Affordable Housing

H23 - Open Space in New Housing Development

DC1 - Design

DC4 - Public Art

DC5 - Access

DC6 - Landscaping

DC7 - Waste Collection and Recycling

DC8 - The Provision of Infrastructure and Services

DC9 - The Impact of Development on Neighbouring Uses

NE9 - The Lowland Vale

TR1 - Wantage relief road scheme

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

1 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development

2 – Settlement Hierarchy

3 – Housing delivery

5 – Providing supporting infrastructure and services

12 – Spatial strategy for the South East Vale Sub-Area

14 – Transport delivery for the South East Vale Sub-Area

- 15 – Safeguard of land for transport schemes in the South East Vale Sub-Area
- 18 – Affordable housing
- 20 – Density
- 21 – Housing mix
- 23 – Accommodating current and future needs of the ageing population
- 29 – Promoting sustainable transport and accessibility
- 30 – Sustainable design and construction
- 32 – Flood risk
- 33 – Natural resources
- 34 – Landscape
- 35 – Green Infrastructure
- 37 – Design
- 38 – The historic environment
- 40 – Delivery and contingency
- Crab Hill Strategic site development template

5.3 Supplementary Planning Documents/Guidance (SPD/SPG)

- Residential Design Guide – December 2009
- Sustainable Design and Construction – December 2009
- Open space, sport and recreation future provision – July 2008
- Affordable Housing – July 2006
- Planning and Public Art – July 2006
- Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan, April 2012 – Chapter 17. Science Vale UK Area Strategy

5.4 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – March 2012

- Paragraphs 14 and 49 – 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
- Paragraphs 70 and 73 – plan positively for community facilities, open space and opportunities for sport and recreation
- Paragraph 72 – sufficient school places for existing and new communities
- Paragraph 99 – Flood risk assessment
- Paragraph 109 – contribution to and enhancement of the natural environment
- Paragraph 111 – encourage the effective use of land
- Paragraph 112 – economic and other benefits of the best and versatile agricultural land
- Paragraph 118 – conserve and enhance biodiversity
- Paragraphs 120, 123 and 124 – risks from pollution
- Paragraph 131 – protection of heritage assets

5.5 National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) – March 2014

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 *The principle of development*

This site is an unallocated site within the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011. Thus, this scheme is contrary to Policies GS2 and H10 of the Local Plan, which restrict development on unallocated greenfield sites and housing developments outside the towns of the district. Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2008 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicated otherwise. The key such material consideration is the NPPF. Ordinarily and in accordance with the plan led system, the

council would first consider the potential development of this land through the local plan process given the site's size and location and its potential to be part of a larger strategic housing land allocation and to ensure the planning for and management of the necessary combined infrastructure delivery. However, the council must assess this application on its own merits having regard to all material considerations.

- 6.2 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The NPPF is clear that councils should grant planning permission where the development plan is absent, silent or the relevant policies are out of date, 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 (Paragraph 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 documented that this council does not currently have a five-year supply and has persistently under-delivered on housing. This lack of a five-year housing land supply means by definition relevant plan policies are out of date and the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies. The application site does not lie within any areas where specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted. In essence this requires some flexibility in line with the NPPF when assessing applications that do not accord with local plan policies.
- 6.4 This approach is aimed at identifying planning sites suitable to address the housing shortfall whilst meeting the relevant sustainability and design criteria of the NPPF.
- 6.5 Under policies GS1 and H10 of the adopted local plan, Wantage and Grove are identified as one of the most sustainable locations for development within the district. Both policies are considered to be consistent with the NPPF. Wantage and Grove also lie within the Science Vale Oxford wider strategic area of economic development. The emerging local plan 2031 part one continues a settlement hierarchy which focuses housing growth at the market towns and identifies Wantage as the market town of the South East Vale sub-area. Within this emerging strategy, core policy 3 identifies the Monks Farm, Grove site as a site suitable for new housing and core policy 12 states 9535 houses will be provided by 2029 for the sub-area, of which around 750 units will be provided for at the Monks Farm site.
- 6.6 The emerging plan further sets out detailed policy requirements for this site in the form of a development template which states the council would expect the following key objectives to be achieved:
- To deliver up to 750 houses with associated services and facilities
 - To provide for a new primary school on site
 - Provision of land for the Grove Northern Link Road (GNLR)
 - To deliver a high quality, sustainable and mixed use urban extension, providing 40% affordable housing and a suitable mix of housing
 - To ensure the development integrates with Grove and residents can access existing facilities in the village
 - To contribute to balanced employment and housing growth in Science Vale
 - Subject to viability testing, provide requisite infrastructure to mitigate the impact of growth
- 6.7 At this stage in accordance with the NPPF, the emerging Local Plan only has limited weight, but it is considered to be a material consideration in relation to the proposal. It has been through several stages of consultation and is expected to be submitted to the

secretary of state for examination early next year. Whilst some objections to the proposed development site were identified in response to the draft local plan 2031 part one consultation, these mainly relate to the importance of development delivering appropriate infrastructure and being supported by appropriate evidence rather than to the principle of development. A comprehensive suite of evidence documents have been prepared, by both the district council as part of the evidence base and the site promoters, which demonstrate the site is suitable and deliverable. The site is therefore considered to be potentially a highly sustainable location for development in economic and social terms, consistent with both the adopted Vale local plan 2011, the emerging Vale local plan 2031 part 1 and the NPPF.

6.8 *Visual and landscape impact*

The site lies within the lowland vale landscape. However, the site has been assessed under the “Landscape assessment of land on the edge of the Vale's main towns” which is part of the Local Development Framework Evidence Base (available to view online). This document confirms visibility from the north and east is limited by hedgerows and trees with the northern edge of Grove limiting visibility to the south. It also concludes that from a landscape point of view further development should be directed to this area “as the majority of this area has a landscape that is robust enough to accept major development” (paragraph 11.2). Therefore it is not considered that the proposal would have a harmful impact on the character of the area or affect the long open views across the Lowland Vale.

6.9 *Access and Highway Considerations*

Access to the site is proposed from the A338 through the earlier permitted phase. The access to both developments is considered acceptable to accommodate the additional traffic from the proposed development. The county highways engineer has raised no objections to the proposal on highway safety or traffic generation grounds, subject to conditions and contributions to strategic highway improvements. Furthermore, this site is not required for any part of the proposed northern link road. The development is therefore acceptable in terms of highways.

6.10 Each property is proposed to have at least two parking spaces. A condition is recommended preventing the change of use of garages or car ports to accommodation without permission to ensure sufficient parking provision is retained.

6.11 *Affordable housing*

Adopted local plan policy H17 requires 40% on-site provision of affordable housing. This development will therefore need to include up to 30 affordable homes with a tenure delivery of 75% affordable rented and 25% shared equity. In accordance with the 2011 update of the HNA the following mix is suggested with no more than 40% of the affordable housing total being delivered as flats.

	1 bed (min floor area 46 m2)	2 bed (76 m2)	3 bed (88 m2)	4 bed (100 m2)
Rent (23 units)	4	10	6	3
Shared ownership (7 units)	2	4	1	0

6.12 The affordable housing requirement has been confirmed by the applicant to be workable as part of the scheme and the council’s housing officer has no objection to the

proposal. Officers are confident a satisfactory mix, tenure and distribution of affordable housing across the site can be achieved at the reserved matters stage to comply with policy H17.

6.13 *Design*

The NPPF is explicit in seeking a high quality outcome for good design in terms of layout and building form as a key aspect of sustainable development. Whilst scale, layout, appearance and landscaping are reserved matters, the illustrative layout showing housing areas and accessibility routes within the site provides a residential arrangement offering active street frontages and good visual linkages to the proposed open areas and pedestrian routes. Overall, this illustrative layout is considered to be visually acceptable, is not an overdevelopment of the site and provides sufficient integration linkages with the adjoining residential development of the earlier phase. Officers are also confident a satisfactory mix of housing types and sizes across the site can be achieved.

6.14 *Impact on residential amenity*

The illustrative layout indicates the development proposed would not have any harmful impact on residential amenity. Officers consider a development observing the various principles of the design guide can be satisfactorily achieved at the reserved matters stage. However, following comments from environmental health, conditions relating to noise and contaminated land investigation are required. Subject to these, officers consider the proposal is acceptable in amenity terms.

6.15 *Lack of a master plan*

One of the main areas of concern with this proposal relates to the lack of a master plan. However, as confirmed by the policy team (paragraph 3.4), the site in question does form a discrete parcel of land where residential development can be considered to be consistent with policy, providing the application clearly illustrates that the development does not prejudice the delivery of the wider proposed allocation, demonstrates how it contributes towards and supports the delivery of a comprehensive package of infrastructure across the wider site and demonstrates how the site forms an integral part of the wider master plan in accordance with the views of a comprehensive range of consultees.

6.16 In response to the various concerns raised, the applicant has provided an illustrative framework plan. Officers have assessed this and are satisfied that development of this particular site would not prejudice bringing forward the wider strategic allocation.

6.17 Contributions can also be secured to offset the impacts arising from the development and such contributions, through a section 106 legal agreement, can be directed to the wider site allocation to ensure infrastructure for the whole site is appropriately funded. The figures requested are set out in section 2 and the applicant has agreed in principle to these contributions.

6.18 On balance, officers do not consider that a refusal based on the lack of a master plan would be defensible on appeal, especially when assessing this proposal against the NPPF and the lack of a five year land supply. However, it is considered essential that any further proposals across the wider proposed allocation are brought forward as a single application and an informative to that effect is suggested.

6.19 *Drainage*

Initial objections were raised by the council's drainage engineer and the environment agency (EA) in relation to surface water drainage, as part of the site falls within flood zone 2 and additional information was required to demonstrate the proposal would not

flood or create flooding elsewhere. Following further discussions and an additional flood risk assessment submission by the applicants, the EA and the drainage engineer have withdrawn their objections.

6.20 In respect of foul drainage, the new dwellings will be connected to the main sewer, which is acceptable in principle and the drainage engineer and Thames Water raise no objections in this regard.

6.21 *Ecology*

The countryside officer has confirmed that the application is supported by a good level of ecological information which provides a good basis for understanding the ecological impacts of this proposal. The main habitats of interest on this site are the Letcombe Brook and the hedgerows along the northern and eastern site boundary. The Letcombe Brook is a chalk stream and a priority habitat under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

6.22 The Letcombe Brook Project has assessed the application and raises no objection in principle, subject to conditions. Subject to further work prior to commencement of development (see Countryside Officer / Letcombe Brook Project comments above) the proposed mitigation measures are considered acceptable and the relevant licence tests are considered to have been met. Any impact on other wildlife (i.e. that is not protected under EU directives or UK law) is considered acceptable.

6.23 *Heritage assets*

The NPPF requires that account should be taken of the desirability to sustain and enhance heritage assets. Whilst the proposal has no impact on the village conservation area or listed buildings, archaeological remains have been found within the locality. The county archaeologist has no objection but has requested a further programme of archaeological investigation work is undertaken to address the significance of the heritage assets. This can be secured through conditions. Consequently the impact on heritage assets and their significance is acceptable.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

7.1 This site is proposed as a strategic housing allocation in the emerging Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part One 2029. At this stage, this document (and allocation) have only been through an initial public consultation and so have limited weight in the decision making process. Nonetheless, this application has been submitted in anticipation of this strategic allocation and closely follows the template for development within the emerging Local Plan.

7.2 Despite the above, this proposal does not accord with the current development plan. However, in light of the current shortfall in the council's five year housing supply and the clear guidance in paragraph 14 of the NPPF it is not considered that the adverse impacts so significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. On the contrary the contribution that these proposals would bring to delivering more houses and associated infrastructure is welcome. Crucially an outline approval will provide certainty so that more work discharging the Section 106 agreement and conditions to secure the necessary infrastructure can progress and lead to delivery sooner rather than later. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable and accords with the NPPF.

7.3 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 have informed the S106 requirements listed above.

7.4 There are no technical concerns with the application, subject to the recommended conditions. Appropriate financial contributions will be sought to offset the impact of this development on local infrastructure. The proposal also makes a measurable contribution to help address the current housing land shortfall and the application is, therefore, recommended for approval.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

8.1 **It is recommended that authority to grant outline planning permission is delegated to the head of planning, in consultation with the chairman of committee, subject to:-**

i) S106 Agreements to secure the affordable housing and the requested financial contributions, and

ii) The following conditions:

1 : TL2 – Time Limit (Outline Apps)

2 : OL2 - Standard OL Condition (Excluding Access)

3 : Approved plans

4 : Maximum number of dwellings

5 : Access in accordance with specified plan

6 : Landscape

7 : Trees

8 : Maintenance plan of Open Space/Play Areas

9 : Prior to the commencement of the development, a detailed sustainable drainage scheme for foul and surface water of the development shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by the District Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented prior to the occupation of any dwelling to which the scheme relates.

10 : The detailed drainage scheme to be developed and implemented in accordance with the submitted Drainage Strategy and Flood Risk Assessment version 9 dated 5 August 2014 prepared by CH2M HILL (formerly Halcrow Group Ltd).

11 : Garage accommodation

12 : The development hereby permitted shall be implemented in accordance with the Assessment and Mitigation Proposals contained in Chapter 5 of Ecological Assessment (Hankinson Duckett Associates March 2014) in all respects. Any variation shall be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority before such change is made. This condition will be discharged on receipt of a letter from the project ecologist stating that the mitigation has been completed according to the approved report.

13 : No development shall take place until full details of a habitat creation and restoration scheme for the green spaces to the west of the site including the corridor of the Letcombe Brook have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. These works shall be carried out as approved. The developer should liaise with both the Local Planning Authority and the Letcombe Brook Project when developing the plans. Details to be submitted should include but not be limited to: (i) Purpose, aims and objectives for the scheme; (ii) A review of the site's ecological potential and any constraints; (iii) Description of target habitats and range of species appropriate for the site; (iv) Selection of appropriate strategies for creating / restoring target habitats or introducing target species; (v) Selection of specific techniques and practices for establishing vegetation; (vi) Sources of habitat materials (e.g. plant stock) or species individuals; (vii) Method statement for site preparation and establishment of target features; (viii) Extent and location of proposed works; (ix)

Aftercare and long term management; (x) The personnel responsible for the work; (xi) Timing of the works; (xii) Monitoring; (xiii) Disposal of wastes arising from the works. All habitat creation works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details, unless otherwise approved in writing by the local planning authority. The works shall be carried out prior to the occupation of any part of the development.

14 : Private housing mix and build out rate to be agreed

15 : Travel plan for both phases to be submitted

16 : Construction environmental management plan

17 : Written scheme of archaeological investigation

18 : Staged programme of archaeological investigation

19 : MC22 – Contamination

20 : noise mitigation measures

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