

APPLICATION NO.	P14/V2877/FUL
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION
REGISTERED	23.12.2014
PARISH	WATCHFIELD
WARD MEMBER(S)	Elaine Ware and Simon Howell
APPLICANT	CCS Developments LLP
SITE	Land at Cowans Camp Depot High Street Watchfield, SN6 8TE
PROPOSAL	Planning permission for the erection of 33 new (1, 2, 3 and 4 bed) homes of which 40% are affordable units on brownfield land previously consented for a care facility and learning disability unit (as amended by plans and design and access statement received on 8 July 2015)
GRID REFERENCE	424283/190573
OFFICER	Adrian Butler

SUMMARY

This application had been included on the agenda for the 10 June planning committee meeting. A recommendation for refusal was being made based on design matters. However, the applicant indicated that it wished to revise the scheme in an effort to overcome officer concerns and therefore, the application was deferred from consideration. Revised plans have now been submitted with these revisions seeking full planning permission for the erection of 33 x 2-storey dwellings; originally the proposal was for 35 dwellings.

This application follows a previous detailed planning approval (ref. P13/V2359/RM) issued on 4 August 2014 for a residential development of 100 dwellings homes, extra care housing comprising 50 apartments for elderly persons and two learning disability homes comprising of 17 bedrooms, public open space and new accesses.

The main issues are:

- Whether the principle of development is acceptable with consideration being given to the fall back position with the extant detailed planning permission
- Whether the site is a suitable location for new housing that can contribute to the five-year housing supply shortfall.
- The cumulative impact of this proposal alongside other approved and proposed residential developments in the village.
- Whether the submitted details take account of site constraints and propose an appropriate design and neighbourly form of development.
- Whether the proposal will impact on highway safety.
- Implications for flood risk, foul and surface water drainage.

This report seeks to assess the planning application details against the national and local planning policy framework where relevant and all other material planning considerations.

An extant planning permission (P13/V2359/RM), permits care facilities on the site. These have yet to be built and this application seeks an alternative form of development on the site. In reporting application no. P13/V2359/RM to planning

committee the previous case officer's report advised that in part permission was being recommended for approval because of the benefits of the care facilities.

Previously developed land such as this is the preferred location for new housing in accordance with the NPPF and the proposal, if implemented, will help in part to address the council's current lack of a 5-year housing supply. There is no obligation on a developer to provide the care facilities and the County Council opines that this is not an appropriate site for care facilities. In principle housing on this site is considered acceptable.

The landscape and visual impact is acceptable in the context of the wider permitted residential development adjacent to the site. Revisions to the scheme overcome previous design concerns expressed by officers.

The technical issues relating to noise, drainage and sewage are acceptable subject to conditions. The development will have some impact on the highway network however these impacts are not unacceptable.

Overall, the development is considered sustainable development on previously developed land. The number of dwellings proposed and their design are reasonable

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Watchfield is defined as a large village by policy H11 of the adopted Local Plan. The village provides a range of services including shops, community facilities, a primary school, employment opportunities and access to a regular public transport service serving larger towns.
- 1.2 This application relates to land to the north western edge of Watchfield forming part of the former Cowans Camp site. This part of the site accommodated buildings which have relatively recently been demolished as part of the permission to develop the Cowans Camp site. Immediately north west of the site is the A420. To the north east on the opposite side of High Street is the Shrivenham Hundred Business park. To the east is existing housing in Star Lane. Land to the south is presently open but benefits from planning permission for housing. Land to the immediate east of the site being between it and Star Lane also benefits from planning permission for housing. Land between the site and the A420 is to be open space associated with the permitted housing scheme. The site is generally level and contains no specific features.
- 1.3 Access to the current site is from High Street
- 1.4 The application is presented to committee as the Parish Council object and more than four letters of objection have been received.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 This is an application for full planning permission now seeking approval for 33 two storey dwellings. The majority of the dwellings will be accessed from an approved road associated with application no. P13/V2359/RM which in turn takes access from High Street. Three dwellings will have access via a separate single point of access directly from High Street.
- 2.2 Following queries and design issues raised by officers the scheme has been revised to clarify the red line site area and other land within the applicant's control (blue land). There have also been revisions to the layout resulting in the removal of two dwellings which reduces the scheme from the originally submitted 35 to 33 dwellings. The amendments also include linking two previously proposed cul-de-sacs to produce a

single through road, revisions to parking arrangements, positions of garages and some dwellings and in seeking to address the relationship with proposed and permitted adjoining open space.

- 2.3 The proposed layout consists of dwellings fronting a permitted road serving the wider permitted housing scheme with parking between the proposed dwellings and set back behind the house frontages in an attempt to limit its visual impact in the street scene. A secondary road sweeps to the west of the site serving proposed dwellings before rejoining the main spine road.
- 2.4 The proposal provides a mix of dwellings sizes with 2 x 1-bedroom flats, 12 x 2-bedroom houses, 13 x 3-bedroom houses and 6 x 4-bedroom houses. 40% (13 dwellings) of the dwellings are proposed as affordable dwellings (plots 207 – 210, 221 – 224, 225 & 226, 231 – 233).
- 2.5 Sixty-three parking spaces are allocated to the dwellings with a further 13 being unallocated visitor spaces.
- 2.6 The application is accompanied by a number of supporting documents including:
- Design and Access Statement
 - Planning statement
 - Utility and drainage report
 - Ecology update
 - Noise assessment
 - Air quality assessment
 - Brownfield v greenfield assessment
 - Archaeological desk based assessment
 - Highways technical memo
 - Soakaway and ground monitoring investigations
 - Flood Risk Assessment
 - Ecology & tree survey
 - Landscape & Visual Impact assessment
- 2.7 A site location plan is **attached** at Appendix 1.

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

- 3.1 Below is a summary of the responses received from interested parties to the proposal. A full copy of all the comments made can be viewed online at www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk.

Parish/Town Council	<p>Strongly Object. Their concerns may be summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans sent to them still show 35 dwellings casting doubts on a proper consultation process • The 65 bus service through the village has been permanently withdrawn. The application is based on incorrect information with bus services now over 1km away • Public open space is still reliant on adjacent land with no open space within the red line application area • No specific reference to noise attenuation. The A420 has been resurfaced since the earlier application and the new surface generates more noise. Residents could be subject to unsafe levels of noise • Previous permission was granted because it included the
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	<p>care facilities and partly because the District has a short fall in such facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reasons given for granting permission were partially due to the amenities to be provided and the employment opportunities provided by the proposed care facilities • The developer has provided no justification for not providing the care facilities now • Results in a significant loss of employment opportunities for local people whereas construction jobs are temporary and may not include local people • Without jobs being created residents will need to commute to work • Not a sustainable development with the reduction in employment opportunities • Inadequate capacity at the primary school • Nursery school places are at capacity • Together with increased population at the Defence Academy the proposal will place increased pressure on schooling, medical facilities and amenities • Increased traffic and strain on parking • Parking at local amenities in Shrivenham and at the Co-op is under strain • Cumulative impacts need to be considered • Increase in housing in the village by some 87% is overdevelopment <p>Their full comments are attached at Appendix 2</p>
<p>Neighbours</p>	<p>Letters of objection have been received from 28 local addresses (some people have written twice or more). The concerns expressed may be summarised as follows:</p> <p>Principle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permission was granted in the first place because of the jobs the care facilities would create for local people. This proposal offers nothing in return • It seems the developer never had any intention of providing the care facilities; they should provide the development already permitted • The number of dwellings now proposed will overwhelm the village • Loss of jobs the care facilities would have brought • The permitted care facilities are needed • Watchfield has sufficient housing <p>Highway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased traffic over roads that are narrow due to on street parking; this will result in congestion and be harmful to safety • Inadequate parking space proposed • Site is too far from amenities which will encourage car use • Result in further road damage • A420 is already over stretched <p>Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overdevelopment

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed buildings are out of character • Should be more recreational space on site <p>Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spoil the area • Need more open space instead of housing • Unsuitable development on the edge of the village <p>Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate facilities in the village for this 80% increase in housing in the village • Insufficient school places • Nursery places are difficult to find • Doctors surgery is full • Inadequate foul drainage capacity <p>A letter has been received from a local resident who has no objection to the proposal</p>
<p>Councillor Constance</p>	<p>Councillor Constance has written in her capacity as local member for Shrivenham Division (which includes Cowan's Camp in Watchfield) and as Chairman of Oxfordshire's Health and Overview Scrutiny Cttee (HOSC) to object to any relaxation of the requirement to deliver extra-care housing in the development at Cowan's Camp.</p> <p>The need for extra-care housing is a priority in Oxfordshire and that has not changed. Making proper provision for and ageing population is paramount and we at OCC (adult social services) and HOSC are aware that this is an important need to be met. Every opportunity to provide for independent living for the elderly and aged must be realised, and this was carefully assessed as a suitable site at the grant of planning permission, and nothing has changed that need. Far from relaxing the requirements we favour imposing the requirement on all suitable developments in the VWHDC</p>
<p>Oxfordshire County Council One Voice</p>	<p>No overall objection</p> <p><u>Transport</u> No objection subject to conditions relating to access, vision splays, car parking, new estate roads, a travel plan, Construction Traffic Management Plan and SUDs.</p> <p>The development will have a negligible impact on the operation of surrounding road network. Parking is adequate. A travel information pack will be required.</p> <p>Financial contribution towards A420 route strategy requested</p> <p><u>Archaeology</u> No objection - The application area contains no known archaeological sites or features. There are no archaeological constraints to this application.</p>

	<p><u>Education</u> No objection. Watchfield Primary School serves the families attending the Defence Academy, and experiences significant volatility of pupil numbers as a result. It is therefore particularly important to plan for a level of spare places at the school to allow it to respond to these unpredictable demands. The school is currently expanding from 1.5 form entry to 2 form entry in response to demand for school places and local housing development, with a capital project delivering 105 additional pupil places at a contract cost of £1,745,000 due to complete in the academic year 2015/16 and on site now Suggest a variation to the pervious s.106 agreement to obtain financial contributions towards primary and secondary schools and special education needs.</p> <p><u>Property</u> No objection. Suggest a variation to the pervious s.106 agreement to secure financial contributions towards libraries, museum resource centre, waste management and health care.</p> <p>Suggest an informative relating to sprinkler systems in new dwellings.</p> <p><u>Ecology</u> Should seek advice from the District Council ecology advisor</p> <p><u>Commissioning Manager (Housing) – Extra Care Accommodation</u> I had previously submitted a general letter of support (to the agent acting for the potential applicant) on the need for extra care housing in the wider locality served by the original application. However, having later visited the actual site I withdrew my support for any affordable extra care housing on the proposed site which I felt to be too remote from necessary community services. In addition, since my original letter of support, the need for extra care housing in the particular locality has been served by an agreed development of 45 units at Southmoor and a planned 60 unit development at Faringdon. Consequently, I have no objection to the change of use in the revised application regarding the removal of extra care housing for the above reasons. However, there is a need generally for other forms of retirement housing in the area which should look to meet the needs of more active and independent older people , the majority of who are owner occupiers and may be looking for good quality retirement housing to encourage them to ‘downsize’ and release their under-occupied properties for other purchasers. Therefore I would prefer if the extra care housing use could be substituted for a general retirement housing use as described above. I also had no objection to the proposed care home use for people with learning disabilities in the original application and equally I have no objection to its removal in the revised application.</p>
<p>Thames Water</p>	<p>No objection Waste Comments: Thames Water has identified an inability of the existing waste water infrastructure to accommodate the needs of this application, therefore recommended a Grampian condition for a</p>

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	<p>drainage strategy to be submitted and approved prior to commencement.</p> <p>Water Comments: recommend an informative be attached to any permission stating that Thames Water will aim to provide customers with a minimum pressure of 10m head (approx.. 1 bar) and a flow rate of 9 litres/minute at the point where it leaves Thames Waters pipes.</p> <p>On waste they state permission for 4 units has been agreed prior to understanding the detailed infrastructure improvements needed for the site</p>
Health and Housing Team – contaminated land	No objection subject to conditions requiring a phased contaminated land risk assessment although intrusive investigation will not be necessary
Environmental Protection Team	No objection subject to a condition requiring noise attenuation for the dwellings
Waste Team	No objection - seek a contribution of £170 per dwelling towards waste collection services and bin provision for this development
Countryside Officer	No objection
Housing Development team	No objection. Recommend the shared ownership dwellings are together and the rented affordable dwellings are together
Planning Policy team	Support the proposal in principle
Landscape Architect – comments on original scheme	<p>The proposed change from the proposed care facility and learning disability unit to residential development will have little change on the Landscape Character and Visual impact of the proposed development.</p> <p>However, the proposed layout is not acceptable. The build form does not relate to the proposed POS. The change in proposed built form should also mean that the proposed POS and interface should be redesigned to respect these changes.</p> <p>The proposals are car dominated with parking and turning heads forming the interface with the POS.</p> <p>This is not helped by the proposed planting and layout of the POS. The attenuation pond in association with the land modelling which runs along the housing boundary effective cuts off the housing area from the wider POS and its associated footpath.</p> <p>The plans show long lines bollards adjacent to the hard surface which would be visually unattractive. The proposed planting shows the majority of the boundary between the housing area and the POS to be hedged with <i>Prunus lusitanica</i> a very large and quick growing evergreen plant. This will again affect the interface between the housing and POS, restrict visibility and informal supervision of the POS and be a maintenance problem in the future.</p> <p>The proposals leave very limited space for street tree planting, small species such as <i>Malus</i> are proposed. Although the tree is labelled</p>

	as Malus Snowmound it is keyed Malus tschonoskii. Could the proposed species be confirmed? Native trees should be used within the POS. The planting on the site frontage with the High Street should reflect the tree planting opposite and large tree species are required.
Environment Agency	No objection
Drainage Engineer	The revised flood risk assessment is sufficient to remove the previous holding objection. Recommends a condition requiring a detailed drainage scheme.
Vale Leisure & recreation	Seek contributions towards improvements to swimming pools, sports hall, health and fitness at Wantage, artificial grass pitches at Great Coxwell, outdoor tennis at Shrivenham, MUGA at Shrivenham, football, cricket and rugby pitches at Great Coxwell, clubhouse/pavilion on an unnamed strategic site

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 P13/V2359/RM - Approved (04/08/2014)

Reserved Matters application approved following Outline permission P12/V2283/O

4.2 P12/V2283/O - Approved (04/08/2014)

Residential development for up to 100 dwellings; provision of Extra Care Housing comprising 50 No. apartments to meet the needs of the elderly (Class C2); provision of two Learning Disability Homes comprising 17 No. bedrooms in total (Class C2); together with means of access.

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 **Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan 2011**

The development plan for this area comprises the adopted Vale of White Horse local plan 2011. The following local plan policies relevant to this application were 'saved' by direction on 1 July 2009.

Policy No.	Policy Title
GS1	Developments in Existing Settlements
GS2	Development in the Countryside
DC1	Design
DC3	Design against crime
DC5	Access
DC6	Landscaping
DC7	Waste Collection and Recycling
DC8	The Provision of Infrastructure and Services
DC9	The Impact of Development on Neighbouring Uses
DC12	Water quality and resources
DC13	Flood Risk and Water Run-off
DC14	Flood Risk and Water Run-off
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
HE10	Archaeology
NE9	Lowland Vale

5.2 **Emerging Local Plan 2031 – Part 1**

The draft local plan part 1 is not currently adopted policy. Paragraph 216 of the NPPF allows for weight to be given to relevant policies in emerging plans, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise, and only subject to the stage of preparation of the plan, the extent of unresolved objections and the degree of consistency of the relevant emerging policies with the NPPF. At present it is officers' opinion that the emerging Local Plan housing policies carry limited weight for decision making. The relevant policies are as follows:-

Policy No.	Policy Title
Core Policy 1	Presumption in favour of sustainable development
Core Policy 2	Co-operation on unmet housing need for Oxfordshire
Core Policy 3	Settlement hierarchy
Core Policy 4	Meeting our housing needs
Core Policy 5	Housing supply ring-fence
Core Policy 7	Providing supporting infrastructure and services
Core Policy 20	Spatial strategy for Western Vale Sub-Area
Core Policy 22	Housing mix
Core Policy 23	Housing density
Core Policy 24	Affordable housing
Core Policy 33	Promoting sustainable transport and accessibility
Core Policy 35	Promoting public transport, cycling and walking
Core Policy 36	Electronic communications
Core Policy 37	Design and local distinctiveness
Core Policy 38	Design strategies for strategic and major development sites
Core Policy 39	The historic environment
Core Policy 42	Flood risk
Core Policy 43	Natural resources
Core Policy 44	Landscape
Core Policy 45	Green infrastructure
Core Policy 46	Conservation and improvement of biodiversity

5.3 **Supplementary Planning Guidance**

- Design Guide – March 2015

The following sections of the Design Guide are particularly relevant to this application:-

Responding to Site and Setting

- *Character Study (DG6) and Site appraisal (DG9)*

Establishing the Framework

- *Existing natural resources, sustainability and heritage(DG10-13, 15, 19)*
- *Landscape and SUDS (DG14, 16-18, 20)*
- *Movement Framework and street hierarchy (DG21-24)*
- *Density (DG26)*
- *Urban Structure (blocks, frontages, nodes etc) DG27-30*

Layout

- *Streets and Spaces (DG31-43)*
- *Parking (DG44-50)*

Built Form

- *Scale, form, massing and position (DG51-54)*
- *Boundary treatments (DG55)*
- *Building Design (DG56-62)*
- *Amenity, privacy and overlooking (DG63-64)*

- *Refuse and services (DG67-68)*

- Open space, sport and recreation future provision – July 2008
- Sustainable Design and Construction – December 2009
- Affordable Housing – July 2006
- Flood Maps and Flood Risk – July 2006
- Planning and Public Art – July 2006

5.4 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – March 2012

5.5 National Planning Practise Guidance 2014 (NPPG)

5.6 Environmental Impact

This proposal does not exceed 150 dwellings and the site area is under 5ha. Consequently the proposal is beneath the thresholds set in Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 and this proposal is not EIA development and there is no requirement under the Regulations to provide a screening opinion.

5.7 Other Relevant Legislation

- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990
- Community & Infrastructure Levy Legislation Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010
- Localism Act (including New Homes Bonus)

5.8 Human Rights Act

The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 have been taken into account in the processing of the application and the preparation of this report.

5.9 Equalities

In determining this planning application the Council has regard to its equalities obligations including its obligations under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The relevant planning considerations in the determination of this application are:

1. Principle of the development
2. EIA and Cumulative Impact
3. Use of Land
4. Locational Credentials
5. Affordable Housing and Housing Mix
6. Design and Layout
7. Residential Amenity
8. Landscape and Visual Impact
9. Open Space and Landscaping
10. Flood Risk and Surface/Foul Drainage
11. Traffic, Parking and Highway Safety
12. Protected Species and Biodiversity
13. Archaeology
14. Viability and Developer Contributions

The Principle of Development

- 6.1 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Section 70 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 provides that the local planning authority shall have regard to the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations. The development plan currently comprises the saved policies of Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011. Paragraph 215 of the NPPF provides that due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).
- 6.2 Other material planning considerations include national planning guidance within the NPPF and NPPG and the emerging Vale of White Horse Local Plan: Part 1-Strategic Sites and Policies and its supporting evidence base.
- 6.3 Paragraph 47 of the NPPF expects local planning authorities to *"use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area"*... The authority has undertaken this assessment through the April 2014 SHMA which is the most up to date objectively assessed need for housing. In agreeing to submit the emerging Local Plan for examination, the Council has agreed a housing target of at least 20,560 dwellings for the plan period to 2031. Set against this target the Council does not have a five year housing land supply.
- 6.4 Paragraph 49 of the NPPF states *"Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites"*. This means that the relevant housing policies in the adopted Local Plan are not considered up to date and the adverse impacts of a development would need to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits if the proposal is refused. In order to judge whether a development is sustainable it must be assessed against the economic, social and environmental roles.
- 6.5 Policy GS1 of the adopted Local Plan provides a strategy for locating development concentrated at the five major towns but with small scale development within the built up areas of villages provided that important areas of open land and their rural character are protected. In terms of a hierarchy for allocating development this strategy is consistent with the NPPF, as is the intention to protect the character of villages. This site benefits from planning permission for a housing development but with care facilities on this particular part of the site. The proposal is within an area permitted for development.
- 6.6 Planning permission exists for a housing development on the wider Cowans Camp site but with that scheme permitting care facilities in the form of elderly person's accommodation and accommodation for disabled persons on this particular part of the site. In presenting application no. P12/V2283/O to planning committee the planning officer's report stated:
"in light of the current shortfall in the five year housing land supply, the proposal is considered acceptable on the basis of the following:
- *Character - the site is adjacent to, and a fill-in site, between the built-up area of the village and the A420. The site is also naturally contained on all sides apart from the south side. As a result, there will only be a limited landscape impact.*
 - *Sustainability – The site is adjacent to the village with good access to roads, public transport, schooling, sports facilities and shops within a reasonable*

distance.

- *Employment – the creation of circa 50 new jobs, potentially for local people is considered to add merit to the application.*
- *Elderly care provision – it is recognised at a national, county and district level that the provision of additional elderly care facilities is an important strategic aim. The application accords with that aim”.*

6.7 The current application needs to be considered on its own merits. The Parish Council and local residents concerns regarding loss of employment and care facilities are understandable. The site is currently vacant and employment and or care facilities are not physically being lost as no such opportunities or facilities exist on the site and there is no obligation on a developer to provide them. The site remains an accessible location for housing being acceptably close to local services and facilities including employment opportunities. The site is mostly previously developed land and therefore, a preferred location for housing development in accordance with the NPPF. A developer is under no obligation to provide the care facilities and the County Council advises that for affordable care facilities this site is too remote from services and moreover, need for this area is now met through new developments in Faringdon and Southmoor.

6.8 The relevant housing policies of the adopted and emerging local plan hold very limited material planning weight in light of the lack of a 5 year housing supply. Consequently the proposal should be assessed under the NPPF where there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Sustainable development is seen as the golden thread running through the decision making process. Having a deliverable 5 year housing supply is considered sustainable under the 3 strands. Therefore, with the lack of a 5 year housing supply, and this being mostly previously developed land adjoining a permitted scheme of housing, the proposal is acceptable in principle unless any adverse impacts can be identified that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of meeting this objective.

Cumulative Impact

6.9 The NPPF does not suggest that populations of settlements should be limited in some way or not be expanded by any particular figure. It expects housing to be boosted significantly. Some local residents consider the proposal will overwhelm the village. Adding a further 33 dwellings to this site and to the village is considered reasonable in principle. Pressures on infrastructure can be addressed in part through appropriate financial contributions and through planning conditions. The highway authority is not raising any concerns in response to increased traffic movements.

Use of Land

6.10 The NPPF encourages the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value (paragraph 17). This site has limited environmental value and the loss of this land to housing is outweighed by economic, social and environmental benefits.

Locational Credentials

6.11 The NPPF requires the need to travel to be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes to be maximised (paragraph 34).

6.12 The site adjoins the Shrivenham Hundred Business Park and the Defence Academy is approximately 1200m distant and both of these sites could provide employment opportunities. Shops and other services exist in Watchfield including those at the Watchfield roundabout (approximately 950m away), a primary school (approximately 950m away by road). A regular bus service is some 1km from the site providing access

to Shrivenham and beyond to Swindon and Faringdon with their wider choice of services and employment opportunities. The walking distances to key facilities in the village are greater than 400m which is a desirable distance according to the Institution of Highways Transportation guidelines for providing for journeys on foot (2000) but which does also advise distances up to 800m are acceptable and up to 1200m are a preferred maximum.

Affordable housing and housing mix

- 6.13 The application makes provision for 40 % affordable housing which accords with Policy H17 of the adopted Local Plan. The proposed affordable housing mix and tenure split is shown in the table below.

	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed	Total
Rent	2	5	2	0	9
Shared Ownership		4		0	4
Total	2	9	2	0	13
SHMA	27.3%	35.1%	33.6%	3.9%	
SHMA expectation	3.549	4.563	4.368	0.507	

- 6.14 Policy H16 of the Adopted Local Plan requires 50% of houses to have two beds or less. However, as stipulated at paragraph 47 of the NPPF this policy is out of date as it is not based on recent assessments of housing need. The Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2014 (SHMA) is the most recent assessment and estimates the following open market dwelling requirement by number of bedrooms (2011 to 2031) for the District:

	1 bed	2 beds	3 beds	4+ beds
SHMA	5.9%	21.7%	42.6%	29.8%
Proposal	0	3	11	6
SHMA expectation	1.18	4.34	8.52	5.96

- 6.15 Affordable housing in terms of mix is close to the expected SHMA expectation with the exception of 2-bed units but the scheme is generally balanced towards the smaller sized units.

- 6.16 In terms of market housing the mix is acceptably close to the SHMA requirement.

Design and Layout

- 6.17 The NPPF provides that planning decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment (paragraph 60). It gives considerable weight to good design and acknowledges it is a key component of sustainable development.

- 6.18 A number of local plan policies seek to ensure high quality developments and to protect the amenities of neighbouring properties (Policies DC1, DC6, DC9). In March 2015 the council adopted its design guide, which aims to raise the standard of design across the district. The below assessment is set out in logical sections similar to those in the design guide.

- 6.19 *Site, Setting and Framework*

The design and access statement (DAS) (as updated on 1 July 2015) fails to mention this Council's previous Residential Design Guide or the current adopted Design Guide. Instead it uses Building for Life 12 as a tick box exercise for assessing the proposal. The DAS includes a limited character study, context appraisal and site appraisal and does not explain how the proposal responds to local character or how the house designs respond to the photographs of dwellings used in the DAS. Limited weight is given to the DAS.

- 6.20 In this case the site and its setting is heavily influenced by the extant planning permission for 100 dwellings on adjacent land which in effect enclose this site separating it from the wider village and which once built will separate this proposal visually from the village.
- 6.21 Principle DG26 of the design guide states that density should be appropriate to the location, and it requires a range of densities for larger development proposals. Policy H15 of the adopted local plan requires densities of at least 30 dwellings per hectare. The application proposes a density of some 31 dwellings per hectare which is reasonable and reflective of the density of development for the permitted adjacent housing scheme. This density is acceptable subject to the layout of the development.
- 6.22 *Spatial Layout*
As mentioned above the site is influenced by the extant planning permission for housing on adjacent land. That approved scheme has access from High Street and this proposal provides a frontage to this permitted spine road in the form of detached, semi-detached and terraced two-storey dwellings with parking spaces between them. This housing pattern reflects that on the opposite side of the permitted spine road. The proposal also provides 3 dwellings fronting High Street which are accessed by their own drive directly from High Street. Providing an active frontage to High Street is acceptable. The proposal provides dwellings at the corners of the proposed cul-de-sacs with active frontage to the highways and this is acceptable.
- 6.23 The boundary hedge to High Street is to be retained but the verge is to be lost to visitor parking. In this context of a developed area which lacks rural character this is reasonable.
- 6.24 There is a hierarchy of streets through the provision of the permitted spine road into the site from High Street and a lower order with a secondary road creating a loop to serve proposed housing, access open space areas and linking back to the spine road. Traffic calming is provided via rumble strips, raised tables and changes in surface treatment and the curvature and narrower secondary road.
- 6.25 In terms of the roads and houses fronting on to them the proposal accords with design guide principle DG28 in that it creates a sense of enclosure, with buildings close to the street. Fronts generally face fronts along the spine road with parking between dwellings in an effort to hide them. In entering the site a visitor would be aware of parking on the High Street frontage, faced with a parking space on entering the site and the parking at plot 5 and the parking between dwellings on the eastern side of the spine road which is part of the permitted scheme. This pattern of visible parking is common through the main spine road and this follows the pattern established through the extant permission for the wider housing scheme. Opportunities for tree planting and soft landscaping are limited and the urban form will dominate. This is not ideal and this needs to be balanced against the benefits of the scheme.
- 6.26 The development provides for pedestrians through the provision of footpaths either side of the spine road. Links to the proposed open space to the west are available via the

secondary road with this approach to the open space being an improvement in comparison to the original submitted scheme for this site.

- 6.27 The proposal does not provide any on site play space. An area of open space is included in the site area but this is dominated by an attenuation pond and would not be appropriate useable open space. The permitted scheme for this site and the wider Cowans Camp site includes a large area of open space between the development and the A420. This area is within the control of the applicant (blue land). A planning condition could ensure this open space is provided, managed and maintained by the developer or an appointed management company and would negate the need for a financial contribution being sought by this Council towards its upkeep.
- 6.28 The proposal includes dwellings that overlook and provide surveillance of open spaces to the west with some limited defensible space in front of them. Previous concerns relating to the proposal amounted to the impact of turning spaces and parking on the development edge which provided a weak boundary at odds with principle DG29 of the Design Guide. The amended plans resolve this with a through road against the boundary edge and dwellings mainly overlooking the open spaces similar to the approved scheme on the adjacent land and limited garden fences against the open space. The amended arrangement is considered to accord with principle DG29 of the Design Guide.
- 6.29 The affordable housing is not dispersed through the site but lined along the western boundary. There is parking to the front of some of the units with others having parking to their sides. I note the housing officer is not objecting but wishes to see the rented and shared ownership dwellings together. This merely requires 'swapping' unit 207 to a rented affordable dwelling and plot 222 to a shared ownership dwelling. This can be arranged through the s.106 agreement to secure the affordable housing.
- 6.30 *Built form*
The proposed dwellings in terms of their heights, materials and external appearance are reflective of the house types already permitted in the extant planning permission scheme for adjacent land. They resemble in appearance features and scale of more modern dwellings in the village. This site is outside the conservation area and has no impact on its setting. In this location the external appearance of the dwellings is reasonable.
- 6.31 **Residential Amenity**
Adopted local plan policy DC9 seeks to prevent development that would result in a loss of privacy, daylight or sunlight for neighbouring properties or that would cause dominance or visual intrusion for neighbouring properties and the wider environment. Protecting amenity is a core principle of the NPPF. Design principles DG63-64 of the Design Guide pertain to amenity, privacy and overlooking.
- 6.32 There are no existing residential neighbours to this site, as they will be separated by the permitted housing on adjacent land. Therefore, no unreasonable overlooking of existing neighbours occurs. Even if the permitted housing was not to be built the distances and tree screening on the Star Lane boundary would ensure no unreasonable overlooking or over shadowing would result.
- 6.33 Issues associated with the previous 35 dwelling layout have been addressed with proposed dwellings in accordance with Design Guide advice for distances back to back. In addition, the flats no longer have shared gardens.
- 6.34 The proposal is in close proximity to the A420 and occupants of the proposed dwellings

will hear traffic noise from the A420. A condition can be imposed as recommend by the environment protection team requiring a noise attenuations scheme to ensure noise disturbance internally is at reasonable levels.

Landscape and Visual Impact

- 6.35 The NPPF seeks to enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes (paragraph109). This is not a valued landscape in NPPF terms. The site is part of the wider Lowland Vale landscape. In this context of an edge of village location with development permitted 'around' the site, the A420 to the west and a business park to the north and limited views across the site, the landscape impact is reasonable and not contrary to policy NE9 of the adopted local plan.

Open Space, Landscaping and Trees

- 6.36 Adopted Local Plan Policy H23 requires a minimum of 15% of the residential area to be laid out as open space. As mentioned already the proposal includes some 'open space as part of the application site but this is dominated by an attenuation pond. This would not provide adequate open space for the proposal in accordance with policy H23.
- 6.37 The permitted scheme for 100 dwellings provides a large open space between the A420 and the permitted housing site. This land is within the control of the current applicant. The current proposal is a standalone application and if permitted could be built even if the developer decided not to construct the 100 dwellings (commencement of that development has begun). It would be possible to require a developer to provide open space on land immediately to the west of the site and within the applicants control and this would provide adequate open space in addition to the attenuation pond for drainage. As with the legal agreement associated with the extant planning permission the open space could be offered to the Parish Council for management and maintenance and a commuted sum towards this or the legal agreement can provide the option for the development to manage and maintain the space.
- 6.38 There are no trees on site and few landscape features with the main feature being the hedge on the High Street frontage which is shown as retained and this can be secured by condition. Scope for planting throughout the site is limited. The proposal will have an urban form. The only spaces available are areas the dwelling frontages and between parking bays plus the attenuation pond area. This is similar to the approved scheme.

Flood Risk and Surface/Foul Drainage

- 6.39 The NPPF provides that development should not increase flood risk elsewhere and should be appropriately flood resilient and resistant (paragraph 103). It states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, amongst other things, preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution (Paragraph 109).
- 6.40 Adopted local plan policy DC9 provides that new development will not be permitted if it would unacceptably harm the amenities of neighbouring properties or the wider environment in terms of, amongst other things, pollution and contamination. Policy DC12 provides that development will not be permitted if it would adversely affect the quality of water resources as a result of, amongst other things, waste water discharge. Policies DC13 and 14 are not considered to be consistent with the NPPF, because they do not comply with paragraphs 100 to 104 which require a sequential approach to locating development and provide that flood risk should not be increased elsewhere.
- 6.41 In this case the application is not supported by a contamination survey. The Council

has granted permission for care facilities on this site and as there are no changes in circumstances in terms of ground conditions, contamination is not considered an obstacle. Like the outline permission for developing this site soil remediation can be dealt with by condition.

- 6.42 The drainage bodies have no objections. Appropriate surface water drainage include SUDS can be provided and required by condition. Foul and waste water drainage can be provided and secured by Grampian style condition.

Traffic, Parking and Highway Safety

- 6.43 Adopted local plan policy DC5 requires safe access for developments and that the road network can accommodate the traffic arising from the development safely. The NPPF (Paragraph 32) requires plans and decision to take account of whether:-
- the opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up depending on the nature and location of the site, to reduce the need for major transport infrastructure;
 - safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people; and
 - improvements can be undertaken within the transport network that cost effectively limit the significant impacts of the development.
- 6.44 Paragraph 32 goes on to state: *“Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe.”*
- 6.45 The highway authority has not raised any concerns. Access to High Street has already been permitted through the previous planning approvals for this site. Circumstances have not changed. The highway authority has not raised any concerns in respect of the modest increase in traffic that this proposal could generate in comparison to the approved scheme or to the cumulative impacts of increased traffic including those that would access the A420.
- 6.46 Part of the application site in the north west corner where the site meets High Street is seemingly controlled by the County Council. This is not a highway safety matter but one of land ownership. The applicant has served notice on the County Council.

Ecology and Biodiversity

- 6.47 Paragraph 117 of the NPPF refers to the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, whilst Paragraph 118 sets out the basis for determination of planning applications. Paragraph 118 states that *“...if significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused...”*
- 6.48 The application is supported by a letter from an ecologist that updates the ecology reports previously submitted for the site. This confirms the development has no unreasonable impact for biodiversity including Great Crested Newt that inhabit a pond on site. The newts are being translocated as part of the planning permission for developing the site and a planning condition can continue to require this. The buildings formerly on site were used by roosting bats but the buildings have now been demolished in accordance with the wider approved scheme for this site and neighbouring land.
- 6.49 The attenuation pond and margins allow an opportunity for biodiversity enhancement which could be secured by condition.

Archaeology

- 6.50 Policy HE10 of the adopted Local Plan states that development will not be permitted if it would cause damage to the site or setting of nationally important archaeological remains, whether scheduled or not. The County Council archaeologist confirms that the site contains no known archaeological sites or features and that there are no archaeological constraints to this application.

Viability, affordable housing and Section 106 contributions

- 6.51 The NPPF advises that planning obligations should only be sought where they meet all of the following tests (paragraph 204):
- i) Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
 - ii) Directly related to the development; and
 - iii) Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
- Policy DC8 of the Adopted Local Plan provides that development will only be permitted where the necessary physical infrastructure and service requirements to support the development can be secured.
- 6.52 As discussed above, the application provides for 40% of the dwellings as affordable housing.
- 6.53 On 6 April 2015 a change in legislation was introduced by the Government which now prevents the pooling of more than five financial contributions to any one infrastructure project. Consequently this rules out requests for contributions towards Faringdon Community College, Special Educational Needs, Wantage library, the central library, waste management, museum resources and adult day care in Wantage and improving the bus service along the A420 route; swimming pool and sports hall contributions.
- 6.54 Watchfield Parish Council has requested contributions to village infrastructure improvements that are summarised in their letter dated 1 May 2015 (Appendix 3). The applicant is not prepared to provide contributions towards the drainage issues at the sports field, as these have not been caused by this development and consequently are not relevant to this development. Officers agree that this issue is not directly related to this development and a contribution should not therefore be sought. The applicant advises the new Village Hall does not appear to have planning consent nor a site; the contributions made must be necessary, robust and CIL compliant, and therefore the applicant does not accept this item. Officers disagree in that the development could put increased pressure on the existing village hall requiring its improvement which could include an extension. Should permission be granted a contribution should be sought. The contribution towards a new footpath surface is accepted by the applicant but suggest this must be apportioned with 4% of £2500 being £100 making the total £1060. Officers consider this reasonable. The applicant considers contributions towards sporting infrastructure and other recreational facilities such as multi sports, youth facilities, tennis, green spaces, allotments etc are District matters but are prepared to contribute pro rata figures. Officers consider the Parish is entitled to request reasonable contributions to these infrastructure improvements, as facilities the Parish has responsibility for. I am also aware of the Council's leisure department's advice on contributions towards items such as multi use games areas (MUGA) and tennis which are considerable less than those requested by the Parish Council. The District Council's requests are proportionate but in the case of MUGA relate to Shrivenham whereas the Parish Council's request is towards MUGA in the Parish. The Parish Council request in this respect is reasonable but with regard to tennis seems excessive in which case the District Council's calculations seem more accurate. Other District Council requests towards sports and leisure provision are for facilities outside the Parish and are not considered relevant given facilities in the Parish and which the parish Council has made a reasonable case for improvements through increased pressure and potential for use by residents of this development.

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- 6.55 An art contribution is not being requested.
- 6.56 With the above in mind the following developer contributions are considered fair and proportionate and should be subject to a legal agreement to secure them should planning permission be granted:-

Vale of White Horse District Council	<i>Proposed Contributions</i>
Waste collection & bin provision for this development	£5,950
Open space	£36,347
Street Naming and numbering	To be confirmed
Parish/Town Council:	
Grass pitch provision in the village	£12,938
Multi sports court provision in Watchfield	£8,000
Youth facilities in Watchfield	£6,960
Tennis courts in the village	£742
Amenity green space	£5,400
Natural green space	£5,400
Parks & gardens	£5,400
Allotments	£2,697.50
Artificial turf	£1,916
Formal play space provision	£21,883
Sports pavilion on the recreation ground	£6,723
Village hall improvements	£10,466
Additional benches	£1,120
Surfacing a footpath beside the churchyard and recreation ground & a barrier to separate cyclists and pedestrians	£1,060
Additional equipment for children's play groups, the Acorn Club & Friendly club	£570.82
Total	£91,276.32
Oxfordshire County Council	
	<i>Proposed Contributions</i>
Watchfield Primary School	£103,891

Total	£103,891
Overall Total	£195,167.32

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 This application has been assessed against the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), relevant saved policies in the local plan and all other material planning considerations. The NPPF states that sustainable development should be permitted unless the adverse effects significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. The NPPF also states that there are social, economic and environmental dimensions to sustainability and that conclusions must be reached taking into account the NPPF as a whole.
- 7.2 In view of the council's housing land supply shortfall, the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies and permission should be granted unless *"any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole"* (NPPF paragraph 14). Paragraph 7 of NPPF identifies three mutually dependant dimensions to sustainable development; it should fulfil an economic role, a social role and an environmental role.
- 7.3 The proposed development would perform an economic role, at least in the short term, in that it would provide employment during the construction phase. It would also create investment in the local and wider economy through the construction stage and new residents and their spending. Through increasing the housing stock, it would contribute to an expansion of the local housing market and could potentially improve the affordability of open market housing. In the Highworth Road, Faringdon appeal case (proposed up to 94 dwellings) it is noted that the Secretary of State considered that the *"benefits of the scheme would include the provision of much needed market and affordable housing to contribute towards acknowledged substantial shortfalls, and would generate considerable economic benefits of the type arising from housing development"* and that he gave these benefits significant weight (application no. P13/V1366/O, appeal reference APP/V3120/A/13/2210891).
- 7.4 The scheme will have a social role as it will provide in general additional housing that the District needs together with much needed affordable housing units. Whilst the housing mix does not strictly meet the SHMA the emphasis of this proposal is on providing two and three bedroom dwellings and this marginal variation from the SHMA is outweighed by the benefits of providing smaller units and by the economic benefits.
- 7.5 The proposal will have some limited environmental implications resulting from localised landscape harm and loss of a newt pond. This limited harm has already been accepted by this authority in permitting development on this site and the limited harm is outweighed by the benefits and mitigation for newts this has already been accepted in granting the earlier extant planning permission and the mitigation undertaken.
- 7.6 Some limited harm has been identified in terms of design including limited landscaping opportunities and boundary treatment to the open space. In accordance with paragraph 56 of the NPPF great importance is given to the design which is a key aspect of sustainable development. The elements of the design identified on their own or together would not in officer's opinion be sufficient to justify refusal. Lacking a five year land supply and the economic and social benefits of new housing identified outweigh this limited harm. Consideration also needs to be given to the extant scheme which included fencing to the open space.

7.7 The proposal represents sustainable development and consequently, there is a presumption in favour of this proposal. The NPPF seeks to boost significantly the supply of housing (paragraph 47) and encourages new housing on previously developed land. The applicant is not obliged to build the care facilities and the County Council indicates that there is no need for the care facilities previously permitted. In any event this is a suitable housing site and regardless of the previous permission, a housing development on this site is acceptable in principle and the design of the scheme is now considered reasonable.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

8.1 **It is recommended that authority to grant planning permission is delegated to the head of planning, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the committee, subject to:**

A. A S106 agreement being entered into with both the county council and district council in order to secure contributions towards local infrastructure and to secure affordable housing; and

B. Conditions as follows:

1. Time limit - full application.
2. Approved plans.
3. Access, parking and turning in accordance with approved plan.
4. New estate roads.
5. No drainage to highway.
6. Landscaping scheme (submission).
7. Landscaping scheme (implement).
8. Retain existing High Street frontage hedgerow.
9. Provide, manage and maintain open space.
10. Materials in accordance with approved plan.
11. Contamination and if necessary a remediation scheme to be submitted.
12. Drainage details (foul water).
13. Sustainable drainage scheme.
14. Boundary details in accordance with approved plan.
15. Garage accommodation to remain as garages.
16. Sound insulation (dwellings).
17. Slab levels (dwellings).
18. Approved plans.

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