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| APPLICATION NO. | P15/V0979/O |
| APPLICATION TYPE | Major Outline Application |
| REGISTERED | 30.4.2015 |
| PARISH | WANTAGE and GROVE BROOK |
| WARD MEMBER(S) | Julia Reynolds and Jenny Hannaby |
| APPLICANT | Trustees of the Community St Mary the Virgin |
| SITE | Land to the South of Challow Road and North of Naldertown, Wantage, OX12 9EB |
| PROPOSAL | Outline application for the demolition of Aberclare, St.Johns Ambulance Hall and Cedarholme and development of up to 31 dwellings, with all matters reserved except access and layout. |
| GRID REFERENCE | 439214/188108 |
| OFFICER | Simon Dunn-Lwin MRTPI |

SUMMARY

This application is referred to the planning committee because Wantage Town Council objects, together with 31 objections from local residents, at the time of writing this report. The proposal is in outline form for the development of 31 dwellings, following demolition of two houses and the St Johns Ambulance Hall in the south-eastern portion of the site fronting Naldertown. This application is for the principle of residential development. All matters, except for access and layout, are reserved for further consideration at a future date.

The main issues are:-

- Whether the principal of development is acceptable.
- Whether the site is a suitable location for new housing that can contribute to the five-year housing supply shortfall.
- Impact of the proposal on neighbouring residential amenities.
- Impact of the proposal on the setting of the Listed Convent site to the north
- Suitability of the access and layout
- Impact of the proposal on highway safety.
- Cumulative impact on Wantage.
- Implications for foul and surface water drainage, flooding and contamination.
- Impact on archaeology, ecology and arboriculture

This report assesses the planning merits of the outline proposal in the context of national and local planning policy, and other material planning considerations.

The outline application proposal will help to address housing needs in the district in the absence of a five year housing land supply in accordance with the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF). The access and layout is considered acceptable in the context of location and character of the area.

The proposal presents a satisfactory development subject to detail consideration of scale, appearance and landscaping at full application stage. The supporting information addresses issues of transport and access, heritage assets, drainage and flooding, ecology, trees and archaeology. There are no unreasonable undue

impacts on the environment, neighbouring amenities or traffic safety. The technical issues are considered acceptable subject to conditions.

The report concludes that the proposal is considered to amount to 'sustainable development' and compliant with policy and guidance. Whilst limited adverse impacts during the construction phase would be experienced by neighbours, on balancing all material planning considerations, the proposal is acceptable. The application is recommended for approval subject to conditions and a S106 legal agreement to secure contributions to mitigate the impact on local infrastructure.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application site is approximately 0.97 hectares in total area. It is located on the south side of Challow Road (A417) and north side of Naldertown and to the rear of residential properties on Ham Road to the east, also owned by the applicant. The site is largely an open field (approximately 75%) with three properties in the south-west corner fronting Naldertown occupying approximately 25% of the site area. The application site is located approximately 550m from Wantage Town Centre to the south east (approximately 7 minutes walk away). The site plan is **attached** at appendix one.
- 1.2 Three properties within the red line application site boundary at Aberclare, St John's Ambulance Hall and Cedarholme, all fronting and accessed from Naldertown, are currently occupied. The applicant say the tenants would be provided with alternative accommodation although no details other than the St Johns Ambulance (SJA) have been provided. This is discussed further in the assessment section below. One additional property adjoining 'Aberclare', further to the west and fronting on to Naldertown, called 'Maryhill', is also owned by the applicant, but it is not included within the application site.
- 1.3 The site has a street frontage of approximately 182m on Challow Road to the north and approximately 121m on Naldertown to the south, with a depth of approximately 65m in the centre, widening out to approximately 75m to the west. The site is elevated above Challow Road by approximately 1m and slopes down from west to east by approximately 2 metres across the site. It is bordered by mature high hedging along the northern boundary with Challow Road and in part on the western boundary with trees primarily along the eastern and northern edge. Two trees are located within the site, behind Cedarholme, but it is predominantly an open field, largely overgrown with grass, except for the properties in the south-western corner described above.
- 1.4 This is a built up urban area just outside Wantage town centre and characterised by two storey residential properties of varying ages from Victorian Cottages to 70s semis on Naldertown. The main St. Mary's the Virgin Convent site is located to the north, on the other side of Challow Road, which comprise a number of Grade 2 Listed Buildings including the Convent, the Chapel in the centre of the site, 'White Lodge' to the eastern boundary on Denchworth Road, and the Gateway and wall on Challow Road. The Anglican Sisterhood of St. Mary the Virgin was founded in 1848 and the buildings date back to the 1850s. The area to the west and north within the convent grounds consists of open fields and paddocks.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The application proposal comprise demolition of the two houses ‘ Aberclare and ‘Cedarholme’, together with the SJA Hall described above and development for 31 houses with access from Naldertown with two new access points into the site. The existing vehicular accesses are retained to proposed parking areas.
- 2.2 Outline permission is sought for up to 31 dwellings in a mix comprising 3 x 1 bed, 7 x 2 bed, 14 x 3 bed and 7 x 4 bed units in a mix of flats and houses considered further below. The proposal comprises 60% market and 40% affordable housing. Public open space is included within the layout amounting to just over 15% of the overall site area or 1468 sq.m (0.15ha).
- 2.3 The application is in outline form and only access and layout arrangements are considered in detail. The proposal retains the existing vehicular access points on Naldertown with two new access created into the site with the proposed layout as shown in the application plans **attached** at appendix two.

3.0 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

- 3.1 Consultation letters were sent on 27th April 2015. A site notice was posted outside the site and a press advert placed in the local paper.
- 3.2 Consultations

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| Neighbours: | <p>31 objections received. The objections can be summarized as follows: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking and traffic congestion in Naldertown which is a narrow road. • Implications for safety of pedestrian and particularly school children who use this route. • Displaces road safety issues onto Ham Road through increased traffic movement • Loss of green space and rural context contrary to draft Wantage Neighbourhood plan. • Loss of family houses • Loss of St John Ambulance hall facility and historical association locally. • Loss of views of the convent and tower. • Loss of views of the Berkshire downs from the north. • Impact on local infrastructure relating to medical and school capacity. • Loss of wildlife habitat and bio-diversity. • Impact on utilities/sewerage infrastructure. • Impact/disturbance of construction traffic and access. • Excessive population increase with other developments in Wantage. • Access should be via A417. • Density too high. • Insufficient facilities and amenities in village to • Drainage and flood risk. |
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| <p>Wantage Town Council:</p> | <p>The Town Council objects to the application and the response is produced in full below:-</p> <p><i>“There are concerns regarding the additional traffic generated along the narrow highway in Naldertown and the highways leading to Camel crossroads. The number of dwellings is considered an over development with insufficient parking for the number of dwellings. There is an objection to the loss of green space and the impact of the loss on wildlife.”</i></p> |
| <p>Wantage and Grove Campaign Group</p> | <p>Object on the following summarized grounds:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over- development of site. • Exacerbate parking congestion in Naldertown with consequential road safety implications. • Development should provide additional visitor parking to alleviate road safety issue. • More green space should be preserved to safeguard bio-diversity. |
| <p>Oxfordshire County Council One Voice</p> | <p><u>Transport</u> No objection subject to conditions and S106 contributions as follows: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial contribution of £50,000 for pedestrian signal crossing on A417 Challow Road. • £2000 for provision of Bus Stops in vicinity of site. • S278 agreement required for all off-site access and highway mitigation/ improvement works to Naldertown. • S38 agreement required for adoption of new roads. <p><u>Archaeology</u> No objection subject to conditions on written scheme of investigation and staged programme of archaeological evaluation prior to development. Application lies near the site of a Romano British villa estate. Geophysical survey suggests agricultural activity along with considerable disturbance.</p> <p><u>Education</u> No objection subject to S106 school capacity mitigation contributions as follows:- £97,752 for Stockham Primary School £182,199 for Grove Airfield Secondary School.</p> <p><u>Property</u> No Objection subject to S106 contributions for the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £6698 for Wantage Library. • £6116 for Adult Day Care |

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| | <p>Recommend condition regarding fire hydrants.</p> <p><i>Officer comment: This is a matter for Building Regulations.</i></p> |
| Conservation Officer | <p>Concluding comments as follows:-</p> <p>“I raise no Conservation objection to this outline. The layout provides some retention of views to and from the Convent which goes someway to preserve the setting of the listed building in line with the Planning (LB&CA) Act 1990. Although it is undoubtedly a substantial alteration from the existing character of the site, the harm to special interest of the designated heritage assets is minimal and steps have been taken to respond to those areas of greatest sensitivity in line with Local Plan 2011 Policy HE4.”</p> |
| Forestry Team (Trees) | <p>Comment summarized below:-</p> <p>Express concern about two mature trees (Oak to the south west corner and Lime to the north-west corner) which are off site but root protection area (RPA) likely to be affected by the proposal.</p> <p><i>Officer response: Additional information has been submitted within the supplemental Arboriculture Report. An update response to be included within addendum not.</i></p> |
| Drainage Engineer | <p>No objection subject to following condition:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • detailed sustainable drainage scheme for foul and surface water to be agreed prior to development and implemented before occupation. |
| Environmental Protection Team – Contaminated Land | <p>No objection.</p> |
| Environmental Protection Team - Noise | <p>Final comments as follows:-</p> <p>“I have reviewed this application again and given that the proposed development is set back from the road in an urban location and in consideration of the levels of traffic on the A417 near this location. I do not feel that a full acoustic assessment is required. Although traffic noise is a material consideration I do not believe that it will have a significant impact on this development.”</p> |
| Countryside Officer (Ecology) | <p>‘The site has been subject to a suite of ecological surveys which were all conducted in an appropriate season and involved sufficient effort to justify the findings of the survey report. No important habitats are present on site and there are no significant populations of protected species associated with the site. As a result of the lack of significant ecological constraints I have no objections to</p> |

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| | <p>the proposed development .’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommend standard condition on biodiversity enhancement. |
| Landscape Architect | <p>Comments as follows:- “the application acknowledges the inter-visibility with St Mary the Virgin Convent. While it is not ideal to locate the POS on the edge of the site, this does allow for some views to the convent to be maintained and also accommodates the root protection zones of trees located to the east of the site. However the location of the attenuation basin within the POS is of concern. This area of POS with function as a Local Area for Play (LAP) for the area of housing especially plots 12-13 and 22-27, which have limited amenity space. The use of SUDS integrated into the site layout, such as rain gardens, tree pits, filter strips, storage under hard surfaces could all be used rather than the proposed attenuation pond within the main area of POS.</p> <p>The issue of how the proposed SUDS is integrated with the site layout can be dealt with under reserved matters.</p> <p>While I acknowledge the application is Outline, I note the Site Layout Drawing contains practical no street trees or front garden trees, the majority of the proposed trees are contained within the rear gardens. This will give a very hard development appearance especially when taken with the amount of rear gardens which abut the two site entrance roads.”</p> <p><i>Officer response: Noted and treated by condition for reserve matters stage.</i></p> |
| Housing | <p>Request 40% affordable housing with a tenure split of 75% rent and 25% shared ownership. Detailed comment on unit sizes to be addressed at full planning stage.</p> |
| Thames Water | <p>Thames Water has identified an inability of the existing waste water infrastructure to accommodate the needs of this application and recommend a ‘Grampian’ style condition to address this issue with an informative relating to water pressure.</p> <p><i>Officer response: The Council’s Drainage officer has suggested the same condition after reviewing Thames Water response which is recommended.</i></p> |
| Environment Agency | <p>EA defer to Oxfordshire County Council for comments as the Lead Local Flood Authority.</p> <p><i>Officer comment: County have not raised any objection to flood issues as the LLFA. Drainage issues are addressed by condition.</i></p> |

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| Waste Management | No objection subject to S106 contribution of £5270. Comments are provided on technical requirements for bin storage provision and maintenance. |
| Leisure | No objection subject to contributions for leisure facilities set out in the report under S106 contributions. |

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 Two minor applications on record for a front entrance porch at Maryhill in 1985 (P85/V2345) and a garage at the St Johns Ambulance Hall in 1995 (P96/V0836). Both were approved.
- 4.2 Formal pre-application advice provided by officers in December 2014 (P14/V2038/PEJ) for a similar scheme to the current application. This was preceded by a formal application for a Screening Opinion in June 2014. Formal determination issued on 03/07/2014 that an EIA is not required.

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 local plan policies relevant to this application as listed below were 'saved' by direction on 1 July 2009.

- GS1: Developments in Existing Settlements
- GS2: Development in the Countryside
- CF1: Protection of Existing Services and Facilities.
- DC1: Design
- DC3: Design against crime
- 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
- DC12: Water quality and resources
- DC13: Flood Risk
- DC14: Flood Risk and Water Run-Off
- H10: Development in the Five Main Settlements
- H15: Housing densities
- H16: Size of dwelling and lifetime homes
- H17: Affordable Housing
- H23: Open Space in New Housing Development
- NE9: Lowland Vale
- HE4: Development and Setting of Listed Buildings
- HE10: Archaeology
- TR2: Integrated Transport and Land Use
- TR5: Cycle Network

5.2 Emerging Local Plan 2031 – Part 1

The draft local plan part 1 is not currently adopted policy. The relevant policies are as follows:-

- 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 15: Spatial Strategy for South-East 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

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.

5.3 Neighbourhood Plan

The Wantage Neighbourhood Draft Plan 2015-2031 was issued on 22nd June 2015 for initial consultation that expired on 14th July. Responses are currently being reviewed for a further consultation in the Autumn before being submitted for examination. Consequently, the neighbourhood plan is in draft form and has yet to be examined. As its policies remain subject to unresolved objections little weight can be given to it. It should be noted however that the site is not designated within the emerging draft plan as a Local Green Space (Draft Policy 9).

5.4 Supplementary Planning Guidance

Design Guide – March 2015 –

The following sections of the design guide are particularly relevant to this application, however it should be noted the proposal is outline and the layout is indicative only:-

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)*

Sustainable Design and Construction – December 2009

Flood maps and flood risk – July 2006

5.5 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – March 2012

Paragraphs 6 – 10 – Achieving sustainable development

Paragraphs 11- 14 and 29 – presumption in favour of sustainable development

Paragraph 17 – Core Principles

Paragraphs 34 & 37 – encourage minimised journey length to work, shopping, leisure and education

Paragraph 47 - 50 – housing

Paragraph 50 – create sustainable inclusive and mixed communities

Paragraph 99 – Flood risk assessment

Paragraph 103 – Ensure flood risk is not increased

Paragraph 156 – Local Plans to set strategic priorities for infrastructure, including waste

Section 11 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Paragraphs 203, 204, 205 – Planning obligations and conditions

Paragraph 216 – prematurity of neighbourhood plans

5.6 National Planning Practice Guidance 2014 (NPPG)

In particular guidance on:

‘Determining a planning application’

‘Design’

‘Air Quality’

‘Noise’

‘Transport assessments in decision taking’

‘Planning obligations’

‘Water supply, waste water and water quality’

‘Use of planning conditions’.

5.7 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. Whilst this proposal is not EIA development the applicant did,

nevertheless, seek a formal Screening Opinion which was provided in July 2014 and referred above.

5.8 Other Relevant Legislation

5.8.1 Community & Infrastructure Levy Legislation Human Rights Act 1998.

5.8.2 Equality Act 2010.

5.8.3 Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

5.8.4 Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

5.8.5 Localism Act (including New Homes Bonus).

5.9 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.

5.10 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

6.1 The main planning considerations in the determination of this outline application are:-

- The principle of development
- Land use
- Accessibility and sustainability
- Cumulative Impact
- Impact on the setting of the listed convent
- Layout, design and residential amenity
- Affordable housing and housing mix.
- Highway Safety
- Flood Risk and Drainage
- Ecology and Archaeology
- Contamination.
- S106 infrastructure mitigation contributions

The Principle of Development

- 6.2 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 the 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).
- 6.3 Other material planning considerations is the NPPF and accompanying technical guidance, the emerging Vale of White Horse local plan: part 1-strategic sites and policies and its supporting evidence base, and planning policy guidance PPG.
- 6.4 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 that 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.
- 6.5 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 to be refused. In order to judge whether a development is sustainable it must be assessed against the economic, social and environmental roles.
- 6.6 Policy GS1 of the adopted local plan provides a strategy for locating development concentrated at the five major towns. 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. The site is not allocated for housing. It is clearly within the built up area of Wantage. Policy GS1(i) also says important open land will be protected from development, but the site is not allocated as public open space or for any other designation. The emerging Wantage Neighbourhood Draft Plan 2015-2031 also does not designate the site as a Local Green Space, albeit that the draft emerging plan carries little weight.

- 6.7 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, 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. In conclusion, the principle of development and in particular residential development on this site is considered acceptable.

Land Use

- 6.8 Paragraph 17 of 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. The application site, as described above, is largely an open field. The proposal would result in two houses and the St Johns Ambulance Hall being demolished to make way for 31 houses and flats. The Parish and local residents have objected, inter alia, that it would result in the loss of green space, loss of two family homes and the St Johns Ambulance Hall.

- 6.9 The issue of green space is addressed above. The proposal does not contravene adopted or emerging policy with regard to green space. It is neither formal or informal public open space. The provision of new housing with a net gain of 29 units is also supported by adopted policy H10. However, Policy H10(i) supports housing in Wantage on the proviso that it does not result in the loss of facilities important to the local community. Objections are raised regarding the loss of the St Johns Ambulance Hall and this matter was raised in the pre-application advice given by officers in relation to Policy CF1.

- 6.10 St Johns Ambulance (SJA) have been formally consulted but they have not replied at the time of writing this report. Officers understand the use of the hall by St Johns Ambulance for training sessions is infrequent and the hall remains largely empty. Officers also understand that SJA also use the Beacon for alternative accommodation given the SJA Hall in Naldertown is in poor condition. The applicant has advised that the current lease for the hall expires in June 2016 and the Trustees of the Convent of St Mary the Virgin (CSMV) are not under an obligation to renew the lease. In any event the applicant has stated that they are willing to accommodate SJA within the north convent site. Given these circumstances officers consider the proposal would comply with Policy H10.

Accessibility 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). In terms of facilities, the site is located about 550 metres from Wantage Town Centre with access to a range of goods and services, including bus services to Oxford and Swindon.
- 6.12 In terms of the site's location, and its relationship to the existing urban environment of Wantage, the proposal is considered a sustainable form of development under the

terms of the NPPF, and emerging Core Policy 1.

Cumulative Impact

- 6.13 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 nationwide.
- 6.14 Core Policy 8 of the emerging local plan 2031 provides the spatial strategy for the South East Vale Sub-Area. In terms of housing delivery, the Plan proposes that at least 12,450 new homes will be delivered between 2011 and 2031: 10,320 homes to be delivered through the strategic site allocations, with the remaining 56 homes to be allocated through the local plan part 2, neighbourhood development plans or through the development management process. 164 homes are estimated through windfall sites. The plan makes it clear that Wantage and Grove are part of this strategic growth area where 4750 homes are allocated at Crab Hill (1500), Grove Airfield (2500) and Monks Farm (750). This is set out on pages 70-71 of the emerging Local Plan 2031, Part 1.
- 6.15 The Council has permitted or resolved to grant permission for a number of major housing developments within the last 3 years of 268 dwellings. Based on the 2011 census figures for Wantage, if all the developments are implemented, it would increase the town population by 6% (675 people), excluding the strategic allocation sites. Each major development scheme is accompanied by S106 contributions to mitigate impacts on local infrastructure such as education and transport.
- 6.16 Based on the SHMA household size of 2.52 the development would produce a net population increase of approximately 73 people. This represents an increase of approximately 0.64% on the 2011 Population Census of 11,327 for Wantage, which would be a very small increase to the population of Wantage. The impact on local infrastructure is mitigated by S106 contributions set out below.
- 6.17 The marginal increase in population is considered acceptable. The proposal should be considered on its planning merits in a sustainable location. The NPPF does not seek to restrict development in any settlement in terms of numbers; it expects housing to be boosted significantly nationally.

Impact on the Setting of the Listed Convent

- 6.18 The NPPF seeks to protect heritage assets and requires Councils to assess the particular significance of any heritage that may be affected by a proposal, including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset (Para.129).
- 6.19 The site is adjacent to the convent on the north side of Challow Road with several statutory Grade 2 Listed Buildings described above in paragraph 1.4. Local residents have objected to the proposal on the grounds that views of the convent would be lost. There is no legal right to a view.
- 6.20 A heritage statement submitted by the applicant has been considered by the conservation officer. In conclusion the conservation officer considers the proposal is acceptable and raise no objection. Concluding comments are provided above within consultation replies.

Layout, design and amenity

- 6.21 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. 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.

- 6.22 The application is in outline form seeking approval for access and layout only with scale, appearance and landscaping as reserved matters for full approval at a later date. The existing access points on Naldertown are retained to provide access to three separate parking areas with the main access roads into the site enabled by two new access points from Naldertown for circulation, turning areas, servicing and pedestrian movement across the site, which is to be linked to the north convent site by a signal crossing on Challow Road in the north west corner.
- 6.23 The proposed access points also facilitates pedestrian access to the Public Open Space in the north east corner of the site. No new access is proposed from Challow Road (A417) because of considerations for traffic safety, retention of mature hedging and trees along the northern boundary. This would also provide a green buffer to mitigate traffic noise within the development. Whilst concerns have been expressed by residents regarding parking and traffic congestions in Naldertown the transport officer is satisfied with the proposal, subject to contributions towards public transport and signal crossing to improve pedestrian safety.
- 6.24 Principle DG26 of the design guide states that density should be appropriate to the location. Policy H15 of the adopted local plan requires densities of 50 dwellings per hectare close to the town centre. The application proposes a density of 32 dwellings per hectare. The Wantage and Grove campaign Group considers the proposal is an over development of the site and a number of objectors have also raised this issue. However when compared to the pattern of existing development in the area the provision of 31 dwellings is considered to be an acceptable density for this site and the plan form of the units would be in keeping with the pattern of development in the area.
- 6.25 The layout provides a robust street frontage on Naldertown with double aspect corner properties around the main access points and provides a vista to the convent to the north. The proposal comprises a mix of terraced and detached housing with ample rear gardens and parking provision. The rear line of terraces and flats are set back from the northern boundary edge with Challow Road, which retains its extensive hedging and tree borders to the east and west to preserve its green character along this edge. Minimum privacy distances are observed within the scheme and with neighbouring properties to ensure privacy and a good outlook from all dwellings. Detailed design at a later stage will consider these issues in more detail. Public open space comprise 15% of the site area and details of landscaping and boundary treatment are conditioned for further approval.
- 6.26 The built form, building design, and boundary treatments will be assessed in detail as part of any future reserved matters full application. However, officers are satisfied from the proposed layout that 31 dwellings can be satisfactorily accommodated on site in a manner that complies with the relevant design guide principles (DG51-54, DG55, and DG56-62).

Affordable Housing and Housing Mix

- 6.27 The applicant makes provision for 40% affordable housing in accordance with adopted policy H17. This provision will be secured through a S106 legal agreement. The Council's Housing Officer requests that the affordable housing provision equates to 8 rented and 3 shared ownership dwellings, based on the net increase in units (29) and to the following mix requirement: -

Rent – 9 units:

3 x 1 bed units
3 x 2 bed units
2 x 3 bed units

S/O – 3 units:

1 x 2 bed unit
2 x 3 bed units

- 6.28 Policy H16 of the adopted local plan requires that 50% of dwellings have 2 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 bedroom | 2 bedrooms | 3 bedrooms | 4+ bedrooms |
|-----------|------------|------------|-------------|
| 5.9% | 21.7% | 42.6% | 29.8% |

- 6.28 This represents an under-provision of smaller one bedroom units and larger 4+ bedroom units. The application would be expected at reserved matters stage to comply with the SHMA housing mix.
- 6.29 The open market housing would comprise 1 x 1 bed, 1 x 2 bed, 11 x 3 bed and 7 x 4 bed units, which equate to the following percentage split:-

| 1 bedroom | 2 bedrooms | 3 bedrooms | 4+ bedrooms |
|-----------|------------|------------|-------------|
| 5% | 5% | 55% | 35% |

- 6.30 Whilst this represents an under provision of 2 bed homes, and an overprovision of 3 and 4 bed homes, the council's housing team are satisfied with the mix proposed and officers consider it strikes a good balance between meeting SHMA requirements and fitting in with the pattern of existing development in the locality.

Highway Safety

- 6.31 The 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 decisions 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 effectively limits the significant impacts of the development.

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.”*

- 6.32 The NPPF requires the need to travel to be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes to be maximised (paragraph 34). Local residents have raised

concerns that the transport infrastructure will not cope, that parking and congestion is already a problem along the A338.

- 6.33 The application is supported by a Transport Statement. The proposal includes primary vehicular access from Naldertown which includes pedestrian footways across the site linked to Challow Road in the north east corner. The layout shows a total of 62 parking spaces including 5 visitor spaces with visibility slays on Naldertown. Submitted plans also show swept path analysis and turning areas for cars and service vehicles which are considered acceptable within the site, although there is reservation about service vehicle swept paths at the access points on Naldertown. These matters are to be addressed by condition at the reserved matters stage to ensure satisfactory arrangements are in place before occupation of the site.
- 6.34 County Transport have considered the submitted Transport Assessment and plans, and whilst it is acknowledged that residents have expressed concern about traffic congestion and road safety in Naldertown, the transport officer advise that Naldertown would have to be widened to support the new access and allow two way traffic to ease congestion. This has been discussed with the applicant and it is recommended that all of the highway works are to be included within S278 agreement to address this issue.
- 6.35 An interim Travel Plan has been prepared and it is proposed to be developed into a full residential travel plan. A full travel plan condition is recommended to ensure that County is satisfied with the details of the Travel Plan. Subject to the above provisions it is not considered that there are grounds to refuse the application on transport grounds that cannot be addressed by the S278 agreement and by appropriate conditions.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 6.36 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).
- 6.37 Adopted local plan 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.
- 6.38 The applicant has submitted a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and a conceptual drainage layout in support of the application. They have been considered by the County, as Lead Local Flood Authority, and by the Council's Drainage officer. No objections are raised on drainage issues subject to conditions.
- 6.39 Thames Water has also considered the proposal and their response is set out in the consultation section above. It is acknowledged that there is a local capacity issue relating to the existing waste water infrastructure. Thames Water have recommended that this issue be dealt with by way of a 'Grampian' style condition to prohibit any occupation of the development until such time that the infrastructure is

in place to accommodate the foul water discharge from the development. No objection is raised regarding water infrastructure capacity.

Ecology and Archaeology

6.40 The application is supported by an Ecological Assessment, which has been considered by the Council’s Countryside officer (ecology), who has confirmed that there are no important species or habitats on the site. Whilst there have been concerns expressed by a number of residents regarding the loss of wildlife habitat the proposal is not considered to affect any recognized habitats of importance. In line with NPPF Section 11 and emerging Core Policy 46 to conserve and enhance biodiversity a condition is recommended.

6.41 A desk based archaeological assessment has been submitted in support of the proposal which has been vetted by the County’s Archaeological advisor. Comments are summarized above. No objection is raised but conditions are recommended for further ground investigations prior to development.

Contamination

6.42 The contamination officer has considered the submitted contamination risk assessment, which has not found any evidence of historical uses with potential for contamination at the site and intrusive investigation is not considered necessary. No objection is raised to this assessment.

Viability and Developer Contributions

6.43 The NPPF advises that planning obligations should only be sought where they meet all of the following tests (paragraph 204):-

- Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- Directly related to the development; and
- Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development

6.44 Recent legislative changes to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010, introduced in April 2015, places pooling restrictions on S106 contributions. As a result the original developer contributions agreed at the public inquiry into the previous refusal have been reviewed together with the requests made by the County. The following table sets out the contributions agreed with the applicant, which is compliant with NPPF requirements and CIL Regulations.

| Proposed project/type of infrastructure | Requested by | Amount |
|--|---------------------|---------------|
| 2 x Bus Stops in Vicinity | OCC Transport | £2,000 |
| A417 Challow Rd - Pedestrian signal crossing | OCC Transport | £50,000 |
| Primary School - Stockham Primary School | OCC Education | £97,752 |
| Secondary School - Grove Airfield New Secondary School | OCC Education | £182,199 |
| Wantage Library | OCC Property | £6,698 |
| Adult Day Care - Oxford Options | OCC Property | £6,116 |
| Monitoring | OCC | £3,447.65 |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Affordable Housing 40% | Vale | |
| Waste | Vale | £5,270.00 |
| Outdoor tennis | Vale | £6,099.00 |
| MUGA | Vale | £6,848.00 |
| Cricket Pitches | Vale | £2,261.00 |
| Rugby Pitches | Vale | £1,155.00 |
| Recreation Club House/Pavilion | Vale | £3,958.00 |
| Public Open Space Provision | 15% of site area | |
| Play provision (sq.m) | 28 | |
| Monitoring | Vale | £935 |
| Total | | £374,739 |

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 Overall, the proposal is considered to amount to sustainable development, and whilst there will be some minor and temporary adverse effects during the construction phase and increase in traffic movement these do not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of new housing provision that includes 40% affordable housing. Consequently, the application is recommended for approval subject to conditions and a S106 legal agreement.

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:**

1: A S106 agreement being entered into, with both the County Council and District Council in order to secure contributions towards local infrastructure, S278 highway works in Naldertown and affordable housing; and

2: Conditions as follows:

- 1. Commencement – Two years or six months after reserved matters approval.**
- 2. Reserved matters on appearance, landscaping and scale submitted within 9 months of outline consent.**
- 3. Approved plans.**
- 4. Landscaping and boundary treatment.**
- 5. Tree protection in accordance with Arboricultural Report (ref: JKK8302 dated 8 June 2015)**
- 6. Details of sustainable drainage scheme.**

- 7. Foul and surface water drainage strategy.**
- 8. Biodiversity enhancement.**
- 9. Construction traffic management plan.**
- 10. Residential travel plans to be agreed.**
- 11. Details of junction design and vision splays on Naldertown to be agreed prior to commencement.**
- 12. No drainage to highway.**
- 13. Parking, servicing and turning areas completed prior to occupation.**
- 14. Wheel washing facilities on site during construction.**
- 15. Thames water requirement on waste water infrastructure upgrade prior to occupation.**
- 16. Archaeological watching brief.**
- 17. Implementation of programme or archaeological work.**
- 18. Bus stop locations and layout to be agreed.**

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