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| APPLICATION NO. | P15/V1934/O |
| APPLICATION TYPE | OUTLINE |
| REGISTERED | 13.8.2015 |
| PARISH | GREAT COXWELL |
| WARD MEMBER(S) | Roger Cox Mohinder Kainth Simon Howell Elaine Ware |
| APPLICANT | Welbeck Strategic Land |
| SITE | The Steeds Land West of Coxwell Road Faringdon, SN7 7NN |
| PROPOSAL | The erection of up to 200 dwellings together with Green Infrastructure, surface water attenuation and a new access from Coxwell Road |
| AMENDMENTS | Yes – changes to the illustrative masterplan. |
| GRID REFERENCE | 427917/194365 |
| OFFICER | Sally Appleyard/Laura Hudson |

SUMMARY

This application comes to Committee due to an objection from Faringdon Town Council.

This application relates to land at Steeds Farm, Coxwell Road, Faringdon. The application seeks outline planning permission with all matters reserved other than access, for 200 dwellings and associated open space, surface water attenuation and new access.

The site forms part of an emerging local plan allocation. However, this process currently holds limited weight given the status of the emerging local plan. The proposal has been submitted to address the five year supply deficit.

There is a pending application on a larger site area but which includes this site for 250 dwellings, public house, shop, and open space to include land for sports pitches and associated infrastructure including a new roundabout junction where the A420 meets Coxwell Road.

The main issues to consider in determining the application are:

- The principle of the proposed development in this location in relation to planning policy context.
- Whether the proposal is suitable to meet the five year housing supply deficit in terms of the sustainability of the site and cumulative impact on the settlement with other permitted and emerging development.
- The Impact of the development on the wider landscape and the north vale corallian ridge.
- Whether the submitted illustrative masterplan is acceptable in demonstrating that the proposed development can be accommodated on the site and the relationship to existing development and the surrounding area.
- Whether the proposed access onto Coxwell Road is acceptable for the proposed development and the wider impact on the highway network.
- Impact of the development on the local drainage network and

- implications for surface water and flood risk.
- The delivery of the development in relation to contributions and level of affordable housing provision.

There are no technical constraints to the development and the principle is considered acceptable. Faringdon is one of the larger settlements in the District and is capable of accommodating additional development. Upgrade works to the sewage treatment plant in the town are scheduled by Thames Water within the lifetime of a standard permission therefore there are no outstanding drainage issues in relation to the site. The illustrative design and layout are considered acceptable together with the impact on the landscape. The extent of the site area ensures that there is a robust open gap of agricultural land which remains between the development and Great Coxwell to the south west.

When applying the balancing exercise required by the Framework this is a case where the adverse effects do not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits which have been identified. Accordingly, the application is recommended for approval subject to conditions and a legal agreement to secure the affordable housing and the financially viable developer contributions towards key local infrastructure.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This application relates to land to the south west of Faringdon known as Steeds Farm. Although located on the edge of Faringdon, the site lies within Great Coxwell Parish boundary.
- 1.2 The site, which amounts to around 11.8 ha is currently open undeveloped agricultural land which lies adjacent to the existing built up area of the town. The site is separated from the existing urban area by a mature landscaped bund. From here the land slopes downwards away from the urban area before levelling out at its south western end.
- 1.3 The site is bounded along Coxwell Road by a mature hedgerow although there are gaps where views into the site are obtained. The western edge of the site abuts open farmland but is marked by a line of mature landscaping. There is currently no strong defined boundary to the south western end of the site although the edge of the proposed built up area is marked by the existing farm access.
- 1.4 Land to the east of Coxwell Road opposite the current application site has outline planning permission for 200 dwellings. Both sites are within the emerging local plan part 1 although this currently holds little weight in policy terms. The application has therefore been submitted to address the five year housing supply deficit.
- 1.5 The site is not within any national designations but lies within the North Vale Corallian Ridge as defined on the Local Plan proposals map. This area is recognised locally for its striking landform with a steep north facing scarp slope separating the clay vale from the Thames Valley.
- 1.6 The site falls entirely within Flood Zone 1, an area of least fluvial flood risk from water courses.
- 1.7 A separate application covering a larger area extending south west towards Great Coxwell is pending and includes the current application site area. This pending application is for 250 dwellings and includes a retail unit, public house, large managed community parkland area and a new roundabout junction on the A420. Given the amount of wider community benefits offered by this scheme, the level of

S106 contributions and affordable housing would be significantly reduced. These elements are still under discussion hence the delay in determination of this larger scheme.

1.8 The application comes to Committee as Faringdon Town Council object.

2.0 PROPOSAL

2.1 The application seeks outline planning permission for the erection of up to 200 dwellings, and associated open space and play area, drainage attenuation, structural planting and new access onto Coxwell Road.

2.2 Access to the site would be obtained from a new junction onto Coxwell Road towards the northern end of the development. The existing farm access would be retained and would continue to serve the farm complex which is located to the east of the site.

2.3 The application is accompanied by an illustrative layout which shows how the development could be accommodated on the site. It is intended that the residential part of the site would equate to a density of approximately 30 dwellings per hectare. The layout includes a series of curved streets creating perimeter development blocks with houses fronting the roads. The scheme includes an area of open space fronted by development and including a children's play area.

2.4 The proposal includes footpaths through the site linking into the existing network and opportunities to provide a link to the emerging Highworth Road allocation to the north of the site and Great Coxwell to the south.

2.5 The illustrative plan has been amended to reflect discussions with the Councils urban design officer to address concerns in relation to the legibility of the scheme and links to existing and future development.

2.6 Additional highway information and modelling has also been submitted to address concerns of the County Highway Engineer. Whilst not part of the application itself, improvements to the A420/Coxwell Road junction have been modelled to include a traffic light signalised junction towards which contributions are sought.

2.7 The following documents have been submitted in support of the application:

- Design and Access Statement
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
- Phase 1 Survey Report for Ecology
- Reptile Report
- Bat Report
- Great Crested Newt Report
- Planning Statement
- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Statement
- Transport Assessment Report and Site Wide Travel Plan
- Sustainability Statement
- Tree Survey and Arboricultural Statement
- Archaeological Evaluation Report
- Waste Statement
- Noise Assessment
- Air Quality Assessment
- Affordable Housing Statement
- Community Consultation Statement

- Environmental Impact Assessment

Extracts from the current application drawings are **attached** at Appendix 1.

3.0 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

3.1 Below is a summary of the responses received. A full copy of all the comments made can be viewed online at www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk. Any further comments received as a result of the updated traffic modelling and junction proposals will be included in the addendum report.

| Parish/Town Council | |
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| Great Coxwell Parish | <p>Object.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The edges of the development should include native structural woodland planting. The green strip to the south should include around the balancing pond to provide a green interface with the surrounding countryside as required by Policy EDQ1 of the Neighbourhood Plan. • Existing hedgerow and trees along Coxwell Rd should be retained. • The existing footway along Coxwell Road should be retained. • A cycle link to Great Coxwell should be provided. • Fernham Fields does not set a precedent for this development. • Height of the development should not exceed 2 storey. • The development should follow the requirements of the neighbourhood plan in terms of design and materials. • The site has previously been assessed as having high landscape sensitivity not medium as currently stated. • Street lighting should be avoided. • The junction at the A420 should be improved, the current proposals are unsafe. • Clarity on the status of the land to the south of the site should be provided. This area could provide an essential buffer for the village and should be protected. A full copy of the comments is attached at Appendix 2. |
| Faringdon Town Council (Adjacent parish) | <p>STRONGLY OBJECT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Council's objections remain the same as those previously submitted to the VWHDC in regard to The Steeds development. • In addition to those comments, Town Council also objects strongly to shared surfaces and the lack of provision of adequate parking for visitors and multi-occupancy houses. |

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| <p>Little Coxwell Parish Council (Adjacent parish)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a large cul-de-sac development and there is concern that there is only one access/egress onto Coxwell Road. • The planning application has been completely changed and is now basically a high density housing estate without any commitment, despite initial promises by the developers, to any infrastructural developments through planning obligations or the A420/Coxwell Road junction. The maps do not include the A420 junction any more and Town Council is concerned as to what will happen to the remainder of the site currently indicated as a buffer zone between Faringdon and Gt Coxwell. • There is also inconsistency in the Sustainability Appraisal. It is stated that the site is close to community facilities but in fact the distances quoted are those “as the crow flies” and would actually be longer by road. • It should also be noted that the community consultation referred to in the planning application refers to a consultation held on the original planning application submitted, a completely different plan to the one currently seeking planning permission. • The 65 bus no longer runs. A full copy is attached at Appendix 2. • Traffic Impact – disappointed in the loss of the proposed roundabout – this is essential for safety. • Improvements at the Little Coxwell junction should be included also. • The site is closer to Little and Great Coxwell than the centre of Faringdon – it is not sustainable. • The proposal would impact on the village of Great Coxwell. |
| <p>Neighbours – Letters of objection have been received from 9 properties raising the following concerns.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cumulative impact of all the development in Faringdon in terms of traffic. Roundabout or traffic lights should be proposed. • Over subscribed local facilities. • Lack of employment. • No new housing should be proposed until sewage/water problems resolved. • The development will alter the character of Great Coxwell and the land should be protected. • Area inundated with development. • Larger number of bungalows should be included. • The application is a poor reflection of the previous proposal with more houses and no facilities. • The scheme does not include an open buffer of |

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| | <p>land, playing field space for Faringdon, allotment space, new store, roundabout junction on the A420, employment land, provision for water run-off and drainage – permission should not be granted unless these benefits are re-instated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The submitted transport evidence is deficient and there should be additional works to improve Coxwell Road. • Coxwell Road will become a rat run. • Further public consultation should be carried out. • There are few jobs in the area so everyone will have to travel. • The neighbourhood plan requires the green buffer. • The application process for this site has taken too long. • The proposal does not add to or enhance the landscape and should be refused as the Humpty Hill scheme was. • An independent traffic survey should be carried out to assess the needs on the A420. |
| <p>Oxfordshire County Council One Voice – Transport.</p> | <p>Original holding objection dated 10.09.15</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrepancies in the submitted junction data. • The development would intensify the use of the A420/Coxwell Road junction which cannot cope with existing levels of traffic. • Concerns over the junction analysis information and change in stance from the provision of a roundabout to a right hand turn lane. <p>Further modelling information provided and updated comments received 16.10.15 raising continued holding objection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further discussions on proposed enhancement to the junction necessary. • Submitted information unrealistic. • Roundabout junction still the preferred option of the highway authority. <p>Further information submitted including modelling based on a traffic light signalised junction to be partly funded by the development but delivered by the highway authority.</p> <p>Subject to S106 contributions towards the cost of the new junction works - Objection withdrawn.</p> <p>S106 also required to include contributions to bus services, bus stop infrastructure, amendments to the speed limit, upgrading public footpaths and travel plan monitoring.</p> <p>Any further OCC comments will be included in the addendum report.</p> |
| <p>Oxfordshire County Council One Voice – Archaeology.</p> | <p>No objections subject to conditions. Further investigation and recording pre-commencement.</p> |
| <p>Oxfordshire County</p> | <p>No objections subject to legal agreement securing</p> |

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| Council One Voice – Education and property. | contributions towards the new primary school at Park Road, upgrades to Faringdon Community College, and special needs schools. |
| Oxfordshire County Council One Voice – Drainage | No objections. |
| Thames Water | No objection. Identified an inability to of the existing waste water infrastructure to accommodate the need of the development. Request a grampian style condition requiring upgrade works to the system prior to occupation of the development. No dwelling should be occupied until March 2018 to allow the programmed upgrade works to take place. (this has been the subject of significant discussions with Thames Water in order to obtain the time frame for committed works.) Water Supply – condition required in order to carry out impact study on water supply in the area. |
| Environment Agency | No comments made. “The site does not fall within any of the categories of development in our external consultation list.” |
| Council Drainage Engineer | No objections. Conditions recommended in relation to drainage details, and requirement for sustainable drainage scheme. |
| CPRE | Object. Coalescence of Faringdon and Great Coxwell - the views from and around the village should be protected. The new proposal is more desirable as it reduced the amount of greenfield land developed and lessens the effect on Great Coxwell. The southern and western belt of landscaping need broadening so that the development is not visible from the village and key landmarks such as the Barn. |
| National Trust | Object. The National Trust understands the need to provide housing to meet shortfalls however the application is sufficiently harmful in terms of the wider landscape impact that permission should be refused. The proposal would result in the urbanisation of a sensitive area. The cumulative impact has not been considered. The refusal on the nearby site at Humpty Hill should be highlighted. The proposed development is not sustainable and the harm outweighs the benefits. |
| NHS – Oxfordshire CCG | Whilst primary healthcare will be challenged by an increase in growth there is no objection to the development. There may be pressure on patients ability to park – more parking could be needed. |
| Landscape Officer | No objection. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site was contained within the Landscape Capacity Study 2014: Site Options as part of the Emerging Local Plan Evidence Base. Within this document the site was assessed as having a |

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| | <p>Medium to High Landscape Capacity, and the proposed site area is contained in the area that has potential for development and follows the recommendations of this report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site is a proposed strategic housing site allocation in the Emerging Local Plan. The site is covered by a Site Development Template and the proposed submitted information addresses the objectives contained in the template with regard to Landscape. This includes structural planting with reference to Great Coxwell, its southern boundary and the Community Forest. • In relation to the site layout concerns over the drainage attenuation pond details but acknowledge that this is an illustrative layout. |
| Leisure comments | No objection subject to off site contributions in relation to local facilities and maintenance of on-site open space if adopted by the Parish. |
| Housing Officer | Object. The inclusion of 70 affordable homes within the application is not in line with current policy for 40% which would require 80 to be affordable on a site of 200 dwellings. (the application has since been through a viability assessment and 35% is justified). |
| Countryside Officer | No objections. Subject to the recommendations of the submitted ecological reports. Condition requiring updated surveys if development has not commenced within 2 years. |
| Waste Management Officer | No objections subject to contributions towards bin provision for each property (£170 per dwelling). |
| Forestry Officer | No objections subject to protection measures for those trees to be retained. |
| Thames Valley Police funding | No objection. Contributions requested towards set up costs for 2 members of staff, proportion of a patrol vehicle, bicycle and police community support vehicle, mobile IT, number plate recognition and premises. |
| Environmental health – air quality and noise | No objections. The Environmental assessment submitted in support of the application has considered traffic impacts of this scheme alongside other schemes which are permitted or being considered in the locality. This has concluded that any traffic impacts will not be of great significance and in view of this the impacts on local air quality and noise are not likely to be significant. |
| Urban Design Officer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns over some of the connectivity and legibility of the development – overuse of private drives – these could be connected without major |

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| | <p>changes to the development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Account should be had to the land to the south west of the site and future development so potential vehicular and pedestrian links should be considered. • Additional pedestrian links should be provided through to existing development. • Comments in relation to materials. • The balancing pond is very separate to the rest of the development – consideration as to how this will integrate as a feature should be made. • Orientation of the dwellings should be considered. • Rear parking courts for apartments should be overlooked and include planting to soften the impact. • Private amenity space for the apartments should be included. <p>An amended masterplan has been received which addresses the majority of these comments. Details in relation to the design and materials would be addressed at the reserved matters stage.</p> |
| <p>Stage Coach (West) bus operator</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support the development and its early delivery given its sustainable location. • Concerned that the roundabout junction or an equivalent, funded by the developments, are delivered as soon as possible. • The roundabout arrangement would perform significantly better for buses turning right towards Swindon than the priority island. • An alternative signal controlled junction would be a viable alternative subject to the impact on the wider A420. |

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 P13/V1101/O – Pending. Erection of up to 250 dwellings; a Class A1 retail shop (about 420sq m); a public house (Class A4); Green Infrastructure including sports pitches; children's play area ; sustainable drainage system and other related infrastructure ; internal roads, footways and cycleways; 2 vehicular accesses from Coxwell Road and alterations to the junction of Coxwell Road./A420

[P13/V0139/O](#) - Approved (14/01/2015)

(Fernham Fields)Outline planning application for residential development of up to 200 houses, public open space, associated infrastructure and new access (As amended by Drawing No: 2360.3000 Revision F accompanying agent's letter dated 11 November 2013). Environmental Statement received 6 November 2014.

[P14/V1890/SCO](#) - Other Outcome (19/09/2014)

Request for EIA (environmental impact assessment) Scoping Opinion

[P06/V1928/O](#) - Approved (14/08/2007)

Outline Planning Application for Residential Development with new access road

[P06/V0380](#) - Approved (12/06/2006)

Alterations to existing access to Steeds Farm and construction of new access.
Construction of 6 tennis courts including 4m high fencing. New clubhouse, floodlights, car parking and landscaping.

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 |
| H10 | Development in the main settlements |
| 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 |
| NE7 | North Corallian Ridge |
| NE12 | Great Western Community Forest |

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 21 | Safeguarding land for Strategic Highway Improvements |
| Core Policy 22 | Housing mix |
| Core Policy 23 | Housing density |

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| 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 |

Land to the south of Faringdon is identified as a strategic site allocation for 200 dwellings. The application site covers a slightly smaller area than that shown in the allocation. Although limited weight can be afforded to these emerging policies, the inclusion demonstrates the role of this development in the strategic vision for growth in the Western Vale Sub Area of the plan in which this site falls.

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 Practice Guidance 2014 (NPPG)**

5.6 **Neighbourhood Plan**

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.

Great Coxwell Neighbourhood Plan

The site is located in Great Coxwell Parish who have an adopted Neighbourhood Plan which carries full weight. The plan does not include specific site allocations although it does acknowledge the inclusion of the site in the draft Local Plan part 1 and the need to retain a buffer between Faringdon and the village (policy EDQ1). The same policy also seeks improvements to the pedestrian and cycle links between Faringdon and Great Coxwell. More details policies in relation to the design and materials of development are not relevant to this outline application.

Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan

Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan has been through examination but has since been amended and views sought on the pre-submission draught. There remains uncertainty over the plan and therefore, little weight can be given to these policies. In any case however, the site currently lies outside the area covered by the plan.

5.7 Environmental Impact

This is EIA development and the application is accompanied by an Environmental Statement.

This proposal is for more than 150 dwellings and the site area exceeds 5ha in size and is therefore, above the thresholds set in Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2015. As required by the above Regulations officers have undertaken a screening opinion. Taking into account government guidance on thresholds in paragraph 58 of the NPPG and having considered the potential for significant effects of the proposal in accordance with Schedule 3 of the Regulations, the proposal is not considered EIA development in itself but together cumulatively with other pending and approved development in the town that the effects, particularly in relation to traffic impact are significant and therefore an ES was submitted.

5.8 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)

5.9 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

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. Other Benefits
15. Viability and Developer Contributions including affordable housing

Principle

- 6.1 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications for planning permission 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 which includes part of the current site as an emerging allocation for 200 dwellings together with the safeguarded land for road improvements.
- 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 (NPPF paragraph 14). 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. Although the site is located within Great Coxwell Parish, one of the smaller villages in the District, the site is actually immediately abutting the built up area of Faringdon, one of the five main settlements in the District with a good range of services and facilities. The site is however outside the development boundary of the town as defined on the adopted local plan proposals map and is therefore contrary to policy H10.

- 6.6 However, 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.

Cumulative Impact

- 6.7 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. There are a number of recently permitted and pending large scale schemes currently in Faringdon as follows:

| Reference | Address | Description of Development |
|-------------|------------------------------|--|
| P13/V0139/0 | Fernham Fields, Coxwell Road | Residential development of up to 200 houses, public open space, associated infrastructure and new access. Approved Jan 2015. Within the emerging Local Plan part 1. |
| P13/V0709/0 | Land south of Park Road | Residential development (up to 380 units including up to 64 Extra care units), employment development, primary school, allotments, public open space and associated infrastructure with new access from Park Road. Resolution to grant planning permission. Within the emerging Local Plan part 1. |

- 6.8 Together with the application site this amounts to 780 units. In addition to this the emerging local plan includes a further 200 units south west of Faringdon therefore amounting to a total increase of 980 units (not including any smaller windfall developments and local plan part 2 sites). It is acknowledged that this level of development represents a significant increase in the town's population. However all the sites listed above are included in the emerging Local Plan part 1 as strategic allocations. They therefore form part of the planned growth for the town enhancing its role as the service centre for the Western Vale Sub Area identified in the plan. The level of future development proposed would help ensure that Faringdon's key role in the area is maintained and enhanced.
- 6.9 The site was screened for EIA in relation to cumulative impact and identified a need for an Environmental Assessment covering traffic impact and associated noise and air quality impact. This has been updated in relation to the additional 50 dwellings which replaced the employment use. As set out in this report, the cumulative impact is considered to be able to be mitigated in terms of the impact on infrastructure, including the highway network.

Use of Land

- 6.10 The NPPF identifies the need to protect the best and most versatile agricultural land from development (paragraph 112). The site is currently in agricultural use and graded in the Natural England land classification maps as grade 2/3. Whilst the loss of such productive land must be considered as a potential constraint, this needs to be balanced against the current lack of a five year housing land supply. Whilst this is higher quality land, the site is located on the edge of the town and it is being proposed for residential development in the emerging local plan.

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). The site is located immediately adjacent to the existing built up area of one of the five main settlements in the District with a good range of services and facilities. Therefore although located within jurisdiction of Great Coxwell Parish, the site would form an extension of the town in terms of location.
- 6.12 The Faringdon Community College is located on Fernham Road within easy walking distance of the site as is the new primary school proposed on the Park Road development which would serve this site.
- 6.13 Bus services currently operate along Coxwell Road which provide a link to the town centre and also Oxford and Swindon. New bus stops would also be provided on Coxwell Road which would be well within the recommended 400m distance of all the proposed houses within the site
- 6.14 There is an existing footway along the western side of Coxwell Road which would be retained. Additional footpath links through the site which would link into the existing footpath network to Great Coxwell. The layout also facilitates a pedestrian and potential cycle link to the emerging Highworth Road allocated site to the north, and a potential vehicle link could be facilitated with the proposed illustrative layout.
- 6.15 Although located some distance from the town centre, albeit not further away than the approved Fernham Fields scheme, due to the improved footpath links and availability of bus services the proposal is considered a sustainable form of development in relation to its location and provides the opportunity to minimise travel and maximise the use of non-car modes of travel.

Affordable housing and housing mix

Affordable Housing

- 6.16 Policy H17 of the adopted local plan requires the development to provide 40% affordable housing in a mix of 75% rented and 25% shared ownership. The emerging local plan would require this development to provide 35% affordable housing however this policy has no weight at this current time. The application currently proposes 35% affordable housing in accordance with the emerging local plan, hence the objection from the housing officer.
- 6.17 This element of the application has been the subject of significant discussion. A viability report has been submitted with the application which has been independently assessed by BPS Surveyors. The assessment concludes that with a reasonable level of S106 contributions that the scheme can only afford 35% in line with the emerging

local plan requirements. S106 requirements will be discussed later in the report.

Market Housing

- 6.18 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 bed | 3 bed | 4+ bed | Total |
|-----------------------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|
| SHMA % | 5.9% | 21.7% | 42.6% | 29.8% | 100% |
| SHMA Expectation no's | 12 | 43 | 85 | 60 | 200 |

- 6.19 The application is submitted in outline and therefore the details of mix have not been provided although the submitted design and access statement refers to a mix of 2 to 5 bedroom units. It would therefore be expected that any reserved matters submission should reflect as far as possible the mix set out above but also reflect the edge of town location.

Design and Layout

- 6.20 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.
- 6.21 A number of local plan policies seek to ensure high quality developments and to protect the amenities of neighbouring properties (Policies DC1, DC6, and DC9). In March 2015 the council adopted its design guide, which aims to raise the standard of design across the district. The assessment below is set out in logical sections similar to those in the design guide however it must be acknowledged that this is an outline application with all matters reserved other than access therefore the masterplan is illustrative. As and when reserved matters are submitted the scheme would also need to be assessed against the detailed design policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Site, Setting and Framework

- 6.22 The applicants have provided a character study within the submitted design and access statement, as recommended by principles DG6 –DG9 of the design guide which requires an assessment of site context including the structure and history of the settlement. The proposal has been designed in response to this. The applicants have also carried out an assessment of the proposal against the Building for Life 12 document which sets out a government endorsed industry standard to achieve well designed homes and neighbourhoods.
- 6.23 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 proposed development aims to deliver a density of around 30 dwellings per hectare within the residential area of the site. Given the edge of town location it is considered that this density is appropriate.

- 6.24 The scheme includes an area of public open space towards the south western edge of the site and a substantial landscaped buffer along the southern and western site boundaries also includes some useable open space. The 20 metre landscaped strips sought by the Neighbourhood Plan on the edge of any development can be achieved.

Spatial Layout

- 6.25 The illustrative layout has been designed with a clear connected framework of streets creating good permeability through the development. The street layout is defined with main streets at the centre of the development and smaller lanes and private drives with shared surfaces radiating from these main routes. Whilst not a traditional grid type layout as recommended by principle DG27 of the design guide, the street hierarchy creates clear perimeter blocks with gardens backing onto one another and frontages which provide a sense of enclosure to the street scene as required by principle DG28. Frontage development also frames the main area of open space on the north and eastern edges.
- 6.26 The urban design officer has raised concerns over some of the blocks which result in cul de sacs and should be through routes to create better permeability and legibility. The plans have been amended to address the majority of these.

Built Form

- 6.27 Although illustrative at this stage the design and access statement refers to the built form of the development as being largely of two storey dwellings. This reflects the scale of development within the immediate surrounding area as recommended by principle DG51. It is intended that where possible buildings will be located to turn corners and provide landmark features to aid legibility through the development as required by principle DG30 of the design guide. In these locations 2.5 storey buildings would create key landmark buildings.
- 6.28 Parking is mainly on plot and on street to avoid the need for rear parking courts. Landscaping is a reserved matter and the details will need to ensure that the on street parking is softened by landscaping to prevent large expanses of tarmac as recommended by principle DG46.

Architectural Detailing

- 6.29 The submitted design and access statement refers to the need to reflect elements from the surrounding vernacular. Although these details will be covered by the reserved matters, it is intended that a traditional palette of light stone, red brick and some render would be utilised with slate and tile roofs and chimneys.
- 6.30 Overall it is considered that the illustrative layout is largely acceptable and if followed to reserved matters will result in a high quality scheme as recommended by the NPPF. It is recommended that the design principles set out in the design and access statement should be secured by condition to ensure they are followed in relation to the reserved matters application.

Residential Amenity

- 6.31 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 The site does not immediately adjoin any existing neighbouring properties. Views towards the scheme from the dwellings fronting Badbury Close and Eaton Close are limited by an existing landscaped buffer. It is therefore considered that the proposal would not have any harmful impact on the residential amenity of any existing properties.

Landscape and Visual Impact

- 6.33 The NPPF seeks to enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes (paragraph 109). The application is accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA).
- 6.34 The site is located within the North Vale Corallian Ridge as defined in the local plan proposals map. This local designation covers the northern part of the district and is recognised for the striking landform with steep north facing scarp slope separating the clay vale from the Thames Valley. The ridge is characterised by woodland and expansive views. Although falling within this locally designated area, the site is not located immediately on the ridge and would not therefore be overly prominent from the wider landscape to the north where the views of the ridge are most marked.
- 6.35 Whilst the development would have an impact visually from the immediate site surroundings given that it would alter the appearance of this agricultural landscape, and the current setting to Faringdon, the buildings, which are largely no more than 2 storey, would be viewed in the context of the rest of the town beyond and the permitted housing scheme at Fernham Fields which is a material consideration to which planning weight must be given in the assessment of the landscape impact of this application scheme.
- 6.36 The site is covered by policy NE12 as defined on the local plan proposals map. This Policy requires development within this area to make a positive contribution towards creating diverse woodland. The proposal is relatively low density with opportunities for tree planting within the housing layout, around the open space, and within substantial landscaped buffers along the southern and western site boundaries. These areas provide the opportunity for native tree planting which would accord with policy NE12 and improve the visual amenity and habitat opportunities over the current agricultural nature of the site.
- 6.37 The erection of housing on the site would alter the appearance of the landscape on this side of Faringdon. However, the change to the local landscape and wider visual amenity has already been accepted in the approval of the Fernham Fields development and the allocation of the application site in the draft local plan. Whilst the proposal will change the character of the area, the benefits of provided a well intergrated development in to the landscape with the outer landscaped buffers and the opportunities for habitat creation also need to be taken into account in any balancing exercise.

Open Space, Landscaping and Trees

- 6.38 There are no significant trees within or around the site that would be adversely affected by the development and the planting of additional indigenous woodland as part of the scheme is considered a benefit of the proposal in accordance with policy NE12.
- 6.39 Adopted Local Plan Policy H23 requires a minimum of 15% of the residential area to be laid out as open space. The application, when taking onto account the entire site within the red line delivers around 38% although this does include the landscaped buffers areas around the edges and the SUDS area. The useable open space meets the 15% requirement however and therefore is in accordance with Policy.

- 6.40 The main area of open space also includes a local equipped area of play (LEAP) which is overlooked by the proposed housing which frames this area.

Flood Risk and Surface/Foul Drainage

- 6.41 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).
- 6.42 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.

Surface Water

- 6.43 The application site falls within Flood Zone One, i.e. the lowest probability in terms of risk from river or sea flood risk events. The submitted FRA states that surface water strategy is to control the surface water discharge from the development to greenfield run off rates. Detention ponds and swales are proposed to be located on site to control off site run off as the clay geology of the site is not suitable for infiltration. The council drainage engineer is satisfied with the principles of the surface water drainage strategy subject to conditions requiring full details.
- 6.44 This is a viable and deliverable solution and can be required by condition to be provided before the development is occupied. Consideration could be given at the detailed design stage as to whether there would be the opportunity to address the occasional flooding on Coxwell Road caused by poor highway drainage.

Waste Water

- 6.45 Thames Water in their consultation response has identified an inability of the existing system to accommodate the needs of the development. A sewer impact study has been carried out and the main issue relates to the storage tank capacity of the Faringdon sewage treatment works. This has been the subject of lengthy discussions between Thames Water and the developers for the main strategic sites coming forward in the town. It was initially proposed that the developers would forward fund the upgrade works to enable forthcoming developments to be delivered.
- 6.46 Since then, Thames Water have included the required upgrade works in their current AMP 6 programme for improvements for the 2015-2020 period. These works are currently forecast for March 2018. Given the passage of time, this now falls within the timeframe for the delivery and occupation of an outline permission, followed by reserved matters and discharge of conditions.
- 6.47 The site would connect into the existing sewer network on Coxwell Road which has capacity via an onsite pumping station. A condition to ensure that the development is not occupied until Thames Water have upgraded the treatment works is recommended.

Traffic, Parking and Highway Safety

- 6.48 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.
- 6.49 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.”*
- 6.50 The application is supported by a development specific transport assessment and a site wide travel plan. The submitted traffic assessment has identified that the traffic generated by the proposed development on its own is acceptable and can be accommodated on the local highway network without the need for any significant highway upgrade works, including at the junction of A420/Coxwell Road.
- 6.51 A cumulative traffic assessment has been carried out as part of the submitted EIA to assess the impact of this development in addition to other pending and approved schemes in this part of the town. This did not identify a specific need to upgrade the A420/Coxwell Road junction but did identify some other improvements at the junction of Coxwell Road and Marlborough Street and a contribution towards these works would be required as part of the County’s S278 Agreement.
- 6.52 Members may be aware of an alternative application on this same site for 250 dwellings covering a larger area and including a new roundabout junction on the A420. This improvement, although referred to in the emerging local plan which safeguards the land for future upgrade works, is not specifically required to make the development acceptable in planning terms. It would be welcomed as a wider benefit but its requirement as part of this current proposal in isolation would not be necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms or reasonable in relation to the scale of the development proposed.
- 6.53 Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) highways originally lodged a holding objection in relation to this proposal as there were concerns over the data provided and some inconsistency in relation to the previous application referred to above. Concerns over the loss of the roundabout were also raised despite the fact that the impact of the proposal in isolation was not so significant to justify the works. An updated Traffic Impact Assessment was submitted providing clarification. This failed to address the highway authority concerns given continued question marks over the modelling data provided.
- 6.54 Discussions with OCC highways have been on-going for some time. Through discussions, updated modelling information has been prepared based on a new traffic light signalised junction. Whilst this solution has not previously been the preferred strategy on the A420, the highways authority have accepted this option as suitable to accommodate the additional traffic from this development and other strategic sites to the West of Faringdon should they all both progress. Although the applicants’ highway consultants have provided a junction design and associated modelling, the works do not form part of the current application. The improvements can be accommodated wholly within highway land without the need for third party land, unlike the roundabout,

therefore the delivery of the works would be carried out by the highway authority. Preliminary costs have been prepared which have informed the contribution request.

- 6.55 Fernham Fields to the east of the application site has outline planning permission for 200 dwellings. As part of this development a contribution was secured in the S106 agreement towards the provision of an upgraded right hand turn lane at the A420/Coxwell Road junction. The wording of the S106 agreement enables this contribution to be put towards a more significant upgrade at this junction, including the proposed roundabout as part of the previous Steeds application, if both developments progress.
- 6.56 This application would be subject to a similar contribution for a right hand turn upgrade but includes additional money to facilitate the traffic light signalised junction. The S106 agreement would include the same flexibility as Fernham Fields to allow for the money to be spent on either the right turn lane if Steeds progresses alone or with the addition of lights should both progress together. Given the marginal viability of the Steeds development the remaining junction money for the lights, if not required, or if the costs are less than anticipated, provision would be made in the S106 to be used to top up the affordable housing provision which is lower than the adopted local plan requirement.
- 6.57 The proposal includes a new access onto Coxwell Road which is considered acceptable subject to conditions, and new bus stop provision on Coxwell Road to serve the development. The existing bus stop by the current Great Coxwell junction would also be replaced. The application also offers the opportunity to deliver a new pedestrian and cycle access from the northern end of the site into the adjacent draft local plan allocation on Highworth Road and a condition to ensure this opportunity is not prejudiced is recommended.
- 6.58 The street hierarchy set out in the illustrative masterplan is considered acceptable and details in relation to parking provision would be covered by reserved matters.

Ecology and Biodiversity

- 6.59 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...”
- 6.60 An ecological appraisal was submitted in support of the application which identified the site as having low ecological value being arable land. The council countryside officer has raised no objections and considers that the proposed open space and drainage attenuation would provide an opportunity for some biodiversity benefits when compared to the current agricultural use.

Historic Environment and Archaeology

- 6.61 Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires a local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Considerable importance and weight should be given to this requirement.
- 6.62 Policy HE4 of the adopted local plan seeks to protect the setting of listed buildings and Policy HE1 of the adopted local plan seeks to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas.

- 6.63 The site is not located within a conservation area and is not adjacent to any listed buildings. Some concern has been raised over the impact on the setting of Great Coxwell which includes a conservation area and number of listed buildings including the Tithe Barn. However, given the distance away and the undulating topography of the land in between, it is not considered that the proposal would have a harmful impact on the setting of the village.
- 6.64 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. An archaeological evaluation has been carried out and this revealed features of late Iron Age and early Romano British periods. The County Archaeologist has raised no objections subject to conditions to secure further archaeological investigation and a programme of work.

Viability, affordable housing and Section 106 contributions

- 6.65 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.
- 6.66 Paragraph 204 of the NPPF also quotes this expectation. The NPPG provides further guidance on how to apply these tests and notes the following:
- i) Planning obligations assist in mitigating the impact of development which benefits local communities and supports the provision of local infrastructure.
 - ii) Planning obligations should not be sought where they are clearly not necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.
 - iii) Planning obligations must be fully justified and evidenced. Where affordable housing contributions are being sought, planning obligations should not prevent development from going forward.
- 6.67 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.
- 6.68 Regard also need to be had to the restrictions of pooling of any financial contributions to no more than 5 schemes.
- 6.69 Policy H17 of the adopted Local Plan requires the development to provide 40% affordable housing. For viability reasons, and to accord with the emerging local plan, the application currently proposes 35% of the residential units as affordable housing. Given the limited weight afforded to the emerging local plan policy the applicants have been requested to provide evidence of the viability of the development.
- 6.70 This has been provided and assessed by an independent surveyor, BPS Surveyors, who have concluded that the inputs to the report are reasonable and in line with market norms and that given the extent of the deficit generated that the scheme cannot viably deliver 40% affordable housing. This is based on present day costs and values and without a reduction in all the S106 requests.
- 6.71 Officers therefore consider that a reduced level of affordable housing is justified at around 35% but dependent on the level of S106 contributions which are considered to meet the relevant tests.

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6.72 The following developer contributions have been requested and comments on the justification for each request included.

| Vale of White Horse District Council | <i>Proposed Contributions</i> | <i>Comments on justification</i> |
|--|-------------------------------|--|
| Football pitches | £31,888 | Not justified - no land identified for new pitches or costed proposal to deliver. |
| Rugby pavilion | £7,963 | Not justified – no land identified for new pitches or costed proposal to deliver. |
| Football pavilion | £39,172 | Not justified – no site identified or costed proposal. |
| Indoor bowls | £11,163 | Not justified – no local provision or project to provide. |
| Health and fitness | £44,212 | Not justified – no specific costed project to which the money would be put. |
| MUGAs (Youth sport) | £47,226 | Justified – new Faze Youth facility within 12 minutes walk of the development. Proportionate contribution. |
| Open space maintenance | £470,289 | Not required – open space would be maintained by a management company at the cost of new residents. |
| Play space maintenance | £25,238 | Not required – open space would be maintained by a management company. |
| Artificial grass pitch | £13,344 | Justified – proportionate contribution to new facility at Faringdon College. |
| Waste bin provision | £34,000 (£170 per unit) | Justified – money towards bin provision at each property that would be at the cost to the Council otherwise. |
| Public Art | £60,000 (£300 per unit) | Although justified, will be secured by a condition to deliver on site in the form of street furniture and/or specific features. |
| Thames Valley Police | £31,664 | Not justified – police equipment is funded by alternative means. |
| Monitoring | £23,420 | Justified – cost to the council involved in monitoring the S106. |
| Total | £839,579 | |
| Oxfordshire County Council (3Q15 indexed) | <i>Proposed Contributions</i> | |
| Primary Schools | £1,667,039 | Justified in part - to mitigate the impact of additional pupils but the amount requested is not considered justified given the comparison costs. |
| Secondary Schools incl 6 th form | £968,336 | Justified in part – money towards Faringdon Community College but not clear exactly what the money would be spent on. |
| SEN (special needs) | £44,020 | Not justified – no information as to where the money would be spent and how it relates to the development. |
| Social and health care – adult day care | £52,652 | Not justified – nearest facility in Wantage and no clear project to which the money can be spent. |
| Library | £55,739 | Not justified – no current plans to extend |

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| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | | Faringdon Library. |
| Strategic bus services | £204,653 | Will be utilised to improve the A420 junction which will improve the reliability of the service. |
| Highway improvements | £650,000 plus approx. £200,000 towards traffic lights. | Justified – to be spent on junction upgrade works on the A420. |
| Bus shelters | £12,287 | Justified – specific to the development to facilitate bus stops outside the site. |
| Rights of way | £15,359 | Justified – improvement existing footpaths to the site to facilitate connectivity. |
| Traffic regulation order (speed limit) | £5,116 | Justified – cost of amending the speed limit. |
| Travel plan monitoring (5yrs) | £1,269 | Justified – monitoring costs. |
| OCC Monitoring | £10,181 | Justified – monitoring costs. |
| | | |
| Total | £3,836,651 | |
| | | |
| Great Coxwell Parish Council | £0 | Money previously requested to manage the rural buffer which is no longer included in this application. Other previous requests not directly related to the development as facilities in the village some distance away. |
| | | |
| Faringdon Town Council | £405,000 | Not justified – money requested towards town centre projects including corn exchange and pump house – not related in kind and scale to the development. Play area requests not justified – play area on site. Leisure money towards Faze Youth MUGA can be justified -see above. |
| | | |
| | | |
| Overall Total | £5,081,230 | |
| Total per dwelling | £26,406 | |

County Council Contributions

- 6.73 The County Council have identified that the development will increase pressure upon existing community infrastructure. Therefore contributions have been requested towards increased school places, public transport improvements, and other county infrastructure. The above table sets out whether it is considered that these meet the required tests and are therefore justified.
- 6.74 The majority of these are considered to be justified given that they relate specifically to the development to mitigate its impact. Where it is not clear exactly where the funds would be spent and there is no costed project to deliver the improvements, the requests are not justified. Specifically as set out above in relation to the special needs education, adult day care and library contributions.

Education - Primary

- 6.75 There has been significant debate surrounding the level of education contributions

which account for the majority of the S106 costs. Specifically the primary education figure which is based on contributions towards the cost of a new school on the Park Road strategic site to the east of the town. The park road site includes the provision of land by the developer to deliver a new 2 FE school for 420 pupils. The proposed school would be 1690sqm in area. Oxfordshire County Council Education authority are requesting a contribution towards this school based on the number of primary school pupils generated by the development equating to 58. The total contribution required based on 3Q12 figures is £1,416,592 or £24,424 per pupil place. When this figure is indexed to 2015 figures the contribution totals £1,667,039.

- 6.76 In discussion with officers the applicant has challenged this amount and officers consider that it has not been justified against the 3 statutory tests. Officers consider that £1,667,039 is disproportionately high given accepted market standards provided from other sources and other requests on similar developments in the locality. Whilst it is accepted that there are a number of variables such as the building specification of the school, the need to obtain land, and sustainability credentials required, the County have provided no details of the proposed school in terms of plans on which an accurate assessment can be made.
- 6.77 In the absence of guidance from OCC on a reasonable and justifiable primary school contribution and costs officers have reviewed other sources of information to understand what would be reasonable and proportionate to assist the planning considerations in terms of the 3 statutory tests. Two key reputable sources have been reviewed being Government guidance and BCIS. Government guidance is from the 'Education Funding Agency' (EFA) which has a new formula (2014) to aid practitioners in understanding costs for primary schools. The other is BCIS annual reports on costs, which is universally used by all practitioners in understanding and predicting construction costs.
- 6.78 The EFA gives a cost of £1,113m² but it is noted that it excludes external works, professional fees etc. Their formula for new primary schools is 350m² + 4.1m² per pupil place x £1,113. Based on 58 pupils this suggests a cost of some £654,221. However Officers do accept that the EFA figures do not include fees and external site costs in addition to other costs.
- 6.79 Officers have also received from a consultant quantitative surveyor based on BCIS Mean (5 year sample version of 24 schools built in this time) that confirmed a figure of £2,873m². This already incorporates BREEAM and other factors not covered by the Government formula. Using BCIS calculation based on a new school accommodating 420 children and amounting to 1690m² indicates each pupil accounts for 4.02m². 58 pupils would therefore, require 233.38m² of floor space. BCIS costs for school construction is £2,873 per m². This results in a calculation of £670,503. Interesting both sources BCIS and the EFA give figures that are similar whilst the OCC figure is much higher. Consequently having given consideration to BCIS calculations it would suggest a reasonable figure could be £670,503 based on 58 pupils.
- 6.80 Officers note that the EFA formula does not include aspects that OCC include. However, the BCIS data does include all the necessary variables and is a valid, robust and accepted source of information. The BCIS data provides data from completed builds which is the most accurate data. There are other issues to amounts sought by OCC that cannot be justified. BREEAM Very Good and 60% carbon reduction are not required under planning legislation and policy and are therefore not reasonable in planning terms. Such expectations are covered by Building Regulations Part L. The expectation for the primary school site and build to be 2FE to future proof growth is not reasonable in planning terms. These requirements are OCC requirements and increase the cost of the construction disproportionately to what is reasonable in scale and kind to the development. In addition the school would be delivered by the

Faringdon Academy in the first instance which would seek to reduce costs wherever possible.

- 6.81 Based on the above, and using the BCIS standard as a reasonable compromise, officers consider that the level of primary education contributions of £670,503 based on additional pupil numbers generated by the development of 58. Whilst this is not an exact calculation, given the limited information provided and based on accepted industry standards it is considered to be a reasonable level which given the marginal viability of the scheme, allows for a deliverable level of affordable housing.

Education – Secondary and 6th Form

- 6.82 Faringdon Community College would need additional capacity to accommodate the expected additional pupil generation and a financial contribution is considered justified. The County have requested £968,336 towards secondary and 6th form expansion based on an additional 40 secondary pupils and 6 6th form pupils. It is understood that this contribution would be towards a planned second phase of expansion at the school although a third phase is likely to be required given current housing forecasts. No details of the future phases of expansion are provided and it is unclear as to how these costs relate to the costs of that expansion in 2015 prices. Therefore, it is challenging for officers to clearly quantify if the amount sought is reasonable to scale and kind of the development because it is not clear what the amount is to be spent on exactly. The expansion is justified as a result of increased pupil numbers from this development and the costs are based on Department of Education advice on works that have not been clearly defined.
- 6.83 In the absence of any other figures relating to school extensions and the lack of detail on the actual works, officers are prepared to support this request subject to a number of conditions to ensure CIL compliance and avoid challenge. The £968,336 can only be spent on phase 2 of the school expansion. Once known the OCC will confirm the nature of that expansion, how it increases school capacity and state the costs. This will ascertain that the amount sought is only spent on this expansion, whatever form it takes and the associated cost relates to scale and kind to the development. Lastly, to relate to the development the amount sought will be spent within 5 years of the date of commencement of works. If the costs of the expansion are lower, which could be a possibility, this authority will seek to use the funds for providing affordable housing. The s.106 agreement will reflect this.

Special Education Needs (SEN)

- 6.84 The County have stated that the development is likely to generate a special education needs requirement of 1.2 pupils equating to a contribution of £44,020. The nearest special needs facility is in Wantage however no information has been provided to demonstrate that there is a planned expansion programme at this school. Given this and the distance away, it is not considered that this requirement meets the 3 CIL tests and is therefore not justified.

Highways

- 6.85 The highway contributions are considered to be justified as they are required to fund works connected to the development. The S106 would include flexibility to take account of the adjacent Fernham Fields site and ensure that the necessary works are delivered depending on whether both sites progress together or separately and the ability to enable some claw back if not all the money is required.
- 6.86 The public transport contribution is considered justified to pump prime the Route 66 Bus service to a premium route frequency. However, given the additional money now required to deliver a more substantial upgrade to the A420/Coxwell Road junction, and

the benefits of this upgrade recognised by the local bus operator (Stagecoach), it is considered that this money should be used to deliver the junction works.

District Council Contributions

- 6.87 District provision includes contributions towards waste bin provision on site and monitoring of the S106. Public art would be secured on site by way of condition and this has been accepted by the applicant. Whilst there is a request from Thames Valley police towards infrastructure, they benefit from other funding including council tax from future occupants, therefore it is not considered that this requirement meets the relevant CIL tests.
- 6.88 A number of leisure requests are not considered justified as it is not clear where the money will be spent. It is considered that the MUGA contribution which would go to the newly acquired Faze Youth centre within close proximity to the site is justified and is also a project being promoted by the Town Council. In addition there is a proposal for a new all weather pitch at Faringdon College and a proportionate contribution is considered justified.
- 6.89 The proposed open space and SUDS features would be maintained by a management company funded by the new residents therefore these costs are not necessary.
- 6.90 As a result of the above, the following table sets out what contributions are considered to meet the relevant CIL tests and are therefore justified.

| | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Vale of White Horse District Council | <i>Proposed Contributions</i> |
| MUGAs | £47,226 |
| Artificial grass pitch | £13,344 |
| Waste bin provision | £34,000 (£170 per unit) |
| Monitoring | £23,420 |
| Total | £117,990 |
| | |
| Oxfordshire County Council (3Q15 indexed) | <i>Proposed Contributions</i> |
| Primary Schools | £670,503 |
| Secondary Schools incl 6 th form | £968,823 |
| A420 right hand turn works | £650,000 plus £204,653 |
| Bus shelters | £12,287 |
| Rights of way | £15,359 |
| Traffic regulation order (speed limit) | £5,116 |
| Travel plan monitoring (5yrs) | £1,269 |
| OCC Monitoring | £10,181 |
| | |
| Total | £2,538,211 |
| | |
| Overall Total | £2,656,201 |
| Total per dwelling | £13,281 |

- 6.91 These total £2,656,201 including the works to the A420 should Fernham Fields not proceed first and the additional costs of a signalised junction. The applicants, based on viability, have offered contributions totalling £2,647,723 which is at a level which enables the delivery of 35% affordable housing. The total justified level of contributions set out above are similar to this figure therefore officers are satisfied that this level of affordable housing is acceptable and deliverable and that the impact of the development on local infrastructure is mitigated.

6.92 The NPPF (para 205) is very clear regarding the need to be mindful of viability and that Councils should be sufficiently flexible to prevent development being stalled, particularly planned development within the emerging local plan.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 The adverse effect which has been identified is principally to the change which would occur to the local landscape land as a consequence of the proposed development occurring on higher quality agricultural land outside the currently defined settlement boundary of Faringdon. However, this site is being proposed as a housing allocation within the draft local plan and planning permission has already been granted for the residential development of land at Fernham Fields located to the east of Coxwell Road.
- 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. This could help secure local facilities or make them more robust. There would also be the payment of the New Homes Bonus and an increase in the community charge income of the Councils.
- 7.4 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). The boosting significantly the supply of housing is a key objective of the Framework.
- 7.5 The planning obligation package of contributions would provide physical and social infrastructure improvements including education and leisure, and improvements to the A420/Coxwell Road junction.
- 7.6 The scheme would have a **social role** as it will provide in general additional housing that the District needs together with much needed affordable housing units.
- 7.7 The proposal will have some **environmental** implications resulting from localised landscape harm but mitigation is proposed to be put in place to address this impact. Additional planting is proposed which will enhance this current arable landscape and together with the proposed drainage attenuation ponds would help create new wildlife habitats which would provide opportunities for environmental enhancement. These environmental benefits need to be balanced against the localised harm which has been identified.
- 7.8 The travel plan would encourage more sustainable non-car travel for residents and the new dwellings would be constructed to a higher environmental standard than the

existing housing stock at Faringdon.

- 7.9 For the reasons outlined in this report when read as a whole the application scheme would amount to a sustainable form of development. As has also been identified in this report there is some localised adverse effects associated with the residential development of the application site. However, when applying the balancing exercise required by paragraph 14 of the Framework, this is a case where the localised adverse effects do not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits which have been identified. Accordingly, the application is recommended for approval subject to conditions and a legal agreement to secure affordable housing and developer contributions towards key local infrastructure.

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 and to secure affordable housing, and;

2: Conditions as follows:

- 1. Standard Outline time limit – commencement within 2 years of reserved matters approval.**
- 2. Reserved matters to be submitted within 3 years of outline permission.**
- 3. Development in accordance with the approved plans.**
- 4. Development to follow the design principles set out in the design and access statement.**
- 5. Site access details including visibility splays to be agreed**
- 6. Cycle and pedestrian link to northern boundary of the site facilitate access to Highworth Road site.**
- 7. Site wide travel plans to be agreed**
- 8. Implementation of landscaping scheme**
- 9. Submission of landscape management plan for buffer area.**
- 10. Surface water drainage details to be agreed**
- 11. No dwelling to be occupied until sewage treatment work upgrade completed**
- 12. Construction traffic management plan to be agreed**
- 13. Works in accordance with flood risk assessment**
- 14. Tree protection to be agreed and method statement submitted.**
- 15. Wildlife protection as per submitted statements**
- 16. Requirement for further habitat and badger survey if development has not commenced with 2 years of date of permission.**
- 17. Contamination – if found on site then remediation required.**
- 18. Noise mitigation as per submitted statement and ES**
- 19. Air quality mitigation in accordance with submitted air quality report and ES**
- 20. Submission of Archaeological investigation.**
- 21. Implementation of Archaeological investigation**
- 22. Play areas provided on site pre-occupation.**
- 23. Public art to be provided on site in accordance with details to be submitted and approved.**

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