

APPLICATION NO.	P15/V2952/O
APPLICATION TYPE	OUTLINE
REGISTERED	23.12.2015
PARISH	WANTAGE
WARD MEMBER(S)	Charlotte Dickson St John Dickson
APPLICANT	King Alfred's Academy
SITE	King Alfred School, East Springfield Road, Wantage, OX12 8ET
PROPOSAL	Residential development for up to 150 dwellings with associated access, new footpath link, areas of public open space and landscaping.
AMENDMENTS	None
GRID REFERENCE	440672/187892
OFFICER	Stuart Walker

SUMMARY

This application is referred to committee in light of objections from local residents.

The application is seeking outline planning permission for the erection of up to 150 dwellings (including up to 60 affordable units). The applicant seeks consent for means of access only at this stage, with appearance, landscaping, layout and scale being reserved for future consideration.

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

The main planning issues that have been considered are:

- The principle of the proposed development in this location in relation to planning policy context.
- Whether the proposal is suitable to contribute towards the five year housing supply deficit in terms of the sustainability of the site.
- The cumulative impact of this proposal alongside other approved and proposed residential developments in Wantage.
- The proposed illustrative layout and design of the development within its context.
- The impact on highway safety.
- Implications for flood risk, foul and surface water drainage, ecology, heritage assets and archaeology.

The principle of the development to help to address the council's current shortfall in housing supply is acceptable. Wantage is one of the district's key settlements with a range of facilities and the site is sustainably located in relation to the town centre. The provision of additional housing is acceptable and contributions are sought to offset cumulative impact on physical and social infrastructure. Technical issues relating to highway impact, drainage / flood risk, ecology, heritage assets and archaeology are acceptable subject to conditions.

Overall the development is considered to amount to sustainable development, and is recommended for approval subject to conditions and a S106 agreement.

1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Under policies GS1 and H10 of the adopted local plan, Wantage and Grove are identified as one of the most sustainable locations for development within the district. Wantage is a market town with a range of services and facilities, schools, employment opportunities and access to regular public transport services to Oxford, Didcot, Swindon, and beyond.
- 1.2 The application site is situated off Springfield Road, to the south of the A417 Charlton Road. It is located just over half a mile to the east of Wantage town centre and is currently King Alfred's Academy East Site school campus. The site extends to approximately 4.9 hectares and is broadly rectilinear in shape. The school buildings are situated on the western half of the site with playing fields on the eastern side and tennis courts in the south-west corner. Vehicle access is taken off Springfield Road.
- 1.3 The site is located within an established residential area which comprises Springfield Road, Charlton Road and Fyfield Close. Residential properties in these streets are arranged in linear patterns and are predominantly semi-detached or detached and two storeys in height. Most properties adjoining the application site have private rear garden space up to the site boundary. A number of hedgerows and trees define the southern and western edges of the site, together with some groups of generally small trees.
- 1.4 A location plan is **attached** at Appendix 1.

2.0 **PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 King Alfred's Academy is a comprehensive school that serves Wantage, Grove and the surrounding villages. It has over 1,800 pupils who are taught on three separate sites in the town - West (Challow Road), Centre (Portway) and East (Springfield Road). The academy is seeking to consolidate school operations to two sites (centre and west) with the disposal of the third site (East) for redevelopment. It is proposed to reinvest the proceeds of this disposal to enable modernisation of the two remaining sites.
- 2.2 The application seeks outline planning permission for the erection of up to 150 dwellings with associated access, new footpath link, areas of public open space and landscaping. The detailed matter to be considered at this stage is access. Landscaping, appearance, layout and scale are reserved matters that will be subject of a further detailed application should outline permission be granted.
- 2.3 The layout, mix and design of the dwellings will be considered under the reserved matters application. However, 40% of all dwellings built would be affordable units, spread in groups throughout the site. Over 15% of the site will be publicly accessible open space. The site will be accessed via two points off Springfield Road and a new pedestrian link to Charlton Road.
- 2.4 A full suite of surveys and assessments have been undertaken to support the application, including the submission of an illustrative layout plan. All plans and supporting technical documents accompanying the application are available to view online at www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk. The illustrative layout plan is **attached** at Appendix 2.

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

- 3.1 Below is a summary of the responses received to both the original plans and the amendments. A full copy of all the comments made can be viewed online at www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk.

3.2

<p>Wantage Town Council</p>	<p>Support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Wantage Town Council support the re-development of this site in principle, being a brownfield site that complies with the requirements of the NPPF. We note that it is an outline application with only matters of principle and access to be considered at this time.</i> • <i>We have concern that the level of parking shown is insufficient for the likely number of residents and car users and would not comply with the aspirations of the Wantage Neighbourhood Plan. More space should be provided for parking for the dwellings or as added visitor spaces. This could be ‘designed in’ to the green areas to avoid indiscriminate parking on verges and community spaces.</i> • <i>It is difficult to comment on the access and transport implications without sight of the OCC Highway comments. Our support would be subject to there being no objections from this consultee. We would question how up to date the information is within the Transport Assessment and how applicable to this particular site. Consideration should also be given in relation to the sight lines for the access on Springfield Road and as to whether the current footpath linking to Charlton Road could be upgraded to a vehicular exit from the site.</i> • <i>If approved, we would hope to see more information in any Reserved Matters application in relation to the lost facilities from the site and where these will be replaced i.e. Sweatbox. We would also request a Construction Phase Management Plan as it is likely there will be considerable disruption and added traffic during the build phase and this should be limited where possible”.</i>
<p>Neighbours / local residents</p>	<p>93 letters of local representation have been received: 55 objections and 38 in support.</p> <p>The objections expressed may be summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too many houses. • Traffic generation and impact on local highway network. • Concern on use of Springfield Road / Charlton Road junction for access and highway safety. • Not enough off street parking provision – on street parking is already a problem. • Loss of school capacity when there is a current shortage of pupil places; site will be required to accommodate population growth from other developments (i.e. Crab Hill). • Wrong school site has been chosen for disposal, and will leave the east side of Wantage without a secondary school. • Proposed sale proceeds cannot be controlled to be spent on school improvements and will not provide sufficient funding to consolidate three sites into two. • No real evidence the two remaining sites can accommodate / expand to take capacity of existing pupil numbers.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sewer capacity. • Loss of playing fields, leisure and community facilities (including loss of the ‘Sweatbox’ youth club). • Site should be redeveloped for community use. • Site should be sold to another school provider. • Impact on infrastructure. • Overdevelopment. • Density too high. • Proposed heights of dwellings too high. • Impact on character of area / loss of trees. • Impact on residential amenity / loss of privacy and light. • Not enough public open space is proposed. • Impact on proposed neighbourhood plan town centre policies by increasing development on the centre site. • Centre school site should be disposed of instead. • There are no formal plans with planning permission for improving facilities on the other two sites. • New pedestrian access and potential risk of crime. • New pedestrian access is not an existing public right of way. • Construction noise and disruption. • No provision of housing for the elderly (i.e. bungalows). <p>The letters of support may be summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The demand for an outstanding educational facility in Wantage will only increase in line with rising population. • The proposal will enable the school to improve and modernise its facilities; without it the school cannot upgrade or provide new buildings. • The consolidation from three sites to two will improve operational efficiency of the school and will improve pupil safety. • Proposal helps meet the housing shortage and provides houses on a brownfield site close to the centre of town. • Proposal will provide long term benefits to the whole community and local economy.
<p>Oxfordshire County Council</p>	<p>No objection. Their full response is available to view online.</p> <p><i>Highways</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No objection, subject to conditions and contributions towards the Wantage Eastern Link Road, bus services, travel plan monitoring and the provision of replacement bus stops on Charlton Road. <p><i>Archaeology</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No objection. <p><i>Education</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No objection, subject to contributions towards primary school education and Early Years provision. • <i>The proposed development site is currently owned by King Alfred’s Academy, which seeks to dispose of it to help fund its capital programme, to enable it to reduce from three sites to two sites. The county council supports this</i>

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	<p><i>objective, and is working closely with the academy to ensure coordination of the concentration of the school onto its west and central sites with the need to ensure sufficient accommodation to meet population growth in the area.</i></p> <p><i>Property</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No objection, subject to contributions towards expanding Wantage library and adult day care provision.
Thames Valley Police	<p>No objection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek contributions towards increased policing for the area.
Thames Water	No objection.
Drainage Engineer	No objection, subject to conditions.
Countryside Officer	<p>No objection, subject to conditions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>There are no known habitats or species of nature conservation importance associated with this site. The surveys conducted by Aspect Ecology in support of the planning application confirm the lack of any significant nature conservation interest in the site.</i> • <i>The proposed plans offer the opportunities to provide ecological enhancements which in the longer term are likely to provide low level enhancements to the overall biodiversity value of the area.</i>
Tree Officer	<p>No objection, subject to conditions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The information provided by the applicant includes an indicative concept plan showing the trees intended to be retained. There are a number of trees on the site and it is clear from the layout that several would be lost as a consequence of the development.</i> • <i>There is a maturing Maple and Horse Chestnut on the adjacent to Springfield Road that are not shown as being retained but both make an important contribution to the street scene. If a building line similar to that north of the access were to be pursued, the two trees could then be accommodated.</i> • <i>There are two groups of mature trees, to the north and south boundaries halfway along the site, which are shown to be retained. Some of the trees within the groups will be lost within the footprint of the development and more would be lost as a consequence of the proximity to dwellings, notably those to the west of the play area along the mid-south boundary. These are prominent when viewed from outside the site and it would be preferable for the development to recognise them as a constraint and accommodate them accordingly.</i>
Landscape Officer	<p>No objection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The site is contained within an existing area of housing and will not have significant impact on the Local Landscape Character.</i>

Urban Design Officer	<p>No objection, subject to design revisions which can be addressed through any reserved matters application.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Support the principle of residential development but would not support the proposed illustrative layout at reserved matters stage.</i> <p>The officer's full comments in relation to the illustrative plan are available to view online.</p>
Leisure Team	No objection, subject to contributions.
Conservation Officer	<p>No objection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>There are no heritage constraints to this scheme and no impact on designated heritage assets.</i>
Housing Development Team	<p>No objection subject to 40% provision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The current policy H17 requiring 40% affordable housing on eligible sites (15 or more units in urban areas or 5 or more units in rural locations) is still applicable and therefore for a scheme of 150 units, 60 should be delivered as affordable housing.</i>
Environmental Health – Protection Team	No objection.
Waste Management Team	No objection, subject to contributions for provision of new bins for each property.
Cllr Jenny Hannaby	Charlton road is very busy during the day but more so in the morning 7am and from 3pm, Residents along this road have difficulty accessing Charlton Rd and to help with traffic flow a mini roundabout from Springfield Rd is required.
Sport England	No objection, subject to a community use agreement condition on King Alfred's Academy West and Central campus' sports facilities to ensure public access.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 Applications

[P12/V2079/NM](#) - Approved (29/10/2012)

Non-material amendment to planning permission P12/V0336, to change the approved Elliott style building to a McAvoy modular building.

[P12/V1087](#) - Approved (19/07/2012)

Installation of a new relocatable classroom building to replace existing substandard accommodation resulting in the demolition of three temporary classrooms and a grounds store.

[P12/V0336](#) - Approved (11/04/2012)

Installation of three new modular buildings for a temporary period of 5 years and the

demolition of one of the existing modular building.

[P11/V1778](#) – Withdrawn (17/12/2012)

Proposed extension of parking area at front of school to provide 14 extra spaces.

4.2 **Pre-application advice**

The applicant undertook pre-application discussions with officers in March 2015. The key matters discussed are as follows:

- Planning policy context;
- Urban design principles and master planning;
- Flooding and drainage;
- Landscape and visual impact;
- Access and highways;
- Ecology.

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.

GS1 - Developments in existing settlements
H6 - Housing sites in Wantage
H10 - Development in the five main settlements
H16 - Size of dwelling and Lifetime Homes
H17 - Affordable housing
H23 - Open space in new housing development
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
TR1 - Wantage relief road scheme
TR5 - The national cycle network
L1 - Playing space
CF1 - Protection of existing services and facilities

5.2 **The emerging Local Plan 2031, Part 1, Core Policies**

The draft local plan part 1 is not currently adopted policy. Whilst the draft local plan has now been through examination the inspector's report has not been received and policies remain subject to unresolved objections. As per paragraph 216 of the NPPF, at present it is therefore officers' opinion that the emerging Local Plan policies carry limited weight for decision making. The relevant policies are as follows:-

- 1 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- 3 – Settlement hierarchy
- 4 – Meeting our housing needs
- 7 – Providing supporting infrastructure and services
- 15 – Spatial strategy for South East Vale Sub-Area
- 17 – Delivery of Strategic Highway Improvements within the South East Vale Sub-Area

- 22 – Housing mix
- 23 – Housing density
- 24 – Affordable housing
- 26 – Accommodating current and future needs of the ageing population
- 33 – Promoting sustainable transport and accessibility
- 35 – Promoting public transport, cycling and walking
- 36 – Electronic communications
- 37 – Design and local distinctiveness
- 38 – Design strategies for strategic and major development sites
- 39 – The historic environment
- 40 – Sustainable design and construction
- 41 – Renewable energy
- 42 – Flood risk
- 43 – Natural resources
- 44 – Landscape
- 45 – Green Infrastructure
- 46 – Conservation and improvement of biodiversity
- 47 – Delivery and contingency

5.3 **Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)**

- Design Guide – March 2015

The following sections of the Design Guide are 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
- Affordable Housing – July 2006
- Flood Maps and Flood Risk – July 2006
- Planning and Public Art – July 2006
- Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan 4, April 2014
- Oxfordshire Pupil Place Plan – July 2015
- S106 interim guidance 2014

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

5.5 Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) – March 2014

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.

5.7 Wantage Town Council have formally submitted their proposed Neighbourhood Plan to the council and the planning policy team are currently assessing responses made following the latest public consultation (closed 4 March 2016), ahead of the examination process. However, as per paragraph 216 of the NPPF, the neighbourhood plan policies carry limited weight for decision making at this point in time.

5.8 Environmental Impact

This proposal does not exceed 150 dwellings, the site area is under 5ha and is not within a 'sensitive area' as defined by the EIA regulations. Consequently the proposal is beneath the thresholds set in Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 as amended and this proposal is not EIA development and there is no requirement under the Regulations to provide a screening opinion.

5.9 Other Relevant Legislation

- Written statement by Secretary of State on sustainable drainage systems (18 Dec 2014)
- Written statement by the Secretary of State on car parking (25 March 2015)
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990
- Community & Infrastructure Levy Legislation
- 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)

5.10 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.

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

1. Principle of the development
2. Cumulative impact
3. Loss of school and its playing fields
4. Affordable housing and housing mix
5. Design and layout
6. Residential amenity
7. Landscape and visual Impact
8. Open space, landscaping and trees

9. Flood risk and surface / foul drainage
10. Traffic and highway safety
11. Ecology and biodiversity
12. Archaeology
13. Delivery and contributions

6.2 The principle of development

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.

6.3 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).

6.4 Other material planning considerations include national planning guidance within the NPPF and NPPG and the emerging Vale of White Horse Local Plan: Part 1-Strategic Sites and Policies and its supporting evidence base.

6.5 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.

6.6 Paragraph 49 of the NPPF states *"Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites"*. This means that the relevant housing policies in the adopted Local Plan are not considered up to date and the adverse impacts of a development would need to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits if the proposal is refused. In order to judge whether a development is sustainable it must be assessed against the economic, social and environmental roles.

6.7 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, and as the proposal is within Wantage the proposal accords with policy GS1,

6.8 Policy H6 of the adopted Local Plan identifies sites allocated for housing in Wantage. Whilst the application site is not allocated under this policy, the supporting text of policy H6 makes reference to *'the reorganisation of the secondary school could lead to additional brownfield sites being made available for development in the longer term.'*

- 6.9 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 has to 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 this proposal, on a brownfield site within the town development boundary, is acceptable in principle unless any adverse impacts can be identified that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of meeting this objective.
- 6.10 **Cumulative Impact**
Wantage has been subject to a number of planning applications for housing development that have been permitted including 1500 dwellings at Crab Hill, 380 dwellings at Stockham Farm, and 80 dwellings at Chain Hill. Local residents consider the proposal is therefore a disproportionate increase to the housing stock in the town.
- 6.11 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. Additional housing can help support and secure local services and it may be possible to address infrastructure deficiencies through planning conditions or through a legal agreement. Cumulative impacts are considered further where relevant in the topics below.
- 6.12 **Loss of school and its playing fields**
The site is currently in educational use. The applicant (King Alfred's Academy) has set out a case to release this land and consolidate operations on its other two sites in Wantage. Notwithstanding local support to do this, other residents have raised concern over the loss of school pupil space capacity at a time when the local population is growing. They further consider the wrong site has been chosen for redevelopment and will leave the east side of the town without access to secondary school provision.
- 6.13 The county council, as local education authority, has a statutory duty under section 14 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure there are sufficient school places to meet local need. In response to this application, the county council has no objection and confirms support for the applicant's objective to consolidate to two sites with the need to ensure sufficient accommodation is provided to meet population growth in the area. In the absence of an objection from the county council to the loss of the school from this particular site, officers consider there are no reasonable grounds to withhold permission in respect of impact on local education provision. Wantage still retains secondary education.
- 6.14 Local concern has also been raised over the potential loss of the playing fields. The proposal would result in the loss of about 2.51ha of playing pitches, currently laid out as one rugby pitch full size, one football pitch full sized and two mini pitches. In addition six tennis courts arranged as three hard court areas and a school gym area would be lost through redevelopment. It is noted the facilities on the application site have no community sports use but other sport facilities on the applicant's centre and west sites are made available for use by the community.
- 6.15 As part of the evidence base for emerging local plan 2031 part 1, the council has undertaken a review of playing pitch provision within the district. The draft Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) October 2015 identifies the strategies for rugby and football generally, and at the King Alfred Academy. For football the PPS identifies that as long as the playing fields planned for Grove Airfield and Crab Hill come forward there will be

sufficient football pitches in the South-East Vale area. For rugby the PPS identifies that there is a deficit of -0.75 of a pitch in the South East Vale Area. The leisure team confirm the priority for the South East/Grove area is to support Grove RFC to convert 3 football senior pitches plus 2 mini football pitches to rugby (when football moves to the new Grove Airfield site).

- 6.16 On the basis of new playing pitches due to come forward at Crab Hill and Grove Airfield, officers consider the loss of the school playing pitches, which are not available for community use is acceptable when balanced against the economic, social and environmental benefits of the proposal including the current housing shortfall. In addition Sport England and officers consider there is benefit through this proposal to ensure community use continues on the other school sites and a condition is suggested to ensure public access to these facilities is permanently retained, especially as new facilities elsewhere may not be available immediately following development on the application site.
- 6.17 **Affordable housing and housing mix**
The applicant has based their initial affordable housing provision on this site on the draft Local Plan Core Policy 24, at 35% with a 75:25 split of rented and intermediate housing respectively. This emerging policy has limited weight not being adopted policy and officers consider policy H17 can be given weight as an adopted policy. Through negotiation, the applicant has agreed to make provision for 40% affordable housing to accord with Policy H17 of the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011.
- 6.18 As this is an outline application, the actual number of dwellings and precise mix that might be accommodated on site is not known at this stage. Notwithstanding, officers will expect any reserved matters applications to closely comply with the April 2014 Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) mix which is the most recent objective assessment of housing need (or any document that supersedes the SHMA), with an affordable housing mix to complement the expectations of the housing needs team (their comments on mix is available to view online).

Design and Layout

- 6.19 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.
- 6.20 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.
- 6.21 This is an outline application with only access to be considered. The details of layout, scale and external appearance of dwellings and landscaping are reserved matters. It is therefore not intended to address design and layout in any detail in this report. The application is, however, supported by a proposed indicative masterplan and a Design and Access Statement (DAS).
- 6.22 The indicative masterplan provides an indication of how the development of the site may come forward, but is considered by officers to poorly translate the design principles identified in the DAS (see urban design officer comments online). As such, this plan will not form part of any planning approval sought under this application and thus should not be used as a basis for a reserved matters application. On the whole, the design principles identified in the DAS are reasonable for taking forward a detailed

scheme should outline permission be granted.

- 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.
- 6.24 Overall the application proposes a density of approximately 30 dwellings per hectare. Whilst surrounding development is relatively low in density (approximately 20 to 25 dwellings per hectare), taking into account the expectations of NPPF to boost the supply of housing, the brownfield status of the site within the town development boundary, the proposed density is considered acceptable.
- 6.25 **Residential Amenity**
Adopted local plan policy DC9 seeks to prevent development that would result in a loss of privacy, daylight or sunlight for neighbouring properties or that would cause dominance or visual intrusion for neighbouring properties and the wider environment. Protecting amenity is a core principle of the NPPF. Design principles DG63-64 of the Design Guide pertain to amenity, privacy and overlooking.
- 6.26 It is not possible to consider the amenity impact of the proposal in detail at this stage as no firm details on layout or house types accompany this outline application. Should outline permission be granted, it would be more appropriate to assess amenity when considering any reserved matters applications.
- 6.27 **Landscape and Visual Impact**
The NPPF seeks to enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes (paragraph 109). The site is contained within an existing area of housing and will not have significant impact on the Local Landscape Character.
- 6.28 **Open Space, landscaping and trees**
Adopted Local Plan Policy H23 of the adopted Local Plan requires a minimum of 15% of the residential area to be laid out as open space and the application accords with this.
- 6.29 In respect of trees, there are a number of trees on the site and it is clear from the indicative masterplan that several would be lost as a consequence of the development. The tree survey identifies a total of 48 individual trees and 5 tree groups with four trees of high quality; 21 trees of moderate quality and 23 trees of low quality. The applicant indicates the most significant trees on the site are intended to be retained. However, there is a maturing Maple and Horse Chestnut adjacent to Springfield Road that are not shown as being retained on the illustrative plan, but both make an important contribution to the street scene. The tree officer advises that if a building line similar to that north of the access were to be pursued, the two trees could be retained.
- 6.30 The indicative masterplan shows two groups of mature trees are to be retained, to the north and south boundaries halfway along the site. However some of the trees within these groups will be lost within the footprint of the development and more could be lost as a consequence of the proximity to dwellings. These trees are prominent when viewed from outside the site and the tree officer considers it would be preferable for the development to “*recognise them as a constraint and accommodate them accordingly*”. Officers consider these specific matters can be accommodated within any future layout submitted in respect of reserved matters, should outline permission be granted.

- 6.31 The proposed indicative masterplan indicates a range of open spaces and streets which will accommodate street tree planting and overall officers consider there is sufficient space to deliver a well landscaped scheme. The council's landscape officer has raised no objection to the proposal, but raises minor points on layout which again can be addressed at reserved matters stage.
- 6.32 **Flood Risk and Surface/Foul Drainage**
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).
- 6.33 Adopted local plan policy DC9 provides that new development will not be permitted if it would unacceptably harm the amenities of neighbouring properties or the wider environment in terms of, amongst other things, pollution and contamination. Policy DC12 provides that development will not be permitted if it would adversely affect the quality of water resources as a result of, amongst other things, waste water discharge. Policies DC13 and 14 are not considered to be consistent with the NPPF, because they do not comply with paragraphs 100 to 104 which require a sequential approach to locating development and provide that flood risk should not be increased elsewhere.
- 6.34 The Environment Agency Flood Map shows the whole site to be located within the lowest risk category, Flood Zone 1, which are zones the least susceptible to flooding and preferred in flood risk terms for housing development.
- 6.35 The application is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment and development drainage strategy. A sustainable drainage scheme can be agreed and secured by planning condition thereby minimising the risks of flooding from this development. In respect of foul drainage, Thames Water raise no objection. The council's drainage engineer has also assessed the application and has no objections to the proposal, subject to further details being submitted under conditions.
- 6.36 Subject to the suggested drainage conditions, the proposal is acceptable in respect of flood risk and drainage.
- 6.37 **Traffic and Highway Safety**
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 cost effectively limit the significant impacts of the development.
- 6.38 Paragraph 32 of the NPPF goes on to state: *“Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe.”*
- 6.39 The application is supported by a transport assessment. The school site is currently served by a twin access arrangement directly off Springfield Road. The application

proposes to keep the position of the northern access but alter the location of the southern access further south, to achieve greater separation distance from Hallett Close on the opposite side of Springfield Road, which is acceptable.

- 6.40 Local residents have however expressed concern that the Springfield Road junction with Charlton Road is insufficient to cope with additional traffic generation from the proposal and that the proposal would cause traffic congestion to the detriment of road safety.
- 6.41 The trip generation for the site has been estimated using the TRICS database for both existing and proposed uses. The development is expected to reduce two-way movements in the morning peak from 213 to 63 which is seen as a benefit to the local highway network as the site will no longer be a point of destination. However, two-way trips in the PM peak will increase from 34 to 62. The county highways team anticipate that this PM peak increase is not expected to have a detrimental impact on the capacity of local junctions, but advise the increase will require the provision of traffic calming through the provision of a mini roundabout at the Charlton Road / Springfield Road junction. Subject to this, the county highways team raise no objection to the proposal on traffic generation of highway safety grounds.
- 6.42 The town council and local residents raise concern on proposed parking levels. Whilst these are details to be considered under reserved matters, it is acknowledged that current parking provision within this area of Wantage is problematic and the county highways team indicate that any future parking should provide adequate on-site parking so as not to exacerbate the situation. At present, parking provision of 342 spaces is proposed, 66 of which will be unallocated. The county highways team advise the unallocated provision should be accessible spaces and spread throughout the site and that casual on-street parking, or parking across footways, within the site or in the surrounding area will not be acceptable. The applicant has confirmed that residential parking across the site will be provided in accordance with current standards, which is acceptable.
- 6.43 Local concern has been raised over the provision of a pedestrian link to Charlton Road in relation to security and loss of privacy to existing residents. This link exists and officers consider the benefits in providing this link for a shortened route to access bus services and other local facilities outweigh the concerns raised.
- 6.44 Overall, the proposal is acceptable in terms of highway impact and subject to conditions and contributions to strategic highway improvements, the proposal is considered to accord with policy DC5 and the NPPF.
- 6.45 **Ecology and Biodiversity**
The NPPF seeks to conserve and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible (paragraph 109).
- 6.46 There are no known habitats or species of nature conservation importance associated with this site and the surveys in support of the planning application confirm the lack of any significant nature conservation interest in the site. The countryside officer raises no objection, but comments "*the proposed plans offer the opportunities to provide ecological enhancements which in the longer term are likely to provide low level enhancements to the overall biodiversity value of the area*".
- 6.47 The proposal is thus considered to accord with the NPPF.

6.48 **Archaeology**

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.

6.49 There are no known archaeological features within or within the vicinity of the application area. Neither aerial photographic survey nor Lidar data suggest the presence of any archaeological features within or adjacent to the application area, and thus there are no archaeological constraints to this application. The proposal accords with adopted local plan policy HE10 and the NPPF.

6.50 **Delivery and Contributions**

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

- i) Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- ii) Directly related to the development; and
- iii) Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

Policy DC8 of the Adopted Local Plan provides that development will only be permitted where the necessary physical infrastructure and service requirements to support the development can be secured.

6.51 The NPPG provides further guidance on how to apply the tests mentioned above and notes the following:

1. Planning obligations assist in mitigating the impact of development which benefits local communities and supports the provision of local infrastructure.
2. Planning obligations should not be sought where they are clearly not necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.
3. Planning obligations must be fully justified and evidenced. Where affordable housing contributions are being sought, planning obligations should not prevent development from going forward.

6.52 *Recreation/sports Provision*

Additional population will increase pressure on existing facilities in the village and at Wantage/Grove. It is reasonable to request contributions towards their improvement as no on site provision is being made as part of this proposal. The sums requested are set against planned and costed schemes. The amounts sought are proportionate to this development based on 150 dwellings.

6.53 *Education*

The County Council has confirmed a new primary school at Grove is planned, and has sought a financial contribution of £760,000 for 38 pupil places. The county council's request is justified by the increasing pressure for new primary school places, and is reasonable and proportionate.

6.54 The Early Years request is to provide expansion of nursery education provision at Camel Pre-school and a financial contribution of £46,990 is sought for 8.4 pupil places. The request is justified, reasonable and proportionate.

6.55 *Transport*

The public transport request is justified in seeking to improve the existing X1 / X32 & X34 services, along with two replacement bus stops on the Charlton Road. The provision of traffic calming / mini roundabout will be delivered through a separate S278

agreement with the county council.

6.56 *Property*

A contribution of £40,796 towards expansion of adult day care in Wantage Day Centre has been requested, which is justified, reasonable and proportionate. However, clarification is being sought on the number of contributions already sought towards this facility, as should five or more have already been secured, Regulation 123 of the CIL Regulations would rule out this contribution. An update will be provided for the meeting. The county council has also requested £36,064 towards the expansion for Wantage Library, based on generic costings. No evidence has been provided to justify this figure and officers do not consider the request is reasonable or necessary to make this development acceptable. It also appears this request is ruled out, as it appears more than five contributions have already been secured towards this facility.

6.57 *Thames Valley Police*

Thames Valley police has requested £18,283 towards staff set up, vehicles, IT, and premises. Very limited detail has been provided as to how this request relates directly to this proposal and it appears the contribution would be pooled towards policing costs and not directly relevant to this proposal. In addition, pooling restrictions affect vehicles, and mobile IT. The request is therefore not considered justifiable in planning terms.

6.58 The following developer contributions have been requested. These contributions are considered fair and proportionate:-

Vale of White Horse District Council	<i>Proposed Contributions</i>
Public art	£45,000
Street naming	£3,052
Waste bin provision	£25,500
New sports hall at Mably Way, Wantage	£78,190
Health & Fitness at Mably Way, Wantage	£30,513
New swimming pool facility at Mably Way, Wantage	£60,407
New AGP facility at Mably Way, Wantage	£10,022
Youth facilities at Memorial Park	£32,695
Improved cricket pavilion at Challow & Childrey CC	£9,353
Rugby Pitch improvements at Grove RFC	£5,972
Monitoring	£2,530
Total	£303,234
Oxfordshire County Council	<i>Proposed Contributions</i>
Wantage Eastern Link Road Phase 3	£353,340
Improved bus services in Wantage	£126,277
Replacement bus stops on Charlton Rd	£4,000
Travel plan monitoring	£1,240
New Grove primary school	£760,000
Expanded Camel Pre-school	£46,990
Adult Day care expansion	£40,796
S106 monitoring	£1,500
Total	£1,334,143
Overall Total	£1,637,377 (approx. 10,916 per unit)

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 The proposed development would perform an economic role through increasing housing stock, it would contribute to an expansion of the local housing market and could potentially improve the affordability of open market housing. In addition, the additional houses would help maintain existing infrastructure, creating investment in the local and wider economy. 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). These economic benefits outweigh the limited economic benefits this site has in being agricultural land.

7.3 The scheme would have a social role as it will provide housing and affordable housing to meet the needs of present and future generations through the provision of a range of housing types and sizes and would meet the social dimension of sustainable development which should be afforded significant weight. Other social benefits will arise through the contributions to local infrastructure identified including towards local bus services and recreation and sport facilities which in turn could benefit existing residents of Wantage.

7.4 The proposal has an environmental role including providing housing in a reasonably accessible location, new highway infrastructure, provision of public open spaces and new tree planting.

7.5 In conclusion, it is considered that this proposal meets the three strands of sustainable development. The impacts of the proposal are not considered unreasonably adverse and it is considered the harm identified does not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the NPPF as a whole. Consequently, the application is recommended for approval subject to conditions and a legal agreement to secure affordable housing and developer contributions.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

8.1 **It is recommended that authority to grant planning permission is delegated to the head of planning:**

- 1. A S106 agreement being entered into with the district council in order to secure contributions towards local infrastructure and to secure affordable housing; and**
- 2. The following conditions:**
 - 1. Approval of reserved matters.**
 - 2. Reserved matters to be submitted within three years.**
 - 3. Time limit for implementation – two years after final reserved matters**

approval.

4. Approved plans.
5. Access in accordance with specified plans.
6. Off-site highways works completed prior to occupation.
7. Construction traffic management plan.
8. Travel plan statement.
9. Garage accommodation to be retained.
10. Sustainable drainage scheme (in accordance with approved floor risk assessment) to be agreed and implemented prior to occupation.
11. Foul drainage details to be agreed and implemented prior to occupation.
12. Tree protection.
13. Community use agreement for two remaining school sites.

Informatives

1. **Market housing mix to complement the SHMA.**
2. **Affordable housing mix to accord with housing team requirements.**

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