APPLICATION NO.P16/V0652/OAPPLICATION TYPEOUTLINEREGISTERED21.3.2016

PARISH EAST CHALLOW WARD MEMBER(S) Yvonne Constance

APPLICANT Mr B M H Pert & Mr K I Pert
SITE Land at Park Farm, East Challow

PROPOSAL Development of up to 88 dwellings including 40%

affordable housing, landscaping and other

associated works with all matters reserved with the

exception of access.

OFFICER Adrian Butler

SUMMARY

The application seeks outline planning permission for the erection of up to 88 dwellings. Only the principle of housing on this site and means of access are to be considered as part of this application with all other matters (appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) being reserved matters for future consideration.

This is an open, greenfield site at the edge of East Challow

The principle of housing on this site is considered reasonable particularly in light of the lack of a 5-year land supply and Government advice in the NPPF which is considered more up to date and relevant in comparison to the housing policies in the adopted local plan and as the emerging local plan policies can only be given limited weight at this stage.

The key consideration is the landscape and visual impact including perceived coalescence between settlements as policy NE10 of the adopted local plan designates the site as part of an important open gap between East Challow and Wantage. The site is visually contained by vegetation on the boundaries and housing to the north and permitted to the south east. Views from public vantage points are limited. There will be some localised landscape and visual harm with the change in character and appearance of the site and some erosion of the gap between East Challow and Wantage. This site makes a limited visual contribution to the gap with land further to the east being more important visually in this respect. The open aspect of the site perceived from the A417 immediately south of the site can be retained through open land on this part of the site. This limited and localised landscape and visual harm is considered outweighed by the benefits of the proposal.

Overall the proposal is considered sustainable development meeting the three roles (economic, social and environmental) referenced in the NPPF. The limited harm this proposal would cause is not considered so adverse as to significantly or demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal or that specific policies in the NPPF specifically heritage policies, indicate development should be restricted.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 East Challow is defined as a large village by policy H11 of the adopted Local Plan. The village has limited services which include community facilities, a primary school, some employment opportunities and access to public transport serving larger towns being Wantage and Faringdon. Wantage is also a short drive from the village or could

be cycled.

- 1.2 This application relates to a greenfield site at the eastern edge of the village. The land is farmed and currently has an arable crop.
- 1.3 The southern and western boundaries are defined by hedges and trees with the A417 beyond. Also adjoining part of the southern boundary is an existing house (Greenacre) and a former deport site on which planning permission has recently been grated for up to 36 dwellings (P15/V2545/O). The northern boundary mainly adjoins dwellings in The Park, Park Farm and The Barn and The Orchard. The remainder of the northern boundary and the eastern boundary adjoin open fields. A public footpath is immediately adjacent to the north and eastern boundaries. The land falls from some 111m AOD in the south to some 89.2m AOD to the north.
- 1.4 The site location plan is **attached** at Appendix 1.

2.0 **PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 This is an outline application for up to 88 dwellings. Access is to be considered at this stage with appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for future consideration.
- 2.2 Access is proposed from the A417 and is located opposite Letcombe Hill. To facilitate access a roundabout is proposed on the A417. Since the initial submission the roundabout has been reduced in size from 36m to 32m in diameter. In addition a plan proposing extended and improved footways beside the A417 has been submitted.
- 2.3 The application is supported by an illustrative site layout plan depicting a single vehicular access point from the A417 off the proposed roundabout. The access serves groups of dwellings accessed from a hierarchy of roads and cul-de-sacs. Open spaces are provided at the north, east and southern edges of the site. An area of car parking is provided for existing residents of dwellings such as those at The Park and Parkside. The layout is merely illustrative at this stage. It is unsatisfactory and a different layout would be expected at reserved matters stage.
- 2.4 The illustrative masterplan is **attached** at Appendix 2.

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.

minutes walk (400m) of home, and if possible a mixture of	F	Parish Council	 Object. Their objections may be summarised as follows: The Council has a 5-year land supply East Challow is not a sustainable location – there is no shop and no cycle ways connecting it to Wantage No safe access to village facilities Site is not well located to the village and new residents would not feel part of the village Lack of infrastructure to support the development The County Council's Residential Road Guide advises people should have access on foot or bicycle and ideally this means a local shop for daily needs within 5 to 8 minutes walk (400m) of home, and if possible a mixture of
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	 shops, businesses and other uses within walking distance Manual for Streets encourages a reduction in the need to troval by ear
	travel by carA development that encourages most people to drive or
	 catch a bus to access food shopping is not sustainable Local roads are too narrow to navigate especially in
	 winter The benefits of the proposal claimed by the applicant
	could be applied to any housing development and should be afforded less weight
	Medical services are over subscribed
	8 minute response time for ambulances cannot be met
	 Restricted sewage capacity and question whether it can be upgraded in time
	The applicant has not provided traffic loading coming through the village from the north and south or via
	Letcombe Hill • 36% of traffic will use Letcombe Hill
	Cumulative effects of increased traffic will be severe and unsafe
	A FOI request to OCC revealed the A417 is at or over capacity
	 An impact assessment is needed for the amount of pedestrian crossings
	 Concern over the ability for the proposal to integrate with the village; in effect this is an isolated development
	Parking for villagers on site is not secure and question Parking for villagers on site is not secure and question
	how it can be retained for villager use?Schools are at capacity and there is no space to extend
	the primary school
	Risk of flooding
	The full Parish Council response can be viewed on this council's web site for this application
Neighbours	3 letters of objections have been received. The concerns expressed may be summarised as follows:
	Eliminate panoramic views from Greenacre which is a
	neighbouring dwelling
	Dwellings on the higher part of the site and higher than the bottom of the garden at Greenacre would be extremely imposing and would increase drainage problems in this part of the garden (raducing the site).
	problems in this part of the garden (reducing the site levels in this area may resolve the drainage issue)
	No improvements to infrastructure despite the huge
	number of houses built and permittedA417 is very busy and dangerous
	 A417 is very busy and dangerous Unsafe for pedestrians crossing the A417 or using the
	narrow pavements
	Speed limit needs to be revised Developer provides upregliation prodictions for increased.
	Developer provides unrealistic predictions for increased traffic and car use for new occupants
	 Increased traffic will make the A417 road surface worse Inadequate village facilities for the day to day needs of
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- Increase pressure on Wantage facilities which presently cannot cope
- No jobs in the area
- Loss of green spaces and countryside
- Losing rural character and places for people to walk and cycle
- Need more 1, 2 and 3-bed dwellings for families with children or those wishing to downsize and not more flats, 4/5 bed houses and retirement complexes
- Unsustainable and unsuitable development
- Roundabout is inappropriate and out of keeping with the rural vernacular of the village
- Poor, uninspiring layout that divorces itself, hides itself away from and turns its back on the village
- Proposal does not integrate with the main street
- Layout does not acknowledge adjacent development

Oxfordshire County Council

Highways

Holding objection

Wish to see the footway on the southern side of the A417 to King Alfred's school widened to 1.8m (or 1.5m where there are restrictions). Also require a 2m footway on the north side of the A417 to link with footpath 196/5. The absence of a proposal for the footway means there would not be a safe and convenient route for pedestrians and cyclists towards Wantage and the nearby St Alfred's school and hence a holding objection is raised (*Planning officer note. The plans now offer the extended and widened footways and a planning condition can secure them*)

No objection on traffic or drainage grounds. Seek financial contributions towards zebra crossings, bus stops, bus services, traffic regulation order and travel plan monitoring and recommend conditions including requirements for details of the roundabout, vision splays, footways improvements beside the A417, a construction management plan, travel plan, sustainable drainage scheme.

Archaeology

No objection

An archaeological evaluation of the application area has identified an area of Romano British settlement and activity. It has also identified evidence of early Anglo Saxon activity. The archaeological features that have been revealed will require further investigation Recommend that should planning permission be granted conditions are attached that will require an appropriate level of investigation in advance of the development

Education

No objection

Advice there is insufficient capacity in the village primary school, St Alfred's Academy, Fitzwaryn special education needs school (SEN) and the village nursery to serve this development. Financial contributions are sought towards expansion of the village primary school and nursery, SEN and a new secondary

	school on the Grove airfield site
	Property No objection
	The proposal will place increased pressure on local infrastructure
	such as libraries, waste services and museums. However,
	financial contributions cannot be sought due to pooling
	restrictions (Regulation 123 of the CIL Regulations).
	OCC's full comments are available on the web site
Thames Water	No objection.
	Thames Water, has been unable to determine the waste water
	infrastructure needs of this application. Should the Local
	Planning Authority look to approve the application ahead of
	further information being provided, we request a Grampian
	condition requiring a drainage strategy to be approved prior to development commencing.
	Surface Water Drainage - it is the responsibility of a developer to
	make proper provision for drainage to ground, water courses or a
	suitable sewer. In respect of surface water it is recommended
	that the applicant should ensure that storm flows are attenuated
	or regulated into the receiving public network through on or off
	site storage. When it is proposed to connect to a combined public
	sewer, the site drainage should be separate and combined at the final manhole nearest the boundary. Connections are not
	permitted for the
	removal of groundwater
	In terms of water supply Thames Water will aim to provide
	customers with a minimum pressure of 10m head (approx. 1 bar)
	and a flow rate of 9 litres/minute at the point where it leaves
	Thames Waters pipes.
	Insufficient documentation containing confirmed details of the proposed drainage plan could be located on the local authority
	website. In order for Thames Water to determine whether the
	existing sewer network has sufficient spare capacity to receive
	the flows from the proposed development, a drainage strategy
	must be submitted detailing both the foul and surface water
	strategies. Details of any proposed connection points or
	alterations to the public system, including; calculated peak foul
	and surface water discharge rates, details of any pumped
	discharges (maximum pump rates), attenuation details with
	accompanying capacity requirement calculations and details of incorporated SuDS must be included in the drainage strategy. If
	initial investigations conclude that the existing sewer network is
	unlikely to be able to support the demand anticipated from this
	development, it will be necessary for the developer to fund an
	Impact Study to ascertain with a greater degree of certainty,
	whether the proposed development will lead to overloading of
	existing waste foul and surface water infrastructure, and if
	required recommend network upgrades.
Drainage	No objection
engineer	Recommends conditions requiring a sustainable drainage
	scheme and foul water drainage scheme

Environment Agency	No comment The application falls outside their remit as a statutory planning consultee and they do not wish to be consulted on it
Waste Management	No objection Ask for clarification on the size of vehicle used in the swept path analysis. Question whether the north east part of the site can be serviced by a refuse vehicle. If not waste collection points will been needed. Seek a £170 per dwelling towards bin provision
Health & housing – contaminated land	No objection Notes the applicant's Preliminary Geotechnical and Contamination report has not identified the presence of any significant contamination that would preclude the development of the site. The report does highlight that carbon dioxide has been identified within the region of the historic pond. The gas monitoring undertaken to date does not currently comply with CIRIA C665/Ground Gas Handbook and further gas monitoring should be carried out to improve confidence in the gas assessment and to confirm the requirements for any gas protection measures for the proposed development. The report also highlights that no evidence of made ground or contaminant impact was identified in the vicinity of the former council depot and recommends that further check investigation should be undertaken in new garden areas at this boundary once the layout has been determined. Recommends a condition to ensure that any ground, water and associated gas contamination is identified and adequately addressed.
Health & housing – environment protection team	No objection The site is affected by noise from traffic using the A417. With regard to noise levels in outdoor living areas, only day and night time averages have been given and it is not clear to which plot(s) this relates. It would be helpful to see the modelled noise contours overlain on the block diagram to demonstrate the suitability of the outdoor living areas in terms of noise. For clarity the noise levels in outdoor living areas should ideally not exceed 50dBLAeq. Where this is not achievable I would not be minded to object subject to the level not exceeding 55dBLAeq and where at least part of each external living area meets 50dBLAeq.
Health & housing – air quality	No objection The site is not in or close to an air quality management area and has an open access. Do not anticipate that air quality will be significantly affected by the operational activity at the site, however the introduction of the roundabout could have an impact. In view of this I request a screening assessment of the combined impacts of operational phase of the proposed development and the introduction of the roundabout in order to provide clarity on this matter.
Ramblers Association	No objection Request that access along this footpath 196/5/10 is not

	unnecessarily denied during the building works, and that any damage sustained by the footpath surface as a consequence of the building works is made good.
Conservation officer	No objection The proposed new roundabout is large and will intrude upon the rural character of the settlement, changing the setting of the Old Schoolhouse. The new road layout should have a clear justification or the junction redesigned in keeping with the village settlement. Impacts on the listed buildings would be limited due to the undulation of the landscape, distance from heritage assets and hedge/tree screening of these heritage assets from the north and west.
Countryside officer	No objection. Has reviewed the amended Ecological Assessment which now correctly assesses pond P1 with regard to its suitability for Great Crested Newts (GCN) and accepted their likely presence. The Ecological Assessment contains an outline mitigation strategy for GCN and the proposals for the development include areas of informal open space with drainage basin's adjacent to the pond P1 which should in the medium term enhance the habitats available for GCN. If planning permission is granted then conditions should be imposed to protect GCN and to ensure the proposals achieve the promised biodiversity enhancements.
Landscape officer	No objection The proposed development would not cause unacceptable landscape and visual harm for the Lowland Vale (NE9) and Important Open Land (NE10). The proposal indicates that it has sought to mitigate the landscape and visual effects, with retaining the existing planting on the site boundaries, proposing additional planting and areas of POS on the more sensitive areas of land. There will be views of the Lowland Vale which will be affected, predominately glimpsed views in the vicinity of the A417 and open views from the footpath along the sites eastern boundary. Landscape impacts will be predominately localised, the scale of the site access roundabout is a concern both on the village character but also with regard to its visual impact.
Leisure	No objection Suggest the development could result in increased pressure of leisure and recreation facilities and recommends financial contributions to secure improvements

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 Planning permission was granted in July 2005 for a new school and playing fields at Challow Park with the application site area extending across the site subject to this current planning application and also neighbouring land. An application in 2010 to renew the permission was withdrawn. It is considered the permission has expired.
- 4.2 P16/V0572/SCR a suggested proposal for up to 92 dwellings on this site was not

considered to represent EIA development – 18 March 2016

- 4.3 P15/V2900/PEJ relates to a request for pre-application advice for a scheme of up to 95 dwellings including landscaping and other associated works. Officers responded on 27 January 2016. The following is a brief summary of advice offered:
 - Limited weight can be given to the adopted and emerging housing policies and to policy NE10 of the local plan, as they are either not up to date (adopted local plan) or still subject to unresolved objections (draft local plan)
 - It was acknowledged that the NPPF presumes in favour of sustainable development and seeks to significantly boost housing supply
 - Any harm identified has to be balanced against the development benefits and it will be for the applicant to demonstrate this
 - There will be some localised landscape harm from loss of the site to housing and the roundabout proposed and that this harm will need to be balanced against the scheme benefits
 - Housing mix should comply with the SHMA
 - The 2015 adopted design guide needs to be complied with in terms of design of the scheme and relationship with neighbours
 - Highway authority advice and other technical consultee responses were sent with this council's reply.
 - Separation of the site from the main village in terms of access to facilities needs to be addressed particularly with regard to highway safety
 - The settings for three listed buildings need to be considered
 - Need to consider biodiversity of the site and any impacts for protected species
 - A flood risk assessment would be needed with surface water restricted to greenfield run-off rates for all events up to the 1 in 100year storm event including allowance for climate change
 - Should seek advice form Thames Water on sewer capacity
 - An indication of financial contributions towards infrastructure improvements that may be sought subject to them being CIL compliant
 - 40% affordable housing would be sought
 - A list of documents/assessments that should accompany an application
 - The advice offered was based on the lack of a 5-year land supply and this situation could change
 - The advice offered is an officer opinion only and not binding on the council

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan 2011

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

Policy No.	Policy Title
GS1	Developments in Existing Settlements
GS2	Development in the Countryside
DC1	Design
DC3	Design against crime
DC5	Access
DC6	Landscaping
DC7	Waste Collection and Recycling
DC8	The Provision of Infrastructure and Services
DC9	The Impact of Development on Neighbouring Uses
DC12	Water quality and resources

DC13	Flood Risk and Water Run-off
DC14	Flood Risk and Water Run-off
H11	Development in the Larger Villages
H13	Development Elsewhere
H15	Housing Densities
H16	Size of Dwelling and Lifetime Homes
H17	Affordable Housing
H23	Open Space in New Housing Development
NE9	Lowland Vale
NE10	Urban Fringes & Countryside Gaps
HE1	Conservation Areas
HE4	Listed buildings
HE9	Archaeology

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. The draft local plan has been subject to 2 stages of Examination. The Inspectors report has yet to be received and there remain unresolved objections. 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 7	Providing supporting infrastructure and services
Core Policy 20	Spatial Strategy for Western Vale sub-area
Core Policy 22	Housing mix
Core Policy 23	Housing density
Core Policy 24	Affordable housing
Core Policy 33	Promoting sustainable transport and accessibility
Core Policy 35	Promoting public transport, cycling and walking
Core Policy 36	Electronic communications
Core Policy 37	Design and local distinctiveness
Core Policy 38	Design strategies for strategic and major development sites
Core Policy 39	The historic environment
Core Policy 42	Flood risk
Core Policy 43	Natural resources
Core Policy 44	Landscape
Core Policy 45	Green infrastructure
Core Policy 46	Conservation and improvement of biodiversity

5.3 **Supplementary Planning Guidance**

- Design Guide March 2015
- 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**

There is no neighbourhood plan for East Challow.

Environmental Impact

5.7 This proposal is for up to 88 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. A screening opinion provided on 18 March 2016 for a proposal for up to 92 dwellings on this site opined it was not EIA development. Taking into account government guidance in paragraph 58 of the NPPG on thresholds that may trigger the need for EIA this opinion remains relevant.

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**

5.8

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. 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 and Highway Safety
- 12. Protected Species and Biodiversity
- 13. Historic environment
- 14. Viability and Developer Contributions

The Principle of Development

- 6.1 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications for planning permission 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.
- 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. Figures referred to by the Parish Council rely on housing site allocations in the draft local plan which are subject to unresolved objections and therefore, there is no guarantee they will be accepted.
- 6.4 Paragraph 49 of the NPPF states "Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites". This means that the relevant housing policies in the adopted Local Plan are not considered up to date and the adverse impacts of a development would need to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits if the proposal is refused. In order to judge whether a development is sustainable it must be assessed against the economic, social and environmental roles.
- 6.5 Policy GS1 of the adopted Local Plan provides a strategy for locating development concentrated at the five major towns but with small scale development within the built up areas of villages provided that important areas of open land and their rural character are protected. This site is not allocated for development. Policy GS2 of the adopted local plan prevents development outside settlements unless the land is allocated in the local plan. These policies are not based on up to date objectively assessed housing need, restrict housing and are not considered NPPF compliant and therefore, little weight is given to them.
- 6.6 Policy H11 of the adopted local plan and emerging policy 3 of the draft local plan 2031 allocate East Challow as a large village. Policy H11 is out of date being based on south east plan housing figures and emerging policy 3 is subject to unresolved objections. I give both policies limited weight.
- 6.7 The relevant housing policies of the adopted and emerging local plan hold very limited material planning weight in light of the lack of a 5 year housing supply. Consequently the proposal should be assessed under the NPPF where there is an expectation to significantly boost housing and 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

- 6.8 East Challow has been subject to some major planning applications for housing development that have been permitted or remain undecided. These applications include planning permissions granted for up to 36 dwellings on land at the former council depot on Challow Road (P15/2545/O), 71 dwellings now built at the Nalder Estate site on Main Street (P12/V1261/FUL), 14 dwellings on the former Challow country club site, Woodhill Lane (P11/V1960/EX), and a pending application for 50 dwellings off Windmill Place (P14/V0298/FUL). Permission exists for at least 121 dwellings. This proposal and the Windmill Lane proposal could add 128 dwellings should they be permitted.
- 6.9 According to the 2011 census summary the Parish population was 769 people but will have been increased by the occupants on the former Nalder Estate site to some 939 residents. Based on an average household size of 2.4 people this application if permitted could add 211 residents increasing the parish population by some 22%. The aforementioned permitted schemes (excluding the Nalder Estate site) could add 120 people to the village. The combined total if all schemes are approved is a further 451 residents.
- 6.10 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. Expansion of the village and population growth is not a justifiable objection in principle.
- 6.11 Cumulative impacts are considered where relevant in the topics below.

Use of Land

- 6.12 The NPPF encourages the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value (paragraph 17). With the limited availability of previously developed land in the District there is a need for new development to be on greenfield agricultural land. The site is agricultural land given over to arable. According to Natural England's agricultural land classification map it is part grade 2 and part grade 3a and this is confirmed by the applicant's land classification assessment which in turn advises loss of this land would not adversely affect the farm holding.
- 6.13 Paragraph 112 of the NPPF seeks to direct development to poorer quality land where significant development is proposed. This proposal is not considered to represent significant development and consequently there is no unacceptable conflict with the NPPF. I am mindful of housing allocations in the draft local plan which are on grade 2 agricultural land e.g. the proposed strategic site at Harwell and two successful recent appeals at Shrivenham in which this authority refused planning permission on grounds of loss of good quality agricultural land. Balancing the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile land against the benefits of this proposal which include providing housing including affordable housing to meet the district's needs, it is considered the benefits of the scheme outweigh the limited disadvantages of the loss of this agricultural land.

Locational Credentials

- 6.14 The NPPF requires the need to travel to be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes to be maximised (paragraph 34).
- 6.15 There are limited services available in East Challow; there is no shop and limited employment opportunities and therefore, residents will be reliant on shopping and employment opportunities elsewhere such as those in Wantage and Grove or further afield. Using distances measured by road and from the centre of the site the primary school and nursery are 420m away; part of St Alfred's school 510m away (by footpath); the British Legion clubhouse and Challow and Childrey cricket club are approximately 470m away, a public house is 210m walk and Wantage town centre is about 2km east and can be reached by bus although it is recognised some, perhaps most people will drive. The walking distances to most facilities in the village are greater than 400m which is a desirable distance according to the Institution of Highways Transportation guidelines for providing for journeys on foot (2000) but which does also advise distances up to 800m are acceptable and up to 1200m are a preferred maximum.
- 6.16 There is a bus service along the A417 connecting the site to Wantage and Faringdon. The County Council is seeking to improve this service by increasing the frequency from funds secured from development in the Science Vale area. This proposal could contribute towards the improved service and provide bus stops on the A417 south of the site.
- 6.17 There are opportunities to access services and employment opportunities using transport methods other than the private motor car. People may choose to use their cars, but with the range of services and employment opportunities in reasonable proximity of the site, they do not need to be dependent on the private motor car. This is a reasonably accessible site.

Affordable housing and housing mix

6.18 The application makes provision for 40% affordable housing which accords with Policy H17 of the adopted local plan. It will be expected that 75% are secured for rent and 25% for shared ownership. This is an outline application with only access to be considered. A suggested housing mix in the application submission is reasonably SHMA compliant. However, the detail will be considered at reserved matters stage and will be expected to reflect the most up to date housing need expectations or those the housing service require in respect of affordable housing.

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 concerning layout, scale, external appearance of the dwellings and landscaping are reserved matters and will be considered at reserved matters stage; they are not part of the consideration of this outline application. It is not therefore, intended to address design and layout in any detail in this report.

- 6.22 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 (dph) and this is also reflected by policy 23 of the draft local plan 2031. The proposal amounts to 14dph although if the open spaces are deducted the density increases to 22 dph. The permitted housing scheme for the adjacent depot site amounts to some 19dph (including the open space). Housing in the village has a mixed density and 22dph would not be inconsistent. For example the density of dwellings opposite in Field Gardens and Hedge Hill Road are some 27dph, and dwellings in The Orchard, Canal Way, The Park and at Park Farm amount to some 14dph.
- 6.23 The illustrative layout has positives in terms of a choice of routes through the layout, green spaces, street hierarchy, links to the footpath and most elements of development facing out to its edges. Unfortunately there are numerous negatives including but not limited to courtyard parking, parking spaces poorly related to dwellings, frontage parking, few landmarks or focal points and the layout lacks legibility and enclosure, dwellings poorly related to street frontages and links through the development. I am not convinced that the illustrative layout accords with the council's March 2015 adopted design guide. The proposal seeks to demonstrate that up to 88 dwellings might be accommodated on site. The final number of dwellings accommodated will depend on a satisfactory scheme being presented at reserved matters stage. At this stage this authority is not committing to the illustrative layout presented.

Residential Amenity

- 6.24 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.
- 6.25 As no firm details of housing layout or house types accompany this outline application, as they are reserved matters, it is not possible to consider the impact on existing residential amenity. The most appropriate stage to do this would be at reserved matters stage. It is acknowledged that the occupants of Greenacre enjoy panoramic views across the landscape to the north and housing is likely to impinge in these views. Being private views limited weight can be given to them and Greenacre is unlikely to become an unattractive place to live. Care will be needed at detailed stage to ensure privacy of the occupants is not unacceptably affected.
- 6.26 There could be some noise disturbance for future residents from vehicles using the A417. An acoustic mitigation scheme can be secured by condition.

Landscape and Visual Impact

- 6.27 The NPPF seeks to enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes (paragraph109). Policy NE9 of the adopted Local Plan designates the site as part of the wider Lowland Vale which is a distinctive landscape and valued for its own quality. Paragraph 7.67 of the adopted local plan explains that "the long views over the patchwork quilt of fields, farms and villages in the Vale are an essential part of the landscape quality of the District". Loss of the site would have a negligible effect on the Lowland Vale landscape
- 6.28 Views across the site from the A417 are restricted by vegetation on the boundaries and the lower level of the A417 as it passes the western site boundary. The site is not striking in any distant views. The site is most prominent from the public footpath beside the eastern and part of the northern boundary of the site. In these views the site is seen

as a large open field with a backdrop of the village. The rural character of the footpath will change and effects for users will be major. The illustrative layout plan seeks to reduce the effects through showing open spaces adjacent to the footpath which in turn retain the limited views to the church and a distant westwards view over part of the village towards high ground in the AONB. The localised harm to the users of the footpath needs to be considered in the planning balance.

- 6.29 Policy NE10 of the adopted local plan designates the site as part of an important open gap between settlements in this case East Challow and Wantage. I am mindful of a Court of Appeal decision¹ which held policies such as NE10 restrict housing and therefore, are not NPPF compliant. I give limited weight to policy NE10. Nevertheless, coalescence of settlements remains a material consideration.
- 6.30 This site is considered to have a limited role in the open space between the settlements of East Challow and Wantage, as the site is not prominent in views of the land that forms the gap. Land to the east plays a significant role in forming the visual gap when seen from the public footpath as does the space between the edge of Wantage and the former depot site in views from the A417. Housing is illustrated as being separated by ¹ Court of Appeal case reference C1/2015/0583 & C1/2015/0894 dated 17 March 2016 open space from the southern boundary of the site and in turn the A417 retains a sense of openness to the road. It is not considered the proposal unacceptable coalesces settlements and the limited harm has to be balanced against the scheme benefits.
- 6.31 The site is outside the AONB and there is a lack of visibility between the site and AONB and vice versa. The proposal has no impact on the setting of the AONB.

Open Space, Landscaping and Trees

- 6.32 Some 2.5ha is shown on the illustrative plan as being public open space including space for a play area. Should the attenuation ponds be removed the open space remaining is in excess of 15% of the site which accords with policy H23 of the adopted local plan.
- 6.33 There are no protected trees on site. Part of the A417 boundary hedge would be removed to provide access with the access rising into the site. The site contains space for new planting to strengthen boundaries and soften the visual effects of the proposal. Landscaping is a reserved matter.

Flood Risk and Surface/Foul Drainage

- 6.34 The NPPF provides a sequential test to steer new development to areas with the least probability of flooding (paragraph 101). The NPPF provides that development should not increase flood risk elsewhere and should be appropriately flood resilient and resistant (paragraph 103).
- 6.35 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.
- 6.36 The site is within flood zone 1 and is therefore, sequentially preferable for housing; the proposal accords with paragraph 101 of the NPPF.
- 6.37 The applicant has submitted a flood risk assessment (FRA) as required by the NPPF, as the site area exceeds 1ha. It provides flood risk mitigation measures to be

implemented which include a gravity drainage system and reducing run-off from the site. An existing outlet is proposed to be used with conventional gravity pipes leading to attenuation ponds in which water can be retained and discharged to a ditch on the northern boundary at greenfield run-off rates via the outlet. I note the drainage consultees have no objections. A condition can secure implementation of a sustainable drainage scheme.

- 6.38 Paragraph 004 Reference ID: 34-004-20140306 of the NPPG refers to funding wastewater infrastructure. It advises that companies such as Thames Water "are subject to a statutory duty to 'effectually drain' their area. This requires them to invest in infrastructure suitable to meet the demands of projected population growth. There is also statutory provision for developers to fund additional sewerage infrastructure required to accommodate flows from a proposed development". Funding is a matter for Thames Water and the developer.
- 6.39 Thames Water, have a legal obligation under Section 94 of the Water Industries Act 1991 (WIA 1991) to provide developers with the right to connect to a public sewer regardless of capacity issues. This, when read in conjunction with Section 91(1) of the Act in effect makes it impossible for Thames Water to object or for the Council to refuse to grant planning permission for development on the grounds that no improvement works are planned for a particular area. In this case, a condition can secure appropriate sewage disposal, as recommended by Thames Water.

Traffic, Parking and Highway Safety

- 6.40 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.
- 6.41 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."
- 6.42 The County Council seek a footway on the northern side of the A417 linking the site access to public footpath 196/5 and a widened footway on the south side of the A417. The will facilitate pedestrian and cycle access to King Alfred's school and beyond into Wantage. The plans now show the footpaths which can be secured by condition, as suggested by the County Council and which addresses the holding objection. The County Council, also seek zebra crossings which can be secured by a financial contribution which the County Council can then provide in appropriate places.
- 6.43 The applicant's traffic counts indicate in the AM peak there are some 613 two-way movements on the A417 with some 617 two-way movements in the PM peak. The applicant suggests traffic movements will increase by approximately 46 vehicles in the AM and PM peaks from the proposed housing. Oxfordshire County Council as highway authority does not object on traffic generation grounds. They do seek a reduction in the 40mph speed limit between Wantage and East Challow to 30mph. This can be secured through a financial contribution. The County Council has confirmed that the 36% possible increase in traffic using the narrow Letcombe Hill (20 two-way movements being 1 every 3 minutes at peak hours), could not justify refusal.

- 6.44 A roundabout now reduced in size to 32m in diameter is proposed on the A417 and its verge at the site access. The roundabout is proposed in order to reduce traffic speeds and address the 'cross roads' effect that would occur with Letcombe Hill opposite. A mini roundabout would not have the same effect in reducing traffic speeds. The roundabout is designed to allow a HGV to manoeuvre past it. The applicant's statement of community involvement suggests local residents were satisfied with the roundabout proposed. The roundabout is not essential and access could be provided by a right hand turn lane located to the north or east, although locating it to the north would result in the loss of some needed, existing parking adjacent to the A417.
- 6.45 The roundabout does have a visual impact in the street scene being an urban feature in a village street scene. The visual impact needs to be balanced against the benefits of the scheme and a condition can secure the design including surface treatment which should include planting.

Ecology and Biodiversity

- 6.46 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..."
- 6.47 The site is not designated for its ecology or biodiversity interest and there are no designated sites likely to be affected by the proposal. The applicant has updated its ecological assessment in relation to Great Crested Newt and mitigation can be secured by condition. There are no unacceptable impacts for ecology or biodiversity.
- 6.48 Paragraphs 109 and 117 of the NPPF call for all new development proposals to ensure that they do not lead to a net loss in biodiversity and that wherever possible to contribute to provide a net gain. There is scope within this proposal to provide enhancement through wild flower meadows and increased planting.

Historic Environment and Archaeology

- 6.49 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.
- 6.50 Paragraph 132 of the NPPF confirms that "When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be". The NPPF adds at paragraph 133 that proposals causing substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset should be refused unless the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh the harm or loss. Paragraph 134 of the NPPF explains that less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage asset should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
- 6.51 Policy HE4 of the adopted local plan seeks to protect the setting of listed buildings. There are no listed buildings on site. The Barn at Park Farm immediately north of the site is grade II listed. It has been converted to a dwelling. Its curtilage extends to the

application site. The building is experienced from the field although openness makes a limited contribution to its setting, as I would suggest the residential conversion limits its connection nowadays with the open field. The impact on its setting is minor and less than substantial.

- 6.52 The grade II* St Nicholas church is approximately 95m west of the site edge. The church is hidden by vegetation and contained by development adjacent to it including The Orchard. The church derives its setting from its graveyard and grouping with other buildings and not from the open countryside around the village. It is not a prominent building and barely perceived from the site which plays a very limited role in its setting. The impact on its settings is negligible and less than substantial harm results.
- 6.53 The Old Schoolhouse is grade II listed and adjoins the A417 opposite the north western corner of the site. Its setting is derived from its relationship with the village particularly its historic core rather than areas of open land although the building is experienced in views along the A417. Development on the site itself will have a negligible effect on the setting of this listed building due to separation by the A417, vegetation on the site boundary and the difference in levels (the site being at a higher level). The proposed roundabout will visually disrupt the street scene. The Old School House is partially screened by trees beside the A417 in views northwards and the effect of the roundabout on its setting is negligible and less than substantial.
- 6.54 The less than substantial harm to the settings of listed buildings needs to be weighed in the planning balance.
- 6.55 The applicant has undertaken intrusive investigation of the site for archaeological interest. Some evidence of Romano British settlement in the western part of the site has been revealed together with Saxon pottery suggesting the activity or settlement was taking place then. The County Council archaeologist does not object and recommends conditions requiring archaeological investigation. The proposal is considered complaint with policy HE10 of the adopted local plan.

Viability, affordable housing and Section 106 contributions

- 6.56 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.
- 6.57 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.

Recreation/sports Provision

6.58 No community or sports facilities are proposed on site. The Parish Council recognise

this proposal will increase pressure for use of existing village facilities including the village hall, sports pitches and pavilions and play areas for younger people. Contributions are therefore, sought to improve local facilities including the improvements to the British Legion and cricket club buildings which can serve as alternative community buildings due to lack of capacity at the village hall, sports pitches at the recreation ground, pavilion improvements at the recreation ground and youth facilities, allotment provision and burial ground provision/maintenance. The sums sought are reasonable, necessary and proportionate to this development. Public open space on site is expected to be maintained by the developer or through a management company. Contributions towards new sports hall and swimming pool are justified but ruled out due to pooling restrictions.

Education

- 6.59 The proposal will place increased pressure on places available at St Nicholas primary school in the village. The County Council has explained that the proposal could generate additional primary school, secondary school age pupils and children of nursery age and therefore, it seeks a proportionate contribution to allow the village primary school to expand to cover this increase, and towards a new secondary school at grove and nursery school expansion in the village. This is reasonable, necessary and the amount sought proportionate to the development.
- 6.60 The County Council also request a contribution towards SEN at Fitzwaryn School. This council's records indicate some 56 general SEN contributions have been secured and this indicates to me that the SEN request is restricted by pooling (Regulation 123 of the CIL Regulations). The County Council disagree.

Transport

- 6.61 Contributions towards revising the speed limit on the A417, bus stops adjacent to the site and zebra crossings are directly related to this development, necessary to improve safety for those crossing the A417 and in reaching local facilities including the schools. The County Council aspires to increase the 67A bus service through the village providing improved connections to Wantage and Faringdon. These requests are justified. The County Council has requested an unspecified contribution towards highway maintenance. I have requested more information but the highway authority is still unable to specify a sum. In the absence of any figure I have to conclude this request is not reasonable and I note from the highway authority response that any sum can be achieved in any event by s38 of the Highway Act. This affirms the request is unnecessary in respect of Regulation 122 of the CIL Regulations.
- 6.62 The following developer contributions have been requested based on 88 dwellings. These contributions are considered fair and proportionate:-

Vale of White Horse District Council	
	Proposed Contributions
Indoor bowls in Grove/Wantage or East Challow parish	£4,904
Youth sport in East Challow parish	£23,430
Burial ground improvement/extension in East Challow	£3,105
parish	
East Challow British Legion alterations/improvements	£10,530
Challow & Childrey cricket club pavilion extension	£30,510
New rugby pitch at East Challow recreation ground	£945
East Challow allotments extension	£2,700
AGP at East Challow recreation ground	£9,450
East Challow sports pavilion improvements	£4,590

Football pitch flood lights at East Challow football pitch	£1,350
Bin collection and provision on site	£14,960
Monitoring	£3,265
Total	£109,739
Oxfordshire County Council	
	Proposed Contributions
Zebra crossing on A417	£5,750
Revised speed limit on A417	£2,500
Improved bus services in East Challow	£74,580
Two new bus stops on A417	£2,000
Travel plan monitoring	£1,240
St Nicholas primary school expansion	£351,204
Provision of sufficient nursery school education – Windmill	£80,823
nursery pre-school, East Challow	
New build secondary school at Grove airfield	£497,070
Total	£1,015,167
Overall Total	£1,124,906
Total contribution per unit	£12,783

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 polices 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 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. 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.
- 7.3 The scheme would have a social role as it will provide additional housing that the District needs together with much needed affordable housing. The proposal can provide infrastructure improvements such as an improved bus service, enhanced community, recreation and sporting facilities which in turn could benefit existing residents of East Challow. The roundabout has a traffic calming role and new crossing points are proposed together with improved and extended footways.
- 7.4 The proposal has an environmental role including providing housing in a reasonably accessible location, biodiversity enhancements that can include new tree planting, meadow land creation and publicly accessible open areas.
- 7.5 The Council does not have a 5-year land supply. It is in the public interest that housing is provided to meet need acknowledged in the District. The economic and social roles of this development are in the public interest and these wider benefits are considered to

outweigh the limited and localised landscape and visual harm identified. Considerable importance and weight is given to the less than substantial harm to the settings of listed buildings. I consider this harm which is negligible on two accounts and minor on one account is outweighed by the public benefits of this proposal which include economic investment and provision of housing needed in the district including affordable housing.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

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

- 1. A S106 agreement being entered into to secure 40% affordable housing and contributions towards local infrastructure; and
- 2. Conditions as follows:
 - 1. Details of reserved matters.
 - 2. Reserved matters to be submitted within 18 months of the outline consent.
 - 3. Commencement of development 12 months after reserved matters approval.
 - 4. Tree protection to be provided.
 - 5. On site open space provision.
 - 6. Sustainable drainage scheme to be agreed and implemented.
 - 7. Foul drainage strategy to be agreed and implemented.
 - 8. Archaeological scheme of investigation.
 - 9. Implementation of programme of archaeological investigation.
 - 10. Roundabout details to be agreed and implemented.
 - 11. Vision splays to be agreed and implemented.
 - 12. Pavement connections to north and south of A417.
 - 13. Construction method statement and construction traffic management plan to be agreed.
 - 14. Residential travel plan and information pack to be agreed.
 - 15. Great crested newt mitigation and enhancement and licence.
 - 16. Slab levels to be submitted and agreed.
 - 17. Noise levels.
 - 18. Contamination mitigation scheme.

Informatives

- 1. Market and affordable housing mix to complement the SHMA or advice of the council's housing officer.
- 2. Bird nesting.
- 3. This authority is not committing to the illustrative layout presented.

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