
APPLICATION NO.	P15/V2887/FUL
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL
REGISTERED	23 December 2015
PARISH	WEST HANNEY
WARD MEMBER	Matthew Barber
APPLICANT	Mr N Walker
SITE	Land off School Road, West Hanney, Wantage, OX10 0LA
PROPOSAL	Erection of 15 dwellings and associated works (as amended by Drawings and information accompanying agent's email of 22 March 2016 and further amended by location, site and landscaping plan drawings 2925.100B, 101D, 102F, 113A and 115B and Design and Access addendum received 31 March 2016 and as clarified by updated Flood Risk Assessment accompanying agent's email of 23 June 2016)
OFFICER	Peter Brampton

SUMMARY

This application comes to Committee due to an objection from West Hanney Parish Council and the number of objections received from local residents. The application seeks full planning permission for the provision of 15 dwellings.

The main issues to consider in determining the application are:

- Whether the principle of development is acceptable
- Whether the application is suitable to meet the district's five year housing supply deficit in terms of the sustainability of the proposed scheme
- The impact of the development on the character of the area and wider landscape, which forms part of the Lowland Vale
- Whether the layout demonstrates a high quality housing scheme
- Whether the scheme will mitigate any impacts on highway safety, flood risk and sewer capacity
- Whether the scheme will provide necessary infrastructure contributions

This site is on the northern side of School Road, forming part of a single open field that separates West Hanney and East Hanney, with shared boundaries with the public footpath and The Croft to the west and properties on School Road. There are no landscape features to define the eastern and northern boundary of the site so a planting buffer is proposed. The principle of housing on this site is considered to be acceptable, particularly in light of the lack of a five year land supply of housing land with Government advice in the NPPF being particularly relevant.

Given the manner in which housing is located to project no further north or east of existing housing, any concerns over coalescence are sufficiently mitigated and the impact on the Lowland Vale landscape character is not considered significant. Highway safety will be preserved subject to the provision of a pedestrian crossing on School Road which will be secured through condition. The proposed layout is of a suitably high quality that mitigates any potential impacts on neighbouring properties to an acceptable degree and provides 15% public open space. A SuDS compliant drainage scheme is proposed.

Although West Hanney is a smaller village, this site benefits from close proximity to the facilities of East Hanney, a larger village. The scheme will provide affordable units in line with council policy.

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 to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, which is the test within the NPPF that must be applied to this proposal.

Accordingly, the application is recommended for approval subject to conditions and a legal agreement to secure the affordable housing and the fully justified developer contributions towards key local infrastructure.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This application relates to part of a single field located to the northern side of School Road, on the eastern side of the village of West Hanney, one of the districts smaller villages. School Road links West Hanney with East Hanney, which is one of the districts larger villages.
- 1.2 The field is open and there are no natural boundaries to north and east for the 1.12 hectare site, which wraps around existing semi-detached properties facing School Road and is bounded by a public right of way to the west, with the rear gardens of properties in The Croft beyond. The Croft is a development of detached and semi-detached dwellings.
- 1.3 The site sits noticeably higher than School Road, with a gentle slope upwards from the southern boundary. The site has most recently been in arable production. The footpath runs along the western boundary and is informally marked at the edge of the field. There is a variety of rear boundary treatments along The Croft backing onto the site.
- 1.4 As a smaller village, West Hanney has limited facilities, benefitting from a restaurant and a church. The local bus service is likely to be withdrawn. However, the facilities of East Hanney are reasonably close to the application site.
- 1.5 A location plan is attached at Appendix 1.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 This is a full application seeking planning permissions for 15 dwellings. The application has been amended from an initial proposal of 16 dwellings due to officer concerns about the layout and character of the development. In June an updated Flood Risk Assessment was provided to overcome a holding objection from the council's drainage engineer.
- 2.2 The application provides affordable housing in line with Council policy.
- 2.3 Access to the site will be taken from School Road, with a bellmouth junction proposed immediately east of the existing properties on School Road. The housing itself is located so as not to project any further east of the existing School Road properties and no further north than the housing on The Croft.
- 2.4 The site proposes a substantial landscape buffer to define the eastern and northern boundary of the site. As the access road runs centrally through the site, housing backs onto this buffer rather than facing the open countryside.

- 2.5 Parking is generally provided on-plot on private driveways or within garages. Some visitor parking provision is provided on the main access drive. Pedestrian links to the existing footpath are provided within the layout, and the plans indicate this footpath will be upgraded for its duration alongside the site.
- 2.6 The following documents have been submitted in support of the application:
- Planning Statement
 - Design and Access Statement
 - Flood Risk Assessment
 - Transport Statement
 - Utilities and Foul Drainage Assessment
- 2.7 Extracts from the current application drawings are **attached** at Appendix 2. All the relevant documentation can be found on our website – www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk
- 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.

West Hanney Parish Council	<p>Objection. Their concerns may be summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site lies on agricultural land outside the village boundary • Harm to character of the area through coalescence with East Hanney • Cumulative impact with other permissions in West Hanney would be out of character of village • Lack of facilities to support increase in population • Increase in traffic on local roads • Development would be out of character with School Road and The Croft • Loss of privacy to existing neighbours • Unsafe location for pedestrians (original submission only) • Loss of habitat • Inaccuracies in supporting documentation <p>Copies of the Parish Council's response to the original and amended scheme are attached as Appendix 3.</p>
Neighbours	<p>35 letters of objection were received in response to the original application, with 15 letters reiterating previous objections received to the amended application. The concerns raised may be summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Hanney is a small village unsuitable for housing development of this scale • Contrary to Local Plan housing policies • Scheme is poor quality design, out of keeping with the village

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overdevelopment of site • Gardens for Plots 1-10 too small (original scheme) • Need for strong landscape buffer with properties on School Road • Increase in traffic on local roads • Lack of pedestrian crossing to southern side of School Road • Loss of views and outlook to neighbours • Increased noise disturbance to neighbours • Overlooking and loss of privacy to neighbours • Reduction in property values • Insufficient bus service for new residents • Local school is oversubscribed • Insufficient capacity in local sewer network • Increased flood risk, Flood Risk Assessment understates previous flood events • Coalescence with East Hanney • Increased pressure on local health services • Loss of ecological habitat • Loss of agricultural land • Increased light pollution • No community benefit • Precedent for future development • Against wishes of previous landowner • Potential harm to existing public right of way • Inaccuracies on plans • Northern side of highway is privately owned so unsuitable for new footpath (original scheme)
Oxfordshire County Council Highways	<p>No objections subject to conditions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to secure through Grampian condition a safe pedestrian crossing across School Road • Minor alterations to unallocated and allocated parking provision necessary, as well as increasing the dimensions of some spaces • Standard highway conditions relating to access, visibility splays, parking etc. necessary
Oxfordshire County Council Education	<p>No objections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No financial contributions requested for primary, secondary or Special Educational Needs accommodation due to pooling restrictions within Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010 • Requests financial contribution of £6,265 to nursery education provision at St James' CE Primary school
Oxfordshire County Council Property	<p>No objections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No financial contributions requested due to

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	pooling restrictions within Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010
Waste Management	No objections – general comments about council waste collection contract provided. Section 106 contribution of £170/property requested for provision of wheeled bins for each house
Drainage Engineer	No objection following submission of updated Flood Risk Assessment and indicative drainage strategy.
Thames Water	No objections – confirms capacity within existing sewer network to accommodate this development
Environment Agency	No comments
Landscape Architect	<p>No objections – Conclusions on original submission:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts relate to loss of part of arable field, extension of the village, impact on School Road and views from footpath network • Proposal seeks to mitigate landscape impacts with proposed planting on northern and eastern boundaries • Full details of hard and soft landscaping (and maintenance) will need to be secured by condition. <p>Comments on the amended scheme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports removal of parking from access road • Public Open Space on western side of site improves relationship with adjacent footpath • Better distribution of built form, with tree planting breaking up building mass
Forestry Officer	No objections, subject to condition requiring the submission and agreement of a tree protection plan
Countryside Officer	No objections subject to condition requiring the submission and agreement of a Method Statement for Biodiversity Enhancements.
Urban Design Officer	<p>No overall objections following submission of amended plans, comments summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal road should be downgraded to shared surface • Details of link to public footpath must be secured by condition • Opportunity for feature planting either side of access road
Environmental Health Officer	No objections
Housing Officer	No objections, confirms requirements for the affordable units required as part of this development

	in terms of number of bedrooms and tenure type
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4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 None

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
H12	Development in the Smaller Villages
H13	Development Elsewhere
H15	Housing Densities
H16	Size of Dwelling and Lifetime Homes
H17	Affordable Housing
H23	Open Space in New Housing Development
HE9	Archaeology
NE9	Lowland Vale

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

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

Policy No.	Policy Title
Core Policy 1	Presumption in favour of sustainable development
Core Policy 2	Co-operation on unmet housing need for Oxfordshire
Core Policy 3	Settlement hierarchy
Core Policy 4	Meeting our housing needs
Core Policy 5	Housing supply ring-fence
Core Policy 7	Providing supporting infrastructure and services
Core Policy 8	Spatial strategy for Abingdon and Oxford Fringe sub-area
Core Policy 22	Housing mix
Core Policy 23	Housing density

Core Policy 24	Affordable housing
Core Policy 33	Promoting sustainable transport and accessibility
Core Policy 35	Promoting public transport, cycling and walking
Core Policy 36	Electronic communications
Core Policy 37	Design and local distinctiveness
Core Policy 38	Design strategies for strategic and major development sites
Core Policy 39	The historic environment
Core Policy 42	Flood risk
Core Policy 43	Natural resources
Core Policy 44	Landscape
Core Policy 45	Green infrastructure
Core Policy 46	Conservation and improvement of biodiversity

5.3 Supplementary Planning Guidance

- Design Guide – March 2015

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

Responding to Site and Setting

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

Establishing the Framework

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

Layout

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

Built Form

- *Scale, form, massing and position (DG51-54)*
- *Boundary treatments (DG55)*
- *Building Design (DG56-62)*
- *Amenity, privacy and overlooking (DG63-64)*
- *Refuse and services (DG67-68)*

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

5.4 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – March 2012

5.5 National Planning Practice Guidance 2014 (NPPG)

5.6 Neighbourhood Plan

Paragraph 216 of the NPPF allows for weight to be given to relevant policies in emerging plans, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise, and only subject to the stage of preparation of the plan, the extent of unresolved objections and the degree of consistency of the relevant emerging policies with the NPPF.

There has been no formal progress on a Neighbourhood Plan for West Hanney.

5.7 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.

5.8 Other Relevant Legislation

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

5.9 Human Rights Act

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

5.10 Equalities

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

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

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

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

6.1 The Principle of Development

In line with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning Act, the development plan is the starting point for assessing this proposal. The development plan currently comprises the saved policies of Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 and the emerging Local Plan 2031 Part One. The NPPF is also relevant to this proposal as it requires the council to demonstrate a five year housing land supply.

6.2 As members are aware, the council has recently received the Inspector's Interim Findings into the emerging Local Plan 2031. His Findings are positive for the Vale, confirming that, subject to certain modifications, the Plan is sound and the Vale will be able to demonstrate a five year supply of housing land when the Plan is adopted. However, these Interim Findings themselves have only limited weight. As such, the

council still currently cannot demonstrate a five year housing land supply against the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) housing targets on which the emerging Local Plan is based.

- 6.3 Accordingly, the housing policies of the development plan are not considered up to date and the presumption in favour of sustainable development outlined at Paragraph 14 of the NPPF applies, requiring the council to demonstrate “*significant and demonstrable harm*” if an application is to be refused. Thus, officers consider the principle of this development may be acceptable, subject to a balanced assessment of its impacts, which are considered in the following sections of this report.

6.4 **Cumulative Impact**

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. As noted by the Parish Council, three housing applications totalling 24 houses have been permitted in the village. There have been a number of larger housing developments permitted, or are subject of current applications or appeals, in East Hanney. It is important to note that a number of facilities within East Hanney are used by residents of West Hanney. 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 where relevant in the topics below.

Use of Land

- 6.5 The NPPF identifies the need to protect the best and most versatile agricultural land from development (paragraph 112). . This is a greenfield site, being agricultural land most recently used for grazing. The Natural England agricultural land classification broadly classifies agricultural land around East Hanney as Grade 3 – “Good to Moderate”. This application would result in the loss of 2.3 hectares of Grade 3 agricultural land from production and this does weigh in the planning balance. The amount of development planned for the village will cause further loss of agricultural land from production.
- 6.6 Paragraph 112 of the NPPF seeks to direct development to poorer quality land where significant development is proposed. This proposal is not considered “significant” in the NPPF sense of the term, and so officers do not consider there is any conflict with national guidance on this matter. It is also important to note that the council did not receive support from the Planning Inspectorate in two recent appeal decisions in Shrivenham where the loss of agricultural land was a refusal reason. Given this, only very minor weight can be applied to the loss of agricultural land due to this development.

Locational Credentials

- 6.7 The NPPF requires the need to travel to be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes to be maximised (paragraph 34).
- 6.8 The classification of West Hanney as a smaller village reflects the lack of facilities within the settlement, with only a restaurant and church. However, it is important to consider how this development would relate to the facilities of East Hanney. For example, St James’ CE primary school lies around 200 metres from the access of the site, with the village hall and playing fields around 430 metres from the site access. The allotments are 550 metres away, with the Black Horse public house just under 1 kilometre away. It is important to note that, whilst the site falls within West Hanney, these distances to nearby facilities are less than the distances from previously permitted schemes in East Hanney.

- 6.9 In his Interim Findings into the emerging Local Plan 2031, the Planning Inspector queried if the proposed strategic allocation for East Hanney is deliverable. The council has considered this carefully and currently proposes to remove the strategic housing allocation in East Hanney from the emerging Local Plan. Nonetheless, East Hanney remains one of the larger villages in the district, as per the settlement hierarch in the current and emerging Local Plan and the Inspector has not raised any queries on this issue.
- 6.10 Officers are mindful of local objection that St James' school is currently full and existing residents have been unable to find places for their children at the school, leaving them needing to travel further afield. Under Regulation 123 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended), only five financial contributions to improvements to any one facility can be "pooled". Previously, the County Council has sought financial contributions to the future expansion of this school from other, larger, developments in East Hanney and the council has secured these. Consequently, in the consultation response to this application, the County Council has decided not to seek contributions from this development as their preferred approach is to "save" one of their five contributions for a future, larger development.
- 6.11 The County Council is requesting a contribution to nursery education provision on the same site from this development and officers are satisfied this is a necessary, relevant and proportionate contribution.
- 6.12 Paragraph 55 of the NPPF states, *"To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. For example, where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby."* Officers consider this to be the case here. Whilst West Hanney itself could perhaps not be expected to sustainably support further housing of this scale, this development will have access to, and help support, the facilities of East Hanney.
- 6.13 **Affordable housing and housing mix**
The application currently makes provision for 40% affordable housing which accords with Policy H17 of the adopted local plan. The proposed affordable housing mix and tenure split is shown in the below table and has been agreed with the council's housing team.

	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed	Total
Rent	0	2 (Plots 1/2)	2 (Plots 3/4)	0	4
Shared Ownership	0	0	2 (Plots 5/6)	0	2
Total	0	2	4	0	6

- 6.14 However, following the Interim Findings into the Local Plan, the council is only seeking 35% provision of affordable housing, which equates to 5.25 units. The council will secure five affordable units on site and seek a commuted sum for the remaining quarter-unit for use off-site in the local area. The final details of this provision will be secured through the usual Section 106 agreement.
- 6.15 Policy H16 of the Adopted Local Plan requires 50% of houses to have two beds or less. However, as stipulated at paragraph 47 of the NPPF this policy is out of date as it is not based on recent assessments of housing need. The Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2014 (SHMA) is the most recent assessment and estimates the following open market dwelling requirement by number of bedrooms (2011 to 2031) for

the District:

	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed	Total
SHMA %	5.9%	21.7%	42.6%	29.8%	100%
SHMA Expectation no's	0.5	2	3.8	2.7	9
Proposed	0	2	4	3	9

- 6.16 This proposed mix is considered to match the SHMA expectation as far as can reasonably be expected on this relatively small development. One of the affordable units will become a market unit for the reasons outlined above.

6.17 **Design and Layout**

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

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

6.19 *Site, Setting and Framework*

The site lies on the eastern edge of West Hanney, which is characterised by low density detached and semi-detached housing along School Road, The Croft and White Lane which stretches further north of The Croft. Uniformly, this housing backs onto the open countryside. As noted above, a footpath runs along the western site boundary and Nos.10-17 The Croft back onto this. There is a variety of boundary treatments serving the rear of these properties but most have lightweight or low fencing to maximise views of the open fields beyond. Whilst this creates a slightly untidy edge to the village, the visual impact is localised to users of the footpath.

- 6.20 Given this arrangement, there is limited opportunity to link this new proposal into existing development and this has impacted on the framework of the development. Officers are mindful of the manner in which this proposal rather arbitrarily divides up the open field through the creation of a new landscaped buffer along the eastern and northern boundary. The establishment of this buffer will be important in limiting the landscape harm from this development, which is discussed later in this report.

- 6.21 Mindful of coalescence concerns, the applicant has arranged the layout so new housing will not project further east or north of existing housing on School Road and The Croft respectively. The only part of the site that projects closer to East Hanney than the existing village is the access road to the east of No.8 The Croft.

- 6.22 15 houses on this site represents a gross density of 13.4 dwellings to the hectare. This is higher than the surrounding residential development, but, when balanced against local and national density requirements to ensure efficient use of land, this is acceptable.

6.23 *Layout*

Due to the unusual shape and size of the site, and the lack of any opportunity to link the site into neighbouring housing development, the proposed layout has been rather dictated by the need to access the site and maintain an acceptable relationship with neighbours in terms of back-to-back distances. The result of this is that the development “turns its back” on the open countryside. This is not perhaps ideal, but officers are mindful that, if housing faced the countryside, the internal environment of the site would likely be compromised unduly. Thus, the provision of a landscape buffer along the northern and eastern edge of the site is the most appropriate solution, and conditions will secure details of the planting and the maintenance regime to ensure this buffer is established and maintained to provide a good quality boundary to the open land between West and East Hanney.

6.24 The layout incorporates areas of public open space that total 15% of the site area as required by the Local Plan. These areas of open space will benefit from good natural surveillance and are well integrated into the development. The main area of open space sits immediately adjacent to the public right of way to reduce the “tunnelling” effect on this footpath and encourage new residents to use it to travel west into the village. Details of how this scheme links into this footpath will be secured as part of the hard landscaping of the site, secured through a pre-commencement condition.

6.25 All houses are accessed off the main access road, save for a private drive at the northern edge that provides access to Units 9 and 10. Active frontages onto access roads are achieved through the development. Overall, the amended layout is considered to provide a well-defined network of streets and dwellings that provides a coherent environment and a sense of enclosure, as required by Principles DG28 and DG35 of the Design Guide.

6.26 Parking is generally delivered on plot and so does not overly dominant the street scene. Visitor parking is provided off the main access road and this is acceptable to OCC Highways save for some slight adjustments to the dimensions of the visitor parking to comfortably accommodate the correct amount of cars. A pre-commencement condition will secure these changes.

6.27 Officers acknowledge that the main access road is quite a long and winding feature that takes up quite a lot of the site and is visually more dominant than is desirable, particularly with the provision of footpaths either side. The access road needs to be a certain width to allow larger vehicles such as emergency vehicles and bin lorries to safely access the site.

6.28 *Built form*

As noted by the Design and Access Statement accompanying the application there is a variety of housing styles in this part of West Hanney, all being of the era in which they were built. In terms of scale, the housing is predominantly two-storey detached and semi-detached and this is reflected in the housing proposed in this scheme. A mix of roof and eaves height are used to create visual interest. The predominant building material will be red brick, with occasional use of render, tile hanging and timber detailing to add variety. Slate and tile will be used on the roofs. A condition will cover materials.

6.29 *Architectural Detailing*

The Design and Access Statement outlines a wide range of architectural features that are designed to add interest to the housing, such as gables, dormers, chimneys and window fenestration. Plot 9 takes the appearance of a barn, with timber clad walls,

which officers consider works well in this edge of village location. Generally, the architectural detailing adds to the character of the development, with consistent use of materials ensuring the overall scheme doesn't become too "busy".

- 6.30 Boundary detailing will be important, particularly as the return of a number of rear gardens face the public realm. In these instances, a brick wall using materials comparable to those used in the construction of the housing will be necessary. Hard and soft landscaping proposals will be carefully conditioned as these treatments will have a key role in the overall success of the scheme. Subject to these conditions, and others as recommended at Section 8, officers are satisfied that this proposal will provide for a high quality development, which is a key part of sustainable development as defined by the NPPF.

6.31 Residential Amenity

Adopted local plan policy DC9 seeks to prevent development that would result in a loss of privacy, daylight or sunlight for neighbouring properties or that would cause dominance or visual intrusion for neighbouring properties and the wider environment. Protecting amenity is a core principle of the NPPF. Design principles DG63-64 of the Design Guide pertain to amenity, privacy and overlooking.

- 6.32 Officers acknowledge concern from residents of School Lane and The Croft about the impact of the proposals on the outlook and privacy they currently enjoy. It is established in law that there is no right to a view across private land and this is not a material planning consideration. However, planning is required to ensure that existing neighbours continue to enjoy a reasonable outlook and privacy. This is covered by the Design Guide which indicates a 21 metres distance "back to back" should be secured, or 12 metres "back to side". This layout achieves these guidelines. Turning to the relationship between the properties on School Road and Units 1-6 of the development, the Design Guide requirements are comfortably exceeded. Even at the closest point, a distance of nearly 40 metres between the School Road and new units is achieved.
- 6.33 The relationship between The Croft and the new units on the western boundaries is closer but still meets standards. Here the flank elevation of Plot 6 sits side on and between Nos: 15 and 16 The Croft at a distance of 25 metres. Similarly, the flank wall of Plot 8 sits around 20 metres from the rear of No.11 The Croft and 23 metres from the rear of No.12 The Croft. Again, Plot 8 is off-set between these two neighbours to reduce the impact. Finally, Plot 9 sits around 28 metres from the rear of No.10 The Croft.
- 6.34 In terms of overlooking The Croft, there is only one upper floor window in the flank elevation of Unit 6 that causes any particular concern. This window will serve a bathroom and so can easily be fixed shut below eye level and obscure glazed by condition.
- 6.35 Within the development itself, all back to back and back to side distances meet Design Guide standards and no windows will allow undue amounts of overlooking. In submitting amended plans, the applicant has confirmed that all plots will benefit from adequate amenity space in line with the Design Guide requirements (Principle DG63). It is also noteworthy that the proposal provides appropriate levels of public open space against Local Plan requirements. Officers are satisfied this proposal is acceptable in amenity terms.

Landscape and Visual Impact

- 6.36 The NPPF seeks to enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes (paragraph 109). This site falls within the Lowland Vale,

which is a local landscape designation. Policy NE9 of the Local Plan seeks to protect the long, open views that characterise this part of the district. Paragraphs 7.67 and 7.68 of the Local Plan states, *“the long views over the patchwork quilt of fields, farms and village in the Vale are an essential part of the landscape quality of the District”* and that *“insensitively located or designed proposal could have an adverse impact on these open vistas and on the intrinsic qualities of the Lowland Vale.”*

- 6.37 Clearly, this development will impinge on the gap between East and West Hanney, being part of the single field that separates the two villages on the northern side of School Road. Views across this field can be obtained from School Road, the footpath immediately adjacent to the site and from the north where a footpath along the top of the field links the two villages.
- 6.38 As noted by the council’s landscape architect, it is only the access road that extends beyond the current built form along School Road. Officers consider this will have only a minor impact on the landscape character of the area through the reduction of openness between the villages. The development will be seen in the context of the existing housing on The Croft and School Road and will not restrict any open or long views across the Lowland Vale. The only exceptions to this conclusion of the overall impact being minor is the section of footpath immediately west of the site and from School Road. Here the impact is greater, but localised.
- 6.39 Officers agree with the conclusions of the Landscape Architect. The gap between the two villages is important, but is not specifically protected within the Local Plan, which does protect some important open gaps between settlements under Policy NE10. This site would cause some harm in landscape terms through the partial erosion of this gap but it is only the access road that projects closer to East Hanney than existing housing. Officers are mindful of recent appeal decisions in East Hanney where landscape and character concerns led to much larger housing schemes being dismissed. However, officers has assessed this scheme on its own merits and do not consider the level of harm in this particular instance to be sufficient to warrant refusal.

Open Space, Landscaping and Trees

- 6.40 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. The Section 106 agreement accompanying any planning permission on this site will require a management company to be set up by the developer that will maintain the open space.
- 6.41 In consultation responses, both the council’s urban design officer and landscape architect have highlighted the need for a comprehensive soft and hard landscaping scheme for the site and a pre-commencement condition will cover this. In particular, as noted by the urban design officer, the grassed areas either side of the entrance lack any character or definition and would be enhanced by feature tree planting.
- 6.42 As noted by the Forestry Officer, there are no trees on the site of any importance.

Flood Risk and Surface/Foul Drainage

- 6.43 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).
- 6.44 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.

- 6.45 The application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment that identifies the site falls within Flood Zone 1, which is land with the lowest possible risk of flooding from fluvial sources. Therefore, the main risk of flooding is surface water and particularly ground water due to the high water table in the area. Anecdotal evidence from residents suggest West Hanney has experienced surface water flood events in recent years.
- 6.46 The council's drainage engineer required the applicant to do further ground investigations on site to ascertain the groundwater level as it is known to be quite high in the area. The applicant's drainage consultant has carried out these investigations and found the groundwater level to be around 1.3 metres below ground level across the majority of the site. The council's drainage engineer has confirmed that these results are a reasonable basis on which to provide an indicative drainage strategy.
- 6.47 The on-site investigations also revealed that the topsoil on the site would be free-draining, which allows the application to use infiltration drainage techniques. The applicant proposes a SuDS system to drain the site, using soakaways located within rear gardens and under the hard-standing areas of the site. This will provide storage for the 1 in 100 year (plus 30% climate change event) and control discharge into public sewers at agreed "Greenfield" rates.
- 6.48 The council's drainage engineer has confirmed no objections to this indicative strategy. A detailed pre-commencement condition is necessary and this will require further on-site testing to provide the council with confidence that the proposed drainage strategy will work.
- 6.49 In terms of foul water drainage, Thames Water have confirmed no objections to this scheme, indicating that the existing sewer network can accommodate the additional foul flows from this fifteen unit scheme.
- 6.50 **Traffic, Parking 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 decision to take account of whether:-
- the opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up depending on the nature and location of the site, to reduce the need for major transport infrastructure;
 - safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people; and
 - improvements can be undertaken within the transport network that cost effectively limit the significant impacts of the development.

Paragraph 32 goes on to state: "*Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe.*"

- 6.51 The application is accompanied by a Transport Statement that assesses the likely highway impacts of this development. It states that vehicular movements during the morning and evening peak hours will be 9 per hour. In consultation, the County Council as Highways Authority have assessed the methodology behind the predicted traffic

movements and have found it sound. Accordingly, the Highways Authority has confirmed no objections to this development in terms of increased traffic movements on local roads.

- 6.52 The County Council have confirmed no objections to the position of the new vehicular access, subject to a condition requiring the provision of visibility splays measuring 2.4 metres by 43 metres. This is achievable in this location.
- 6.53 The main issue for the Highways Authority has been securing an appropriate pedestrian crossing point across School Road to link to the existing footpath that links West and East Hanney. The original scheme proposed a footpath extension along the northern side of School Road. This proved to involve some private land and was not achievable. With the amended scheme, the applicants have confirmed their intention is to work with both the District Council and the County Council to find an appropriate solution that will link the site to the existing footpath through a pedestrian crossing on School Road. Officers consider the appropriate mechanism to secure this is a Grampian condition that will require agreement to the pedestrian crossing prior to work commencing on site and for the crossing to be completed prior to first occupation.
- 6.54 In terms of car parking, the Highways Authority require the following amendments to certain car parking spaces to ensure they are usable spaces that can be counted as part of the overall parking provision:
- The on-street car parking bay to eastern side of estate road to be increased from 17.5 metres to 18 metres in length to accommodate three vehicles
 - A car parking in front of the garage serving Plot 3 would overhang the highway
 - Internal garage dimensions for Plots 3 and 4 to be increased from 5.5 metres in length to 6 metres in length.
- 6.55 Officers are satisfied these minor amendments can be secured through a pre-commencement condition without impacting significantly on the overall layout.
- 6.56 In terms of the number of parking spaces, the Highways Authority has identified an over provision of allocated parking and an under provision of unallocated parking. However, the overall level of parking, once the above amendments are made, will be very close to the County requirements and so there are no objections from the Highways Authority on this point.
- 6.57 To encourage new residents to travel using sustainable methods, a condition requiring each new house to be provided with a Travel Information Pack is necessary. Similarly, a condition relating to footpath improvements is necessary to link the site into the existing public right of way network. It is important to note that no obstruction or diversion of the public right of way is acceptable during construction or post-completion.
- 6.58 Subject to the detailed conditions outlined above and summarised at Section 8, there are no objections to this proposal on highway safety grounds.

Ecology and Biodiversity

- 6.59 Paragraph 117 of the NPPF refers to the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, whilst Paragraph 118 sets out the basis for determination of planning applications. Paragraph 118 states that “...if significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused...”
- 6.60 In consultation, the council’s countryside officer has stated the site has a low

biodiversity value due to intensive management as an arable field in the past. There are no records of protected species on or near the site and the habitats do not appear suitable for significant populations of any important species to use. Therefore, there are no objections to the application in respect of ecology subject to a condition to secure biodiversity enhancement measures in line with NPPF advice.

Viability, affordable housing and Section 106 contributions

- 6.61 The NPPF advises that planning obligations should only be sought where they meet all of the following tests (paragraph 204):
- Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
 - Directly related to the development; and
 - Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development. 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.
- 6.62 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.
- 6.63 The application provides for 6 affordable dwellings these being plot numbers 1-6. The following developer contributions have been requested. These contributions are considered fair and proportionate:-

Vale of White Horse District Council	
	<i>Proposed Contributions</i>
Wheeled bins for each house	£2,550
Public Art	£4,500
Street Naming	£356.18
Community Facilities	Under discussion with West and East Hanney Parish Councils
Total	£7,406.18
Oxfordshire County Council	
	<i>Proposed Contributions</i>
Early years education at St James' CE Primary School	£6,433
Overall Total	£13,839.19

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 This application has been assessed on its merits, in light of the Inspector's Interim Findings into the emerging Local Plan 2041, the current housing land supply shortfall and the NPPF presumption in favour of sustainable development. 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 in general additional housing that the District needs together with much needed affordable housing units. The mix of affordable and market housing is acceptable.
- 7.4 The development will cause some limited harm, in particular the landscape impact from building on part of this single field that represents the sole gap between East and West Hanney, the loss of part of this field from agricultural production and the pressure on local facilities. This pressure cannot be wholly mitigated through financial contributions due to concerns over the restrictions on pooling of such contributions in the CIL regulations.
- 7.5 It is also important to note that this development far exceeds the scale of development that the current and emerging Local Plan supports in the smaller villages of the district, although this is mitigated slightly in this case by the proximity to East Hanney.
- 7.6 Overall, and in view of the emphasis in the NPPF to boost significantly the supply of housing, the development is considered to amount to sustainable development, and whilst there will be some adverse effects, these do not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. 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 subject to:**

- 1. **A S106 agreement being entered into with both the county council and district council in order to secure contributions towards local infrastructure and to secure affordable housing; and**
- 2. **Conditions as follows:**
 - 1. **Commencement within one year.**
 - 2. **Approved plans.**
 - 3. **Highway works to be agreed – including provision of pedestrian crossing.**
 - 4. **Internal road layout specification to be agreed.**
 - 5. **Car parking to be agreed.**
 - 6. **Slab levels for all dwellings to be agreed.**
 - 7. **Sample materials to be agreed.**
 - 8. **Construction traffic management plan to be agreed.**
 - 9. **Travel information pack to be agreed.**
 - 10. **Sustainable urban drainage scheme to be agreed.**
 - 11. **Landscaping scheme to be agreed – hard and soft – including link to**

footpath.

12. Implementation of landscaping scheme as stated.
13. Boundary details to be agreed.
14. Bicycle parking and bin storage to be agreed.
15. Ecology mitigation measures to be agreed.
16. Visibility splays as specified.
17. Turning space as approved.
18. No drainage to highway.
19. Garage accommodation to be retained.
20. Obscured glazing and fan light only in first floor window of Plot 6.

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