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| APPLICATION NO. | P15/V2880/O |
| SITE | Milton Interchange Services, Milton, Abingdon OX14 4TX |
| PARISH | Milton |
| PROPOSAL | Development of roadside services and facilities and other appropriate development. (as clarified by drawing Nos: 1433-10 Revision F and 1433-20 Revision A accompanying agent's email of 18 December 2015 and by technical notes on impact on Milton Interchange received June 2016 and December 2016) |
| WARD MEMBER | Stuart Davenport |
| APPLICANT | Mays Properties Ltd |
| OFFICER | Peter Brampton |

RECOMMENDATION

That authority to grant outline planning permission is delegated to the head of planning subject to:

1: A S106 agreement being entered into between the applicant and Oxfordshire County Council in order to secure contributions towards local highway infrastructure and;

2: Conditions as follows:

Compliance

1 : Submission of reserved matters within three years, commencement within two years of last reserved matter approval

2 : Approved plans.

3 : Specified use within use class (see Para 1.7 of report).

4 : Permitted development restriction on entire site.

5 : Wildlife protection (mitigation as approved).

6 : Access as approved.

Details to be submitted prior to commencement

7 : On and off site highway works to be agreed.

8 : On site wheel washing facilities to be agreed.

9 : Surface water drainage details to be agreed.

10 : Foul water drainage details to be agreed.

11 : Tree protection to be agreed.

Details to be submitted prior to occupation

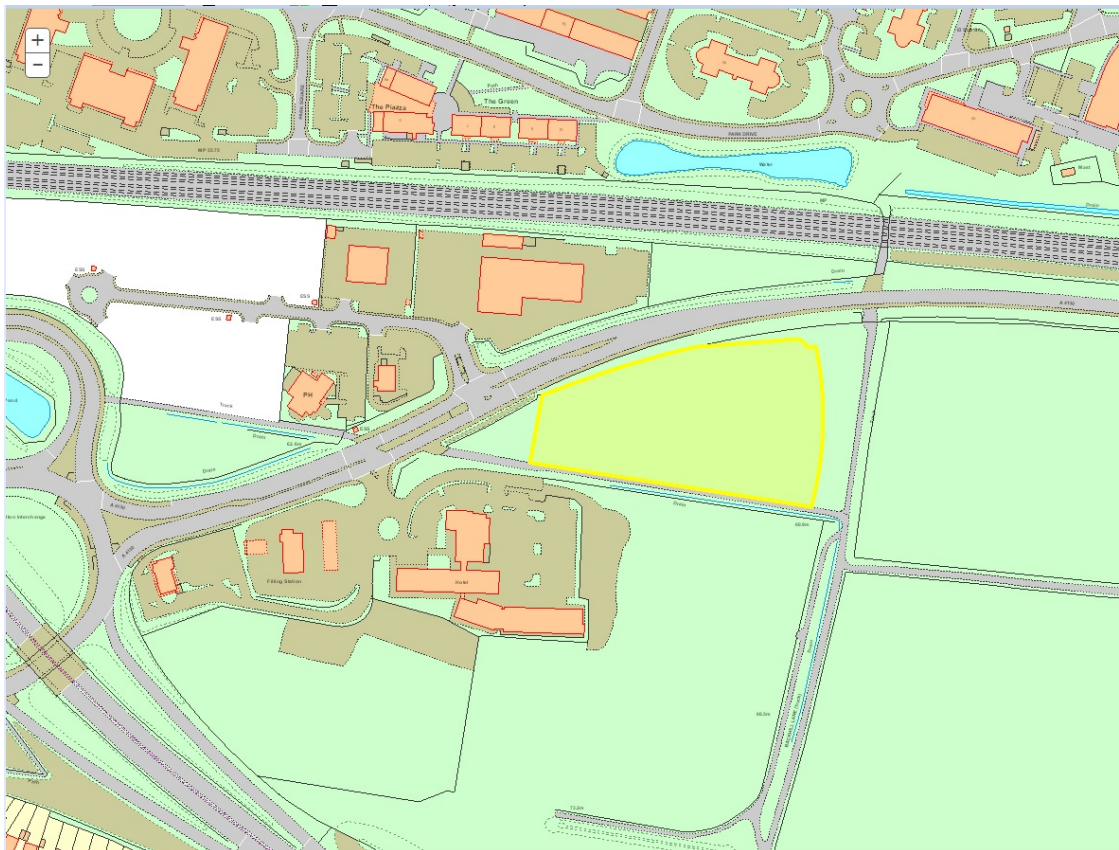
12 : Green travel plans to be agreed.

13 : Electric vehicle charging point provision to be agreed.

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND PROPOSAL

1.1 This application is referred to planning committee as the officer recommendation differs from that of Milton Parish Council.

- 1.2 This application site lies to the south of the section of the A4130 that links Didcot to the A34. To the west and southwest of the site lies an existing roadside services development providing a Premier Inn, the “Applecourt” restaurant, a BP petrol station and a McDonalds. Further west lies the Milton Interchange junction with the A34.
- 1.3 To the north and northwest, on the opposite side of the A4130, lies a newly developed area covered by the Milton Park LDO known as Milton Gate that has permitted car dealerships, a coffee shop and a Harvester restaurant, with Milton Park itself beyond. To the east lies farmland that constitutes the North West Valley Park strategic site for housing within the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part One.
- 1.4 To the south of the site lies an area of land subject to a current planning application for B use development (Application P15/V2899/O) and these two applications will combine to develop the entire site for new retail and employment uses. Since April 2016, the entirety of this site is part of the Science Vale UK Enterprise Zone and now also falls within the Didcot Garden Town area designation.
- 1.5 A site location plan is provided below:



- 1.6 Vehicular access to the site will be possible from an access and internal spine road permitted under P14/V0087/FUL and now under construction. This access road will run to the immediate east of this application site. The

approved plans for this access road are **attached** as Appendix One.

1.7 This application seeks outline planning permission (all matters reserved save for access) for the erection of a number of commercial buildings on the site as follows:

- Block A – A1 non-food unit, A1 food unit, A3 restaurant and a C1 hotel expansion in a three storey building
- Block B – A3 restaurant
- Block C – A3 restaurant
- Block D – A5 take-away with drive through facility
- Block E – A5 take-away with drive through facility

1.8 The indicative plans for the site are **attached** as Appendix Two.

1.9 This report should be read in conjunction with the committee report for **P15/V2899/O**. These two applications combine to show how the site could be developed in totality. However, they are separate applications seeking approval for separate schemes for differing landowners and have been assessed on their individual merits.

2.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

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| Milton Parish Council | <p>Objection on the following main grounds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic concerns • Lack of information <p>Officers note the Parish Council have not specified which aspects of the scheme they consider to be lacking in information</p> |
| Harwell Parish Council | No strong views |
| Oxfordshire County Council Highways | <p>No overall objection following December submission of additional traffic modelling on impact on Milton Interchange</p> <p><i>Section 106 requests</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £39,927.81 to improving capacity on the A4130 based on £83.01/square metre of A1 floorspace • £28,000 for bus shelters, information signs and real-time information boards on A4130 (split with P15/V2899/O if both schemes approved) • £2,500 for Traffic Regulation Order for an extended 40mph speed limit on A4130 (split with P15/V2899/O if both schemes approved) • £2,040 for Travel Plan monitoring <p><i>Conditions requested</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Off-site highway works to be agreed |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to site to be provided as per P14/V0087/FUL prior to occupation or use of development • Surface Water Drainage scheme to be agreed • Phasing of development to be agreed • Construction Method Statement to be agreed • Construction Traffic Management Plan to be agreed • Green Travel Plan to be agreed <p><i>Comments</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December 2016 modelling shows Milton Interchange reaching current capacity by 2021 with all planned development • This proposal is not the sole cause of this and the modelling assumes a worst case scenario in terms of uses • County Council can now plan for a solution to the capacity issues at Milton Interchange • In-kind mitigation of land safeguarding for pedestrian access from Milton Heights required, rather than financial contributions, to ease this proposals impact on the capacity of the A4130 |
| Highways England | <p>Holding response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns about impact of proposal on operation of the A34 • Unclear if OCC accept the conclusions of the December 2016 technical note given need to agree mitigation that could affect A34 • Undertaking separate review of the modelling proposals • Will comment again when application is in its final form |
| Oxfordshire County Council Archaeology | No objection |
| Drainage Engineer | <p>No objections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-commencement condition requiring prior approval to surface and foul water drainage schemes required. |
| Thames Water | <p>No objections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-commencement condition requiring prior approval to foul water drainage scheme required |
| Environment Agency | No comments to make |

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| Countryside Officer | No objection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance condition requiring implementation of mitigation measures contained within Ecological Survey required. |
| Landscape Architect | No objections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature of the A4130 and adjacent service area effects the visual qualities of the site • Proposals will have a minor localised impact • Indicative layout with proposed one and two storey buildings is reasonable • Scope for new landscaping is limited and more space will be required for planting at reserved matters stage |
| Air Quality Officer | No objections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requests pre-commencement condition requiring provision of electric vehicle charging points to be agreed. |
| Contaminated Land Officer | No objections |
| Environmental Health Officer | No objections |
| Neighbour Representations | None received |

3.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

3.1 [P15/V2770/NM](#) - Approved (15/12/2015)

Non-material amendment to planning permission P14/V0087/FUL (Construction of a Service Road for the Milton Interchange Services Area together with a new junction to the A4130 and associated works including a new traffic light controlled pedestrian/cycle crossing) for alteration and adjustment of section of the road alignment.

[P14/V0087/FUL](#) - Approved (02/05/2014)

Construction of a Service Road for the Milton Interchange Services Area together with a new junction to the A4130 and associated works including a new traffic light controlled pedestrian/cycle crossing.

[P14/V0096/D](#) - Approved (24/02/2014)

Demolition of existing pipeline.

3.2 **Pre-application History**

[P15/V2146/PEJ](#)

Proposed development of road-side services facilities and other suitable and appropriate uses.

Advice offered on:

- Principle of development
- Proposed accommodation
- Design and Layout
- Highway Safety
- Lighting
- Landscape
- Ecology
- Drainage

3.3 **Screening Opinion requests**

[P15/V2836/SCR](#) – EIA not required 14/01/2016

Commercial development – covering entire site area of P15/V2880/O and P15/V2899/O

4.0 **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

4.1 This site has been screened for the need for an Environmental Statement and a negative opinion offered (See Para 3.3)

5.0 **MAIN ISSUES**

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

- Current employment and retail policy
- Traffic generation and highway safety
- Design and layout
- Landscape and visual Impact
- Flood risk and drainage
- Ecology
- Air Quality
- Commencement Period

5.1 **Current Employment and Retail Policy**

The council's Development Plan is the starting point for assessing this case and it consists of the adopted Local Plan 2031 Part One, the saved policies of the Local Plan 2011 and the emerging Local Plan 2031 Part Two. Part Two of the Plan is, at the time of writing, undergoing public consultation at the Preferred Options stage and so only limited weight can be applied to the policies within it. Full weight can be applied to Part One of the Plan and the Saved Policies. Officers are also mindful of the aspirations of the Science Vale Enterprise Zone and the ongoing work on the Didcot Garden Town project.

5.2 Saved Policy TR10 is the most relevant policy to this proposal as it designates a number of areas that the Vale consider suitable for new roadside services, including this site. This is to meet the needs of the A34 with parking, picnic and play areas and facilities "*appropriate to a major trunk road service area*" all being supported by the policy. It requires access to be taken from the A4130, off-site road improvements and measures to improve the visual appearance of the site. Paragraph 31 of the NPPF supports the development of roadside services where the primary function is to support the safety and welfare of the road user. Core Policy 31 takes a permissive stance to development that would support the visitor economy including hotel accommodation at service

areas on the main transport corridors.

5.3 Officers are mindful that the uses proposed would not ordinarily be the type of uses that the council would support within an Enterprise Zone. Furthermore, it is unlikely that these uses would be supported within the Didcot Garden Town delivery document currently being drafted, due to be published in the autumn, which will feed into plan making in the area. However, officers accept that the uses proposed with this application are compatible with the allowances of Saved Policy TR10, which, at this stage, would take precedence in the planning balancing exercise.

5.4 Given the above, officers are satisfied that the principle of this proposal can be supported at this time. This is subject to a condition that restricts the floorspace and uses of the development to that shown on the indicative plans. This is necessary to ensure the council retains control over the uses of the site so they remain in accordance with the policies of the Development Plan, particularly TR10. There are also character and highway safety implications that make this condition necessary, and these are discussed later in this report. A permitted development restriction for the entire site is also recommended so that the council retains control over the future growth of the site for similar reasons.

5.5 **Traffic generation and highway safety**

Saved 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) states, *“Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe.”* More specifically, Saved Policy TR3 of the Local Plan 2011 confirms that developments which would likely increase congestion in the vicinity of the A34 Milton Interchange will only be permitted if necessary improvements to the transport network are secured. This includes a number of specific sites listed within the policy, including this one. As the access road to this site has already been approved, the main issue to consider when assessing this proposal on highway safety is the impact of its traffic generation.

5.6 The need for, and scope of, modelling work to demonstrate the impact of this proposal when considered cumulatively with other planned development in the area has been the source of lengthy negotiations between the applicant, Vale officers and Oxfordshire County Council as Highways Authority. The applicant’s transport consultant produced an appropriate note covering this issue in December 2016, allowing the application to move forward positively.

5.7 The Modelling Note has appraised the following junctions:

- Milton Interchange
- BP/Premier Inn/Applecourt/McDonalds access junction

- Milton Gate access junction
- Consented junction for this site (P14/V0087/FUL)

5.8 To ensure consistency of approach, the applicant has used an amended

version of the modelling work of Milton Interchange used when assessing the impacts of the Valley Park application to the east of this site (Application Ref: P14/V2873/O). As this application is seeking outline planning permission for 4,254 houses, no comprehensive modelling of the impact of this commercial proposal can take place without including the results of previous modelling work for Valley Park. This ensures consistency with the NPPF requirement to consider the cumulative impacts of development on highway safety.

- 5.9 The results of the modelling show that, even without this development taking place, other anticipated development in the area, including Valley Park, will start to cause capacity issues at Milton Interchange by 2021. Once this development is factored in, on a worst case scenario that includes all of the B use class accommodation proposed under this application to be in a B1 use, which is the most traffic intensive use of the three uses proposed, the modelling note shows that the further harm to the capacity of Milton Interchange will be less than an additional 3%. The applicant contends that this does not demonstrate a “severe” transport impact as required by the NPPF.
- 5.10 In consultation, Oxfordshire County Council as Highways Authority have removed their initial holding objection in light of the results of the modelling work. The County Council has confirmed that Milton Interchange will reach capacity earlier than they anticipated but are now able to properly consider options to address this future problem based on the evidence provided. The County Council agrees that the impact of this proposal will not be severe so there can be no conflict with Paragraph 32 of the NPPF. At the time of writing, Highways England have not offered a final recommendation on this scheme and are undertaking their own review of the modelling. Any update on this will be provided to members in the Addendum Report.
- 5.11 Saved Policies TR3 and TR10 and Core Policy 7 of the adopted Local Plan seek financial contributions from this development to mitigate its impact. Accordingly the applicant has agreed to a financial contribution for strategic improvements to the A4130 based solely on the A1 floorspace proposed, a use from which the County Council normally seek financial contributions.
- 5.12 This Section 106 agreement will also secure agreed financial contributions to providing bus stops and information boards on the A4130 and to extend the 40 MPH speed limit along the A4130 past the site through a Traffic Regulation Order. Subject to the above being secured, officers are now satisfied that this proposal will have an acceptable impact on highway safety.
- 5.13 **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. Core Policy 37 seeks to ensure good design is incorporated into all new development whilst the council’s design guide aims to raise the standard of design across the district.

- 5.14 At this stage, only full consent is sought for the access to the development. However, this is as approved under P14/V0087/FUL, with a condition proposed to ensure this application is implemented in conjunction with the approved junction. Accordingly, the application is supported by an indicative masterplan, which is largely led by the approved alignment of the access road. Officers have considered this layout carefully and have reached the conclusion it would not be acceptable if it formed part of a detailed reserved matters application.
- 5.15 The layout shows a poor relationship with the A4130. The layout should create a positive, active, frontage to the main road. The indicative layout shows that Units B and C (the restaurants) back onto the main road. Units D and E are side on, with their drive through” elements of Units D and E potentially leaving a harsh edge to the development alongside the A4130. Officers accept that a reserved matters application could show dual fronted buildings and that landscaping could screen some of the blanker elevations. However, this will not, in officers’ opinion, provide an appropriately high quality development. Were this scheme to progress to a reserved matters application, a significant re-design would be required.
- 5.16 Furthermore, Unit A backs onto a public footpath running east-west across the site, with the delivery yard immediately between the building and the footpath. Natural surveillance of this footpath is necessary, particularly as it will enjoy increased use once the Milton Heights and North West Valley Park housing allocations are built out to the south and east respectively.
- 5.17 In consultation, the council’s Landscape Architect has identified that the planting corridors allowed for within the indicative layout appear rather narrow. If space for specimen trees is not allowed for, the development will be dominated by wide expanses of car parking that will create an unattractive visual environment. Whilst recognising that service areas generally have a functional appearance befitting of their uses, officers consider that this site will sit alongside residential development in the future and should offer a much higher quality of environment than this layout would provide.
- 5.18 Nonetheless, officers are satisfied that the indicative plans show that this quantum of development can be accommodated within the site, providing sufficient car parking, etc. It will be for subsequent reserved matters applications to demonstrate the appropriate appearance, scale and landscaping of the site, within an acceptable layout, taking into account the comments above.
- 5.19 **Landscape and Visual Impact**
Core Policy 44 of the Local Plan 2031 confirms that the key features that contribute to the nature and quality of the district’s landscape will be protected from harmful development and, where possible, enhanced. The policy lists six key aspects to the Vale’s landscape that are particularly important.
- 5.20 This application site falls within the Lowland Vale, a local landscape designation covered by Saved Policy NE9 which seeks to ensure development

protects the long open views that characterise this area. Saved Policy TR10 is again relevant as it requires this site, *“to be designed and landscaped to the highest standard...Measures to improve the visual appearance of the site...will also be required.”*

- 5.21 Currently the vegetation associated with the site, particularly the planting on the higher grounds to the southern boundary, adds to the visual amenity of the site. However, the A34, A4130 and the adjacent service areas are all visual detractors. The application is supported by a Landscape and Visual Appraisal and the council’s Landscape Architect has confirmed the conclusions of this document are sound and that the landscape and visual effect from this proposal will have a minor localised impact on the Lowland Vale landscape
- 5.22 As outlined above, the indicative masterplan does not demonstrate an acceptable scheme for the landscaping of the site and this will need addressing at reserved matters stage. In particular, proposals for an extended hedgerow along the more sensitive northern and eastern boundaries are considered necessary to help screen the internal traffic and any outside eating areas from the A4130. Across the site more space for additional planting will be needed, including large specimen trees on the site frontage, to break up the site. This planting scheme will need to complement any necessary SuDS features.
- 5.23 Overall, officers are satisfied this application can demonstrate an acceptable impact on the landscape subject to careful design at reserved matters stage.
- 5.24 **Flood Risk and drainage**
The NPPF provides that development should not increase flood risk elsewhere and should be appropriately flood resilient and resistant (paragraph 103). Core Policy 42 of the Local Plan 2031 seeks to minimise the risk and impact of flooding through directing development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding, requiring new development to manage all sources of flood risk and not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.
- 5.25 The application is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) that confirms that the entirety of the site falls within Flood Zone 1, the area at least risk of flooding. The risk from surface water flooding is considered low, based on the council’s Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SRFA) and the fact there are no surface water sewers within the boundaries of the site. The SRFA indicates a low to medium risk of groundwater flooding but there has been no records of flood incidents within the site.
- 5.26 The FRA proposes a Surface Water Drainage scheme compliant with SuDS principles. Infiltration is the preferred SuDS option for draining a site but this is not possible in this location given the clay soil. Thus, the drainage scheme needs to make provision for discharging surface water into an existing watercourse at a controlled “greenfield” rate. The surface water will be captured by porous surfacing used for all trafficked and parking areas. Overall site storage will be sufficient to allow a controlled discharge into an existing ditch, making the necessary allowance for a 1 in 100 year flood event plus a further 20% for climate change. The ditch is located to the immediate north of

the site alongside the A4130.

5.27 In consultation, the council's drainage engineer, Thames Water and Oxfordshire County Council have confirmed no objections to the proposal, subject to a standard pre-commencement condition to secure the finer details of the drainage proposal.

5.28 In terms of foul drainage, Thames Water have initially identified a lack of capacity in the foul sewer network and requested a standard pre-commencement condition requiring a strategy for foul drainage to be agreed.

5.29 **Biodiversity**

Core Policy 45 of the Local Plan requires all proposals for development to avoid a net loss of Green Infrastructure. Core Policy 46 seeks to conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity in the district.

5.30 The application is supported by an Ecology survey that has found only limited ecological interest within the site, including a population of common lizards. The council's countryside officer is satisfied that the survey results are sound. The survey proposes a number of mitigation measures to ensure the site avoids a net loss of biodiversity. These are supported by the countryside officer and can be secured through a typical compliance condition.

5.31 **Air Quality**

Core Policy 40 encourages developers to incorporate climate change adaptation and design measures into new development. In consultation, the council's air quality officer has noted that, although the site is not close to an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), the increase in traffic emissions from this proposal should be mitigated. To that end, a condition is recommended to secure the provision of electric vehicle charging points on the site. Officers consider this to be a reasonable request, particularly given the site is primarily designed to serve motorists on longer journeys along the A34.

5.32 **Commencement Period**

Ordinarily, an outline application such as this, if approved, would be subject to a condition requiring submission of reserved matters within 3 years of the outline permission being granted, with commencement on site 2 years after the approval of the last reserved matter. However, in this instance, the applicant has required a longer period to submit reserved matters applications.

5.33 The applicant considers that the amount of on and off site infrastructure upgrades needed to facilitate development in this area (power, water, foul sewers etc.) will take some time to fund and implement. The applicant will also need to fund the access to the site onto the A4130 and seek future tenants, whose requirements will need to impact on subsequent reserved matters applications. All this means the longer period to start work is necessary in their opinion.

5.34 On balance, officers do not agree this extended time period is appropriate. This is because this site is part of the Science Vale UK Enterprise Zone and

the council is committed to bringing forward economic development in the area so that new businesses benefit from the financial incentives of locating to the Enterprise Zone. Such a long delay in bringing forward employment on this site would harm the council's aspirations for the Enterprise Zone and also the delivery of the Garden Town project.

- 5.35 Whilst the applicants view is that servicing this site may be costly and time consuming, they have not provided evidence of how much and how long for the necessary upgrades. However, the financial incentives offered to companies to locate in the Enterprise Zone should off-set this and allow the site to be delivered quickly. Therefore officers recommend that the standard 3 year time limit for submitting a Reserved Matters application be applied.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Despite the sites location within the Science Vale UK Enterprise Zone and within the Didcot Garden Town area, the principle of this application is established by Saved Policy TR10 of the Local Plan 2011 which allocates this site for the uses proposed here.
- 6.2 Following the receipt of further traffic modelling work around the impact of these proposals on the capacity of Milton Interchange, there are no objections to this proposal on highway safety grounds, subject to the provision of financial contributions to highway improvements.
- 6.3 There are no technical objections to the proposal and officers are satisfied that the quantum of development can be achieved on the site, although it will be for the reserved matters applications to show an acceptable layout, appearance, scale and landscaping for the development.
- 6.4 The application is compliant with the relevant policies of the Development Plan and the NPPF and should be approved.

The following planning policies have been taken into account:

Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part One Core Policies (CP);

- CP01 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CP07 - Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services
- CP15 - Spatial Strategy for South East Vale Sub-Area
- CP31 - Development to Support the Visitor Economy
- CP33 - Promoting Sustainable Transport and Accessibility
- CP35 - Promoting Public Transport, Cycling and Walking
- CP40 - Sustainable Design and Construction
- CP41 - Renewable Energy
- CP42 - Flood Risk
- CP43 - Natural Resources
- CP44 - Landscape
- CP45 - Green Infrastructure
- CP46 - Conservation and Improvement of Biodiversity
- CP47 - Delivery and Contingency

Saved Policies of the Local Plan 2011

- DC5 - Access

DC6 - Landscaping
DC9 - The Impact of Development on Neighbouring Uses
DC10 - The Effect of Neighbouring or Previous Uses on New Development
DC12 - Water Quality and Resources
E5 - Milton Park
TR3 - A34 related development
TR5 - The National Cycle Network
TR10 - Lorries and Roadside Services
NE9 - Lowland Vale

Emerging Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part Two

Adopted Guidance

Vale of White Horse Design Guide

Other relevant legislation

Community & Infrastructure Levy Legislation
Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998
Obligations under Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010
Provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998
Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010
Localism Act

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