

**GFA/19883-X – Bloor Homes (Tewkesbury) Ltd**  
**Demolition of existing tree nursery structures. Construction of new housing and business development and change of use of land to leisure use.**  
**Land between Park Road, Stanford Road and the A420, Faringdon.**

1.0 **The Proposal**

- 1.1 This is an outline planning application for mixed development on the “Folly Farm” site that is allocated for development in the adopted Local Plan. All matters are reserved for future consideration. The site location plan is in **Appendix 1**. The site currently comprises Faringdon Cricket Club, the former Tuckers tree nursery and Jespers Hill, an old quarry that was reinstated many years ago.
- 1.2 The topography of the site is complex, but there is a general slope down from north to south. Public views are available from the A420, from Park Road and from Footpath 17 which is an elevated public footpath that lies south of Park Road.
- 1.3 A considerable amount of information has been submitted in support of the application. The principal documents are:-
- A landscape and visual impact assessment
  - A traffic statement
  - A design and access statement
  - A drainage strategy
  - An ecological appraisal
  - A noise assessment
- 1.4 The proposal is for the construction of 400 dwellings, 1 hectare of Class B1 business development, and the provision of leisure uses. The leisure uses would comprise a replacement pitch for Faringdon Cricket Club, a new pitch for Faringdon Rugby Club, a skateboard park and an extension to Folly Park. An illustrative layout plan has been prepared for the proposed housing and the leisure area including the site of a new pavilion building to serve both clubs. This plan, together with other illustrative material, is in **Appendix 2**. The main vehicular access to the housing and business development would be from Park Road via the current entrance to Folly Park. A secondary access to serve only the cricket and rugby pitches and pavilion would be taken from Stanford Road. The plan of the proposed access from Park Road is also in **Appendix 2**.
- 1.5 The application is subject to Section 106 Obligations between the developer and the District Council and County Council to cover financial contributions for a range of issues and the phasing of the whole development.
- 1.6 The application comes to Committee because of the size of the proposal and because it involves Council-owned land

2.0 **Planning History**

- 2.1 There is no relevant planning history

3.0 **Planning Policies**

- 3.1 Policies H4, E3 and L13 of the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan confirm the allocation of the site for housing, employment and leisure development. The following policies are also relevant to this application:-
- DC4 – provision of public art
  - DC5 – access, traffic and highway safety
  - DC6 – landscaping

DC8 – social and physical infrastructure and service requirements  
DC10 – the impact of noise on proposed development  
DC14 – the impact of the development on local drainage  
TR2 – the promotion of alternative means of travel  
TR9 – the requirement for a transport assessment  
H17 – the provision of affordable housing  
H23 – the provision of public open space

3.2 The Supplementary Planning Guidance adopted as part of the Local Plan contains guidance on the development of the site and is reproduced in **Appendix 3**.

#### 4.0 **Consultations**

4.1 Faringdon Town Council supports the proposal, stating it “meets with the Town Council’s vision for the future of Faringdon.”

4.2 Local Residents – 1 letter has been received raising the following objections:-

1. The cricket and rugby pitch and pavilion will harm to rural setting of Faringdon
2. Access via Stanford Road will be dangerous and lead to parking congestion

4.3 County Engineer – no objections subject to conditions

4.4 Environment Agency – discussions between the applicants and the Environment Agency were going on at the time of writing this report and an update will be reported to Committee. It is anticipated that the Environment Agency will raise no objections subject to conditions

4.5 County Archaeologist – no objection subject to a condition

#### 5.0 **Officer Comments**

5.1 The principle of the mix of the proposed development has been accepted under the relevant policies of the adopted Local Plan. The application is in outline with all matters reserved, but a detailed plan has been produced of the proposed access from Park Road together with an illustrative layout plan of the proposed housing and proposed cricket and rugby pitches. The illustrative plan shows the broad landscape strategy for the site, which is critical to the visual impact of the development. The layout differs from that shown in the SPG in that the proposed area of business development has been moved to the east in order to provide a more visually pleasing entrance to the site.

5.2 The main issues for Members to consider are:-

- The visual impact of the proposed development
- The safety of the proposed access
- The impact of the development on local services and infrastructure
- The provision of affordable housing
- The phasing of the development

5.3 In terms of visual impact, the SPG recognises that the site generally slopes down from the Folly to Park Road and is prominent in views from the A420, from Park Road and from Footpath 17 which runs between Park Road and the A420. Much of the lower slopes are screened by existing trees. The SPG requires a landscape strategy that includes significant planting belts across the site’s upper slopes to help to integrate the new housing and business development into the landscape. The applicants’ landscape strategy follows the SPG strategy in this regard. One of the unique advantages of the site is the presence of a number of existing nursery stock trees on the former Tuckers nursery that can be transplanted within the site to provide much more effective landscaping than would be the case usually.

- 5.4 The plan for the leisure area shows the indicative locations of the cricket and rugby pitches, the new pavilion and car parking area, and the skateboard park. Design work for the new pavilion is well advanced (although this detail will form part of a future reserved matters application) and its footprint will not differ much from that now shown. There will be a low dog- and rabbit-proof fence around the pitches to protect them.
- 5.5 Also of note are the proposed “attenuation ponds” to the east of the proposed business area, which form part of the proposed sustainable drainage strategy for the site. The role of these ponds is to accommodate water at periods of extreme rainfall and to release the water slowly into the natural drainage system. Because they are designed for peak flow periods, the ponds will actually be relatively dry for most of the time. It is intended that this feature will be naturally sculptured and largely covered in grass. Details of the precise appearance of this feature will be the subject of a future reserved matters application.
- 5.6 Officers consider that the proposed landscape strategy accords with the SPG and that the proposed development will be integrated to an acceptable degree into the landscape.
- 5.7 Turning to the proposed access, the existing access into Folly Park from Park Road is to be modified as shown on the submitted drawing in **Appendix 2**. The existing entrance to the adjacent RAC building is to be closed and land from RAC encompassed within the site to form a landscaped entrance with a new stone wall in front of the RAC site. In exchange, a new access and a compensatory amount of land would be provided for RAC. The new access would be taken from the modified access road into Folly Park, which will also serve the proposed new business development.
- 5.8 The access details have been discussed at length with the County Engineer. He has no objections subject to work to provide improved capacity for left turning traffic at the Park Road roundabout on the A420 to reduce likely queuing. This work would be secured via a legal agreement between the developer and the County Council. Officers consider the proposed environmental improvement works to the access are to be welcomed and will provide a significant enhancement to the appearance of this area.
- 5.9 With regard to the impact of the proposed development on local services and infrastructure, a package of financial contributions has been negotiated with the District Council, the County Council and Faringdon Town Council. In brief these contributions are for:-
- Additional school and college capacity
  - Additional library capacity
  - Social services
  - Youth facilities
  - Public Transport (including the Faringdon Community Bus)
  - Public art
  - Public open space
  - Improvements to communal facilities at the Pump Rooms
  - A survey of parking in Faringdon town centre
- 5.10 The District Council has requested a contribution of £20,000 towards a new artificial pitch at Faringdon Leisure Centre. The applicants have declined this request on the basis that they are spending some £150,000 on providing the rugby pitch for the town in response to local demand, a facility not envisaged in the original package for the site.
- 5.11 In respect of affordable housing, the proposal is in accordance with the Council’s Local Plan policy and SPG. Therefore, 40% of the housing will be affordable with a tenure split of 75:25 in favour of rental and shared equity. This provision will be secured either by condition or within the Section 106 Obligation.

5.12 The phasing of the development is critical to ensure the following:-

The availability of a suitable new cricket pitch and pavilion for Faringdon Cricket Club to enable the club to transfer before the existing pitch is developed for housing  
The provision of the extension to Folly Park as part of the overall development  
The provision of suitably serviced site for new business development

5.13 These issues will be regulated via the Section 106 Obligation.

5.14 To summarise, the proposal is in accordance with both adopted Local Plan policies and adopted SPG.

## 6.0 **Recommendation**

6.1 *Subject to the receipt of further information, it is recommended that authority to grant outline planning permission is delegated to the Deputy Director (Planning & Community Strategy) in consultation with the Chair, Vice-Chair and Local Members, subject to:-*

- i) the completion of Section 106 Obligations with the District and County Councils*
- ii) conditions*