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| APPLICATION NO. | P17/V2479/RM |
| SITE | King Alfred School, East Springfield Road, Wantage, OX12 8ET |
| PARISH | WANTAGE |
| PROPOSAL | Matters seeking approval are appearance, landscaping, layout and scale. The outline planning application was not an EIA application (as amended by plans submitted on 10 January 2018). |
| WARD MEMBER(S) | Charlotte Dickson St John Dickson |
| APPLICANT OFFICER | Bovis Homes Limited Holly Bates |

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that reserved matters approval is granted subject to the following conditions:

Standard

1. Approved plans.

Pre-commencement

2. Material details to be agreed.
3. Boundary details to be agreed.
4. Traffic calming details to be agreed.
5. Details of play area to be agreed including boundary fencing.
6. Landscape details – including additional planting and replacement planting to be agreed.
7. Sustainable drainage scheme in accordance with updated flood risk assessment to be agreed.
8. Slab level details to be agreed.

Pre-occupation

9. Parking and turning areas in accordance with plans.

Compliance

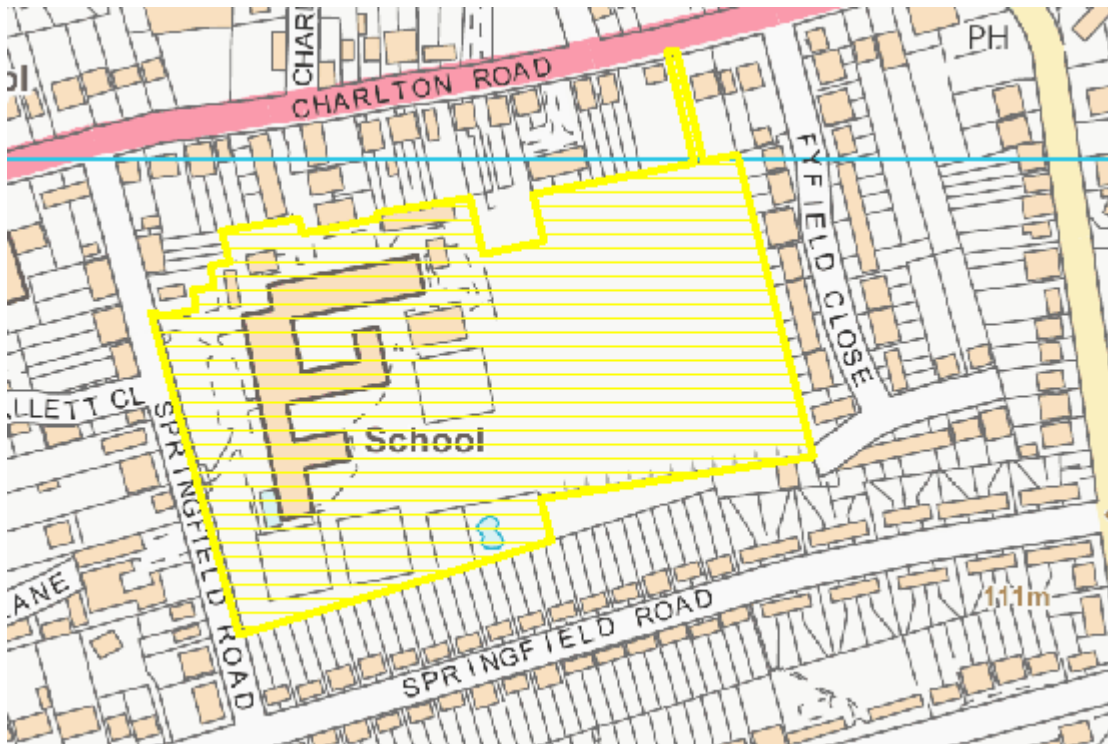
10. Hours of construction work.
11. Obscure glazing to upper floor side-facing bathroom windows where necessary.

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND PROPOSAL

- 1.1 This application comes to planning committee as it is a major application and an objection has been received from Wantage Town Council.
- 1.2 This application relates to the former King Alfred's Academy East site school campus. The site, approximately 4.9 hectares in size, is broadly rectangular

and is located within the built-up area of Wantage. A site location plan is below:

1.3



- 1.4 Outline consent for the erection of up to 150 dwellings on the site was approved in August 2016. Access was the only matter considered as part of the outline consent.
- 1.5 This current application seeks reserved matters approval for the layout, scale, appearance and landscaping of the site.
- 1.6 In line with the outline application, 150 dwellings are proposed to be erected on the site in a mix of one, two, three, four and five bedroom properties. 40% affordable housing is being provided in line with the S106 legal agreement signed at the outline stage, which was completed prior to the adoption of the new Local Plan 2031 Part 1.
- 1.7 The two access points from Springfield Road into the site also are consistent with the outline consent.
- 1.8 Extracts from the application plans are **attached** at appendix one. All plans and supporting technical documents accompanying the application are available to view online at www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk

2.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

2.1 A summary of the responses received to the current amended proposal is below. A full copy of all the comments made can be seen online at www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk

2.2

| Consultee | Response |
|--|--|
| Wantage Town Council | <p>Object.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of green buffer; • Significant impacts on Harecourt and Fyfield Close; • Dwellings close to 8 and 10 Fyfield Close are in unacceptably close proximity; • Loss of open space; • Will a children’s play area be provided? • Parking shown is insufficient; • Additional parking could be designed into the green spaces; • A roundabout should be considered onto A417; • CTMP required; • Contributions requested; • Request that the development be called “Scholars Field” • Insufficient information in relation to trees; • Waste management officer requires more details; • Ask to be informed of any amendments to layout; • Layout is far less appealing than the illustrative layout. |
| Oxfordshire County Council – Transport | No objections. |
| Oxfordshire County Council –Archaeology | No objections. |
| Forestry Officer – Vale | Concern regarding loss of mature trees in the layout which weighs into the planning balance. Condition for tree protection plan requested. |
| Landscape Officer – Vale | <p>Request conditions relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard and soft landscaping; • More tree planting; • SUDS basin and planting details; • Slab levels. |
| Housing officer – Vale | Advice on property sizes, location, parking and allocation. |
| Drainage Engineer – Vale | <p>No objections, subject to conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable drainage scheme |
| Countryside Officer – Vale | No objections. |

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| <p>Waste Management Officer – Vale</p> | <p>No objections.</p> |
| <p>Wantage and Grove Campaign Group</p> | <p>Objection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient parking has been provided. County Council standards require 55 visitor spaces but only 15 are shown on the amended plans; Visitors will utilise the green space for parking; • Insufficient open space has been provided, as the open space to the north-west of the site is a SUDS this should not be included as part of the 15% requirement; • Plots 46, 47, 60, 64, 65, 117, 137 and 136 have parking away from the dwelling, contrary to the Design Guide. This will encourage parking on the grass in front of the dwellings; • Seek assurance that traffic calming will be required as per the S278. |
| <p>Harwell Campus Bicycle Users Group (HarBUG)</p> | <p>Please ensure that the link path between 60 and 62 Charlton Road is suitable for use by both pedestrians and cyclists.</p> |
| <p>Neighbour object (26)</p> <p>And a petition with 100 signatures objecting to the development</p> | <p>Objections from 26 separate properties have been received. The concerns and objections can be summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans are significantly different from those explained to residents by the school; • Amendments do not address concerns sufficiently; • Green buffer – 5m buffer gone; • Landscaping insufficient; • Loss of trees; • Less/insufficient open space; • Dominance; • Loss of privacy; • Overlooking; • Noise; • Disturbance; • Increase in land levels would be overbearing; • Impact on new pedestrian footpath on nearby residents; • Properties fronting Springfield Road should have a consistent building line; • Volume of traffic generated; • Should be a one way system or include traffic lights/roundabout to main road; • Clustering of affordable units too large; • Drainage; • Sewerage capacity; • Parking provision insufficient; • Construction traffic management and hours of working are required. |

3.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

3.1 [P15/V2952/O](#) - Approved (05/08/2016)

Residential development for up to 150 dwellings with associated access, new footpath link, areas of public open space and landscaping.

3.2 **Pre-application History**

[P17/V0060/PEJ](#) - Response (12/04/2017)

Reserved matters pursuant to outline planning permission P15/V2952/O Residential development for up to 150 Dwellings *MEETING IN OFFICE & LETTER*

[P15/V0674/PEJ](#) – Response (17/11/2016)

Proposed residential development of 140 dwellings (approx) associated means of access, open space and landscaping (outline)*OFFICE MEETING*

4.0 **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

4.1 The outline consent confirmed that the proposal is not EIA development.

5.0 **MAIN ISSUES**

5.1 **Current Housing Policy**

The site is a brownfield site located within the main built area of Wantage, consistent with the policies in the adopted Local Plan 2031 Part 1. Outline planning permission was granted in August 2016. As such the principle of the development is acceptable.

5.2 **Design and Layout**

The proposed layout forms a broad block structure, with the benefit of two access points providing the opportunity for movement throughout the site. It is a straightforward and legible layout which provides an active frontage onto Springfield Road and a main central area of open space as a focal point.

5.3 The variance in set-back distance of the properties fronting onto Springfield Road is acceptable in providing variety to the street scene which is reflective of the local character of Springfield Road. Existing dwellings and buildings are set back different distances from the road frontage, some with front gardens of varying lengths and some without.

5.4 The site includes a varied mix of detached, semi-detached, terrace and flatted development along with a mix of garages and on-plot parking either in front or properties or to the side. Some parking would be provided in on-street parking squares or rows; principles DG45 and DG46 allow for this type of parking provision as long as they are appropriately landscaped and well overlooked by development. The area of parking squares and rows proposed would comply with this, and a condition requiring landscape details is recommended.

5.5 All the dwellings would be two storeys in height to reflect the local vernacular. A simple form of two storey rectangular dwellings with pitches roofs is the predominant form, with buildings located on corners having been designed to

provide active frontages to both facades. This approach is consistent with the council's adopted Design Guide SPD 2015.

- 5.6 The material palette consists of predominantly traditional red and buff stone coloured brickwork and plain tiles to reflect the local vernacular, with areas of cream render and slate grey tiles to provide a contrast. Brick walls would form the boundary treatments to the public realm, with timber fencing used for internal boundaries.
- 5.7 The density of the development would be approximately 31 dwellings per hectare (dph). This complies with adopted Local Plan Policy CP23 which requires a minimum density of 30 dph. It encourages higher densities in certain areas, for example where it would make the optimum use of land or where there are good linkages to services and facilities.
- 5.8 While this site is only marginally above the minimum, Officers consider it to be a suitable balance of making effective use of the land, and taking into consideration the character and density patterns of the surrounding area.
- 5.9 In conclusion, Officers consider that the development would make efficient use of the land and would assimilate into its surroundings given the design, scale, layout, materials and landscaping proposed.

5.10 **Residential Amenity**

A number of objections have been received from neighbouring properties regarding the effect that the proposal would have in terms of amenity. Officers have carefully considered all of the points raised, a number of site visits have been undertaken including to properties in Fyfield Close and Harecourt, and the proposal has been amended in response to the comments received.

- 5.11 Officers fully acknowledge that the context of the site will change. The school buildings and playing fields will be replaced by residential development, which is a significant change to the outlook experienced by all the neighbouring properties for a number of years. Officers are sympathetic to this, although the change in itself is not a reason to refuse permission - the principle of 150 dwellings on this site has already been established by the outline consent.
- 5.12 However, there are a number of measures that must be adhered to in order to render the development acceptable in planning terms. 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.
- 5.13 In addition, design principles DG63-64 of the Design Guide SPD 2015 pertain to amenity, privacy and overlooking. The Design Guide requires the following standards to be met in order to protect privacy and avoid any harmful overlooking:

- 21 metre distance between upper floor facing habitable room windows;

- 12 metre distance between an upper floor habitable room window and a flank side elevation;
- 5.14 To the north of the site are properties in Harecourt, Lyneham Court and Charlton Road. All of the dwellings meet the required standards as set out above and these have been re-checked and confirmed with the applicant's agent.
- 5.15 To the east are properties in Fyfield Close. These dwellings have shorter than normal rear gardens and as such the application scheme has been amended to enlarge the rear gardens of the proposed dwellings which will back onto these houses in Fyfield Close. All distances between properties now adhere to the required 21 metre distance as above.
- 5.16 The scheme has also been amended to remove two properties located very close to the boundary alongside 8 and 10 Fyfield Close over concerns relating to dominance. The layout has been amended to re-locate these two units elsewhere on the site.
- 5.17 Adherence to the 21-metre distance requirement will ensure that no harmful overlooking occurs. Back-to-back arrangements of dwellings is a highly common arrangement and is prevalent throughout the area. While this will present a different outlook to the open fields and school buildings currently on the site, the distance between the properties is sufficient to ensure that no loss of amenity would occur as a result of the proposal.
- 5.18 Number 36 Fyfield Close is located at the south-east corner of the site. It is at a higher land level than the application site. The northern boundary (side) of number 36 Fyfield Close would adjoin the southern boundary (side) of plot number 81.
- 5.19 Given that the proposed dwellings would be located to the north, there would be no harmful overshadowing of number 36 or its garden area. Following clarification regarding levels on the site; Officers requested that the land not be built up here to ensure that the proposed dwellings were set down in height by approximately 1 metre in order to reduce their impact. This has now been confirmed by the agent for the application. A condition requiring slab level details is recommended to secure this.
- 5.20 While not a material planning consideration, Officers fully acknowledge the concerns raised by the occupiers of number 36 Fyfield Road regarding the retaining wall structure that will be required to be constructed alongside their boundary and the potential effects of this on their dwelling and boundary planting.
- 5.21 It will be the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that construction procedures are carried out with due care and to proper standards to ensure no harmful effects on any of the surrounding properties. Any and all other relevant legislation, such as the Party Wall Act, will also have to be adhered to.

- 5.22 The matters able to be controlled by planning legislation, such as ensuring development does not overlook, overshadow or dominate neighbouring properties, have been fully taken into consideration and Officers do not consider that the proposal would be harmful.
- 5.23 The properties to the south of the site, in Springfield Road, have larger rear gardens. The minimum required distance of 21 metres is met, and exceeded, here.
- 5.24 Due to the site being adjacent to existing residential development, it is considered reasonable and necessary to seek that construction work be kept to specific hours: (8am and 6pm on Mondays to Fridays and 8am to 1pm on Saturdays. No work on Sundays and Public Holidays). A condition to secure this is recommended.
- 5.25 A construction traffic management plan would also assist in mitigating against these temporary effects in setting out certain parameters for the construction phase, for example delivery times and wheel washing. This is a condition attached to the outline consent (P15/V2952/O).
- 5.26 Overall, officers are satisfied that the proposal is able to come forward without resulting in harm to existing neighbouring properties in terms of overlooking, dominance, loss of light, noise or disturbance and that adequate amenity standards could be achieved within the site.
- 5.27 **Landscape**
One of the most significant objections raised has been the apparent loss of a 5-metre-wide 'landscape buffer' around the entire site. This was shown indicatively on the illustrative outline proposals, but was not approved as part of this application. Officers also understand that it may have been part of community consultation paraphernalia distributed prior to the submission of any applications.
- 5.28 The outline consent only approved matters relating to access; it did not approve layout or landscaping. The reserved matters as proposed here does not include a landscape buffer around the site.
- 5.29 In planning terms, a 5-metre-wide continuous corridor between enclosed private gardens would raise concerns from a safety and security perspective. As set out in saved policy DC3 of the Local Plan 2011, principles of natural surveillance and territoriality (delineating public from private space) are fundamental to designing areas to increase security and deter crime. This would not clearly delineate public from private space and would not receive adequate overlooking and natural surveillance opportunities in all areas. It would also raise concerns over management and maintenance issues.
- 5.30 However, in response to the objections raised by residents, amended plans were sought which elongated the rear gardens to the properties along the eastern boundary and additional landscaping was included within these rear gardens to soften the visual impact of development.

- 5.31 The application is supported by a detailed landscape plan. The proposed layout includes two main areas of public open space including a play area and landscaping as well as a number of areas of additional incidental open space and planting to create a softer green character to the streets and spaces and to aid enclosure and provide visual interest to the development.
- 5.32 Planting is used to frame the public open spaces, aid the assimilation of parking and hard-standing areas and create a green corridor through the development. Additional tree planting is requested by the landscape officer and can be secured by way of condition.
- 5.33 The application states that 15% open space is provided. Officers acknowledge there are two large areas and some smaller areas of public open space being provided, but would highlight that the northern area of public open space is also to be used as a SUDs basin. This means that it would not be available as useable open space at times when it is in use for drainage purposes.
- 5.34 Therefore, while the requisite amount of green space is provided by the development, at certain times the north-eastern area would not be able to be used due to its dual-use as a SUDS attenuation basin.
- 5.35 At the times that this was not able to be used, the provision would be around 11%. This is an under-provision which weighs into the planning balance. Officers are mindful that this would only be at times when the attenuation basin was needed, and of the site's location within the built area of Wantage and within walking distance to other open spaces in the town. The central area of open space also provides a significant area to use for recreation and leisure facilities as well as providing a play area. The layout also provides opportunities for circular walking routes.
- 5.36 Given these considerations, Officers consider the mitigation measures in terms of alternative provision acceptable in mitigating against the under-provision.
- 5.37 **Trees**
A number of trees would be removed to facilitate the development. While a number of these have been assessed to be of low value, four mature black pine trees would be lost which have a high classification and public amenity value. The tree officer is concerned about their loss and would have preferred the layout to have included these trees.
- 5.38 In negotiations with the applicant's agent on this point, it has been explained that the layout has had to come forward in its current form due to the constraints of the site including where the SUDs attenuation basin has to be located.
- 5.39 Officers consider that the loss of the mature trees weighs against the proposal and must be weighed in the planning balance. In providing replacement significant tree planting (to be secured by way of condition), this assists in mitigating against the loss.

5.40 An arboricultural method statement including tree protection plan for retained trees has been secured by way of condition on the outline consent (P15/V2952/O).

5.41 **Traffic, parking and highway safety**

Access to the site was assessed and approved as part of the outline consent granted in August 2016. This application assessed the transport and traffic implications of the scheme and the means of access the site. However, matters relating to the layout such as parking are relevant within this application.

5.42 Oxfordshire County Council raise no objections to the application, subject to conditions.

5.43 There is an adequate number of parking spaces for the proposed dwellings within the site. However, the number of visitor spaces being provided is less than OCC standards.

5.44 Amended plans have increased the number of visitor parking spaces to 15. In direct response to objections received, these additional spaces are to be provided in 'grass-crete' or a similar material to aid assimilation into the landscaped areas.

5.45 While Oxfordshire County Council have noted that the amount of visitor spaces is below the recommended standard; they have not raised an objection.

5.46 Officers have reviewed the plans carefully. A number of the dwellings propose more allocated parking spaces than the minimum standards. For example, many of the three bedroom properties have three allocated spaces; rather than just two. These additional spaces would reduce the requirement for additional visitor spaces.

5.47 In addition, consideration must be given to the site's highly sustainable location within the built area of Wantage, one of the District's main towns. The site is within walking distance of a services and facilities, and bus stops connecting to a number of other settlements like Didcot, Oxford and beyond.

5.48 Therefore, taking these points into consideration Officers are satisfied with the amount of parking provision when taken as a whole for the site. Given that the highway authority has no objection to the application, Officers are unable to support a refusal on this basis.

5.49 The retention of garages for parking provision has been secured by way of condition on the outline consent (P15/V2952/O).

5.50 An amended tracking plan has been submitted to demonstrate that an 11.6m long refuse vehicle would be able to manoeuvre within the site.

5.51 The residential street network includes a long straight alignment which it is advised contains a traffic calming measure to aim to restrict vehicle speeds to

below 20mph. It is more advisable to seek this via design rather than enforcement. The proposed site layout plan does include a raised table and a horizontal deflection zone on the main route. Details of these traffic calming measures can be secured by way of condition, and this is recommended.

5.52 The local highway authority has reviewed the application and have raised no objections. Officers are satisfied that the proposal would not post a risk to highway safety and would provide safe and convenient access and parking.

5.53 **Flood risk and drainage**

Flood risk and drainage matters were considered as part of the outline consent. The site is within flood zone 1, the lowest risk category, and a sustainable drainage scheme was agreed by condition as part of that consent.

5.54 This application is supported by an updated flood risk assessment which concludes that the development will not increase flood risk to the wider catchment area as a result of suitable management of the surface water runoff discharging from the site. The application proposes to incorporate surface water attenuation and storage.

5.55 An amended sustainable urban drainage scheme is now proposed. The drainage engineer raises no objections to this, subject to the details being secured by way of condition. This condition is recommended here and with its inclusion, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in respect of flood risk and drainage.

5.56 **Affordable housing and mix**

The development provides 40% affordable housing because the outline consent was granted prior to the adoption of the Local Plan 2031 Part 1. This was secured via the S106 legal agreement as part of the outline consent. The affordable units are pepper-potted around the site in clusters of no more than 15 units, which is in line with the housing team’s requirements.

5.57 The market housing mix proposed is as follows:

| | 1 bedroom | 2 bedrooms | 3 bedrooms | 4+ bedrooms |
|------------|-----------|------------|------------|-------------|
| | 4 | 21 | 26 | 39 |
| % proposed | 4.5% | 23.3% | 28.9% | 43.3% |
| % SHMA | 5.9% | 21.7% | 42.6% | 29.8% |

5.58 This mix delivers on the smaller units; providing slightly more 2 beds than the SHMA requires. This is a positive element of the scheme which weighs into the planning balance. The number of three and four bedrooms are not as in line with the SHMA figures; there are less three beds proposed and more four beds.

5.59 The SHMA contains estimated figures. Paragraph 7.35 of the SHMA states: *“...we do not strongly believe that such prescriptive figures should be included*

in the plan making process and that the “market” is to some degree a better judge of what is the most appropriate profile of homes to deliver at any point in time.”

5.60 Overall, Officers consider that the proposed mix is a suitable approach to the site taking into account the specific site context, including dwelling types and density in the surrounding area. It provides the smaller units for the town which would be expected of a sustainable town location.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 This application has been assessed on its merits, against the requirements of the adopted Local Plan 2031 Part 1, saved policies of the adopted Local Plan 2011 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

6.2 The principle of development, means of access to the site, affordable housing and financial contributions have been assessed and secured via the extant outline consent ref P15/V2952/O.

6.3 The reserved matters – appearance, scale, layout and landscaping – have all been assessed in details and these detailed elements of the scheme are considered to be acceptable.

6.4 The development would provide 150 new dwellings for the area, including 60 affordable dwellings. The scale, design, materials and layout of the scheme respond to the character and appearance of the local area.

6.5 Limited harm has been identified in the loss of four mature black pines trees and under-provision of fully usable open space at all times due to the dual-use of SUDS areas within some of the green space. Mitigation is proposed in terms of a replacement planting scheme and a large accessible central area of useable open space with play area, as well as the site being highly sustainably located to access the town and alternative recreation areas.

6.6 Overall and in the planning balance, the benefits of the scheme particularly in providing housing towards the District’s sustainable growth strategy, particularly a high number of affordable units and smaller sized units, and provision of contributions towards local infrastructure secured via the outline consent which will have local and wider benefits, are considered to outweigh the limited harm that has been identified. Consequently, the application is recommended for approval subject to conditions.

The following planning policies have been taken into account:

Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1

- CP01 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CP02 - Cooperation on Unmet Housing Need for Oxfordshire
- CP03 - Settlement Hierarchy
- CP04 - Meeting Our Housing Needs

CP05 - Housing Supply Ring-Fence
CP07 - Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services
CP15 - Spatial Strategy for South East Vale Sub-Area
CP22 - Housing Mix
CP23 - Housing Density
CP24 - Affordable Housing
CP33 - Promoting Sustainable Transport and Accessibility
CP35 - Promoting Public Transport, Cycling and Walking
CP37 - Design and Local Distinctiveness
CP38 - Design Strategies for Strategic and Major Development Sites
CP42 - Flood Risk
CP44 - Landscape
CP45 - Green Infrastructure
CP46 - Conservation and Improvement of Biodiversity
CP47 - Delivery and Contingency

Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 saved policies

DC3 - Design Against Crime
DC5 - Access
DC6 - Landscaping
DC7 - Waste Collection and Recycling
DC9 - The Impact of Development on Neighbouring Uses
DC10 - The Effect of Neighbouring or Previous Uses on New Development
DC12 - Water Quality and Resources
H23 - Open Space in New Housing Development
HE10 – Archaeology

Emerging Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 2

The draft local plan part 2 is not currently adopted policy. The plan has yet to be examined and therefore at present it is officers' opinion that the emerging Local Plan carries very limited weight for decision making at this stage.

Neighbourhood Plan

Wantage Town Council are working on a neighbourhood plan. In 2016, the independent examiner inspecting the Wantage Neighbourhood Plan recommended that the plan shouldn't proceed to a referendum. A revised neighbourhood plan has yet to be submitted. Accordingly at this time, no weight can be given to this plan.

Vale of White Horse Design Guide SPD 2015

National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Policy Guidance

Equality Act 2010 (Section 149)

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

Human Rights Act 1998

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.

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