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<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	<a href="#">P18/V1179/CM</a>
<b>SITE</b>	North of the A420 Botley Road to south of the A423 ring road
<b>PARISH</b>	North Hinksey
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	A flood alleviation scheme to reduce flood risk in Oxford.
<b>WARD MEMBER(S)</b>	Debby Hallett Emily Smith Edward Blagrove Bob Johnston
<b>APPLICANT OFFICER</b>	Oxfordshire County Council Adrian Butler

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

I recommend that the following comments are made to Oxfordshire County Council:

- 1. This council has no objection in principle.**
- 2. This council is concerned the proposals may have a negative impact on biodiversity and could have an adverse impact on Egrove Park Meadow Local Wildlife Site (LWS). The County Council should seek additional information to:**
  - **Clearly demonstrate that the overall result of the proposals can deliver a net gain for biodiversity. To do this the Environment Agency should use a biodiversity impact calculator following the methodology developed by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs as part of the biodiversity offsetting pilot scheme; and**
  - **Information should be provided for the area around Egrove Park Meadow LWS so that the conclusions in the environmental statement (ES) can be checked and verified.**
- 3. A revised heritage impact assessment should be submitted to assess:**
  - **The age and time layering of views. The heritage value of trees in the views needs to be clearly ascertained and a deeper understanding of views provided such that a reasoned assessment and proposal methodology can be followed. This would best be provided in a sequence of historic map overlays with views clearly marked and which should cover the JMW Turner views and those once perceived by John Ruskin and his followers in North Hinksey; and**
  - **Explain how the case for tree removal and re-planting and the position of new planting is arrived at with regard to the proposed planting of 9.7ha of new woodland to replace up to 398 individual trees or groups of trees; and**

- **Research on the network of routes criss-crossing the proposal site should be carried out such that their significance nationally, regionally and locally can be better understood and more effective proposals made for their retention, enhancement and appreciation.**
- 4. The landscape and visual assessment reassesses the impact of the proposed scheme on North Hinksey Village and the area of land between Botley Road and Willow walk and also the proposed mitigation planting.**
  - 5. The proposed planting is revisited so it better reflects the local landscape character and screens existing development particularly that on Botley Road.**
  - 6. The design of the Willow Walk and Devils Backbone are revisited to reduce their engineered appearance.**
  - 7. Should the County Council be minded to approve the application at least the following planning conditions should be imposed to require:**
    - **A detailed landscaping scheme, its implementation, and maintenance**
    - **Alternative bridge designs and materials to be submitted and agreed for Willow Walk and the Devil’s Backbone crossings**
    - **Restrict working to 07:30-18:00 Monday to Friday and 08:00-13:00 on a Saturday; and no work to take place on Sundays or Public Holidays**
    - **Require a Construction Environmental Management Plan to be agreed**
    - **Require a Construction Traffic Management Plan to be agreed**
    - **The developer to notify the County Council of the presence of any unsuspected contamination encountered during the development. In the event of any contamination to the land and/or water being encountered, no development shall continue until a programme of investigation and/or remedial works to include methods of monitoring and certification of such works undertaken has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.**

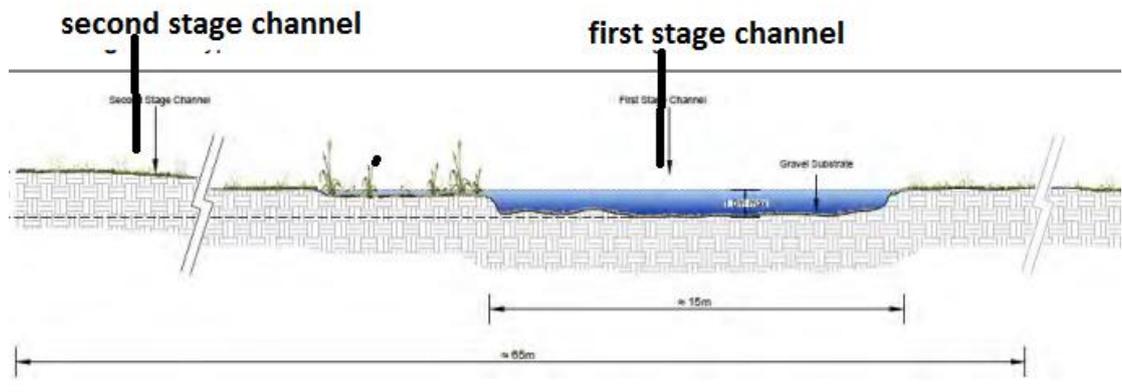
## **1.0 INTRODUCTION AND PROPOSAL**

- 1.1** This report relates to an application submitted to Oxfordshire County Council which will be the determining authority. This council is a consultee. Oxfordshire County Council has sought this council’s comments on the proposals.

- 1.2 The application has been submitted by the Environment Agency. The proposal includes development north of Botley Road and east of Seacourt park and ride, south of Botley Road and east of North Hinksey, South Hinksey and Kennington. The development includes land within this council's and Oxford City Council's jurisdictions. My report relates only to development within the Vale of White Horse District.
- 1.3 The Environment Agency summarise the proposal as follows:  
*“Construction of a new channel, between the A34 to the west and the railway to the east, to the west of Oxford city centre. The channel will extend for a length of approximately 5km, south-easterly from the confluence of the Botley and Seacourt Streams lying approximately 0.6km north of Botley Road, to just south of Kennington (approximately 0.3km south of the A423 ring road). The new channel will carry excess flow from the Seacourt Stream, Bulstake Stream and Hinksey Stream channels during a flood event, thereby reducing the water level in the main River Thames and so reducing the frequency of flooding in built-up areas.*  
*The channel will comprise two stages:*
- *First stage channel – this will be the inner part of the channel which will be permanently wet and carry flowing water all of the time; and*
  - *Second (or 'two-stage') channel – this will be created by lowering the ground between 1m and 1.5m to one or both sides of the first stage channel. The second stage channel will be dry for most of the time but when river levels are sufficiently high, water will flow along the second stage channel. This may occur regularly during wetter periods, especially during the winter months. During large flood events, the fields in the existing floodplain around the new channel will also continue to be inundated...In some local areas, a second stage channel will be constructed without a first stage channel and vice versa;*
- *Provision of new flood defences (embankments and walls) to protect properties which would otherwise continue to flood even with the reduced river levels;*
  - *Provision of new culverts and bridges to cross highways and footpaths to maintain access routes;*
  - *Installation of flood gates for access (under normal, non-flood conditions) through the new defences noted above;*
  - *Creation of new and/or improved habitat for flora, fauna and fisheries, where it does not compromise flood defence or other environmental features; and*
  - *Removal of Towles Mill, in conjunction with a separate scheme at the upstream end of the Seacourt Stream, this will facilitate fish passage around Oxford for the first time in over a century.*

*The proposals will reduce the risk of flooding for around 1,500 properties and key infrastructure such as transport links and utilities”.*

- 1.4 An example cross section through the channels is shown below:



- 1.5 The works include new ‘flood protection’ embankments and a wall to the north and eastern edges of South Hinksey with these varying in height owing to land levels from about 0.5m to 3m.
- 1.6 It is anticipated the works will take some 3 years. Of the material excavated some will be used in the flood defence works although some 364,128 cubic metres will be removed from the site to restoration sites via the A34.
- 1.7 Main access routes to the site will be from the A34 via the Botley Road/West Way, the South Hinksey interchange on the A34 and Old Abingdon Road and the A4144 Abingdon Road. The site plan is **attached** as Appendix 1.

## 2.0 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS ON CURRENT SUBMISSION

- 2.1 A copy of all responses received will be sent to the County Council for their consideration. Below is a summary of the responses received to the current submission is below. A full copy of all the comments made can be seen online at [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk)

Conservation officer
<p>Support in principle:                      This is subject to the following details to either be provided pre-determination or secured by condition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The provision of an updated and enhanced Heritage Impact Assessment regarding views and referencing Historic England’s Seeing History in the View and settings guidance</li> <li>• The provision of a Historic Routes Report relating to Oxford City and routes from the west in the Vale in particular</li> <li>• Redesign of the bridge at Willow Walk to achieve a more</li> </ul>

- sensitive solution better tailored to the rural location
- Details of the materials and finishes of Willow Walk and the other bridges

The conservation officer advises that she would have preferred to have first seen evidence of traditional methods of water management- hedging, ditching, stream clearance etc having been tried and tested and found to be wanting before the application for a much larger scheme with more widespread consequences for the built and natural environments.

#### Countryside officer

##### Comments:

These comments relate specifically to the impacts of the proposals on important habitats within the area of the scheme falling within the district.

The applicant needs to clearly demonstrate that the overall result of the proposals can deliver a net gain for biodiversity in accordance with the main aims of the scheme and core policy 46 of the Local Plan 2031 Part 1.

The accepted way of achieving this is to use a Biodiversity Impact Calculator following the methodology developed by Defra as part of the Biodiversity Offsetting pilot scheme. Using this calculator results in a + (net gain) or - (net loss) figure expressed in biodiversity units.

The information presented in table 8.4 of the Environmental Statement (ES) does not follow this format and does not provide evidence of the likely outcome of the scheme in a format that is widely understood. The information will need to include the details of the calculations so that these can be verified. In addition, information should be provided for the area around Egrove Park Meadow LWS so that the conclusions in the ES can be checked and verified.

#### Landscape officer

##### Comments:

##### **Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment**

The scheme will result in the loss of the majority of planting and trees located on the western side of Botley Road Retail Park. This planting helps reduce the impact of buildings on the Seacourt Nature Reserve, and the land to the south towards Willow Walk. It also helps soften views eastwards from North Hinksey Village across the Greenbelt and Flood Plain to the eastern edge of Oxford.

The submitted Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment does not cover the impact of the loss of these trees in both Landscape

Character and Visual Impact terms. There is no proposal to replace the loss of these trees and vegetation in the planting plans at the western and south-western corner of the Botley Road Retail Park. Although there are proposals for woodland planting on the southern side of the business park, again the majority of existing vegetation is removed opening views to these units until the woodland establishes. Replacement planting is needed.

The submitted viewpoints do not represent the full changes in the area. They are predominately angled down the scheme southwards, with no reverse views of viewpoints such as 6 and 7 to illustrate the impacts on views to the north and east and the proposed interface with Botley Road Retail Park.

The LVIA also does not fully cover the impacts of the scheme for North Hinksey Village. The representative viewpoint from Hinksey Lane is taken from a location where the road drops close to the streamside vegetation, rather than the higher section of the road to the north, which illustrate more open views across the allotments, the Greenbelt and the flood alleviation area to Botley Road Retail Park. The removal of vegetation on the eastern side of the watercourse will also have an impact of the openness of this view.

### **Planting Scheme**

The proposed planting scheme does not reflect the proposed character and existing character of the Flood Alleviation Scheme.

More variation in the planting mixes is needed to represent different types of woodland such as wet woodland. i.e. neither of the proposed woodland mix or woodland edge mix contains any proposed willow species. The proposed hedgerow mix contains a better distribution of species that I would expect to see in the woodland edge mix.

The choice of specimen species planted close to the proposed watercourses are not species that are traditionally associated with watercourses such as *Acer pseudoplatanus*, Sycamore. A number of ash are proposed which is not a species that is currently recommended for planting.

The landscape character assessment of the area picks up the east/ west features of the site including hedgerows and vegetation lines, many of these will be lost with the implement of the two-stage channel. However, there are areas of tree and shrub planting proposed associated with the channels, currently these are evenly distributed but there may be possibilities to cluster the proposed planting to echo the lost sections of

hedgerows.

### **Bridges**

The proposed bridges for Willow Walk and Devils Backbone, will have an impact on the character of these footpath routes.

- The width of the bridge at 7.4m is considerably wider than the current footpath route. While the change in openness is a result of passing over the flood channel and cannot be mitigated, the additional excessive change in width will have a negative change in route character and could be adjusted.
- The proposed design of the bridge with raised concrete upstands on which the railings are bolted with an associated 1.1m wide kerbed verge results in a very engineered appearance to the bridge compared to a bridge with a simple deck profile which allows a much better visual relationship from the bridge to the landscape in which the bridge is set and reducing the change in the character of the footpath.

### **Other Comments**

- The text refers to the use of palisade fencing, if weldmesh fencing could be used in its place, this is less industrial in character and more visually recessive.
- South Hinksey flood walls, the faces are proposed to be clad in Cotswold stone but blue brick bullnose coping. Could the materials of the coping be looked at to be more sympathetic with the Cotswold stone facing.
- Nearly all grading throughout the scheme is proposed with 1 in 3 slopes. Variation in the slopes grading would help with the integration of the features into the adjacent landscape.

### **Recommendation:**

- The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has not adequately explored the impact of the proposed development on the Landscape Character and Visual Impacts with regards to the section of land between the Botley Road and Willow Walk including North Hinksey Village.
- The proposed planting scheme is inappropriate with regards to the species choice and location of planting.
- The designs of the Willow Walk and Devils Backbone bridge are inappropriate.

Forestry Officer

No comments received.

Environmental protection team (noise)

Recommends working hours are restricted to 07:30-18:00 Monday to Friday and 08:00-13:00 on a Saturday; and no work to take place on Sundays or Public Holidays.

#### Health and Housing

Recommends conditions:

- incorporating a dust management plan within a Construction Environmental Management Plan
- contractors to use only Euro VI vehicles or better and in accordance with a Construction Traffic Management Plan agreed by the relevant highway authorities, which includes avoidance of peak traffic hours.

#### Health and Housing (contaminated land)

Recommends a condition:

- The developer shall confirm in writing to the Local Planning Authority the presence of any unsuspected contamination encountered during the development. In the event of any contamination to the land and/or water being encountered, no development shall continue until a programme of investigation and/or remedial works to include methods of monitoring and certification of such works undertaken has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

#### Residents and interest groups

Letters have been received from five local residents or representatives of interest groups. Their objections may be summarised as follows:

- The proposal and felling of 17 trees will destroy the rural feel of Willow Walk as a walkway and amenity
- Felling of scores of trees beside Seacourt Stream will open an industrial estate to views to local residents
- Bridge for Willow Walk is too large
- Waterways should be dredged
- Something better and more cost effective could be designed
- The scheme will still result in Osney Island flooding in 1 in a 100-year peak flooding event. Other areas such as the entrances to Seacourt park and ride, Botley allotments and Bridge Street will all flood in lesser flood events
- Flood defences need to be critically examined
- An extension to Seacourt park and ride needs to be modelled
- A pinch point under Old Abingdon Road will lead to water pooling as the pinch point can only flow at around 35 cubic metres a second
- Alternatives need to be considered including removing the secondary channel

- A secondary channel is experimental and untried in the UK
- An alternative removing the channel but installing the rest of the scheme would still offer protection for most properties but cost half as much - arguments for dismissing this alternative are weak
- Economic costs of omitting the channel have not been provided
- Excavating the channel in the Green Belt results in taller bridges, more access roads which will disrupt established views
- Excavating the channel will have a negative impact on biodiversity, as will the loss of existing waterways to the south
- New habitats could be invaded by masses of the same species
- Scheme takes up 2ha of historic flood meadow at Hinksey Meadow and threatens the whole 10ha flood meadow
- A proposed 10ha meadow will take 60-80 years to become established but is used by the Environment Agency as an important part of its calculation of net increase in biodiversity
- Some 4,000 trees will be lost with a major effect on the landscape and for wildlife and other plants
- Critical tree works should be subject to a condition that they are supervised by a qualified arboriculturalist with the aim of saving as many as possible
- Question whether the proposal is sustainable development
- Doesn't take account of the Green Belt location or protect it
- Alternative temporary public access should be provided whilst Willow Walk bridge is replaced
- Bridge design should be suitable for pedestrian, cyclist and equestrian use
- No flood risk assessment submitted
- Loss of best and most versatile land
- Loss of trees, hedges, water courses, water features, water meadows
- Impact on minerals
- Traffic movements are a concern
- Impact on an equestrian business
- Question the number of houses that might be protected. This could be significantly less than claimed
- Contrary to the Local Plan 2031 Part 1, Minerals and Waste Local Plan and possibly legislation

### **3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

#### **3.1 P17/V/1752/PEM - Other Outcome (25/07/2017)**

Request for pre-planning application advice by the Environment Agency for the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme - Land Raising at Land South of Hinksey Heights

#### **3.2 P17/V/1751/PEM - Other Outcome (21/07/2017)**

Request for pre-planning application advice by the Environment Agency for the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme at Land from North of Botley Road to New Hinksey in the parishes of North Hinksey, South Hinksey and Kennington.

### **4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)**

#### **4.1 The application is supported by an Environmental Impact Assessment which covers at least the following topics:**

- Biodiversity
- Heritage
- Landscape and visual
- Traffic and transport
- Recreation and public access
- Air quality
- Noise and vibration

### **5.0 MAIN ISSUES**

#### **5.1 Planning considerations include:**

1. The principle of the Development
2. Heritage Assets
3. Biodiversity
4. Landscape and Visual
5. Trees
6. Air Quality
7. Land Contamination

5.2 Traffic and transport will be an important consideration. This council does not have highway engineers; it is reliant on County Council highway engineers for advice. Therefore, I do not intend to address this issue but will leave it to the County Council to be informed by its own highway officers. Likewise, in respect of public rights of way I note the temporary closures and diversions and some permanent closures. The County Council has rights of way officers who will advise on them matter.

#### **The Principle of the Development**

5.3 There are no specific policies in this council's Local Plan that relate to the principle of this type of development. Core policy 1 of the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 will support sustainable development.

5.4 The NPPF sets out three dimensions for sustainable development being its economic, environmental and social roles.

- 5.5 The proposal has an economic role with job creation (some 100 jobs according to the Environment Agency). There will be significant expenditure in the economy through contracts for the works. The proposal has an economic role.
- 5.6 The council's countryside officer has expressed some doubts about the scheme improving biodiversity. The proposal seeks to re-use excavated materials in the scheme although a significant amount of material will need to be removed from the site using HGV's. Traffic generation and resultant pollution can have a negative environmental impact. Impacts for heritage assets are largely negligible or less than substantial although for archaeology beneath the Old Abingdon Road bridge, the effect is substantial. The proposal has a significant environmental role to make in seeking to mitigate flooding and in seeking to adapt for climate change.
- 5.7 The proposal has a significant social role in seeking to mitigate flood events for local residents and businesses. It can provide improved recreational opportunities whilst safeguarding existing rights of way.
- 5.8 It is considered the proposal can constitute sustainable development which in principle can be supported by core policy 1 of the Local Plan 2031 Part 1.
- 5.9 The site is within the Green Belt. Whilst the mineral extraction and engineering operations may not be considered inappropriate development in the Green Belt (paragraph 90 of the NPPF), some of the buildings e.g. bridges could be interpreted as inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The Environment Agency has presented special circumstances to justify the proposal including the need and benefits of the flood alleviation scheme itself which include flood protection for some 3,431 homes, businesses and main transport routes within Oxford.
- 5.10 The Green Belt exists to serve five purposes:
- I. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
  - II. To prevent neighbouring towns merging;
  - III. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
  - IV. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns;
  - V. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 5.11 I do not consider the proposals conflict with these aims. Special circumstances have been demonstrated and the proposal is considered to comply with core policy 13 of the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 and the NPPF.

### **Heritage Assets**

- 5.12 The proposal, as acknowledged in the heritage statement supporting the application would visually and physically alter the character of the historic landscape and impact on the setting of numerous heritage assets including listed buildings, conservation areas of North and South Hinksey and scheduled monument at Old Abingdon Road. Historic routes together with views to and from Oxford city and inwards and outwards from North Hinksey and South Hinksey would also be impacted. The harm has been identified as less than substantial apart from the impacts on archaeology at Old Abingdon Road, where substantial harm has been identified. The County Council needs to apply significant weight to these impacts in determining the application.
- 5.13 Over time the application site has changed and would evolve still more under the flood alleviation scheme. The removal of trees for example from the banks opposite North and South Hinksey and along Willow Walk would open up views over the flood plain and between heritage assets. This could be a positive change from the point of view of opening up historic views. Conversely, tree removal might open up less desirable views into industrial estates and built up areas and rather than bring enhancements, detract. Therefore, the age and time layering of views and heritage/trees in the views needs to be clearly ascertained and a deeper understanding of views provided in an updated Heritage Impact Assessment such that a reasoned assessment and proposal methodology can be followed. This would best be provided in a sequence of historic map overlays with views clearly marked. Significant views to assess include:
- JMW Turner views; and,
  - Those once perceived by John Ruskin and his followers in North Hinksey
- 5.14 New footbridges primarily with wood decking and with galvanised steel uprights with a hardwood timber edge in neutral colour are proposed. It is considered a simpler pallet of materials avoiding the exposed use of galvanised steel could be used to retain the semi-rural character of the area.
- 5.15 To protect the settings of the North and South Hinksey conservation areas the flood meadows that are appreciated from Willow Walk and other bridges and renowned for their species rich grassland need to be protected.
- 5.16 Historic routes are identified and proposed to be retained. However, the west/east routes into and out of Oxford have the potential to reveal more about the early settlement of Oxford, trade, communications etc. As part of the understanding to be gained during the course of this scheme research on the network of routes criss-crossing the proposal site should be carried out such that their significance nationally,

regionally and locally can be better understood and more effective proposals made for their retention, enhancement and appreciation.

### **Biodiversity**

- 5.17 Two Local Wildlife Sites are situated within the Vale area of the application site these being Kennington Pool and Egrove Park Meadow. Kennington Pool will be significantly impacted by the proposals resulting in the loss of approximately 52% of the current site area. The remainder of the site is proposed to be enhanced through habitat management works, although this will not compensate for the overall loss of habitat.
- 5.18 It is unclear from the information provided what the impacts of the proposals would be on Egrove Park Meadow. The only reference found in the submission suggests that it is immediately adjacent to a haul route. Other sections of the route within the district will lead to the loss of a variety of priority habitats including floodplain grazing marsh, lowland mixed deciduous woodland, priority habitat semi-improved neutral grassland and wet woodland.
- 5.19 Core Policy 46 of the Local Plan Part 1 calls for development proposals to achieve a net gain in biodiversity if possible but as a minimum to avoid a net loss. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that if the overall scheme can achieve a net gain then the losses at individual sites and habitats are acceptable as the scheme will deliver greater biodiversity benefits in the long run.
- 5.20 Unfortunately, the Environmental Statement (ES) does not provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the scheme can deliver a net gain for biodiversity, in fact it is not possible given the evidence presented in chapter 8.2.2 and table 8.4 of the ES to determine if the scheme can avoid a net loss of biodiversity. If the figures presented in table 8.4 are totalled, then the proposals would cause a loss of 61.07ha of important habitats and only create an additional 53.25 ha of new habitats. In addition, there would be a loss of 1,140 metres of hedgerow. This suggests that the proposals would result in an overall net loss of biodiversity.

### **Landscape and Visual**

- 5.21 Saved policy NE8 gives priority to preserving Oxford's landscape setting and seeks to resist development that harms the landscape setting or obscures or detracts from an important view of the skyline of collegiate Oxford particularly within the views cones identified in the Local Plan 2011.
- 5.22 A view cone exists to the west of South Hinksey which allows views eastwards across the application site to Oxford's spires. Construction of the flood alleviation scheme will result in earth movements, storage, machinery and welfare buildings being on site together with access roads. These will be visible in the foreground to middle ground of views

eastwards although views tend to be over the application site towards the spires. There will be a temporary negative impact for the views during construction works. Following construction views will be maintained and potentially improved with the loss of trees.

- 5.23 The arboricultural statement accompanying the application advises 300 trees and 52 tree groups are proposed for removal with a further 25 tree groups partially removed. Of these it is advised that 163 trees and six tree groups are removed as they are unsuited to long-term retention. Loss of trees could open views towards the centre of Oxford better revealing its heritage assets. New tree planting is needed including against the commercial units on Botley Road. Subject to appropriate landscaping that can be secured by condition the scheme can be made saved policy NE8 compliant.
- 5.24 The site is criss-crossed by public rights of way and there are views over the site from local roads. The construction works will have a significant landscape and visual effect over a three-year period. This is unavoidable for a scheme of this magnitude.
- 5.25 The September 2017 Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) for the district identifies that part of the application site in this district as primarily within the Landscape Character type “River Floodplain (RF5) - North Hinksey to Radley Thames River Floodplain”. Positive landscape features identified in the LCA include:
- Pastoral, largely peaceful landscapes, along the meandering watercourses of the Thames, Ock, and their tributaries.
  - Open water bodies.
  - Varying widths of low-lying river floodplains.
  - Sparsely settled, with a limited number of roads and small groups of traditional dwellings located at river crossings. Elsewhere, the River Floodplain provides a setting to built up areas.
  - Riparian vegetation and land use, such as waterside meadows, wet woodland, and occasional marsh and fen habitats.
  - A network of ditches with ditch line willows and alder.
  - Historic river crossings, including listed bridges.
  - Waterborne recreation
- 5.26 The landscape strategy for this area is to conserve the rural, secluded areas of landscape with its river channels, pasture, and wetlands, and resist further encroachment of development along the edges of the Thames and Ock towards the east of the District. Forces for change/sensitivities/pressures include the following:
- Decline in active management of meadows and pasture on the floodplain and conversion to arable farming
  - Poor maintenance and loss of field boundaries, resulting in gaps in hedgerows.

- Lack of pollarding and loss of boundary willows.
- Extensive gravel extraction with restoration at various stages.
- Encroachment from urban edge development along the edges of settlements within the east of the District.
- Increased demand for moorings.
- Overhead pylons crossing the area

- 5.27 The scheme does not result in urban edge encroachment, increased demand for moorings or staged restoration of gravel extraction works.
- 5.28 It will be important to ensure the scheme does not result in a decline in the management of meadows and pasture and particularly that meadow land is adequately replaced if not enhanced. An opportunity exists to replace hedges lost and to fill existing gaps, to enhance and restore riparian vegetation, individual riverbank trees, blocks of woodland and improve new access links for leisure. Any potential for pylon and overhead line removal should be taken.
- 5.29 Overall, the scheme provides an opportunity for landscape benefits and can be made core policies 37, 38 and 44 of the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 and saved policies DC6 and NE8 compliant through the imposition of conditions or the County Council seeking revisions to the existing scheme such as biodiversity enhancements, land management, appropriate planting, revised bridge design.

#### **Air Quality**

- 5.30 The air quality assessment submitted in support of the application has identified that the site is adjacent to two Air Quality Management Areas in both Vale of White Horse and Oxford City. The principle potential air quality impacts associated with the scheme relate to the construction phase when there will be significant excavation and substantial HGV movements necessary to carry spoil from the site. It is expected that the construction will be limited to three years duration, when construction and any ongoing air quality impacts will cease.
- 5.31 The principle pollutants of concern are nitrogen dioxide from extra traffic, dust and PM10. The modelling has concluded that PM10 impacts will be imperceptible and NO2 will show a small increase at some locations including the Botley AQMA during the construction phase. However, mitigation has been suggested. The small negative impacts can be limited by condition and will be time limited by the duration of construction works. However, it is noted that these predictions may overestimate actual impacts, due to reduced levels of operation in the winter. The proposal is considered compliant with saved policy DC9 of the Local Plan 2011.

#### **Land Contamination**

- 5.32 The proposed development involves the creation a new channel section passing through the Kennington Road West and East landfills. The applicant will need to ensure that any associated risks of pollution

incidents are managed as well as the potential for creating potential pollution pathways.

- 5.33 The scheme design assumes that all excavated made ground and any contaminated materials will be removed and disposed of off-site. The Contaminated Land Assessment and Outline Remediation Strategy Report highlights that the channel through the landfills will be lined/sheet-piled to be near impermeable, so it is unlikely that there would be a direct new pathway created between any leachate in the landfills and the new channel.
- 5.34 The report recommends that water quality monitoring should be completed to establish pre-construction baseline information that can be used to determine any construction phase monitoring and control/trigger levels required to identify any significant change. In addition, it is recommended that a watching brief is undertaken for potential contaminative material during excavations, with an appropriate sampling regime to test suspected contaminated materials.
- 5.35 To ensure that any unsuspected contamination during the development is suitably assessed the condition set out in the relevant representations section above should be imposed. The proposal is considered to comply with saved policy DC9 of the Local Plan 2011.

## **6.0 CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 The principle of development is considered acceptable. However, there is potential for adverse biodiversity, heritage and landscape impacts. The County Council as determining authority should request additional information to enable full consideration of the potential implications.
- 6.2 Should the County Council be minded to approve the scheme conditions should be imposed including those set out in this recommendation.

Guidance and planning policies in the following documents have been considered:

VALE OF WHITE HORSE LOCAL PLAN 2031: PART 1 – CORE POLICIES 1, 7, 13, 33, 34, 35, 37, 38, 39, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46

VALE OF WHITE HORSE LOCAL PLAN 2011 – SAVED POLICIES DC5, DC6, DC9, DC12, DC20, HE1, HE4, HE9, HE10, HE11, NE7, NE8

DRAFT VALE OF WHITE HORSE LOCAL PLAN 2031 PART 2 – CORE POLICY 13a AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES 15, 20, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 35, 36, 37 and 38

VALE OF WHITE HORSE DESIGN GUIDE 2015

OXFORDSHIRE MINERALS AND WASTE LOCAL PLAN SEPTEMBER 2017

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

PLANNING PRACTICE GUIDANCE

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