

Ex.165

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE

HELD AT THE GUILDHALL,
ABINGDON ON MONDAY, 20TH
MARCH, 2006 AT 8.55 PM

Open to the Public, including the Press

PRESENT:

MEMBERS: Councillor Jerry Patterson (Chair), Tony de Vere (Vice-Chair), Mary de Vere, Richard Farrell, Joyce Hutchinson and Roz Smith

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE Steve Culliford, Terry Stock, Rodger Hood, Grant Audley-Miller and Katie Barrett

NON-PARTICIPATING MEMBERS: Councillors Terry Cox, Melinda Tilley, Margaret Turner and Pam Westwood

NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: Nil

Ex.244 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Tessa Ward.

Ex.245 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mary de Vere declared a personal interest on the issues relating to the Harwell/Chilton employment site as she worked there (minute Ex. 249 refers).

Ex.246 URGENT BUSINESS AND CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

Ex.247 STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER STANDING ORDER 32

None

Ex.248 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER STANDING ORDER 32

None

Ex.249 VALE OF WHITE HORSE LOCAL PLAN TO 2011

(Time: 8.55pm to 8.57pm)

(Councillor Mary de Vere declared a personal interest in this item and in accordance with Standing Order 34, she remained in the meeting during its consideration.)

(a) Local Plan Policies

The Executive received and considered report 253/05 of the Strategic and Local Planning Advisory Group together with the recommendations of the Development Control Committee. Report 253/05 was submitted to the Advisory Group, the Development Control Committee, the Executive and the Council. To save paper, it was printed just once and attached to the Development Control Committee's agenda (meeting dated 20 March 2006). The report set out recommendations from the Advisory Group on the Local Plan Inquiry Inspector's recommended changes to the

Ex.166

Local Plan. These were set out in a series of schedules, including the Inspector's views and the Advisory Group's views also. The Development Control Committee had considered these recommendations prior to the Executive's meeting. The Development Control Committee largely agreed with the views of the Advisory Group and added some changes of its own. These were agreed by the Executive for recommendation on to the Council at its meeting on 22 March 2006.

Further to the report, the Strategic and Local Planning Authority Group met on 15 March 2006 and recommended that the Inspector's policy for the former Dow site at Letcombe Regis should be accepted for the reasons set out in paragraphs 8.20.33 – 8.20.50 of his report. An amended schedule was circulated prior to the meeting. The Development Control Committee accepted the Advisory Group's recommendation and the Executive agreed also.

R E C O M M E N D E D (by five votes to nil with one abstention)

- (a) *That, subject to the further amendments set out below, the schedules in Appendix 2 to report 253/05 be published as the Council's statement of decisions on the Inspectors' reports and recommendations on the joint Didcot Local Plan Inquiry and the Vale of White Horse Local Plan Inquiry:*
- (i) *amend paragraph 2.11 of the Local Plan to reflect the Council's vision agreed in November 2005;*
 - (ii) *the Inspector's recommended paragraph 5.23 which refers to the Wantage Relief Road is ambiguous and should be changed in the proposed modifications to read "It has been a long held objective of the District Council and Wantage Town Council that Wantage should have a relief road for the traffic which causes problems throughout the town, particularly in the historic town centre." (page 19 of the Development Control Committee's agenda)*
 - (iii) *amend the reference to the Great Western Park development at Didcot, to state that any increase in the number of dwellings built on the site will count towards the Vale's housing requirements (page 30 of the Development Control Committee's agenda)*
 - (iv) *the proposed modification PM8.40, for the development west of Didcot, should read as set out in Appendix A to these minutes;*
 - (v) *in the context of the Inspector's report and the letter from Oxfordshire County Council as highway authority (dated 10 March 2006) withdrawing its objection to 100 houses, the former Dow site at Letcombe Regis be identified for no more than 100 dwellings following the demolition of the former employment structures. The revised wording for the Council's decision in relation to the Inspector's recommendation, the changes resulting to the analysis of the number of dwellings provided through the Local Plan and the proposed lower case text and policy are set out at Appendix B;*
 - (vi) *the term 'not more than four small dwellings to be permitted' in Policy H11 be clarified by adding the following words after the second sentence in paragraph 8.58 of the Local Plan "This is consistent with the objective of widening housing opportunities in accordance with the Housing Needs Survey which shows a shortage of one and two bedroomed dwellings in all tenure groups in the coming years (page 44 of the Development Control Committee's agenda);*
 - (vii) *the Council's response to the Inspector's recommendation to Policy H12 should refer to the Council's position that the policy enabling one or two small houses within the built up areas of the other settlements in the Vale does not apply to very small groups of houses and ribbons of*

Ex.167

development (page 45 of the Development Control Committee's agenda);

(viii) *the proposed modification to the Proposals Map (PM Map 15) be amended by deleting the Bell Public House from the Primary Shopping Frontage in Mill Street and the Market Place in Wantage (page 125 of the Development Control Committee's agenda);*

(b) *That, subject to the further amendments set out in (a) above, the changes in Appendix 3 to report 253/05 be published as the Council's proposed modifications to the Local Plan for a period of six weeks together with the required statutory notice advertising the proposed modifications and the Council's intention to adopt the Local Plan if no objections are received;*

(c) *that authority be delegated to the Chief Executive to publish (a) and (b) above according to the statutory requirements, and to make any minor consequential and editorial changes that may be necessary. Should any substantive inconsistencies arise, the responsibility to resolve the issues be delegated to the Deputy Director (Planning and Community Strategy), in consultation with the Chair of the Strategic and Local Planning Advisory Group and the Development Control Committee Opposition Spokesman;*

(d) *that the policies that are unchanged by the Inspector's recommendations and the proposed modifications (Appendix 4 to report 253/05) be adopted for development control purposes from 27 March 2006 for applications received on or after 8 May 2006; and*

(e) *that where no duly made objections are received to the proposed modifications to other policies within the six week consultation period, those policies be adopted for development control purposes on the Monday immediately following the closing date for comments. If the closing date is 4 May 2006, then this should apply to applications received on or after 8 May 2006.*

(b) Supplementary Planning Guidance

The Executive received and considered report 254/05 of the Deputy Director for Community and Spatial Planning regarding Supplementary Planning Guidance to be adopted alongside the Local Plan to 2011. Report 254/05 was submitted to the Advisory Group, the Development Control Committee, the Executive and the Council. To save paper, it was printed just once and attached to the Development Control Committee's agenda (meeting dated 20 March 2006). The Executive also considered the views of the Strategic and Local Planning Advisory Group, together with the recommendations of the Development Control Committee. Members agreed with the Committee's recommendations.

R E C O M M E N D E D (by five votes to nil with one abstention)

(a) *that the Supplementary Planning Guidance adopted alongside the Local Plan to 2001, as listed in Appendix 1 to report 254/05, be deleted with effect from 23 March 2006;*

(b) *that the Supplementary Planning Guidance adopted alongside the Local Plan to 2001, as listed in Appendix 2 to report 254/05, be retained for use as development control advice from the time the Local Plan 2011 is adopted;*

- (c) that the Supplementary Planning Guidance published alongside the First and Second Deposit Local Plan 2011, as listed in Appendix 3 to report 254/05, be deleted from 23 March 2006; and
- (d) that the Supplementary Planning Guidance, contained in Appendices 4 to 16 to report 254/05, be amended as indicated subject to the further amendments set out below, and be republished for consultation from 23 March to 4 May 2006:

<u>Page No</u> (referring to the Development Control Committee agenda)	<u>Paragraph No</u>	<u>Amendment</u>
-	-	Ensure Deputy Director post title is consistent throughout the Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG).
145	2.5	Add "(3ft 3ins)" after the word "metre"
150	Appendix 5 – Parking Standards	Add * after "Hotel" and "Stadia" in the table headings
155	2.5	Add a new sentence after "(16 dwellings per acre)." as follows:- "The Council has resolved to grant outline planning permission for a maximum of 192 dwellings. However," Add the words: "for monitoring purposes" at the end of the last sentence.
155	2.6	Substitute "40%" for 50% in the last bullet point.
157	2.28	Substitute "05/2005" for "1/97" in the first line. Update references to all Government Circulars, Guidance and Advice throughout the SPG.
158	2.30	Substitute "legal agreement" for "Section 106 obligation" throughout the SPG.
159	Timbmet Site, Cumnor Hill - Map	Change the Comprehensive Development Area to exclude the car park to the west.
164	5.1	Delete "a new road from Mably Way to the A417 north of East Challow" and substitute "the Wantage Relief Road Scheme" in the last sentence.
168	2.3	Substitute "south west" for "S.W." in the fourth

<u>Page No</u> (referring to the Development Control Committee agenda)	<u>Paragraph No</u>	<u>Amendment</u>
		sentence.
172	2.2	Delete "Recent" at the start of the third sentence.
173	2.5	Add "generally" before the words "to open storage" in the first sentence.
180	4.2	Update paragraph to reflect that the Arts Development Strategy has been adopted.
183	8.0	Tidy up diagram to reflect changes to post titles and service areas.
184	Frequently Asked Questions How is the fee agreed?	Add new sentence as follows:- "Where the Council's Arts Development Officer manages the project the cost of the Officer time will be included in the legal agreement".
201	Appendix A	Change policy DC13 to reflect the proposed modifications to this policy in the Local Plan.
205	Appendix 14 – Recommendation: i)	Add the words "the month of" before the word "May".
216		Add new paragraph 3.8 to refer to archaeological evaluation.
221	7.1	Delete "Government circular 1/97" and substitute "policy DC8 and Government Circular 05/2005" after the words "set out in" at the end of the paragraph.
227	Appendix 15 - Recommendation	Delete the words "Appendix 15" and substitute "the revised draft Supplementary Planning Guidance" after the word "in" at the end of the recommendation.
228	Appendix 15 - Recommendation	Delete the words "Appendix 15" and substitute "the revised draft Supplementary Planning Guidance" after the word "in" at the end of the recommendation.
228	Appendix 15 - Recommendation	Delete the words "Appendix 15" and substitute "the revised draft Supplementary Planning Guidance" after the word "in" at the

<u>Page No</u> (referring to the Development Control Committee agenda)	<u>Paragraph No</u>	<u>Amendment</u>
		end of the recommendation.
229	Appendix 15 - Recommendation	Delete the words "Appendix 15" and substitute "the revised draft Supplementary Planning Guidance" after the word "in" at the end of the recommendation.
237	1.5a	Insert "Inspector's" before the word "recommendations".
238	1.12	Delete the words "In the third phase of the development from 2016 (1000 dwellings)"
241	2.7	Delete "usually for a minimum of 25 years" at the end of the paragraph and substitute "in accordance with Policy DC8 of the Local Plan".
242	2.13	Include reference to "secure by design"
245	3.3 – 8 th bullet point	Delete "In the third phase of the development from 2016 to 2021 (100 dwellings) it will be necessary for". The Bullet point to start "Contributions..."
251	6.5	Substitute "10%" for "20%"
251	6.6	Insert "short term" before the word "temporary" in the third sentence. Substitute "accept" for "access" in the third sentence.
254	7.2	Insert the attached revised phasing diagram (graph – Annex A attached)
255	Appendix 16	Revised Appendix C attached

Exempt Information Under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972

None

The meeting rose at 8.57 pm

Proposed Modification: PM8.40**APPENDIX A****Page 151: Paragraph 8.51**

Delete the second and third sentences and insert:

“Criterion (xi) will secure this objective by providing appropriate on and off-site transport infrastructure. The highway authority and the Highway Agency will advise on the transport measures required. These measures will be identified through the development of an integrated transport strategy for the Didcot area, having regard to the following objectives:

- To reduce reliance on the use of the private car by improving choices available to meet transport needs within Didcot and between Didcot and the surrounding settlements;
- To increase accessibility to facilities for those without cars and/or with mobility impairment;
- To promote the use of public transport (bus and rail);
- To identify and provide a safe, continuous and high quality network of pedestrian and cycle routes;
- To promote road safety and reduce the number and severity of road casualties;
- To promote efficient highway management including the identification of transport infrastructure as appropriate, and parking demand and supply;
- To improve provision for interchange between modes of transport; and
- To relieve traffic congestion where it is causing significant amenity or environmental problems.

The District Councils and Oxfordshire County Council should urgently consider the detailed options for an A4130 to A417 link, to include a Harwell by-pass. For the section between the A4130 and the B4493, this link should not require additional land outside the boundary of the MDA.

The Council, together with South Oxfordshire District Council and the County Council, will be seeking the progression of measures identified in phase 2 of the provisional strategy as a matter of urgency. The provisional strategy proposes a range of transport measures which include a Harwell by-pass in order to alleviate the impact of traffic arising from developments in the Didcot area. The Council considers that the provision of a Harwell by-pass is a priority.

Reason for the Change: to accept the recommendation in the joint Inspectors' Report on the local plan inquiry for Didcot at paragraph 11.2.166 to reflect the importance attached to the Harwell by-pass and to clarify the Council's position.

Proposed Modification: PM8.45**APPENDIX B**

Page 154: Policy H8

After policy H8A add a new heading, paragraph 8.52b and policy H8B as follows:

The former Dow Agro Sciences site in Letcombe Regis

The second site allocated for housing outside the towns is at the former Dow Agro Sciences in Letcombe Regis, where the house, lodge, stables and more modern research buildings and greenhouses have stood vacant since 2002. Although Letcombe Regis is one of the Vale's smaller villages with a very limited range of facilities where normally only a maximum of four small dwellings would be allowed, the Council accepts that a limited redevelopment for residential purposes could be more sustainable than a B1 business use on the site. However, great care will have to be taken to ensure that any redevelopment retains and enhances the Letcombe Brook corridor, provides new public open space, retains the existing trees and open paddocks and can be readily integrated into the village in both physical and visual terms. It will also be necessary for any scheme to protect the setting of the surrounding listed buildings and make a positive contribution to the conservation area, the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the character and appearance of the village as a whole. Given the sensitivity of the surroundings, residential development on the site will only be permitted as part of a comprehensive scheme containing sufficient details to show that all the concerns raised above will be satisfactorily addressed. In addition, to ensure that the redevelopment is no less sustainable than its previous use, it will be necessary to contribute to on and off site infrastructure, and the volume of traffic generated should be no greater than if the site was reused for B1 purposes, preferably it should be less. To help achieve this, contributions, secured through a legal agreement, will be needed towards improving the bus service to Wantage. If all these matters can be satisfactorily resolved a maximum of 100 dwellings will be permitted on the site; this meets the density requirements in PPG3 and policy H14.

POLICY H8B

LAND AT THE FORMER DOW SITE AT LETCOMBE REGIS IS IDENTIFIED FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT RESULTING IN A NET INCREASE OF NO MORE THAN 100 DWELLINGS FOLLOWING THE DEMOLITION OF THE FORMER EMPLOYMENT STRUCTURES. PROPOSALS WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE THEY ARE IN ACCORDANCE WITH A COMPREHENSIVE SCHEME FOR THE WHOLE SITE, INCLUDING LAND SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP TO BE RETAINED AS OPEN SPACE AND WHERE ALL NECESSARY ON SITE AND OFF SITE INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICE REQUIREMENTS ARE MET.

Reason for the Change: to accept the Inspector's recommendation for the reasons set out in paragraphs 8.20.33 to 8.20.50 in his report.

Annexe A	Finance		Implementation	Pre Phase One Preparation 2006-2008	Phase One April 2008-2011 500 dwellings	Phase Two 2011-2016 1000 dwellings	Phase Three 2016-2021 1000 dwellings
	Part	Full					
Preparation of Outline Planning Application To include:							
Environmental impact assessment		Dev	Developer				
Comprehensive framework plan		Dev	Developer				
Legal agreement to secure infrastructure phasing and provision		Dev	Developer				
Analysis of social impact on local communities		Dev	Developer				
Submission and determination of outline planning application		Dev	Developer				
Submission and determination of detailed planning applications							
Establish and maintain Development Forum	Dev	Vale	VWHD/Dev/ stakeholders				
Wantage and Grove Area Strategic Transport Study Preparation and agreement of strategy			VWHD/OCC				
Affordable Housing 40% (to comprise 30% social rented and 20% shared ownership and intermediate housing for rent or sale)		Dev	Dev/Registered social landlords				
Education Primary Schools (including pre school nursery facilities)							
Investment in existing primary schools		Dev	OCC				
First new primary school							
Provide free serviced land		Dev					
Design and Build		Dev	OCC				
Occupation			OCC				
Second new primary school							
Provide Free Serviced Land		Dev					
Design and Build							
Occupation			OCC				

Annexe A	Finance		Implementation	Pre Phase One Preparation	Phase One	Phase Two	Phase Three
	Part	Full					
Secondary School (acquiring local centre)							
Establish size and location and secure funding			OCC				
Provide Free Serviced Land		Dev	Developer				
Design and Build	Dev/OCC		OCC				
Occupation			OCC				
Transport							
Realignment of Denchworth Road or the provision of an alternative road south of grove to Mably Way		Dev	OCC or Dev				
Traffic Management measures in Grove including traffic calming on Denchworth Road and Oxford Lane, Grove		Dev	OCC or Dev				
Traffic Calming in Charlton Village, Wantage			OCC or Dev				
Improve cycle and pedestrian links to facilities in Grove and Wantage. Significant provision to be made in Phase One.		Dev	OCC or Dev				
Improve cycle links to Milton Park and Chilton, Harwell Campus		Dev	OCC or Dev				
Improvements to A338 North of Grove		Dev	OCC or Dev				
Improvements to A417 East of Wantage		Dev	OCC or Dev				
Improve access to A34		Dev	OCC or Dev				
A new road from the Site to the A338		Dev	OCC or Dev				
Design and obtain planning permission		Dev	OCC or Dev				
Build new road		Dev	OCC or Dev				
Wantage Relief Road Scheme	Dev		OCC or Dev				
Seek contributions			OCC or Dev				

Annexe A	Finance		Implementation	Pre Phase One Preparation	Phase One	Phase Two	Phase Three
	Part	Full					
Improve public transport services Footpath links to countryside	Dev	OCC					
	Dev	OCC					
Community Centre							
Identify site	Dev						
Design and build		Developer					
Occupation		Local Organisations					
Library							
Improve facilities and services at existing library	Dev	OCC					
Identify site	Dev	Developer					
Provide free serviced land	Dev						
Design and build	Dev	OCC					
Occupation		OCC					
Core Book Stock	Dev						
Local Shops							
Identify site	Dev						
Design and build	Dev	Developer					
Occupation		Developer					
Childrens Day Care Facility							
Identify site	Dev	Developer					
Provide free Serviced land	Dev						
Design and build		Developer					
Occupation		Developer					
Indoor Sports Hall							
Identify site	Dev						
Design and build	Dev	Dev/Loc Orgs					
Occupation							
Small Business Premises and Live Work Units							
Identify site	Dev						
Design and build	Dev	Developer					
Occupation		Developer					

Annexe A	Finance		Implementation	Pre Phase One Preparation	Phase One	Phase Two	Phase Three
	Part	Full					
Civic Space							
Identify Site		Dev					
Design and Build		Dev	Developer				
Facilities for Teenagers		Dev	Developer				
Open Space							
Equipped and Informal Play Areas		Dev	Developer				
Structural Landscaping							
Identify areas		Dev					
Planting		Dev	Developer				
Playing Fields							
Identify areas		Dev					
Provision		Dev	Developer				
Community Park							
Identify Site		Dev					
Provision		Dev	Developer				
Public Art		Dev	Developer/ VWHDC				
Community Worker		Dev					
Contribution to Off Site Facilities to Include:							
Witts & Berks Canal		Dev	Witts & Berks Canal Trust				
Fire Station	Dev		OCC				
Wantage Leisure Centre	Dev		VWHDC				
Grove Rail Station (when required)	Dev		OCC/SRA				
Waste Recycling	Dev		OCC				
Contribution towards cemetery	Dev		Grove Parish Council				
Provide free serviced land	Dev						

Affordable Housing

REVISED DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Government intends that everyone should have the opportunity of a decent home. Local planning authorities are advised to plan to meet the needs of the whole community, including those in need of affordable housing, in a way which does not reinforce social distinctions. This revised draft supplementary guidance explains in more detail how the affordable housing policy in the Local Plan to 2011 will be implemented. The guidance is given at a general level and the Council accepts there will need to be a degree of flexibility when assessing individual schemes to take account of local and site specific circumstances and to ensure that the housing provided best contributes towards satisfying local housing needs.
- 1.2 The policies in the draft Local Plan have been taken into account as a material consideration by the Council when deciding on planning applications since 1 January 2003. The first draft of the Supplementary Planning Guidance for affordable housing was published in June 2004. Both these documents sought 50% affordable housing on sites of ten or more dwellings in settlements of more than 3000 people and sites of four or more dwellings elsewhere. The Inspector in his report of the local plan inquiry concluded that a 40% target was more reasonable and realistic, and that a threshold of 15 dwellings in settlements of 3000 people or more was consistent with Government guidance. This has been accepted by the Council and the Local Plan and the Supplementary Planning Guidance have been amended accordingly. This revised draft supplementary guidance will be subject to extensive consultation with the public, businesses and other interested parties, and their views will be considered. The guidance will be amended in the light of this consultation and will be approved once the Local Plan is adopted when it will be given substantial weight in determining planning applications. This guidance does not apply to the provision of affordable housing on sites below the size thresholds in policy H16 or rural exception schemes brought forward in accordance with policy H17 of the Local Plan.
- 1.3 The affordable housing policy is part of a wider suite of policies in the Local Plan to widen housing opportunity and choice. These include policies requiring a variety of dwelling types and sizes to meet the needs of existing and future people especially for smaller properties and accommodation suited to people with impaired mobility and other special needs. Additional measures for meeting local housing needs are contained in the Council's annual Housing Strategy Statement. The Council recognises that partnership working involving its housing and planning functions, social housing providers, the Housing Corporation, the local strategic partnerships, developers and landowners is essential if its aspirations for providing affordable housing in the Vale are to be realised.

2.0 THE CONTEXT

- 2.1 The context for the Council's approach on affordable housing is provided at the national, regional and county levels, and its policies and this guidance are influenced by the level of housing need within the district. Of particular importance

has been Planning Policy Guidance note 3: *Housing* and Circular 6/98: *Planning and Affordable Housing* both issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and available on their web site. Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9) and the emerging work on the draft South East Plan which is being prepared by the South East England Regional Planning Assembly (SEERA) have also been taken into account. The Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016, produced by Oxfordshire County Council and which is available on their web site, has an aspirational target that 50% of the housing built in the county should be affordable but that the precise amount will be established by the district councils in the context of need in their areas. The Oxfordshire Community Partnership and the Vale Strategic Partnership, which are responsible for preparing community strategies, both acknowledge that the need for affordable housing is one of the top priorities facing the area, and the top priority for Oxfordshire.

- 2.2 The District Council commissioned Fordham Associates to undertake a district-wide housing needs survey, which was published in April 2001 and this was updated in April 2005. The housing need update demonstrates that the relationship between household incomes and house prices means that 26% of households in the Vale are unable to afford market housing and that some 3400 households are in unsuitable accommodation. To clear the backlog of people in need and provide for newly arising households, it states that 845 affordable homes should be built each year in the district for the next five years. This is in excess of the total number of dwellings to be built each year in the district according to the Oxfordshire Structure Plan and Fordham Associates considered it justified a significant provision of affordable homes through the planning system. They also concluded that the largest shortfalls of both affordable and market housing were for one and two bedroom units.
- 2.3 The issues surrounding the provision of affordable housing were debated extensively at the public inquiry on the Local Plan in 2005. In his report of the local plan inquiry the Inspector stated at paragraph 8.23.3

"It is acknowledged by all concerned that, in a district with some of the highest house prices in the region outside London, there is a considerable need for new affordable housing over the plan period."

However, the Inspector did not accept all of the ambitions set out for affordable housing in the draft Local Plan and the Council is proposing to modify it in accordance with his recommendations. Policy H16 as proposed to be modified states

POLICY H16

40% OF THE DWELLINGS PROVIDED ON THE FOLLOWING SITES WILL BE EXPECTED TO BE AFFORDABLE TO LOCAL PEOPLE WHO ARE UNABLE TO RENT OR BUY A HOUSE APPROPRIATE TO THEIR NEEDS ON THE OPEN MARKET:

- i) **IN SETTLEMENTS OF MORE THAN 3,000 PEOPLE, ON ALL SITES WHICH ARE CAPABLE OF ACCOMMODATING 15 OR MORE DWELLINGS OR WHICH ARE 0.5 HECTARES OR MORE;**
- ii) **IN SETTLEMENTS OF 3,000 PEOPLE OR LESS, ON ALL SITES WHICH ARE CAPABLE OF ACCOMMODATING FIVE OR MORE DWELLINGS.**

THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROVIDED:

- a) **WILL BE OF A SIZE AND TYPE TO MEET LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS;**
- b) **WILL HAVE ARRANGEMENTS PUT IN PLACE TO ENSURE THE HOUSING REMAINS AFFORDABLE FOR LOCAL PEOPLE IN THE LONG TERM; AND**
- c) **WILL BE DISTRIBUTED EVENLY ACROSS THE SITE AND WILL BE INDISTINGUISHABLE IN APPEARANCE FROM THE MARKET HOUSING.**

2.4 This Supplementary Planning Guidance has been written in accordance with the above policy. If significant changes are made to the policy before the Local Plan is adopted the guidance will be reviewed.

3.0 THE DEFINITION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

3.1 The draft Local Plan defines affordable housing as that which caters for people who are unable to rent or buy a house suitable for their needs on the open market. Affordable housing includes social housing for rent, shared ownership and intermediate housing for rent or sale. Irrespective of the tenure it will be provided with a subsidy to enable the asking price or rent to be substantially lower than prevailing market rates, and will remain affordable to local people in the long-term. In the context of this guidance the term "social housing" refers to social housing for rent described in paragraph 3.3 below. Shared ownership and intermediate housing for rent or sale are referred to as "intermediate housing".

Types of Social Housing to be Provided

Tenure

- 3.2 To ensure that the dwellings provided are genuinely affordable to local people in housing need and do not only benefit the initial occupier, the following types of provision set out in paragraphs 3.3 – 3.6 below are accepted by the Council as falling within its definition of affordable housing.
- 3.3 **Social housing for rent** where the rents and service charges are significantly below open market rates. The properties will usually be managed by a registered social landlord or other affordable housing provider. The Council will expect the rents on properties secured through the planning system to be no higher than the target rents for the area as established by the Housing Corporation.
- 3.4 **Shared ownership housing** is housing partly owned by the occupier and partly owned by another body. Where registered social landlords are involved the share of ownership can be as low as 25% and the occupier can gradually purchase a greater share in the ownership of the property. Rent is often, but not always, payable on that part of the equity not owned by the occupier. The rental element should not be greater than the appropriate proportion of the Housing Corporation's guideline figures. Most shared ownership schemes in the Vale are currently run by registered social landlords, but other organisations such as housing trusts set up by local organisations or employers could also be involved.
- 3.5 **Intermediate housing for rent** where the rental levels are significantly below open market rates, but not as low as Housing Corporation target rents. The owner does not have to be a registered social landlord. Such housing will be subject to a legal

agreement that will apply to initial and subsequent owners of the property in the long term.

- 3.6 **Intermediate market housing** is housing for sale at a substantial discount below open market value. To be acceptable to the authority under the affordable housing policies, such housing should not be cheap simply because it has low space, amenity or quality standards, but be of good quality provided at a price significantly below its open market value. Fordham Associates in the supplementary report to the Housing Needs Survey (2001) established that because of the premium on new houses, a very substantial discount is necessary to reduce the price to that of the average in the second-hand market. To be acceptable to the Council intermediate market housing should be at a price that is about 60% of open market value. This sum is equivalent to the provision of free serviced land. The Council will expect a legal agreement to be signed that will be binding on the first and all subsequent occupiers of such properties to ensure that the dwellings are always sold at a fixed percentage of their full market value and to people nominated by the Council or failing that approved by the Council as being in need of affordable housing in the area. If a suitable purchaser cannot be found the difference in value between the fixed percentage and the full market value should be paid to the Council for reinvestment in affordable housing if there is a need for such housing at the time of sale.

Key Worker Housing

- 3.7 The Housing Corporation defines key workers as those 'who work within the public sector providing essential services for the community where there is evidenced recruitment and retention problems or where there have been Regional Board recommendations or employer contributions'. The District Council's definition of a key worker is 'someone whose household income does not exceed 40% of the average house price in the District commensurate with their size of household where at least one member of the household is an employee working substantially in the public sector or under contract to the public sector. Further work on key workers will be carried out through the Council's Housing Strategy Statement and the Oxfordshire Community Partnership. All the tenures of affordable housing will be suitable for key workers depending on their incomes and family circumstances. However, the Local Plan recognises that shared equity housing and intermediate housing for rent or sale are particularly appropriate for key workers who have a reasonable income but are unable to buy a home of their own on the open market.

Special Housing Needs

- 3.8 When assessing the overall provision of affordable housing on a site the need for specialised housing will also be taken into account. This includes accommodation for people who need support to live in the community and special accommodation, such as sheltered housing, for the elderly. The provision of such housing will be taken into account when assessing the amount of affordable housing to be provided on individual sites. Schemes which provide specialised owner occupied accommodation on a commercial basis at market prices will not be taken to offset the provision of affordable homes. Where such schemes provide smaller than normal units (for example provision for the elderly) the Council will assess the affordable provision against what the scheme could provide if the scheme were not providing specialised units.

4.0 SITES SUITABLE FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- 4.1 The Council expects 40% of the dwellings to be affordable on sites of 15 dwellings or more (or 0.5 hectare or more) in settlements of more than 3,000 people. In settlements of 3,000 people or less the threshold above which affordable housing will be expected is 5 dwellings. This is in accordance with policy H16 of the Local Plan. The policy will apply to all planning applications above the site-size thresholds and not only to sites allocated in the Local Plan.
- 4.2 The number of dwellings a site is capable of accommodating will be assessed having regard to the character of the site as a whole and its surroundings, the need to achieve higher densities of development and the minimum density requirements set out in policy H14 of the Local Plan. Where land above the affordable housing threshold is subdivided to create separate schemes below the threshold, the land will be considered as a whole and affordable housing sought on each scheme. If planning permission is granted for development below the threshold and a further application is made on adjacent land, the Council will normally treat the site as a whole and expect the full affordable provision to be made through the second permission. Similarly, if planning permission is granted for a number of dwellings below the threshold and a subsequent application is made which takes the number of dwellings above the threshold, the Council will expect the full amount of affordable housing to be provided on the site. Where a scheme involves the redevelopment of existing dwellings, the number of affordable homes to be provided will be calculated on the number of new dwellings to be built, not on the net gain of units on the site. Outline applications which are capable of accommodating more dwellings than specified in the threshold will be permitted subject to a legal agreement requiring an affordable housing scheme to be submitted in accordance with this guidance at the reserved matters stage. The provision of affordable housing on sites below the threshold will be welcomed.
- 4.3 Circular 6/98 indicates that in deciding whether a site is suitable for affordable housing account should be taken of the proximity to local services and facilities and access to public transport. The general strategy of the Local Plan to 2011 is to locate most development at the main settlements and allow development of up to 15 dwellings in the villages with a reasonable range of services and facilities. The Council considers that all these locations will be suitable for the provision of affordable housing of all tenures. In rare cases housing may be permitted on sites above the threshold in locations remote from local services, such as through the conversion of existing buildings in the countryside, or the redevelopment of existing buildings in small settlements. In these cases the Council will assess their suitability for social housing and may consider the provision of shared ownership and intermediate housing for rent or sale more appropriate.
- 4.4 The Council will normally require that the affordable housing is provided as an integral part of the development. This is in accordance with PPG3 and Local Plan policy H16. As the Vale of White Horse is an area of planning restraint where the amount of land released for housing development is constrained the Council will only allow off-site provision of affordable housing in exceptional circumstances (see paragraphs 6.10 – 6.11 below).

5.0 DETERMINING THE TYPE, MIX AND DESIGN OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- 5.1 It is important that the type and mix of affordable housing secured through the planning system meets local needs. Developers are strongly encouraged to discuss

the type and mix of affordable housing, including the need for specialised accommodation, with the District Council before a planning application is made.

Tenure Mix

- 5.2 Given the incomes of people on the housing register and the fact that the lowest income households are usually the least economically and socially mobile, the Council considers that the majority of affordable housing to be provided across the Vale should be social housing for rent. Within the context set by policy H16 of the Local Plan the Council will normally expect that at least 30% of the housing provided on a site is in the form of social housing for rent and 10% comprising either shared ownership housing, intermediate housing for rent or sale or a mix of these tenures. The Council will encourage a higher proportion of social housing for rent if this can be supported through grant payment or if the whole site is being developed by a registered social landlord.
- 5.3 The precise mix will be considered at the time of a planning application taking into account the characteristics of the site, the need for particular types of affordable housing in that location at the time the application is made and the availability of public subsidy. Another influencing factor will be the existing tenure and social mix in a neighbourhood. Where there is a significantly above average proportion of social rented housing in the locality it may be appropriate to provide a higher than normal rate of intermediate housing. In some villages, where travel costs are relatively high, it may also be appropriate to have a higher proportion of intermediate housing. The affordable dwellings provided in accordance with the Local Plan policy must be at prices that are genuinely affordable to those in housing need.

Size and Type of Affordable Dwellings

- 5.4 On the basis of the Housing Register, the Housing Needs Survey, the desire to build mixed and balanced communities and provide an affordable housing stock that is likely to meet the long term needs of the Vale, as a general guide the following sizes and types of affordable dwellings will normally be sought.

One bedroom (two person) flats	20% social rent 9% intermediate
Two bedroom (four person) flats	8% social rent 3% intermediate
Two bedroom (four person) houses	20% social rent 7% intermediate
Three bedroom (five person) houses	20% social renting 5% intermediate
Four or more bedroom (six or more person) houses	7% social rent 1% intermediate

- 5.5 To accommodate family homes the Council will normally seek a maximum of 40% flats on any development. However, on high density sites in the main settlements which are developed predominantly for flats, the Council is likely to accept that a higher proportion of flats is appropriate. Generally flats provided to meet the affordable housing policy should have a maximum of two bedrooms.

Design

- 5.6 The Council will expect high standards of design, layout and landscaping for all developments, which respect the character of the area and reflect local distinctiveness in accordance with policy DC1 of the Local Plan. The Council will expect compliance with this and other local plan policies on all housing sites irrespective of whether they are for affordable or open market housing. To ensure the creation of mixed and integrated communities the affordable housing should not be visually distinguishable from the market housing on the site in terms of build quality, materials, details, levels of amenity space and privacy. The affordable housing should be fully integrated with the market housing and should be distributed evenly across the site (pepper-potted) or in the case of flats, in small clusters distributed evenly through the development. This should be considered at an early stage of the detailed design and layout of the site. All affordable homes should be built to meet the most up to date Housing Corporation's 'essential items' Scheme Development Standards, including the eco homes 'very good' standard, and those of the Registered Social Landlord to which the housing is to be transferred. 10% of the affordable dwellings must be developed to Lifetime Homes Standards in accordance with policy H15 in the local plan; sometimes these may require higher standards than are provided in the dwellings sold on the open market. The scheme should be laid out to incorporate the principles of 'secured by design' which is a police initiative to encourage the building industry to incorporate measures to reduce crime.
- 5.7 Developers should contact the Council at an early stage to discuss the mix, size and type of affordable dwellings to be provided and the involvement of a registered social landlord. It is very important that the registered social landlord is involved at an early stage in preparing the details of the scheme to ensure the affordable houses transferred to them meet their requirements and the Housing Corporation's standards and guidelines. Ideally the developers should discuss these issues with the Council and the registered social landlord to be involved in the scheme before they enter into contract arrangements with the landowner.

6.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Affordable rents

- 6.1 The Council considers that to be affordable, social rented housing should be let at prevailing Housing Corporation target rent level or less. It will also be necessary to keep service charges to an affordable minimum as it is the total cost of occupying a property that determines whether it is affordable. As a general guide for those on the lowest incomes, no more than 30% of a household's net income should be spent on housing costs.
- 6.2 For shared ownership housing, the units should generally be transferred to an approved partner at a cost that would enable the occupier to make an initial purchase of no more than 40% of the equity. This will help ensure that the dwellings are affordable to local people in housing need.

Subsidies

- 6.3 Given the high cost of housing in the Vale relative to local incomes it is clear that some form of subsidy will be required to enable the properties to be let or sold at an affordable price. Currently there are two main sources of subsidy:
- developer subsidy where the price paid for land or property by the social housing provider is substantially below its unencumbered market value. In practice the cost of this subsidy should be reflected in the lower price that is paid initially for the land by the developer: and
 - public subsidy which is available as social housing grant or key worker funding paid directly by the Housing Corporation to a social housing provider, or capital funding from the social housing provider or local authority.
- 6.4 In December 2003 the Housing Corporation confirmed in a letter to local authorities that 'The position in the South East is that there is a presumption against funding, through social housing grant, housing schemes where it should be possible to negotiate a S106 agreement unless it is clear that the development economics of that scheme require it'. This increases the emphasis on securing affordable housing through land values.
- 6.5 In the context of this statement from the Housing Corporation, where social housing for rent or shared ownership is to be provided, the Council will expect either
- built dwellings to be transferred to the Council or a social housing provider at a price that would enable the Housing Corporation's target rents to be charged without public subsidy. This is the preferred option as it will allow the affordable dwellings to be distributed in small clusters evenly across a site and to be built so they are visually indistinguishable from the market housing; or
 - fully serviced land for all the affordable dwellings to be provided on the site to be transferred to a social housing provider at nil cost, and where appropriate with a cash subsidy, such as would enable the Housing Corporation's target rents to be charged without public subsidy. Fully serviced means the supply of all utilities and access roads to the boundary of the site, the appropriate remediation of any contamination, the demolition of any buildings and structures on the site and the payment of all contributions to on and off-site services, facilities and infrastructure.

Viability

- 6.6 When a developer submits a planning application, the Council will expect developers to be in a position to satisfy the criteria in policy H16 of the Local Plan and this supplementary guidance. If a developer considers this will not be possible then they should contact the District Council at an early stage, well before the planning application is submitted, with evidence to demonstrate why the level of provision sought by the Council would make the development not viable. Such information should include:
- the cost of purchasing the site and whether it has been fully acquired
 - the value of the site in its existing use or any realistic alternative

- estimated construction costs, including allowances for inflation
- other costs including specific on and off-site works and contributions towards improving off-site infrastructure, services and facilities such as education, transport and community facilities
- fees and other on-costs including for design, planning, surveying, legal, marketing, sales and interest charges
- projected sales prices for the dwellings by dwelling type
- the contribution to the developers overheads and profit.

This will enable the evidence to be assessed and if necessary subject to independent verification. Where the Council pays for independent advice from a qualified professional and the advice is that the affordable housing sought by the Council is viable, the Council will expect to recover the costs of the advice from the developer. All evidence on viability submitted to the Council will be treated in confidence by the Council and their professional advisors should it be necessary to seek external advice.

- 6.7 It is expected that standard development costs such as demolition and site clearance, archaeological and ecological surveys and mitigation measures, drainage and flood prevention measures, noise attenuation, landscaping and contributions to infrastructure and services to be reflected in the price paid for the site. Similarly any reasonable costs of remediating contamination will not be taken into account. However, it is accepted that costs can arise that could not reasonably have been foreseen when the site was purchased. In some cases it may be accepted that the provision of other planning or housing objectives through a development may reduce the amount of affordable housing that can reasonably be provided.
- 6.8 Where the Council accepts that the provision of affordable housing in accordance with this guidance would not be viable, the Council will work with the developers and a registered social landlord to access public subsidy. The Council has a limited capital fund which it may use to help provide affordable housing only if it cannot be funded through the development process. Where public funding, either from the Council or the Housing Corporation, is not available, only then will the Council commence discussions about reducing the requirements of this guidance. This may either take the form of an overall reduction of the numbers of affordable housing to be provided or a lower proportion of social housing for rent which is more expensive to provide than other tenures of affordable units.
- 6.9 Where the Council accepts the development cannot fund all the affordable housing requirements set out in this SPG, and where the Housing Corporation is not in a position to allocate social housing grant at the time the planning permission is granted, the legal agreement will set out:
- i) the maximum amount of affordable dwellings with the tenure mix the Council would expect to see taking into account the local plan and this SPG
 - ii) a requirement that the developer seeks additional funding from the Housing Corporation in partnership with the Council and an approved affordable housing provider to achieve i) above
 - iii) should funding be secured, but not at the level to achieve the expectation set out in i) above, the additional provision of affordable housing enabled by the funding must be agreed with the Council

- iv) if no funding is available from the Housing Corporation the level of affordable homes to be provided, by number, size, type and tenure. This will normally be the maximum that the site can provide within the viability assessment.

In this case all the affordable dwellings should be developed to Housing Corporation Scheme Development Standards as this is a requirement of social housing grant and ownership by an RSL.

Commuted Payments for off-site provision

- 6.10 The Council is only likely to approve off-site provision where it is satisfied that the management of the affordable housing cannot be secured effectively, or where off-site provision would contribute more to the achievement of mixed and balanced communities or to satisfying the demand in areas of most acute need. The preference will be for alternative land to be provided and a financial contribution may be necessary in accordance with paragraph 6.11 below. The land given in exchange should be in a location which is consistent with the policies and general strategy in the Local Plan and which would be suitable for meeting those in most need on the housing register. The provision of alternative land in a location which would be contrary to the local plan strategy and would necessitate high travel costs for those in housing need will not be acceptable. The payment of a commuted sum for off-site provision is the least favoured option and will only be acceptable to the Council if it is satisfied that there is a likelihood of the money being able to be used within a reasonable period to provide a similar number of affordable dwellings as would be achieved with on-site provision. The payment may be used by the Council in a range of ways, for example to acquire land for affordable housing for resale to a social housing provider, to enable a higher proportion of affordable houses to be provided on sites where there are abnormally high development costs, to assist schemes being developed solely by social housing providers where the public subsidy is limited or non-existent, to increase the number of social houses for rent, or to enable existing properties to be brought into affordable housing use.
- 6.11 The level of financial contribution will take into account the cost of providing the equivalent benefit on another site. The contribution in lieu of social housing for rent will generally be calculated on the basis of the market value of the dwellings to be commuted, less the mortgage that could be raised from the rental stream at Housing Corporation target rent levels. Commuted sums for shared ownership dwellings will be half this figure provided that full provision has been made for social rented dwellings.

7.0 ENSURING THE HOUSING REMAINS AFFORDABLE IN THE FUTURE

Social Housing for Rent or Shared Ownership

- 7.1 To ensure that the social housing remains available to people in need of affordable housing in the future the Council will generally prefer the involvement of a registered social landlord. This is an effective way of controlling the occupancy of the affordable dwellings without the need for complex planning agreements and is reasonably effective in ensuring the dwellings remain available in the long-term. However, in general terms, under current Government regulations any property which has the benefit of public subsidy can be acquired by the tenant.

Since 1995 the right to buy has resulted in the sale of 600 social rented dwellings in the Vale.

- 7.2 The Council will seek to influence the Housing Corporation in its choice of approved development partner when allocating its social housing grant. The Council will promote those partners that have a good track record of high quality development and management of stock within the locality. Where public subsidy is involved the Council will seek nomination rights on all the affordable properties and on 60% of vacancies that arise thereafter. This will ensure that the affordable housing secured through the planning system best contributes towards satisfying local housing needs.

Intermediate Housing for Rent or Sale

- 7.3 Intermediate housing for rent or sale will be secured by a legal agreement that will run with the property. The rent or sale price will be agreed with the Council and in the first instance the properties should be offered to people on the Housing Register. If the properties cannot be filled from the register the Council will retain the right to approve the prospective tenants or purchasers to ensure they are unable to rent or buy a home suitable for their needs on the open market. If a need no longer exists for the type of property being offered the value of the property secured through the planning system will be returned to the District Council for investment in a more appropriate form of affordable housing.

Legal agreements

- 7.4 The affordable housing will normally be secured through legal agreements. The terms of the legal agreement should be seen as an integral part of the pre-application discussions and negotiations on the site as a whole. The legal agreements will normally specify
- the number, size, type and tenure of affordable housing to be provided (if necessary in accordance with the 'cascade' mechanism described in paragraph 6.9)
 - the units for social rented housing to be transferred at a price that enables it to be let at the Housing Corporation's target rent levels
 - the units for shared ownership properties to be transferred to an approved partner at a cost to enable the occupier to make an initial purchase of no more than 40% of the equity.
 - all affordable housing to be built to at least the Housing Corporation's 'essential items' scheme development standards, including eco homes rating 'very good', and comply with the RSL's specific development requirements, current at the date the affordable units are started on site (or the commencement of a particular phase on large sites) unless agreed otherwise by the Council
 - 10% of the affordable homes to be built to lifetime homes standards and all to achieve "secured by design" wherever practicable
 - not to start constructing the affordable housing units until a contract has been agreed with the RSL (where appropriate)

- all affordable housing to be first let in accordance with the Council's choice based lettings scheme and 60% of vacancies there after.

The Council will publish a standard legal agreement to give clearer guidance as to what is expected.

Phasing the Delivery of Affordable Dwellings

- 7.5 Where land is being transferred to a social housing provider the Council will normally require that this occurs before the first open market dwelling is occupied. This will ensure that the provision of affordable homes is not delayed. On large sites which will take a number of years to build the transfer of land will relate to particular phases of development. Similarly where dwellings rather than land are to be transferred this will be phased to reflect the even distribution of affordable dwellings throughout the scheme.
- 7.6 Outline applications will only be permitted if a legal agreement is signed establishing the broad principles for the amount and type of affordable housing to be provided and the arrangements to be put in place to secure it in accordance with this supplementary planning guidance. The detailed matters will be secured when the reserved matters applications are submitted.
- 7.7 The arrangements for securing affordable housing will usually be finalised when full planning applications or reserved matter applications are submitted. Planning permission will normally only be granted if the developer enters into a legal agreement which sets out the precise arrangements.

8.0 MONITORING

- 8.1 The Council will monitor the level, location and type of affordable housing provided through the planning process on an annual basis. The results will be published in the Council's Annual Monitoring Reports. The effectiveness of the planning policies and this Supplementary Planning Guidance will also be monitored and this may lead to the policies and guidance being reviewed in the future. The guidance may have to be reviewed if there are changes to the affordable housing policies in the Local Plan, government policy, housing finance and local need.

9.0 FURTHER INFORMATION

- 9.1 Copies of the Local Plan, the Housing Needs Survey and the Housing Strategy Statement are available from the District Council and are available at www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk.
- 9.2 Developers are strongly encouraged to discuss their proposals with the Council's Planning Service (www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk) and Housing Service (www.housing@whitehorsedc.gov.uk) at the earliest possible opportunity (tel no 01235 520202).
- 9.3 The Housing Corporation Scheme Development Standards and target rent levels are available from the Housing Corporation, 149 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 0BN (www.housingcorp.gov.uk)
- 9.4 Details on lifetime homes are available from the Joseph Rowntree Federation, www.jrf.org.uk (Tel No 01904 629241).

- 9.5 The County Council's development funding team can be contacted via email at developer.funding@oxfordshire.gov.uk (or tel no 01865 815798).
- 9.6 Details on secured by design are available from the Police Architectural Liaison Officer or Crime Prevention Design Advisor, or from www.securedbydesign.com.

10.0 YOUR VIEWS

- 10.1 This Supplementary Planning Guidance is being published in draft form for consultation. Together with the draft Local Plan to 2011 it seeks to maximise the supply of affordable housing in the District and provide clarity on how the affordable housing will be delivered. The Council would like to receive your views on the draft guidance. Any comments should be submitted in writing by Thursday **4 May 2006**. Comments should be sent to:

The Deputy Director (Planning and Community Strategy)
Vale of White Horse District Council
Abbey House
Abingdon
OX14 3JE

By e-mail to: local.plan@whitehorsedc.gov.uk.

By fax to: 01235 540397

- 10.2 All responses will be considered carefully by the District Council before it is adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance.