

APPLICATION NO.	P13/V0233/FUL
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION
REGISTERED	6 February 2013
PARISH	SUTTON COURTENAY
WARD MEMBER(S)	Margaret Turner, Reg Waite, Gervase Duffield
APPLICANT	Pye Homes
SITE	Land to the north of 92 -112 Milton Road Sutton Courtenay
PROPOSAL	Demolition of 110 Milton Road and erection of 34 dwelling houses with associated access
AMENDMENTS	None
GRID REFERENCE	449402/192956
OFFICER	David Rothery

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This 1.67 ha site lies on the north side of Milton Road at the south-west end of Sutton Courtenay, on the boundary with Milton parish and to the rear of the road frontage properties. It comprises a grassed field enclosed by hedgerows and some inter-spaced trees along the north, east and west boundaries. The south boundary adjoins the rear gardens of residential properties fronting Milton Road. Access is proposed from Milton Road by the removal of no. 110 Milton Road and the creation of a new access road. Overhead electricity lines cross the south and west corner of the site.

1.2 Local facilities in the village are focused at the northern end and comprise a primary school, a village hall, post office, local shop, and public houses. The local sports ground lies to the east of the central area of the village off Old Wallingford Way, and there are other recreational and fitness facilities at Milton Park to the south. Sutton Courtenay parish itself has approximately 1,007 households and an estimated population of 2,421 residents.

1.3 A location plan is **attached** at appendix 1

2.0 PROPOSAL

2.1 This is a full application to consider all the planning aspects of the proposed development. The proposal is a major development and is contrary to the policies of the development plan. The proposal has been publicised on this basis.

2.2 The proposal is for the residential development of the site with 34 dwellings (following the demolition of the existing property for the new access road) together with roads, footpaths and associated parking areas, landscaping, amenity space, and open space.

2.3 This proposal for 34 dwellings would result in an estimated additional 83 residents (based upon district-wide average household figures), which represents about a 3% increase in the parish population. Across the 1.67 ha site the 34 dwellings would result in a density of 20 dwellings per hectare.

2.4 Affordable housing is proposed at 40% (i.e. 13 dwellings). 26.5% of the dwellings are two-bedroom properties or less.

The proposed mix of dwelling units is as follows:

1-bedroom = 0 units

2-bedroom = 13 units of which 9 are shown as affordable properties

Vale of White Horse District Council – Committee Report – 8 May 2013

3-bedroom = 8 units of which 4 are shown as affordable properties
4-bedroom = 13 units

- 2.5 The following documents have been submitted in support of the application:
- Planning Statement & Design and Access Statement (Feb 2013 - WWADP)
 - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Jan 2013 – Lockhart Garratt)
 - Green Infrastructure Supporting Statement (Jan 2013 – Lockhart Garratt)
 - Arboricultural Report (Jan 2013 – Lockhart Garratt)
 - Ecological Report (Jan 2013 – Aae)
 - Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Statement (Dec 2012 – ICS)
 - Supplementary Hydrological Groundwater Impact Assessment (Mar 2013 – ICS)
 - Cultural Heritage Assessment (Jan 2013 – Oxford Archaeology)
 - Transport Statement (Feb 2013 – David Tucker Associates)
 - Sustainable Design checklist (Jan 2013 – Blewburton)
 - Code for Sustainable Homes pre-assessment (Jan 2013 – Breglobal)
 - Renewable Energy Options Appraisal (Jan 2013 – Blewburton)
 - Statement of Community Engagement (Jan 2013 – Meeting Place)

- 2.6 The applicants have been in discussion with council officers and others to agree levels of financial contribution towards off-site services which this proposal (through the increase in population and the activities they generate) would add to the use of, and securing on-site facilities such as affordable housing. Financial contributions cover facilities and services such as waste collection, street name plates, public art, education (primary, secondary, sixth-form and SEN), library and museums, waste management, social and healthcare, fire and rescue, highways and transport, police equipment, and local recreational facilities.

- 2.7 Extracts from the application plans are **attached** at appendix 2.

3.0 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

3.1 Sutton Courtenay Parish Council – Object

A copy of the parish council's comments is **attached** at appendix 3A.

3.2 Milton Parish Council – Object:

“Milton Parish Council considers that this application should be refused. Milton village currently suffers from the inadequate road infrastructure associated with Milton Park and the A34 interchange and any additional car movements can only add to the problems. Milton Parish Council is also concerned about the flood risk posed by further housing. Ginge Brook is currently unable to cope with water levels – frequently flooding and indeed closing Footpath 5. Any disturbance of the water table will surely make things worse.”

3.3 Drayton Parish Council – Object

A copy of the parish council's comments is **attached** at appendix 3B.

- 3.4 **Local residents** – A total of 109 representations had been received from local residents at the time of writing this report, all of which object. The objections are made on the following grounds:

- Increased traffic leading to safety issues and additional road congestion
- The site is subject to flooding with inadequate drainage
- Increased pressure on local infrastructure

- Erosion of the village's rural character
- Cumulative impact on the village which has limited facilities
- Issues of noise pollution and impact on air quality and lighting
- Loss of an open field which is a habitat for wildlife

3.5 Keep Sutton Courtenay Rural – Object

The group has submitted its objections in the form of a report against this proposal and a proposal on adjoining land (application reference no. P13/V0401/O). In addition the group has commissioned and submitted two reports dealing with the application's transport assessment and flood risk assessment as follows:

Review of Transport Assessments (March 2013 – Capita Symonds)
Sutton Courtenay FRA Evaluation (February 2013 – Hydro-GIS Ltd)

Both of these reports have been sent to the consultees who advise the council on these matters.

3.6 Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) – Object

“CPRE Oxfordshire objects to this application on the grounds that it would lead to unsustainable development of the village of Sutton Courtenay. Sutton Courtenay is a pretty riverside village with a strong sense of community. However, rapid and significant expansion of the village threatens to overwhelm local services and facilities, and puts at risk its current green setting. CPRE notes that applications for 160+ houses have already been approved within the village. Further development within this short time period will not be sustainable.

In particular, our concerns are:

1. The density of the proposed development is too great. For example, it will lead to cars from the new development right next to gardens of existing houses.
2. Traffic problems will be created, in particular at key 'narrowings' which are already bad such as Culham Bridge, Milton Heights, Harwell Road.
3. Surface water flooding is already a problem and additional hard surfacing will exacerbate this.
4. Appropriate infrastructure for sewage is not in place.

In addition we note that both this and the current application for further housing at a different point on Milton Road will swallow up some of the remaining green land around the village. If housing is required, the imminent potential of brown field land becoming available at the Didcot A site would be an alternative option which should be considered in the first instance.”

3.7 County Highways – No objection subject to suitable conditions to secure highway improvements and contributions towards public transport provision.

3.8 Landscape Architect – “This site is particularly visible when travelling from Milton to Sutton Courtenay along the Milton Road and when using the public footpath adjacent to the site. The existing hedge and boundary trees help screen the site and should be retained and enhanced. In the Green Infrastructure Statement, ref: 12-2247 3607 D04 page 16, 5.1.7, it states that the hedge will be buffered from the development by a maintenance corridor, which will allow consistent management throughout. Details of this maintenance corridor will be needed.

Details of proposed fences, garden walls and enclosures within the development should be required. It is not clear what the design is between the existing industrial units in the south-west corner of the site and the housing development. Maybe this car

park should be screened off from the housing?

To create an avenue into the development more trees would be required on each side of the entrance road, possibly another four birch trees. There seems to be more opportunities to plant trees within the development site, as indicated in the Proposed Site Plan drawing no. P01 rev. H. It would be good to have more street trees so long as there is no conflict with services and lighting.”

- 3.9 **Arboriculturalist** – No objection provided tree protection measures are implemented and the vegetation around the perimeter of the site is retained.
- 3.10 **Ecologist** - No objection provided the recommendations of the ecological report are followed. There are no significant ecological constraints on this site.
- 3.11 **Natural England** – Standard advice offered. The proposal does not appear to affect any statutorily protected sites or landscapes.
- 3.12 **Environment Agency** – Standard advice offered as the site lies within flood zone 1 and, therefore, it is not a high risk location. Standard advice on surface water flooding has been provided and this can be incorporated into a planning condition.
- 3.13 **Drainage Engineer** – Holding objection on drainage and flood risk grounds pending further information.

There are concerns on the effectiveness of the proposed drainage strategy with the high ground water table. Further information is requested to demonstrate that the proposed development can be effectively drained and will not be prone to flood risk.

Regarding the report submitted by Keep Sutton Courtenay Rural, the surface water and groundwater situation has been responded to by the Environment Agency who has raised no objection from a groundwater protection perspective.

- 3.14 **Thames Water** – An initial investigation has identified an inability of the existing waste water infrastructure to accommodate the needs of this development. If planning permission is granted, Thames Water recommends a 'Grampian' condition is imposed requiring a drainage strategy to be completed.

Regarding the report submitted by Keep Sutton Courtenay Rural, Thames Water indicates that at this stage their comments remain the same. They are aware of capacity concerns for this development and have requested that the developer discusses mitigation measures with them in accordance with the recommended planning condition.

- 3.15 **Environmental Health** – No objection
Air quality - The area has not been identified as an area of poor air quality and the proposed development will be unlikely to result in a significant impact on local air quality.
- 3.16 **Design and Conservation Officer** – There are no known heritage assets on the site that will be affected by the development. The site is visually well contained by existing development and landscaping features which are to be retained and will enhance the development. The design of the proposed housing is appropriate to the location. The sustainability of the site would be improved if there was a more direct pedestrian route from the site into the village.

- 3.17 **County Archaeologist** – The site is within an area of archaeological potential. As such, an archaeological desk-based assessment has been carried out. However, a pre-determination archaeological field evaluation should also be undertaken. A written scheme of investigation has been approved and the field evaluation will be undertaken shortly.
- 3.18 **English Heritage** – Has considered the information submitted and does not wish to offer any comments on this occasion. The application should be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance, and on the basis of the council's specialist conservation advice.
- 3.19 **Housing Services** – The proposal to deliver 34 houses following the demolition of one existing dwelling would result in a gain of 33 dwellings. 40% provision of affordable housing would require 13 dwellings, which is proposed.

Policy H17 requires affordable housing to be distributed evenly across the site and to be indistinguishable in appearance from the market housing. The proposed distribution is not policy compliant.

- 3.20 **Equalities Officer** – Requires storage areas for wheeled bins so that they are not left on the pavement to cause obstruction to pedestrians and wheelchair users. A contribution towards the shopmobility scheme in Abingdon would be requested.
- 3.21 **Waste Management Team** – Requires storage areas for wheeled bins per plot to be provided with collection points clear of parking areas.
- 3.22 **Lesiure Services** – Maintenance of open space areas should be clarified and secured either by adoption by the parish council or through a management company.

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 [P00/V1120](#) - Refused (24/08/2000) - Dismissed on appeal (31/01/2001)
Demolition of bungalow. Erection of four bungalows served by access way.
- 4.2 P13/V0401/O – Pending determination.
Demolition of no. 44 Milton Road to create access, residential development of site for up to 70 dwellings, including vehicular access, pedestrian and cycle links, public open space, landscaping and drainage.

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011

- 5.1 Policy GS1 provides a general location strategy to concentrate development within the five main settlements.
- 5.2 Policy GS2 indicates that outside the built-up areas new building will not be permitted unless on land identified for development or the proposal is in accordance with other specific policies.
- 5.3 Policy DC1 requires new development to be of a high design quality in terms of layout, scale, mass, height, detailing, materials to be used, and its relationship with adjoining buildings.
- 5.4 Policy DC4 requires development on sites of 0.5 ha or more to contribute to public art to significantly contribute to the development or the local area.

Vale of White Horse District Council – Committee Report – 8 May 2013

- 5.5 Policy DC6 requires hard and soft landscaping to protect and enhance the visual amenities of the site and surroundings and to maximise nature conservation and wildlife habitat creation.
- 5.6 Policy DC9 seeks to ensure development will not unacceptably harm the amenities of neighbouring properties or the wider environment.
- 5.7 Policy NE9 says that development in the Lowland Vale will not be permitted if it would have an adverse effect on the landscape, particularly on the long and open views within or across the area.
- 5.8 Policy NE10 says that development which would harm the essentially open or rural character of areas on the urban fringes and in the important gaps between settlements will not be permitted.
- 5.9 Policy NE11 seeks to enhance the landscape character of areas which have been damaged or compromised.
- 5.10 Policy H11 allows limited development of not more than 15 dwellings within villages such as Sutton Courtenay subject to design issues and not losing open space.
- 5.11 Policy H13 seeks to limit new housing development outside the built-up areas of settlements.
- 5.12 Policy H16 requires about 50% provision of housing to be two-bedroom or less for schemes of more than 10 dwellings and 10% should meet lifetime homes standards.
- 5.13 Policy H17 requires 40% provision of affordable housing for schemes of more than 5 dwellings.
- 5.14 Policy H23 refers to housing schemes providing open space at 15% for the larger villages.

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

- 5.15 Residential Design Guide – December 2009
Offers guidance on housing design and layout.
- 5.16 Sustainable Design and Construction – December 2009
Code for Sustainable Homes guidance to achieve level 3 and working to level 4 by 2013.
- 5.17 Open space, Sport and Recreation Future Provision – July 2008
Advice for the provision and maintenance requirements for open space areas.
- 5.18 Affordable Housing – July 2006
Provides further guidance in relation to policy H17.
- 5.19 Planning and Public Art – July 2006
Sites over 0.5 ha should provide a contribution towards public art in line with policy DC4.
- 5.20 **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** – March 2012
Paragraph 14 & 49 – presumption in favour of sustainable development
Paragraph 47 – five year housing supply requirement
Paragraph 50 - create sustainable inclusive and mixed communities

Paragraph 99 – flood risk assessment

Paragraph 109 – contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

National advice

6.1 At the heart of the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Within the context of the NPPF, planning permission should be granted where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, unless any adverse impacts would so significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposed development when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole (paragraph 14).

6.2 The current lack of a five year supply of housing sites in the district is due to the lack of delivery of new housing by developers rather than an under-supply of allocated housing land. This has primarily been caused by delays in progressing some major allocations due to the economic downturn and the delay in bringing forward the council's new local plan. The current lack of a five year housing land supply justifies some flexibility in line with the NPPF in the consideration of planning applications which do not accord with local plan policy.

6.3 This approach is by necessity of a time-limited duration and is aimed at identifying sites considered suitable to address the housing land shortfall whilst still meeting relevant sustainability and design criteria as referred to in the NPPF. An assessment has been made of the case put forward by the applicants that this proposal meets the requirements of the NPPF for providing sustainable development to help address the current housing land shortfall and, as a result, it is considered that the principle of the proposed development is acceptable.

6.4 It is clear the application is contrary to local plan policies GS2 and H11. However, whilst the council does not have a five year housing land supply, these policies are inconsistent with the NPPF. The proposed development, therefore, needs to be considered on its site specific merits and whether it constitutes a sustainable form of development as defined in the NPPF.

Use of land

6.5 Paragraph 109 of the NPPF says that “the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment”, and paragraph 111 says that planning decisions “should encourage the effective use of land by re-using land that has previously been developed (brownfield land).”

6.6 The site has been used for agricultural or similar low activity uses in the past. The development of the site for housing is contrary to policy H11 but, as indicated above, this is not a restricting factor given the current housing land shortfall, subject to all other site specific matters being considered acceptable in accordance with the NPPF. The landscape quality of the site is relatively low and so this, in itself, would not prejudice the proposed development

Sustainability credentials

6.7 The NPPF puts strong emphasis on housing being used to further enhance rural vitality. Sutton Courtenay is one of the larger villages within the district and scores within the top 20 in the village hierarchy. The location of the site is on the fringe of the southern part of the village, but it is reasonably close to the range of services and facilities available within the village. For these reasons, the principle of the proposal is considered to be acceptable in that the site is a reasonably sustainable location.

Cumulative impact considerations

- 6.8 This is the first major proposed housing development within the parish area or an adjacent parish area seeking to assist in addressing the identified housing land shortfall across the district. There is another proposal still pending consideration on land adjacent to this site for up to 70 dwellings, also accessed from Milton Road. Other locations may result in future applications, but there are no other large sites currently before the council for consideration.
- 6.9 The proposal would result in an increase of about 3% in the existing parish housing stock with a commensurate increase in population within the ward of about 3.5%. The overall level of proposed cumulative development could result in an additional 104 dwellings, on the basis of existing applications (including P13/V0401/O the neighbouring site as yet to be considered). This amounts to an 11% increase in the existing housing stock in the parish..
- 6.10 The proposed development is considered to be capable of being accommodated in the locality, provided suitable contributions are secured to on-site and off-site services and infrastructure. This takes into account the housing land shortfall which needs to be addressed and the sustainability benefit of the larger settlements taking a fair proportion of the required additional housing to support and ensure the retention of existing services.

Social infrastructure

- 6.11 There has been some local concern that existing social and physical infrastructure within the village could not cope with the proposed increase in population resulting from this proposal. However, contributions can be secured to offset the impacts arising from the development. The applicant has agreed to the principle of addressing these needs through contributions which can be secured through a section 106 legal agreement.

Access arrangements

- 6.12 The site would be accessed off Milton Road from the south. The access is shown with acceptable vision splays following the receipt of amended plans to address original concerns. Some off-site highway improvements would also be required and could be secured through legal agreements.
- 6.13 Some local concern has been expressed that the proposed access would cause traffic congestion due to the level of traffic using the road from Milton village to the west. However, there are no objections from the County Engineer on traffic generation or highway safety grounds. This takes into account the additional transport assessment report submitted by the Keep Sutton Courtenay Rural residents' group (KSCR).

Affordable housing

- 6.14 The affordable housing requirement has been confirmed by the applicant to be workable as part of the scheme. The distribution of the affordable housing across the site is clustered in one area. This is the preference of the registered social landlord provider who is interested in this element of the scheme. Given the small size of the site, this small clustering is not considered to be overly detrimental to the layout or social integration.

Visual impact - appearance, landscaping, layout and scale

- 6.15 Good design and layout is a key aspect of sustainable development and the NPPF is explicit in seeking high quality outcomes. The submitted proposal has been considered in accordance with the advice in the NPPF and it is viewed that the scheme is acceptable in terms of the site specific considerations.
- 6.16 The layout has a mix of detached, semi-detached and terraced dwellings which

provides a suitable development to complement and add to the existing mix of dwellings in the village. The proposed provision of two storey dwellings is considered acceptable on the periphery of the village layout and can reflect the character of other parts of the existing village environment.

- 6.17 The detailed appearance and design of the dwellings reflect a traditional feel with solid materials and a pitched roofscape. There is a mix of dwelling types to cater for different housing requirements, and the pallet of materials offers individuality whilst retaining elements of a common approach throughout the proposed development.
- 6.18 The proposed dwellings offer passive surveillance of the surrounding public areas and are appropriately separated from the existing dwellings that border the site.
- 6.19 Adequate private garden space is provided and the proposed layout relates well to the surrounding development in the area. Privacy distances within the development and to neighbouring properties are achieved in accordance with the Residential Design Guide.
- 6.20 The proposal retains and maintains the existing field boundaries to the site with additional landscaping provided throughout the proposed layout.

Impact on the residential amenity of neighbours

- 6.21 The proposed layout would not have any direct harmful impact on the residential amenity of adjacent properties in terms of overshadowing, light pollution, over-dominance or loss of privacy. The proposed arrangement would provide a generally inward facing development, and adequate spatial separation is achieved between properties in accordance with the Residential Design Guide.

Heritage assets

- 6.22 The NPPF requires that account should be taken of the desirability to sustain and enhance heritage assets. The proposal has no heritage assets within the site or within the surrounding area. The application has not identified any heritage asset in the local area that would be subject to any adverse impact from the proposal.

Drainage and flooding issues

- 6.23 Surface water drainage – The site is subject to a high water table which requires further assessment by way of a hydrological groundwater impact assessment. Work on this is currently under discussion with Thames Water. An update on this matter will be given at the meeting.
- 6.24 Foul water drainage – Thames Water has identified an inability of the existing waste water infrastructure to accommodate the needs of this proposal. A drainage strategy is required to enable all water drainage (surface and foul) to be discharged into the public sewerage system before any development starts on site.
- 6.25 There is uncertainty about whether the necessary works to provide a drainage strategy can be completed within the life of a 12 month planning permission. Clarification of this matter is awaited from Thames Water, and an update will be given at the meeting.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 This outline proposal does not accord with the development plan and it has been publicised as a departure. However, in the light of the current shortfall in the council's five year housing land supply, the proposal's location adjoining an existing large village with close availability of services and facilities should be afforded appropriate weight. As the proposal would result in a sustainable development in terms of its relationship

and proximity to local facilities and services, the principle of the proposal is considered to accord with the NPPF.

- 7.2 In site specific terms, the proposal is not considered to be harmful to the landscape character of the area, the residential amenity of nearby properties, any local heritage assets or highway safety and, therefore, given the current housing land shortfall, it complies with the NPPF. The proposed plans show an acceptable development on the site.
- 7.3 A major issue that has arisen relates to the foul water infrastructure. The council should not grant planning permission if that permission could not be implemented within its 12 month timescale.
- 7.4 The applicants have confirmed they are actively investigating appropriate measures to address the surface water and foul water drainage issues with Thames Water. This investigation is ongoing at the time of writing this report but it is expected to be finalised within the next few days. If satisfactorily resolved, the issues can be properly addressed by imposing conditions on the permission.
- 7.5 In addition, the scheme could come on stream quickly, as all the necessary criteria are in place for swift development on site which will assist in helping to address the current housing land shortfall.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the decision to grant planning permission be delegated to head of planning in consultation with the committee chairman subject to:

1. Completion within a months period of a drainage strategy to address the water infrastructure issues relating to the site, together with a clear and quantified timescale for the implementation of any works required under the drainage strategy in agreement with Thames Water to ensure that all such works are completed prior to the commencement of development on the site within the 12 month period.

2. Completion within the agreed PPA period of section 106 agreements for on-site affordable housing provision, contributions towards off-site facilities and services including highways works, education improvements, waste management and collection, street names signs, public art, library and museum service, social and health care, fire and rescue, police equipment, local and area hub recreational and community facility improvements.

3. The following conditions, including the requirement for the commencement of development within 12 months from the date of the issue of planning permission to help address the immediate housing land shortfall:

- 1. TL1 - Time limit (12 months)**
- 2. MC2 - materials**
- 3. LS1 - landscape**
- 4. LS4 - tree protection details**
- 5. RE6 - boundary walls and fences – including walls to open frontages**
- 6. Plot curtilage boundaries**
- 7. Plot restriction to southern boundary**
- 8. Ecology**
- 9. MC24 - drainage requirements**

10. Drainage timetable to be implemented
11. Construction traffic management plan
12. Travel information packs
13. Access visibility
14. Parking provision
15. Building height parameters
16. Refuse bin storage
17. Roof top aeriels
18. Maintenance of open space areas
19. Protect and maintain hedges during development operations
20. Approved drawings

If the required section 106 agreements are not completed in a timely manner and so planning permission cannot be granted by the determination deadline of 19 June 2013, in accordance with the agreed PPA, it is recommended that authority to refuse planning permission is delegated to the head of planning in consultation with the chairman and vice-chairman.

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