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<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	<a href="#">P13/V0344/FUL</a>
<b>APPLICATION TYPE</b>	FULL APPLICATION
<b>REGISTERED</b>	18 February 2013
<b>PARISH</b>	GREAT FARINGDON
<b>WARD MEMBER(S)</b>	Roger Cox Mohinder Kainth Alison Thomson
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Bloor Homes Western
<b>SITE</b>	Land Adjoining Folly Park Faringdon
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Proposed development of 28 dwellings, including affordable housing, new access, landscaping and associated works
<b>AMENDMENTS</b>	None
<b>GRID REFERENCE</b>	429386/194936
<b>OFFICER</b>	Martin Deans

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The application site is approximately one hectare in area and lies next to the recently completed housing areas on the Folly Park View estate (the former Folly Farm), off Park Road in Faringdon. The site has been used by Bloor Homes as the main compound during the construction of the housing. It has an existing vehicular access from Clements Way. A site location plan is **attached** as appendix 1.

1.2 The site is bordered on the north and west sides by housing in Clements Way and Palmer Road. Inside the west boundary is a row of semi-mature trees. To the south lies a recently completed attenuation pond that is part of the surface water drainage system for the new housing development, and further south beyond this is a row of mature poplar trees. To the east lies a drainage channel that is also part of the surface water drainage system.

1.3 The site slopes up towards the north and there is a distinct change in level between the northern limit of the site and the adjoining properties in Palmer Road. The application comes to committee because of the number of neighbour objections.

## 2.0 PROPOSAL

2.1 This site has outline planning permission for new business development as part of the Folly Farm development area. The applicants argue that the site is not attractive for new business development given its relatively discrete location, tucked away from view from main roads, and the depressed state of the current market where there is an oversupply of land allocated for new business development. In support they also point to paragraph 22 of the NPPF, which states that sites allocated for employment use should not be prevented from being put to another use if there is no reasonable prospect of the employment use coming forward and there is evidence of need for the alternative use. The applicants refer to the current lack of a five year supply of housing land in the Vale, which they consider proves the need for housing, and adds further weight in favour of the proposal.

2.2 The application seeks full planning permission to build 28 dwellings on the site, 11 of which will be affordable (which equates to 40%). Home offices will be provided above three of the proposed domestic garages. Extracts from the application drawings are **attached** as appendix 2. The proposed mix of housing is:

2 x 1-bedroom flats  
2 x 2-bedroom flats  
4 x 2-bedroom houses  
17 x 3-bedroom houses  
3 x 4-bedroom houses

2.3 The existing row of mature trees along the west boundary will be retained.

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 Faringdon Town Council “has no objection to this particular planning application but would like to be involved in discussions that may take place involving section 106 obligations.”

3.2 Neighbours have submitted ten letters of objection and two letters of observation. The grounds of objection are:

- The site should be used for recreational purposes to help meet the demands of the existing residents
- The application needs to be seen as part of the overall dense Folly Park View estate and will add further problems
- Further overdevelopment of the area
- Additional traffic on already very busy and dangerous roads
- Additional strain on inadequate facilities in the town
- Loss of view (this is not a material planning consideration)

3.3 County Engineer – no objections

3.4 Environment Agency – no objections subject to conditions

3.5 Principal Engineer (Drainage) – no objections subject to conditions

3.6 Countryside Officer – no objections

3.7 Housing Officer had requested amendments to the mix of affordable housing, to which the applicants have responded. An update on this will be reported to committee.

3.8 Landscape Officer has concerns about the treatment of site boundaries to which the applicants have responded. An update on this will be reported to committee.

3.9 Forestry Team had requested more information on the impact of the proposal on the row of mature trees, to which the applicants have responded. A update on this will be reported to committee.

3.10 Waste Management Team – no objections

3.11 Thames Water requests a Grampian-style condition for the assessment of local sewerage capacity, and for the completion of upgrading works, if necessary, prior to the first occupation of any dwelling.

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 [P08/V1078/RM](#) - Approved (07/01/2009)

Approval of reserved matters for second phase (332 units) with related open space and infrastructure.

- 4.2 [P08/V0793/RM](#) - Approved (14/08/2008)  
Approval of reserved matters for first phase housing (68 units) with associated open space and infrastructure.
- 4.3 [P06/V1939/O](#) - Approved (17/04/2008)  
Demolition of residual tree nursery structures. New housing, business and leisure development with ancillary infrastructure and landscaping.
- 4.4 The adopted local plan allocation for the Folly Farm site earmarked one hectare for business development. The outline planning permission P06/V1939/O approved the application site for business development.
- 5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**
- 5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in March 2012, replaced all previous PPG's and PPS's. In accordance with paragraph 215 of the NPPF, weight has to be attached to relevant policies of the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 in relation to their degree of consistency with the NPPF.
- 5.2 Relevant policies from the adopted local plan are DC1 (design), DC5 (highway safety), DC7 (waste collection), DC8 (mitigation of impact on local services), DC9 (impact on neighbours), and H17 (affordable housing). These policies are considered to be fully consistent with the NPPF, and should be given full weight.
- 5.3 Paragraph 22 of the NPPF states that sites allocated for employment use should not be prevented from being put to another use if there is no reasonable prospect of the employment use coming forward and there is evidence of need for the proposed alternative use.
- 5.4 The Residential Design Guide was adopted in December 2009
- 6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**
- 6.1 The main issues for committee to consider are first, the principle of housing on the site; second, the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area; third, the impact on neighbours; fourth, the impact on local services and facilities; and, fifth, highway safety. With regard to the first issue, the applicants argue that the allocation of the site for new business development is not realistic. The site is not prominent from main roads, which reduces its attractiveness for new businesses.
- 6.2 Officers have given careful consideration to this argument, and are mindful of the advice in paragraph 22 of the NPPF concerning the release of employment sites that are unlikely to come forward. The application site is one hectare in area. To the south-east of the site is the allocated employment site on the corner of Park Road and the A420, which is much more prominent from the public highway, and is four hectares in area. Half a mile to the south-west is another allocated employment site, at Rogers Concrete, which also has much more prominence from the A420. The loss of the application site from its allocated employment use would still leave these other two allocated sites in Faringdon. There is also the issue of the current lack of a five year supply of housing land in the Vale, to which significant weight needs to be attached. Overall, officers consider that, given the existence of other more prominent employment sites in Faringdon, it is unlikely that the application site will come forward for business development, certainly in the short to medium-term.
- 6.3 Neighbours have requested that the application site be used for recreational purposes instead, to help meet demand from existing residents. However, the site has always

been allocated for development and was originally purchased by the applicants on that understanding. Officers consider it would be unreasonable now to decide that the site had to be used for recreational purposes. The masterplan for the development included a significant extension to Folly Park and access routes from the new housing area into Folly Park for use by residents. Consequently, following the advice in paragraph 22 of the NPPF and the current shortfall in housing land, the use of the application site for recreational use is not considered to be reasonable and its use for housing development is considered to be acceptable.

- 6.4 Turning to the second issue, the designs of the proposed housing follow the types permitted on the adjacent Folly Farm site, and are therefore considered to be acceptable. Following requests from the council's landscape officer and forestry team, the applicant has submitted additional information concerning the boundary treatment of the site and the relationship of the proposed housing closest to the existing semi-mature trees on the west boundary. This information was being considered at the time of writing the report, and an update on these matters will be reported to the meeting.
- 6.5 Regarding the third issue, the impact on neighbours, the nearest neighbouring properties are in Palmer Road and Clements Way and lie to the north and west of the site. The layout of the proposed housing has been designed so that the council's adopted minimum separation distances will be met. As a consequence there will be no harm from loss of privacy. The site level is below that of the level of the housing to the north, so there will be no harm from loss of light. The existing row of trees on the west boundary provides an effective screen in this direction. Thames Water has requested that a Grampian-style condition be attached to require assessment of local sewerage capacity and the provision of upgrading works if necessary prior to the first occupation of the dwellings. This condition can be added.
- 6.6 The fourth issue is the impact on local services. Oxfordshire County Council has assessed the application and made requests for financial contributions towards education, the local library, youth services, social services, waste management and the county museum. These will be secured via a section 106 obligation. The Vale has requested contributions towards the maintenance of public open space in Folly Park, the provision of waste bins and street nameplates, and public art. The contributions that have been sought are calculated to offset the impact on services by the future residents of the scheme, and mean that the impact of the development on local services will be acceptable.
- 6.7 The final matter is highway safety. The county engineer has assessed the application, and concluded that the amount of parking and the proposed highway details are satisfactory. Therefore, the county engineer has no objections on the grounds of highway safety.
- 6.8 The application has a deadline for determination of 20 May 2013. Planning obligations with both the Vale and Oxfordshire County Council are well advanced and, if committee agrees with the recommendation, officers are confident that a decision can be made by the deadline. To guard against unanticipated problems, however, the recommendation includes authority to refuse planning permission if necessary should the application fail to make the expected progress before the deadline for making the decision.
- 7.0 **CONCLUSION**
- 7.1 In the light of recent guidance in the NPPF, and the current lack of a five year supply of housing land, officers consider the change in the use of the site from an allocated employment site to housing is acceptable. The impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area is also acceptable. Proposed separation distances are

such that neighbours' amenities will not be harmed, and financial contributions will be used to offset the impact on local services. There is no objection on highway safety grounds. Overall the proposal accords with relevant policies of the development plan, particularly policies DC1, DC5, DC7, DC8, DC9, and H17 of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011, and with the NPPF.

**8.0 RECOMMENDATION**

**8.1 It is recommended that authority to grant planning permission is delegated to the head of planning in consultation with the chairman and vice-chairman, subject to:-**

**i) the completion of section 106 obligations with the Vale and Oxfordshire County Council, to secure 40% affordable housing, financial contributions towards the education, the local library, youth services, social services, waste management, the county museum, maintenance of public open space, and for waste bins, street nameplates and public art; and**

**ii) conditions, including external materials, slab levels, details of access and parking, landscaping, works to protect trees, boundary treatments, details of surface water drainage, and a Grampian-style condition for foul water drainage.**

**8.2 If the required section 106 obligations are not completed in a timely manner and so planning permission cannot be granted by the determination deadline of 20 May 2013, 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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