

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE:

THURSDAY 9TH OCTOBER 2014

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING & STRATEGIC HOUSING

I4/0482/P/OP West Carterton, Carterton	
Date	03/04/14
Officer	Phil Shaw
Officer Recommendation	Refuse
Parish	BRIZE NORTON
Grid Ref:	

APPLICATION DETAILS

Development of approximately 1,000 houses, local shops and community centre, employment area, primary school, public open space, sports pitches and play areas, Ecology Park, allotments and ancillary works.

APPLICANT

Crest Nicholson C/O Agent

THE SITE

The application site comprises 77.97 hectares of land to the west of the built-up area of Carterton along Upavon Way and to the north of the B4477 Alvescot Road. The site falls primarily within Alvescot Parish. Agricultural land lies to the north and to the west beyond a minor road between the villages of Alvescot and Shilton as well as to the south of Alvescot Road. Excluded from the outer site boundaries are parts of a number of fields between the main body of the site and a strip of land along the western boundary, two balancing tanks close to Upavon Way and residential and holiday letting cottages at and around Kenn's Farm that are accessed from Alvescot Road.

The land generally rises to the north from Alvescot Road but the Shill Brook lies close to and parallel with the eastern boundary of the site from which the land rises steeply to the west and to the east up to Upavon Way. The land is predominantly in agricultural use comprising a number of large scale fields divided by stone walls, fences and hedges with smaller enclosed paddocks in the south east corner. The sides of the Shill Brook valley are densely covered with trees and shrubs and there are hedges, trees and small blocks of woodland elsewhere on the site.

A public right of way crosses the site from north to south.

THE APPLICATION

The application is in outline with the means of access as the only matter of detail to be determined at this stage. Although detailed designs are not submitted, the principal vehicular access would be taken via a new road bridge (including provision for pedestrians and cyclists) over the Shill Brook from a new roundabout on Upavon Way. Two additional vehicular accesses would be created on Alvescot Road: one 247 metres west of its junction with Upavon Way and one a further 435 metres to the south west.

The proposed development consists of approximately 1,000 dwellings including affordable housing and elderly persons accommodation; a local service centre including local shops and community buildings to serve the development; an area of mixed use development including employment land; a new primary school; public open space including formal and informal sports pitches and children's play areas; a new Shill Brook Ecology Park; allotments and ancillary works.

The submitted Design and Access Statement indicates the expected areas to be devoted to the different proposed uses as follows:

Use	Area (ha)	Homes
Residential	27.63	Around 850
Elderly persons accommodation	1.41	Around 90
Mixed use neighbourhood residential		Around 60
Mixed uses neighbourhood	3.96	N/A
Primary school	2.28	N/A
Shill Brook	8.86	N/A
Greenspace	23.2	N/A
Planting	2.49	N/A

Of the housing 65% would be market housing and 35% would be affordable housing. Provision to meet the needs of older people including some extra care housing would be made. The illustrative overall housing mix is 49% 1-2 bed homes; 26% 3 bed homes; 21% 4 bed homes and 4% five bed homes.

A mixed use area would include local shopping, dedicated employment land and live/work units together with community facilities.

Three parameter plans provide some detail of the proposed layout and form of the development and a basis for preparation of the submitted Environmental Statement. These plans are an Access and Movement Parameter Plan, a Land Use Parameter Plan and a Densities Parameter Plan. The content of these is considered below.

Accompanying the application is an Environmental Statement with the following sections:

- Introduction and Planning
- Community, Economic and Social Impacts
- Transport and Access
- Flooding
- Lighting
- Air Quality
- Noise and Vibration
- Landscape and Visual
- Ground Conditions
- Cultural Heritage
- Ecology

In addition, the application is accompanied by the following:

- Illustrative Landscape Framework Masterplan
- Planning Policy Statement
- Design and Access Statement
- Sustainability Statement
- Statement of Community Involvement
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment
- Utilities Report
- Site Waste Strategy
- Foul Sewerage Impact Assessment
- Retail Assessment of the Proposed Local Centre
- Outline Construction Management Plan
- Transport Assessment
- Framework Travel Plan
- Archaeological Desk Based Assessment
- Phase 1 Land Contamination Report
- Phase 2 Land Contamination Report

PLANNING HISTORY

There are no relevant planning applications relating to the site but it is being actively promoted by the applicant through the emerging West Oxfordshire Local Plan, having previously been identified as a potential site option by the Council in 2010 and 2011 before being rejected in the draft Local Plan (2012) and subsequent Local Plan Housing Consultation Paper (July 2014).

APPLICANT'S STATEMENT

A statement in support of the application proposals has been requested but has not been received at the time of agenda preparation. If one is received it will be included in the additional representations report.

CONSULTATIONS

Alvescot Parish Council

Objection. The proposal does not represent sustainable development and its adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh any benefits. In particular:

- The proposal makes no net contribution to the local economy
- The estimates of jobs created may not be realised as more accessible sites in the town remain unfilled, but anyway would be insufficient to meet the need of residents of the development.
- The need for access by car to the town centre may result in people using other centres with a better offer.
- The growth of Carterton should be within the town boundaries and any expansion should not be the least practical direction.
- Some facilities will be provided for the new residents but will be of little benefit to Carterton and in some cases may undermine it.
- The community centre would replicate the underused Shilton Park Community Centre and would be too remote to be of use by anyone other than residents of the estate.
- The primary school would have more capacity than needed for the estate and would unnecessarily compete with other schools. No provision is made for secondary age children and the average distance to the Community College is greater than other planned developments which will fill the college.
- The site, which has remained unchanged for centuries is an area of high sensitivity and an important rural edge of the town (SHLAA and Carterton Landscape Assessment)
- Increased flood risk is not convincingly addressed and water storage ponds near the main runway could increase the danger of bird strikes.
- The proposal is to pipe sewage to Black Bourton: the associated risk of polluting the Shill Brook is unacceptable.
- The additional traffic would be a burden on over-used and poorly maintained and dangerous roads. New residents' dependence on private transport even to Carterton will do nothing to reduce pollution or impact on climate change.
- The ecology park with human access will not maintain habitats and its maintenance will be an on-going cost to the public purse.
- The proposal would breach all five principles of sustainable development in the UK Sustainable Development Strategy *Securing the Future*.
- The developer has not consulted properly
- Technical submissions are selective and unconvincing.
- The argument that there is not a 5 years supply of housing land is based on assumptions in the SHMA which may be flawed and do not represent a target.

Broadwell Parish Meeting

Objection on the following grounds:

- Supports a strong and vibrant Carterton and development within settlements but not a strategic, satellite development across the Shill Brook on Alvescot Downs.
- The urban/rural harmony of town overlooking the Shill Valley to the Alvescot Downs would be destroyed. The Shill valley is a natural boundary to the town.
- The Council's SHLAA wisely and sensibly ruled out development in this area.

- The site is a Conservation target Area and green lung for Carterton which should be preserved.
- A satellite connected by bridges over the Shill Brook will never be truly assimilated into the town.
- The development would hugely increase traffic on the B4477 which is already dangerous and busy.

Carterton Town Council

Support and comments:

- More policy work on the Economic Development of Carterton is needed to ensure more employment land is allocated to cater for the existing need for jobs and the additional need of new residential development.
- The residential environment would be better than on land east of Carterton with the 'garden village' design meeting the needs of all future residents. Plenty of green open spaces and corridors, landscaping, footpaths and cycleways are proposed in addition to land for employment and sport.
- A lot of work has been done to minimise the risk of flooding downstream and roads can accommodate the extra traffic.
- A new primary school with adequate land for outdoor activities and good access to the expanding Community College is enormously beneficial to the town.
- The site offers good links to the town centre and the development has more potential to contribute to the Master Plan for the Town Centre than development to the east of the town.
- Seek transfer of the country park land along with maintenance funds, improved pedestrian and cycle links, money to enable the TC to establish which of their sites could be used for affordable housing. Promotion of energy efficiency, road improvements, new skate park roof and funding, funding to the football club, money towards allotment provision and cemeteries and provision of an ecology park

Filkins and Broughton Poggs Parish Council

Objection on the following grounds:

- Large scale developments such as this should be decided against Council's policy not by random speculative developments. Consultations in 2011 excluded this site and Council officers have opposed development of the land. The Local Plan Inspector in 2005 concluded that development in the area would result in the loss of a soft green edge to the town and an area of rural character and that '*land beyond the Shill Brook...is a physically separate agricultural area of open, elevated limestone wolds largely unaffected by urban influences*'.
- The proposal is unsustainable and should not be approved in the absence of a 5 year supply of housing land.
- In the last decade Carterton grew by 37% and will grow by a further 30% which is unsustainable. Is there adequate infrastructure?
- The Shill Valley designated as a Conservation Target Area will need to accommodate a significant road bridge.
- Unallocated sites should include 50% affordable housing in accordance with the Local Plan not 35% as proposed.
- Traffic has significantly increased on the B4477 through Filkins and Broughton Poggs and Kencot and there is a bottleneck at Broughton Poggs bridge and T junction where lorries are unable to pass each other.
- The Shill Brook is an essential flood plain. The development involves 5 acres of ponds and a further storage area. Previous claims of betterment in terms of flooding are now reduced to 'insignificant impact'. Extensive water areas close to RAF Brize Norton must give rise to substantially higher risk of bird strikes.
- The developers have approached the owners of land to the west suggesting that further development beyond Shilton Lane could follow.

Kencot Parish Meeting

Objection on the following main grounds:

- The increase in traffic for which the major and minor roads are unsuitable. Traffic on the B4477 has already greatly increased since the closure of RAF Lyneham. It would also put further strain on

the A40 causing even more delays for those travelling at working times. It would cause further delays in Filkins and Lechlade.

- Greater risk of flooding (and consequential difficulty and expense of insurance) in Kencot (where a number of houses flooded in 2007), Broadwell, Filkins, Alvescot, Black Bourton and Clanfield. Test by Crest Nicholson were not completed at the height of this winter's rainfall and we wonder what the actual level of the water table is.
- The prospect of even further development as adjacent landowners have been approached by the applicant's agent.
- The latest figures of housing need were seriously flawed and should be re-examined. The need is for organic growth not another satellite estate. How much RAF/MOD land could be released for development?

Langford Parish Council

Objection. While accepting the need to build new housing:

- The proposal is environmentally damaging and not the right way to proceed
- It would be perverse to build 1000 houses on a Greenfield site while there remain brownfield sites within Carterton: the development of Carterton as a town and coherent community would benefit from development within the existing town boundaries
- A large estate outside the town would create a parallel community and the scale and location are out of keeping with the rural character of the area and the environmental impact on the surrounding villages would be very significant. Smaller development spread around the district would be better
- It could be the first of a number of developments which would have a devastating effect on the rural character of the area
- The development would impact on surrounding local communities in terms of increased road traffic

Shilton Parish Council

Objection. A detailed analysis of the application concludes that:

- The development of a new greenfield suburban development is unsustainable in principle: development should be dispersed throughout the district (10 new houses per village and 40 per town) on brownfield infill sites where people can live in existing communities and support local businesses.
- In the last decade Carterton grew by 37% and will grow by a further 30% which is unsustainable.
- Unallocated sites should include 50% affordable housing in accordance with the Local Plan not 35% as proposed.
- The site is a remote island separated from the town.
- A significant increase in eastbound traffic will go through villages as the town becomes congested (junctions up to 97% of capacity).
- An accident blackspot at/near the B4020/B4477 junction has not been addressed.
- The development will increase water run-off and groundwater has been ignored.
- Sewerage capacity would need to be upgraded.
- The site is of ecological merit, with a Biodiversity Area and Conservation Target Area. There will be significant built infrastructure in the brook for the bridge and a 5ha attenuation basin: it makes no sense to create a manmade park after decimating the natural environment.
- The site is prominent with high landscape value and beautiful rolling countryside.
- The site has a well used public footpath.
- The site is of heritage value and relatively unchanged since the 1798 Inclosure.
- The developer has not consulted with the Broadshires villages.

Thames Water

Existing waste water infrastructure is not able to accommodate the needs of the development. A condition should therefore require a detailed drainage strategy. The developer is responsible to make proper provision for surface water and Thames Water will aim to provide mains water.

Environment Agency

No objection subject to conditions requiring no buildings or land raising within the 1% annual probability flood event outline and identified overland surface water flow route; details of a flood storage scheme to the east side of the Shill Brook; details of sustainable drainage; a landscape management plan; a foul and surface water drainage scheme; and contamination remediation if any found during development.

Natural England

No objection: there is not likely to be an adverse effect on the Alvescot Meadows SSSI if the development is carried out in accordance with the application details. Drainage details should be the subject of conditions. Comments on standing advice on protected species, the landscape and the possible potential for biodiversity enhancements.

BBOWT

Holding objection on grounds of inadequate assessments of the impacts on designated sites and the Shill Brook and insufficient compensation for the impacts on farmland birds, arable plants and brown hare.

Crime Prevention Design Advisor Oxfordshire Neighbourhood Policing and Partnerships

No objection but concern that the Design and Access Statement (DAS) does not address crime and disorder and recommends that permission is not granted until the DAS is supplemented with these details. Recommends a condition requiring details of measures to be incorporated in the development to demonstrate how Secured By Design accreditation will be achieved. Offers advice on design principles to be incorporated in a reserved matters application.

Ministry of Defence (MoD)

No safeguarding objections but would wish to be consulted on the reserved matters application to verify that the scheme would not affect aerodrome safeguarding parameters.

OCC

Supports the proposal in principle subject to addressing concerns of the County Ecologist Planner due to lack of information, various planning conditions and to the delivery of on-site and off-site infrastructure improvements and the provision of contributions to mitigate the potential impacts of the development and improve the safe accessibility of the site.

Proposed conditions relate to completion of accesses before occupation, a construction phase traffic management plan, an amended framework travel plan, safeguarding, protecting and enhancing rights of way on the site, surface water discharge to equal or be less than greenfield run off rates, the implementation of an approved archaeological investigation, the provision of fire hydrants and detailed ecological surveys and a scheme of precautionary method of working for reptiles.

Off-site highway infrastructure requirements are capacity improvements at the following junctions: Alvescot Road/Upavon Way, Upavon Way/Burford Road, Alvescot Road/black Bourton Road, B4477/unclassified Broughton Poggs priority junction at Filkins to change priority.

Pedestrian and cycle infrastructure requirements are new 3m wide segregated off-road footway/cycleways on the western side of Upavon Way and along Alvescot Road east of the mini-roundabout on the north side, zebra crossings 20m south of Richens Drive and north of Edgeworth Drive and a toucan crossing 20m north of the Upavon Way/Alvescot Road mini-roundabout.

Infrastructure contributions are required to the Carterton Strategic Transport Package (£2,254,710), to public transport comprising improvements to the Premium Bus Routes (£1,000,000), to bus stop furniture (£60,000), to public rights of way in the vicinity (£80,000), the delivery of a 1.5 form entry primary school on a 2.2ha site (£7,390,000), contributions to the expansion of one or more SEN schools (£153,280), to library services (£205,700), waste management (£154,880), youth support services (£44,154), museum resource centre (£12,100), a fire station (£327,310), day care facilities (£228,200) and to habitat enhancements in the nearby Conservation target Area

WODC: Environmental Health

No objections on grounds of noise. The south western corner of the site would experience noise levels that would require building sound insulation measures which should be secured by a condition. There

are no issues of air quality concern such as would be caused by pollution emissions from road or air traffic that would create an Air Quality Management Area.

WODC: Environmental Services: Landscape

Requests confirmation of how public open space will be maintained, comments that structural landscaping should not cause long term nuisance and points out that the Council would not wish to adopt incidental open space that does not have a District-wide benefit.

WODC: Housing Enabling Manager

The local need justifies 35% affordable housing with 70% for affordable rent and 30% shared ownership or similar tenure. Ideally the affordable housing mix should be 30% one bed flats, 10% two bed flats, 35% two bed houses, 20% three bed houses and 5% four bed houses. There is also a need for older persons dwellings and possibly a mixed tenure scheme of self-contained dwellings with care on site and for 5% general needs bungalows. At least 3% of dwellings should be suitable for persons in a wheelchair and for a small number of supported living apartments.

WODC: Public Art

The development area provides significant opportunities for public art projects such as public art integrated within the design of buildings and spaces and projects which engage existing and new communities in celebrating and/or investigating local identity/issues that support social development, cohesion and well-being. These should be in a public art plan and at a cost of up to £200,000.

WODC: Leisure Services

No objection subject to provision and maintenance of a NEAP play area, a MUGA (£397,769) and two LEAP play areas (£155,916) and the provision of two tennis courts (£165,000) and a floodlit skate park (£125,000) on site; the provision and maintenance of two off-site football pitches (£449,000), and contributions towards improvements to Carterton Leisure Centre (£710,850).

REPRESENTATIONS

The following is a summary of the principal matters raised in response to the application proposals. It is not practical to provide details of all of the submissions, some of which include very detailed, technical analyses particularly on matters of housing need and drainage. However, all representations have been considered in full and are available for inspection.

Objections have been received in some 378 representations raising the following concerns:

Policy

Development was rejected here in the draft local plan.

Affordable housing on unallocated sites should be 50% not 35% as proposed.

Traffic impact and transport:

There would be a substantial increase in traffic (and congestion) to areas of work (there is little employment in Carterton) in Oxford and Swindon on unsuitable town and country roads, many of which are in a poor condition and include dangerous sections/junctions with accident records (the B4020 towards Burford and its junction with the B4477 south of the site, the B4477 and Upavon Way/Alvescot Road in Carterton), including single lane river crossings and bottlenecks such as between Anstruther and Bridge Cottage on the B4477 at Filkins.

Traffic increase would be significant because of the size of the development and the poor accessibility to the town centre and employment on foot. Traffic movement estimates are too low because the survey was undertaken over the Easter holidays and two days before Good Friday and estimates use average rates for estates around England.

Rat runs would be created through Carterton (Corbett Road, Milestone Road and Wycombe way) and villages such as Alvescot, Bampton, Black Bourton and Filkins causing congestion, danger, noise and air pollution and on lanes used by horse riders.

The three new junctions including on Alvescot Road where traffic speeds can be high would be hazardous and increase accidents and pollution and the modification of four junctions would cause disruption.

The centre of Carterton is congested at peak times and Upavon Way would become gridlocked with access into and out of Richens Way difficult and unsafe and access onto Upavon Way from the

development also difficult. Even on the applicant's low traffic estimates junctions in Carterton would be at 97% capacity. Traffic calming will be necessary.

Increased traffic on rural lanes would be hazardous for horse riders and threaten the viability of livery and riding school businesses and associated businesses.

Parked cars cause congestion on the main street in Clanfield and increased traffic would increase the chance of accidents.

Will a realistic assessment of routes that traffic will actually take be carried out?

Speeding traffic is a problem which would be exacerbated.

There is no scope for necessary improvements to the B4477 at Kencot.

Road widening to accommodate the increased traffic would harm ancient field boundaries and rights of way.

Estimated walking distances are an underestimate and assume construction of the bridge which may not be implemented at an early stage. They are also not measured from the geographical centre of the housing.

Most bus services are to the east so this is the wrong side of the town for development and the closest existing S2 service does not run in the evenings or Sundays and other services would be a mile from the western edge of the development.

How could bus services through the development be sustained in the long term if underused.

The development would be disruptive to existing rights of way.

Other infrastructure issues

Concern re the adequacy of local infrastructure especially police, fire, ambulance, health care (dentists and GPs), sixth form education, social services, shops and town centre parking.

The proposed community centre and playing fields would only meet the need of the development and not provide further benefits and there would be only 4 more allotments than needed. The junior school would have excess capacity so not help existing schools.

Overhead electricity lines and a gas main would need to be diverted which would be costly and would interrupt supply.

Character and landscape issues:

The development would permanently harm an area which affords Carterton and surrounding villages with views of distinct character and is within a pristine unspoilt landscape recognised as being highly sensitive and an area of high landscape value.

The development is not a logical extension of Carterton that complements the scale, pattern, character and context of the area.

The area provides a very well defined natural boundary and rural edge to Carterton beyond the Upavon Road ring road which should be preserved. Once breached, further harmful development will follow and will negatively impact and eventually subsume surrounding villages.

The site is elevated and development would be very conspicuous in the landscape and any floodlights on the football pitch would cause enormous light pollution. Street lighting would also be very conspicuous as there is little in the valley villages.

Little landscaping is proposed because the site is in an open landscape but it will create an incongruous enclosed townscape in this open landscape so woodlands are essential but any such screening would be lost for future expansion.

A contrived ecology park would not compensate for the loss of natural countryside.

The site is of heritage value being relatively unchanged since the 1798 'Alvescot Inclosure'.

The development would encroach on the historic cluster of villages in the Shill valley.

It would spoil an area providing attractive walks and a well used public footpath near Carterton.

Associated plans for a cyclepath opposite 10 Minty Close would result in the loss of three well established trees.

The bridge over the Shill Brook would be an eyesore.

Flooding and drainage

The site is within the flood plain.

The site is elevated and the water table high so there would be an increased risk of flooding of the new houses and of nearby villages despite earlier claims that it would reduce flood risk.

The flood mitigation proposals were based on a finding of no groundwater in November 2013 but there was significant groundwater in January 2014.

The developer acknowledges that discharges into Shill Brook will increase with attenuation basins/storage only providing temporary water storage: the least favoured solution under National Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems which is due to come into force this year. Doubts are raised about the efficacy of the flood mitigation strategy including assumptions that pond capacity should be based on near maximum depth throughout when graduated banks would be necessary for amenity and safety reasons and that there would be no groundwater within them. The area was rejected as a site for a cemetery because of potential flooding. The size of the drainage pipe under the runway limits the volume of water that can be drained and is likely to be inadequate. The development relies on regular silt clearance but who will ensure it happens in the long term? Works to upgrade the Black Bourton sewage plant would be very disruptive.

Ecology

Would be harmful to the ecology of the Shill Brook valley - a CTA and Local Wildlife site next to a SSSI – and to protected species, Red Listed Birds and Birds of Conservation Concern. Restoration and habitat creation are welcome but sensitive species may be affected by pollution from the major building and engineering works, including highly alkaline concrete wash water, construction of the road through the ecology park, creating a 5 acre flood storage pond alongside the brook, as a consequence of sewage being disposed of via a pumping station and long pipework to the Black Bourton works and by the disturbance, noise, light, litter, pollution and impact of cats and dogs and local residents. The ecology park is an opportunity but an on-going public maintenance liability. More clarity is needed on contributions to be made to mitigate the harm to agricultural land fauna and flora. Wildlife is not confined to the valley but also the downland that would be developed.

Living conditions:

The cumulative effect of approved developments (250 at Kilkenny Country Park and 696 at REEMA Central and North) and other proposals (Carterton East and 66 homes near Kilkenny Country Park) need to be considered: it would be a giant construction site creating a very unpleasant living environment. The noise and vibration effects of the development on Ty Nant have not been considered. The property would be surrounded by the development. The high density development nearby would result in loss of privacy, light and in noise and disturbance during construction and use of the development. The development would ruin the peaceful rural setting of holiday accommodation at Ty Nant Cottages and the viability of the letting business. Noise and fumes from RAF Brize Norton would unacceptably affect residents of the development. The development would cause flightpaths to change with a consequential spread of the noise footprint. Increased traffic would cause harm to living conditions in surrounding settlements from noise, disturbance and pollution. The development would be a self-contained satellite estate and would not be integrated physically or socially with the rest of the town and social/community facilities would compete with those in the town: the development is socially unsustainable. There could be contamination and a potential ammunition dump. Will this be investigated? This is a radon affected area. Would this affect the development? The major development works on unstable and difficult terrain would seriously disrupt the daily lives of people living nearby. The massive increase in use of the footpath along Richens Drive would increase noise litter and vandalism to the detriment of local living conditions. The proposed roundabout at the end of Richens Road would cause fumes and health hazards to adjacent residents.

Community facilities:

The satellite development would be too distant from the town centre and community facilities for easy access on foot. It would deter access to the town centre and result in car journeys to Witney and elsewhere which would damage the economic and social development of Carterton. Shilton Park has not had a markedly beneficial impact on the town centre and nor would this.

Other sustainability matters

The construction of three access roads including one over the Shill Brook valley is unsustainable.

The development would have a large carbon footprint in construction and occupancy and could significantly increase water needs. In a part of the country subject to water shortages

The development would involve the loss of prime agricultural land.

The development would be harmful to an ancient track from beyond Burford, through Shilton and to the west of the Carterton towards the Thames.

The land could have been settled – will an archaeological survey be carried out?

Reference is made to garden cities and in particular Ebbsfleet but that was on brownfield land with excellent transport infrastructure.

Would new buildings incorporate solar panels and other energy saving technologies?

There are no plans to use the substantial quantities of field stone that would be excavated.

The scale of development would destroy Carterton as a community.

There are no major employment opportunities and none in prospect for the new residents.

Proposed employment area

There is no need for further industrial areas – there are empty properties off Upavon Way, so those would become housing.

Employment is needed to support more housing but existing buildings and sites are not being taken up so would a remote site here be actually utilised?

The proposed maximum of 562 jobs in the industrial park would be well below the 1,550 needed for the 2420 expected residents.

The employment zone should be located nearer to Upavon Way so giving easy commercial vehicle access to the A40.

Procedural

The pre-application consultation was inadequate and cannot be used to show that the development has public support.

The development should not be approved until SHMA figures are available and taken into account in drawing up an informed plan. The SHMA figures however are not targets to be achieved at any cost and need to be considered with local limitations and constraints.

The proposals are vague in referring to approximately 1000 houses, shops and employment.

The site investigation reports include inconsistencies.

Large scale developments should be allocated through the Local Plan not in response to speculative applications.

The application is premature in advance of the Local Plan and Carterton Master Plan which would address the proper balance between jobs and housing and the best locations for them.

The development is motivated by profit and is an attempt to circumvent the proper policy decision making process.

Need and other options

The need for this scale of development has not been demonstrated – it is not required to meet local need or a 5 year land supply but anyway would take time to realise.

The SHMA assessment grossly exaggerates the likely real housing need in Oxfordshire, but anyway does not represent a target which must include considerations of constraints such as environmental constraints or issues related to congestion and local infrastructure.

The SHMA identifies a need for 1-2 bedroom dwellings and the development would not meet that need but would encourage imbalanced in-migration to occupy the family houses. The SHMA growth rates are unrealistic, based on false assumptions (including questionable figures in the Economic Forecasting Report for Oxfordshire), decisions on how much migration should be provided for. The growth rates are also undeliverable.

Houses are not needed in this area where employment and infrastructure is limited but in Oxford and Swindon.

Carterton grew by 37% in the last decade and with other allocations and permissions will grow by another 30% - this is unsustainable.

The site has potential for much more housing and could be extended further – approaches have been made to adjacent landowners creating greater problems.

Development should be on brownfield land and sites within Carterton not Greenfield land needed for food production.

Development to the east of Carterton would be cheaper, with better public transport, access to the A40 and Oxford as well as the town centre, and employment at RAF Brize Norton and on industrial estates and to the Leisure Centre and Health Centre. It would also be more compact, using less agricultural land, offers community benefits to Brize Norton and includes a promise of an extended country park and land that would prevent further extension towards the village.

Carterton could extend at Swinbrook Road or to the north where infrastructure exists.

Development at Kilkenny Lane where it would be in tune with its landscape and settlement character would be a better location for residential development well away from the airbase than land to the west, or to the east which is not the best environment for housing (noise, air quality and light issues) but is suitable for employment. Small scale developments in villages and infill developments are more appropriate and allow for community integration.

Affordable housing needs could be met by refurbishing empty MOD properties.

Other matters

The creation of wet areas and ponds will increase the risk of bird strike with potential for accidents on the site.

Inadequate analysis of the location of the development within the approach zone to runway 8 at RAF Brize Norton.

Support has been received in two representations on the grounds of the further need for housing and the poor agricultural value of the land.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Taking into account the representations of the interested parties, planning policy and other material considerations, the main issues are considered to relate to:

- the principle of developing the site;
- prematurity;
- housing land supply;
- landscape and visual impact;
- the character and distinctiveness of the development;
- the mix of uses;
- the mix of housing including the provision of affordable housing;
- access and travel;
- drainage, pollution and flood risk;
- heritage assets;
- other infrastructure;
- biodiversity;
- living and working conditions on site and nearby.

These matters are considered having particular regard to saved policies of the adopted West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (LP), the Draft West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2012 (DLP), the West Oxfordshire Local Plan Housing Consultation Paper (July 2014), the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

The principle of developing the site

The first key consideration is whether large-scale residential development in this location is acceptable in principle.

With regard to the adopted Local Plan, the most applicable policy is Policy H7 which states that new dwellings will be permitted in service centres (such as Carterton) in the following circumstances:

- Infilling
- Rounding-off within the existing built up area
- The conversion of appropriate existing buildings
- On sites specifically allocated for residential development in the plan.

The application site is in the countryside where only restricted types of development are considered appropriate (Policy H4).

It also falls within a strategic gap/buffer area. Policy NE2 of the adopted Local Plan applies and states that only certain types of development will be considered appropriate.

As the site is not allocated for residential development in the adopted Local Plan and the application proposals are not limited to development considered appropriate in Policies H4, H7 and NE2, the proposal represents a departure from the Local Plan and has been advertised as such.

It is relevant to note however that the Council is not currently able to demonstrate a 5-year supply of deliverable housing land. In this regard, Paragraph 49 of the NPPF is of relevance and states that, 'Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites'.

As such, the policies of the adopted local plan relating to the supply of housing (including Policy H4 and Policy H7) can only be given limited weight. The issue of housing land supply is considered in more detail later in the report. The implications of Policy NE2 are also addressed later in the report.

It is relevant to note at this point that the application site, although not allocated for residential development in the adopted Local Plan (2006) is currently being actively promoted by the applicant through the emerging West Oxfordshire Local Plan process.

The DLP was published in November 2012 following several rounds of consultation in which the relative merits of expansion to the east, west, north and north west of Carterton were explored and debated. It was based on an overall housing target of 5,500 homes.

Having regard to a range of evidence and analysis, Officers concluded that on balance, land to the east of Carterton was to be preferred and the site was subsequently allocated in the DLP following the agreement of Cabinet on 17th October 2012 as the East Carterton Strategic Development Area (SDA).

Alternative options to the north, north west and west of Carterton (the application site) were rejected.

The plan was subject to public consultation from 7th November until 19th December 2012.

Formal publication of the pre-submission draft Local Plan was planned for summer 2013 but deferred to take account of the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) published in April 2014. Taking account of the SHMA and other relevant evidence, the Council recently published a Local Plan Housing Consultation Paper which proposes to increase the housing target from the 5,500 homes set out in the DLP (2012) to 9,450 homes. The period for comments closed on 19 September 2014. Notwithstanding the increased housing target, the application site was not allocated in the Local Plan Housing Consultation Paper.

In terms of the weight that can be afforded to the emerging Local Plan, advice is provided in Paragraph 216 of the NPPF which states that decision makers may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to the stage of preparation of the emerging plan, the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies and the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the NPPF.

In this instance the DLP is yet to be formally published and submitted and is the subject of a large number of outstanding objections. As such, it can only be given relatively limited weight.

Notwithstanding this, it is a matter of record that based on a range of technical evidence and analysis, the Council has concluded that there are better sites available to meet the proposed housing target for the Carterton area and that alternative strategic options on the edge of the town, including the application site, are not needed at the present time and should not be allocated.

Prematurity

As described above, the application site is currently being actively promoted by the applicant through the emerging Local Plan – a process which has not yet reached a conclusion. This raises the issue of whether or not it would be 'premature' to determine the application prior to the Local Plan being adopted.

Specific advice on the issue of prematurity is set out in the Government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) which states that in the context of the NPPF and in particular the presumption in favour of sustainable development:

'Arguments that an application is premature are unlikely to justify a refusal of planning permission other than where it is clear that the adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, taking the policies in the Framework and any other material considerations into account'.

It goes on to state that:

'Such circumstances are likely, but not exclusively, to be limited to situations where both:

- a) the development proposed is so substantial, or its cumulative effect would be so significant, that to grant permission would undermine the plan-making process by predetermining decisions about the scale, location or phasing of new development that are central to an emerging Local Plan or Neighbourhood Planning; and*
- b) the emerging plan is at an advanced stage but is not yet formally part of the development plan for the area.*

Importantly it states that:

'refusal of planning permission on grounds of prematurity will seldom be justified where a draft Local Plan has yet to be submitted for examination, or in the case of a Neighbourhood Plan, before the end of the local planning authority publicity period'.

On this basis, in the current circumstances, it would not be reasonable to refuse planning permission on the grounds of prematurity.

Housing Land Supply

One of the core principles in the NPPF is that planning should *'proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth (paragraph 17).*

Paragraph 47 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should:

'Identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years worth of housing against their housing requirements with an additional buffer of 5% (moved forward from later in the plan period) to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. Where there has been a record of persistent under delivery of housing, local planning authorities should increase the buffer to 20% (moved forward from later in the plan period) to provide a realistic prospect of achieving the planned supply and to ensure choice and competition in the market for land.'

Given the previous strong rate of housing delivery in West Oxfordshire, the 5% buffer is considered to apply.

Paragraph 49 of the NPPF goes on to state that:

'Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites'.

In the absence of a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, Paragraph 14 of the NPPF applies and states that:

'At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.

For decision-making this means:

- *approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and*
- *where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*
 - *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or*
 - *specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.*

Demonstration of an adequate 5-year housing land supply is therefore an important issue.

The Council published a 5-year housing land supply position statement in April 2014. This was calculated using a target of 541 homes per annum (based on the Government's household projections

as adjusted through the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment) and took account of anticipated housing supply in the period 1st April 2014 – 31st March 2019.

When the overall 5-year requirement (3,091 homes) was set against anticipated supply (2,962 homes) it was evident that the Council was unable to demonstrate a 5-year supply of deliverable housing sites (4.7 years only).

Housing land supply is however in a constant state of flux and since April, a number of new planning permissions have been granted along with resolutions to grant permission subject to a legal agreement. An updated housing land supply position statement has therefore been prepared to reflect the situation as of the end of September 2014.

The updated statement considers likely housing delivery in the 5-year period 1st April 2015 – 31st March 2020. It is based on the same target of 541 homes per annum used in the April 2014 position statement but the overall 5-year requirement has increased from 3,091 to 3,228 as a result of fewer than expected completions in 2013/14 and further anticipated under-supply in 2014/15 (307 homes only).

In terms of anticipated supply, this has increased slightly to 3,114. The increase since April 2014 is relatively modest because a number of the sites that have secured permission or resolution to grant permission since April were already included in the previous housing land supply calculation (e.g. Swinbrook Road, Carterton and Cromwell Park, Chipping Norton). The updated position statement also includes a lower windfall allowance to take account of potential double counting with the existing planning permissions on previously unidentified (windfall) sites.

Because the anticipated supply (3,114) remains below the 5-year requirement (3,228) the Council is currently unable to demonstrate a 5-year supply of deliverable housing sites (4.8 years only).

As such, Policy H7 and Policy H4 of the adopted Local Plan in this instance can only be afforded limited weight and in line with paragraph 14 of the NPPF, there is a presumption in favour of planning permission being granted unless:

- any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole; or
- specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted

These issues are explored in the remainder of the report.

Given that the Council is currently unable to demonstrate a 5 year supply of deliverable housing sites, consideration must be given to the contribution that the application site might reasonably be expected to make towards the 5-year housing land supply in the period 2015 - 2020.

It is the case in West Oxfordshire that there are not enough previously developed 'brownfield' sites available to meet the identified housing requirement and that inevitably, some development on undeveloped Greenfield land such as the application site will be needed.

If outline permission were to be granted, it is reasonable to assume that the first residential completions could take place in 2016/17. With an anticipated delivery rate of around 75 dwellings per year, between 2016 and 2020 the site is likely to deliver around 300 new homes.

Based on the Council's current 5-year supply assumptions and methodology this would be sufficient to demonstrate that the Council has in excess of a 5-year supply of deliverable housing land (5.3 years).

The ability to help deliver a five-year housing land supply is clearly an important material consideration in the determination of this application.

Landscape and Visual Impact

The application site falls within a designated policy area to prevent urban sprawl and protect existing character. Policy NE2 of the adopted Local Plan 2011 applies and is set out in full below.

Policy NE2 – Countryside around Witney and Carterton

Only the following types of development are considered appropriate within the strategic gaps/buffer areas defined on the Proposals Map:

- a) buildings for agriculture or forestry that cannot be accommodated elsewhere;

- b) recreational and community uses of an open nature appropriate to the countryside;
- c) minor alterations and additions to existing buildings; and
- d) the conversion of appropriate existing buildings.

Development in the strategic gaps/buffer areas which would harm the rural character of an area or lead to the undesirable sprawl of a settlement will not be permitted.

The proposed development does not fall into any of the development types listed above and is therefore contrary to Policy NE2.

However, whilst that policy has been formally saved under the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (transitional arrangements) and remains part of the statutory development plan, it is important to note that the policy was adopted in 2006 in the context of the housing requirement in place at that time (which was based on the former Oxfordshire Structure Plan). Since then there have been a number of important changes of circumstance including the publication of the NPPF and a desire to boost the supply of housing nationally.

The adopted Local Plan housing requirement is based on the Oxfordshire Structure Plans 2011 and 2016 with the requirement of the latter plan applied on a pro-rata basis to 2011. Importantly the end date of the Local Plan (2011) has now elapsed and the Oxfordshire Structure Plan upon which the housing requirement is based, no longer forms part of the statutory development plan. The housing requirement in place at the time Policy NE2 was adopted is therefore no longer relevant.

The DLP housing requirement was based on the South East Plan, applied on a pro-rata basis and proposed at 5,500 homes from 2011 – 2029 (306 per year). However, the South East Plan has now been revoked and new evidence of housing need has been published in the form of the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) which suggests a significant upward shift in the housing requirement is needed.

Further to the publication of the SHMA the Council undertook its own analysis and has recently published a Local Plan Housing Consultation Paper which proposes that the overall housing target increases from 5,500 homes to 9,450 homes with an increase in the Carterton area specifically from 1,850 to 2,450 homes.

Given that there is not enough previously developed (brownfield) land available to meet this increased housing target, some Greenfield development in sustainable locations will inevitably be needed.

It is important to consider Policy NE2 in light of the changing circumstances outlined above.

The key issue here is whether the proposed development would either harm the rural character of the area or lead to the undesirable sprawl of Carterton. The supporting text to Policy NE2 provides further clarity and states that ‘development that would compromise the open character of the countryside will be resisted in order to prevent urban sprawl, the further intensification of existing loose knit urban-fringe development and/or coalescence of neighbouring settlements’.

In relation to the issue of coalescence, although the development would extend the built area of the town westwards, the location of the nearest settlements including Broadwell, Alvescot and Shilton is such that there would be little if any impact in terms of coalescence between Carterton and those settlements.

Of more relevance is whether the application proposal would harm the rural character of the area, compromise the open character of the countryside and lead to undesirable urban sprawl and/or intensification of existing loose knit urban-fringe development.

With regard to the latter issue, although there is a scattering of existing development to the west of Upavon Way, the western edge of Carterton cannot be described as particularly loose-knit and the proposed development would not lead to a discernible intensification of the existing built form.

Of greater concern is the potential harm caused by the development to the open, rural character of the area. Upavon Way and the Shill Brook form a strong boundary to Carterton and when travelling along the Alvescot Road, as soon as the junction of Upavon Way is passed, one enters an area of open countryside relatively unspoilt by urban influences. There are wide vistas out across a generally flat topography and views into and across the application site are key components in this currently open and unspoilt rural character.

The proposed development would have a significant adverse effect on the open, rural character of this area. The extent of proposed development and its relationship to the existing built form of Carterton is also such that it could be described as urban sprawl, extending the town outwards in an illogical and harmful manner contrary to the general objectives and purpose of Policy NE1 and the detailed provisions of policy NE2 of the adopted Local Plan.

The application proposal comprises large scale mixed-use development on a greenfield site on the western side of Carterton. A key consideration is therefore the potential impact of the development on local landscape character. Policy NE3 of the adopted LP applies and states that development will not be permitted if it would harm the local landscape character of the District.

Advice on landscape impact can be drawn from a number of studies including the West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment – WOLA (1998) the Carterton Landscape Assessment (2009) and the Kirkham Report (2012). The applicant has also submitted their own landscape evidence.

The WOLA (1998) is a District wide landscape assessment developed to increase understanding of the landscape resources of the District, to assist with policy formulation and development management and to assist with the targeting of resources for enhancement and management.

The application site is identified as falling within a combination of different landscape types including predominantly, open limestone wolds, but also semi-enclosed limestone wolds and minor valleys (Shill Brook).

In broad terms, WOLA identifies that open limestone wolds landscapes are visually exposed and sensitive to development and that particularly strong landscape structures are needed to absorb development in more open landscapes. The report also highlights the visual sensitivity of semi-enclosed limestone wolds landscapes and suggests that development would need to be closely and sensitively integrated with existing buildings or within a strong landscape structure.

In relation to the minor valleys, WOLA highlights their sensitivity to built development and suggests that the landscape buffer provided by the Shill Brook along the western edge of Carterton should be maintained and strengthened.

With specific regard to land west of Carterton, WOLA highlights the strong landscape edge provided by the Shill Brook and the open, elevated large scale rectilinear nature of the fields to the west. It identifies that the area has a rural character largely unaffected by urban influences.

The report identifies high intervisibility in this area (except in the river valley), good unspoilt views out from the urban edge and a good landscape approach from the west along the B4020.

In terms of key sensitivities and considerations, the report highlights the fact that the minor valley is an important landscape resource which is sensitive to change, the western edge of Carterton is sensitive to change with a particularly sensitive skyline and there is a need to maintain landscape strength along the western fringe particularly within the minor valley.

The Carterton Landscape Assessment (2009) was prepared by Amanda Hopwood Landscape Consultancy. The aim of the report was to update and expand the relevant sections of the West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment (1998) in order to establish a sound evidence base for the emerging Local Plan (then referred to as 'Core Strategy').

The majority of the application site falls into an area defined as 'DI'. The report highlights that this is part of the rural landscape west and north of Carterton, with no landscape and little visual relationship with the town. It is part of the rural, agricultural landscape setting of Shilton, with its Conservation Area, and the Shill Brook valley. It also highlights the fact that the valley forms a strong western edge to the town at present.

The report identifies the area as having a generally weak landscape structure and high intervisibility. It states that while this large scale landscape could in theory accommodate housing development, it would need to be set within a new very generous landscape structure to minimise landscape/visual impacts.

It also highlights the fact that new development would extend the town into the open countryside to the west, into what is at present a completely rural area. The integrity of the agricultural setting of Shilton village would need to be maintained, with no development (including planted buffer) on the north facing slope south of Shilton, to maintain the open fields around the village.

The area is defined as having high local and medium district landscape/visual importance and high landscape/visual sensitivity.

To provide further evidence in support of the emerging Local Plan, additional landscape advice was commissioned from Kirkham Landscape Planning in 2012. Their report was published in November 2012 as part of the DLP consultation.

Importantly, unlike the previous 1998 and 2009 landscape assessments, the Kirkham report considers the landscape and visual impact of potential developments as promoted through concept drawings and master plans submitted by developers in response to the emerging draft Local Plan. This means it is able to provide a more informed judgement than the two previous studies which were not informed by the same level of detail.

The Kirkham report considered four different options to the east, north, north-west and west of Carterton. The four options were ranked 1 to 4, 1 having the least impact on the quality and character of the landscape, visual and settlement pattern.

The application site was ranked number 4 (i.e. greatest level of impact).

In relation to land to the west of Carterton, the Kirkham report highlights the following issues:

- Major expansion into open countryside of high sensitivity
- The site is part of the wider landscape
- Low level of harm to the few on site landscape features outside of the Shill Brook corridor
- Potential to enhance Shill Brook valley
- Landscape buffer to Shilton and Alvescot can be protected
- Visually exposed area
- Visual impact on the wider landscape
- More difficult to reduce the visual impact in the short term whilst planting is young
- Presents an opportunity for the creation of major Green Infrastructure
- Development can avoid the expansion of Carterton close to the existing villages
- The site provides an opportunity to contain the expansion of Carterton to within one area.

The report identifies that development to the west of Carterton would result in an adverse impact on the landscape character, visual amenity and settlement pattern of Carterton's landscape setting.

It states that any development west of the Shill Brook landscape corridor will inevitably result in both landscape and visual harm to the wider landscape and for this reason a minor incursion into this area could not be justified.

It goes on to state that development on this site, part of it or even a greater area, would all result in a major change to the settlement and its relationship with Shill Brook and the wider wolds landscape. Up to date, the Shill Brook valley has been seen as a landscape transition zone to the edge of the settlement, clearly marking the edge of town and separating it from the open countryside. This role changes as soon as any development takes place to the west of this line.

The report therefore suggests that should development continue as an option here, it should be designed as a response to creating a new part of town with the Shill Brook valley as an internal area of green infrastructure for the benefit of the whole community and linking with the remaining more rural arms of the Shill Brook valley.

The applicant's own ES also concludes that the site is relatively sensitive as a result of its rural character, open skylines and soft edge it provides to Carterton. The site has strong intervisibility with the wider landscape to the north, south and partially to the west with visibility to the east contained by the soft edge of the densely vegetated Shill Brook. Significant effects of the development as shown on the illustrative master plan on the landscape character of the site are predicted and would result in the creation of a new landscape character sub-type. The ES predicts that that these significant effects would only extend beyond the site to the Alvescot Downs Settlement Edge Area and would be mitigated by measures incorporated in the master plan. Significant effects on views are predicted to a relatively small number of people in nearby houses and to those persons using the adjacent roads near the proposed

entrances and the footpath crossing the site. Significant landscape and visual effects are stated as only being felt at the site level and on the immediate area surrounding the site.

Taking account of all of the above the overall conclusion reached by Officers is that development of the scale and nature proposed would, despite the landscape-led design approach being promoted, have a harmful landscape impact in this highly open, visible and sensitive rural location resulting in an incongruous addition to the town that felt neither part of the settlement nor was appropriate in its countryside context. This harm would be contrary to Policy NE1, NE2 and NE3 of the adopted LP and in your officers opinion represents a significant and demonstrable harm that in the terms of the NPPF would outweigh the presumption in favour of sustainable development that applies in the absence of a 5 year housing land supply.

Character and distinctiveness

LP Policy BE2 requires new development to respect and, where possible, improve the character and quality of its surroundings and provide a safe, pleasant, convenient and interesting environment. Similarly, DLP Core Policy 4 requires new development to respect and contribute to local distinctiveness and, where possible, enhance the character and quality of its surroundings.

Whilst the application is in outline with most matters of detail reserved for subsequent approval, the submitted Design and Access Statement (DAS) provides information on the intended layout of the site and how the character of different parts of the development would vary. The vision in the DAS is based on the principle of a garden village which comprises a new and distinct community with its own unique character. It is intended to integrate with the existing town but include its own local centre.

Three parameter plans provide some detail of the proposed layout and form of the development. These are a Land Use Parameter Plan Access, a Densities Parameter Plan and an Access and Movement Parameter Plan.

The Land Use Parameter Plan identifies the location of the different proposed land uses. Most of the built development would be to the west of the Shill Brook valley with a small amount of residential development to the east on either side of the junction of the new access road. The new road would cross the Shill Brook valley from Upavon Way and enter the main development area between areas of elderly persons accommodation and a mixed use area including, employment, commercial, retail and residential uses. To the north, south and west the site would be largely devoted to housing and linear open spaces although a further mixed use area would be developed in the south western part of the site beyond an area of enhanced landscaping along the B4477.

The Densities Layout Plan shows the average density of residential development in different parts of the site of between 22 dwellings per hectare and 37 dwellings per hectare. The highest densities are generally within a central north/south corridor with lower densities to the east and west and lowest density along the western edge.

The Access and Movement Parameter Plan shows the primary road network comprising a road extending westwards from Upavon Way with intersections with two roads extending north from the two new junctions on the B4477 Alvescot Road and a loop extending around the northern part of the site. The secondary road network and a network of cycle and pedestrian paths which includes paths along and across the Shill Brook are also shown.

Legibility and visual interest are provided by a hierarchy of roads each, with different widths, landscaping and parking arrangements. They are also served by the creation of areas within the development of different character. Six such areas are shown within the DAS.

The illustrative layouts show buildings overlooking streets and public spaces and parking on-plot or on the street rather than in rear parking courts which is considered to be compatible with the principle of designing out opportunities for crime.

Architectural detail would be a matter for consideration at reserved matters stage but illustrations in the DAS indicate a mix of traditional building designs and others with traditional proportions and modern detailing which could contribute to a development that is distinctive but sympathetic to the character of the wider area.

If the site is to be developed, the approach set out in the DAS generally represents a reasonable solution to the site constraints. These site constraints include the width, topography, rural character

and the wooded eastern margin of the Shill Brook and its associated flood plain, and the rural countryside that lies to the north, south and west. In response to these constraints it is understandable that the DAS promotes most built development to the west of the Shill Brook valley with the higher density development in the centre and with low density development, open space and landscaping around it. However, this reinforces the incongruous, isolated nature of the development, which would have the character of a self-contained satellite community in the countryside that is not physically or functionally well integrated with the existing town.

The development therefore would not respect or improve the character and quality of its surroundings and would conflict with LP Policy BE2.

The mix of uses

The application proposes approximately 1,000 dwellings; a local service centre including local shops and community buildings; an area of mixed use development including employment land; a new primary school; public open space including formal and informal sports pitches and children's play areas; a new Shill Brook Ecology Park and allotments.

The scale of the non-residential uses is considered appropriate for the role they would play in supporting the residential development and creating a sustainable community.

The submitted Retail Assessment of the Proposed Local Centre concludes that the proposed development could support new convenience net retail floorspace of some 350-700m² (500-950m² gross) which could be delivered in the form of one store or a main store with smaller units.

This scale of retail development is considered necessary to meet local community needs in accordance with LP Policy SH4 and would not therefore conflict with the 'town centre first' approach set out in LP Policy SH1 and the NPPF for more major retail development. Additionally, control would be exercised at the reserved matters stage.

The provision of additional employment land would help to provide additional investment opportunities in Carterton and would contribute to greater self-containment by providing new employment opportunities in the town. The Council's Business Development Officer supports the provision of additional employment land in Carterton although considers that in this location it would be completely disconnected from other business areas in the town.

A planning obligation and planning conditions could ensure that the uses that are essential to support the proposed residential development are provided at an appropriate time. They will also be necessary to ensure that these parts of the development are designed and managed to adequately fulfil their functions.

Overall it is considered that the proposal provides for an appropriate mix of uses. In this respect it would represent a sustainable development that would accord with the NPPF and DLP Core Objective CO8.

Housing mix and affordable housing

LP Policy H3 requires new housing developments of six or more dwellings to provide a mix of dwelling sizes and types including accommodation for the elderly and the disabled based on the housing needs of the area. In accordance with LP Policy H11 the Council would seek up to 50% affordable housing on housing developments on unallocated land and 30% affordable housing on allocated land in Carterton

Of the proposed housing 35% would be affordable and provision to meet the needs of older people including some extra care housing would be made.

The overall proportion of affordable housing at 35% is consistent with the DLP Core Policy 8) consultation undertaken in December 2013 and the Local Plan Housing Consultation Paper (July 2014) which propose a 35% target for Carterton.

The illustrative housing mix is 49% 1-2 bed homes; 26% 3 bed homes; 21% 4 bed homes and 4% five bed homes with no distinction between market and affordable housing.

The DLP suggests that to create a more balanced housing stock, future market should be based on a split of 60% 1 and 2 bed properties and 40% 3 and 4+ bed properties.

A more recent assessment of need in the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), published in April 2014, suggests in relation to West Oxfordshire that the following mix of market housing is required:

- 1 bedroom (4.8%)
- 2 bedroom (27.9%)
- 3 bedroom (43.4%)
- 4+ bedroom (23.9%)

The DLP suggests that as a guide the Council will seek an overall mix of affordable housing in the following proportions:

- 65% one and two bedroom homes
- 35% three and four bedroom homes

This is supported by the SHMA which suggests that the following mix of affordable homes should be sought:

- 1 bedroom (23.3%)
- 2 bedroom (43.7%)
- 3 bedroom (30.4%)
- 4+ bedroom (2.6%)

Although these are only guidelines, it suggests that the mix of housing being proposed is too heavily weighted in favour of larger properties and a better mix of house types should be sought.

The precise mix of housing would be determined at the reserved matters stage and the proportion of affordable housing would need to be the subject of a planning obligation and may need to reflect viability considerations, but the applicant's illustrative figures give no reason to conclude that acceptable provision in accordance with the emerging Local Plan would not be secured.

A planning obligation, together with control at the reserved matters stage would secure an appropriate mix of market and affordable housing and phasing to secure a balanced approach to meeting housing needs. The development is therefore considered to be acceptable in terms of the housing mix and affordable housing provision.

Access and travel

The NPPF states that all developments that generate significant amounts of movement should be supported by a Transport Statement or Transport Assessment. Plans and decisions should take account of whether:

- the opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up depending on the nature and location of the site, to reduce the need for major transport infrastructure;
- safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people; and
- improvements can be undertaken within the transport network that cost effectively limit the significant impacts of the development. Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe.

LP Policy BE3 requires development to make provision for the safe movement of people and vehicles and for increased use of public transport. Policy T7 requires proposals for major new development to include a Travel Plan.

DLP Core Policy 24 states that priority will be given to locating new development in areas with convenient access to a reasonable range of services and facilities and where the need to travel by private car, particularly where it would add to traffic congestion around Oxford, can be minimised.

The Environmental Statement (ES) concludes that there are opportunities for travel by a variety of means of transport and that the site is close to Carterton Town Centre (1300m from the centre of the development), a secondary school and doctor's surgery. In addition, the proposal includes local centre services, a primary school, recreation facilities and employment opportunities that would be easily accessed by residents of the development.

In addition to pedestrian and cycle access via the three proposed vehicular accesses, there would be three additional pedestrian links to Upavon Way. It is also proposed to extend the existing S2 bus service into the site and increase its frequency to provide three buses an hour to Witney and Oxford. A financial contribution to a possible express service to Swindon is also proposed.

The Transport Assessment and ES examine the impact of the development on the road network and propose a number of mitigation measures including new footways/cycleways on the western side of Upavon Way and along Alvescot Road east of the mini-roundabout; pedestrian crossings south of Richens Road, north of Edgeworth Drive and 20m north of the Upavon Way/Alvescot Road mini-roundabout; improvements to the Burford Road/Upavon Way crossroads, Upavon Way/Alvescot Road mini-roundabout and the T junction of the B4477 at Broughton Poggs and traffic calming along Alvescot Road to the east of the site. A financial contribution would be made towards improvements to the A40 and a travel plan would seek to maximise travel by sustainable means.

The development would clearly generate significant private vehicle movements. Importantly, the LHA is satisfied that the site accesses are acceptable and would not have any significant adverse impact on the safety and convenience of highway users. The LHA is satisfied that the submitted Transport Assessment is an appropriate assessment of the impact of the development on the local highway network. The proposed mitigation measures would minimise any adverse impact on local junctions and the development will be expected to contribute towards strategic transport infrastructure in the Carterton area. The site benefits from an accessible location, which would be enhanced through the provision of local facilities and an improved and extended bus service.

The submitted Framework Travel Plan proposes facilities and other measures to promote the use of sustainable travel. The Local Highway Authority (LHA) is satisfied in principle but requires a more detailed plan which could be secured by a planning condition.

Subject to the requirements of the LHA for financial contributions and off-site works and for conditions relating to the accesses, a Construction Phase Traffic Management Plan and more detailed Framework Travel Plan it is therefore considered that the development would have no unacceptably harmful effects in terms of access and travel. In these respects it would be sustainable and would accord with the NPPF, the PPG, LP Policy BE3 and DLP Core Policy 24.

Drainage, pollution and flood risk

The NPPF states that when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure flood risk is not increased elsewhere.

LP Policy NE8 states that new development will not be permitted within areas at risk from flooding which is likely to impede the flow of water, result in loss of flood storage or increase the flood risk elsewhere.

The majority of the site lies within Flood Zone 1 (the lowest risk of flooding) but there are areas of Flood Zone 2 and 3 (the highest risk) adjacent to the Shill Brook.

The NPPF states that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk. It therefore refers to a Sequential Test, the aim of which is to steer new development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding. It states:

Development should not be allocated or permitted if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower probability of flooding. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment will provide the basis for applying this test. A sequential approach should be used in areas known to be at risk from any form of flooding.

If, following application of the Sequential Test, it is not possible, consistent with wider sustainability objectives, for the development to be located in zones with a lower probability of flooding, the Exception Test can be applied if appropriate. For the Exception Test to be passed:

- *it must be demonstrated that the development provides wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh flood risk, informed by a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment where one has been prepared; and*
- *a site-specific flood risk assessment must demonstrate that the development will be safe for its lifetime taking account of the vulnerability of its users, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and, where possible, will reduce flood risk overall.*

Both elements of the test will have to be passed for development to be allocated or permitted.

The applicant was therefore invited to submit a Sequential Test and if appropriate an Exception Test in support of the application. In response the applicant's submission is that the intent of NPPF policy is to ensure that where development acknowledges the presence of higher risk parts of the site and guides vulnerable development into Zone 1, these should be considered as Zone 1 developments.

Nevertheless, the applicant carried out a Sequential Test by looking at potentially sequentially preferable and reasonably available and deliverable sites for the development. It looked at land at East Carterton and North Carterton (Kilkenny Lane). It concluded that the former could not accommodate the same amount of development and is subject to flood risk from watercourses that are not mapped by the Environment Agency but are of a risk equivalent to Zones 1 and 2. It concludes that the land at North Carterton is unsustainable for a number of reasons and is at the head of a delicate catchment. It should therefore be considered to be sequentially less appropriate than the application site.

The applicant's sequential test submission is that West Carterton is the only development that can deliver the quantum of development proposed in a sustainable manner. The proposal has also taken account of the aim of the Sequential Test in proposing that no built development takes place within Flood Zones 2 and 3 or areas at risk of flooding. In accordance with the PPG, the part of the site at little or no risk of flooding is being developed in preference to areas of higher flood risk.

In term of the Exception Test it is submitted that the development would have sustainability benefits as set out in the Design and Access Statement, would improve flood risk overall and would include significant enhancements to the Shill Brook Valley.

Your officers' view is that a Sequential Test is required and that the applicant's assessment is inadequate. However, the Environment Agency (EA) did not object initially to the absence of a Sequential and Exception test and has subsequently not objected to the applicant's Sequential Test document.

In terms of risk to the proposed development, the FRA concludes that the Shill Brook is the only potential source of fluvial flooding but identifies a history of flooding from overland flow in the vicinity with a potential natural flow path through the centre of the site which acts as a drainage pathway during heavy rain. All of the more and less vulnerable development would be located within Flood Zone 1 with only the access bridge crossing the flood plain and this would span the modelled floodplain.

The main risk from the development itself would be a potential increase in surface water run-off. However, the FRA states that this would be intercepted and attenuated to below greenfield run-off rates by SUDS in the form of re-use of existing ditches; swales, infiltration trenches and filter drains; detention basins, domestic soakaways; porous pavings; and water butts. These measures are stated to reduce the risk of flooding downstream and the volume of overland flow leaving the site which would further reduce flooding. Typical annual flooding levels and water tables are not predicted to change to the detriment of the local ecology.

Although considerable concern has been expressed by local residents about the likelihood of flooding and about the efficacy of the proposed attenuation measures, the Environment Agency has not objected subject to a number of conditions. It should be noted that these include a condition requiring all building development to be located outside the 1% annual probability flood event outline (including an allowance for climate change) and overland surface water flow route and outside Flood Zone 2.

The submitted Foul Sewerage Impact Assessment explains that due to the site topography all foul sewage would be collected at a single underground pumping station at the lowest part of the site adjacent to the B4477. From there it would be transferred for treatment some 2.5km away at Thames Water's existing Carterton works, which would be upgraded to accommodate the additional flows. The development would be an entirely new and separate sewerage system up to the treatment works and would not rely on capacity in an existing system.

Thames Water has raised no objection to the proposed development subject to a condition requiring no discharge of foul drainage until an approved drainage strategy has been carried out.

The ES identified a number of potential sources of contamination including made ground within the embankment adjacent to Upavon Way in the vicinity of two holding tanks, an old gravel pit, limestone

quarry and tanks but further investigation did not indicate any fundamental constraint to developing the site. The Environmental Health Service has raised no objection on grounds of contamination.

The ES concludes that the impact on water quality would be negligible and neither the Environment Agency nor Thames Water Utilities has objected on grounds of pollution of the water environment or the quality of water supplies or resources contrary to LP Policies NE7 or NE11.

In conclusion, notwithstanding concerns about the adequacy of the Sequential and Exception tests, the development would not be harmful in terms of flooding, pollution or drainage and would contribute to alleviating existing flooding problems. In these respects the development is therefore considered to be acceptable.

Heritage assets

There are no designated heritage assets on the site.

The ES identifies a small number of undesignated archaeological assets of local importance that could be affected by the development and recommends a planning condition to secure appropriate mitigation measures that would allow for preservation in situ or by record. The County Archaeologist endorses those conclusions and raises no objections subject to conditions and there is considered to be no conflict with LP Policy BE13.

The ES and submitted Heritage Asset Assessment conclude that there are no listed buildings close to the site that would be affected by the development and that there would be no effect on the character, appearance or setting of the Shilton, Alvescot or Kencot Conservation Areas. Having regard to the distance of these heritage assets from the site and the nature of the intervening land, it is considered that these conclusions are valid and that there would be no conflict with LP Policies BE5 or BE8.

Other infrastructure

LP Policies BE1 and DLP Core Policy 5 require new development to be supported by appropriate transport, service and community infrastructure. These policies are in line with paragraphs 69 and 70 of the NPPF.

Thames Water has raised no objections in terms of supplying water to the development (LP Policy NE10). The submitted Utilities Report also identifies the availability of gas, electricity and telecommunications infrastructure along the road frontages of the site. High speed broadband connections could be provided on site and secured by a planning obligation.

The County Council and District Council officers have raised no objections to the proposed on-site infrastructure proposals but have identified the need for other infrastructure principally in the form of off-site highway works and financial contributions to enhancing off-site facilities as set out above. These requirements include on-site provision of play facilities including a skate park and two tennis courts and public art in accordance with LP Policy TLC7.

High speed broadband connections can be provided on site and secured by a planning obligation and condition.

The developer has raised no objection in principle to providing or funding the identified infrastructure requirements which it is considered would be secured through planning conditions and a planning obligation. These mechanisms would also ensure that specific infrastructure is provided at key points and that the community benefits are delivered as soon as possible.

Biodiversity

LP Policy NE13 states that in determining planning applications, the Council will seek to safeguard, maintain and enhance priority habitats and species within the District. Development proposals should include measures to mitigate any effects upon features of nature conservation value, including where appropriate the provision of compensatory habitats or management. Policy NE15 states that development that would have an adverse effect on a site supporting a specially protected species will not be permitted unless damage can be prevented by compliance with conditions or planning obligations.

DLP Core Policy 18 states that the overall biodiversity of West Oxfordshire shall be protected and opportunities to achieve a net gain actively pursued.

Paragraph 118 of the NPPF provides that *when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying principles including:*

- *if significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;*
- *opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged.*

There are no statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations on the site. The Alvescot Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest is located 795m to the south east of the site boundary and there are four Local Wildlife Sites (Willow Meadows, Carterton Grassland, Manor Farm Meadow and Shilton Bradwell Grove Airfield) within 2km of the centre of the site.

The site principally comprises arable land with some hedgerows and stone walls. There is also semi-improved grassland in the south east corner of the site. Along the valley of the Shill Brook the habitats are more varied including areas of unimproved calcareous grassland, marshy grassland, semi-natural broadleaved and planted mixed woodland, scrub and the river/brook.

The ES concludes that the land to be developed is dominated by intensive arable field supported by species-poor hedgerows and walls which supports farmland birds, arable plants and brown hare, the impact on which could be compensated/mitigated through enhancements to retained arable land on site and nearby.

The ES also concludes that most important part of the site ecologically is the Shill Brook valley which lies within the South Cotswolds Conservation Target Area (CTA). Development in this area would be limited to an access road from Upavon Way to the main development area and to development along the western edge of the CTA and small areas adjoining Upavon Way. Most of the site within the CTA would be used to create the Shill Brook Ecology Park which would create new habitats and enhance others with a network of paths for public access.

Overall the ES finds that with mitigation and enhancement measures the impacts on habitats and species of principal importance are found to be not significant or to 'minor beneficial' with the exception of bats, the impact on which would be 'minor adverse'.

Natural England concludes that with appropriate planning conditions there would be no likely harmful impact on the Alvescot Meadows SSSI and that the opportunity to secure measures that would be beneficial to wildlife should be taken.

Oxfordshire County Council's Ecologist Planner has sought further information from the applicant on impacts on designated sites and the Shill Brook, long term management, compensation and enhancements and on species. The responses overcome most of her initial concerns subject to agreed planning conditions. The only outstanding matters are the receipt, prior to the determination of the application, of confirmation that there would be no street lighting on the eastern frontages of houses closest to the Shill Brook, of details of an acceptable scheme of enhanced agricultural practices for ground nesting birds and arable plants and of a bat activity survey. These have yet to be received but your officers consider that acceptable details could be secured by planning conditions.

Subject to appropriate safeguards in planning conditions and to contributions being made towards measures to enhance the South Cotswolds CTA, the development would be acceptable in terms of its effect on biodiversity and would accord with relevant LP and DLP policies and with the NPPF and PPG.

Living and working conditions

LP Policy H2 states that proposals for additional dwellings should not create unacceptable living conditions for existing and new residents.

DLP Core Policy 4 requires development of high quality design that provides a pleasant environment and does not harm living conditions in nearby properties.

One of the core planning principles in the NPPF is that planning should always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

With specific reference to **noise**, LP Policy BE19 states that planning permission will not be granted for:

- housing and other noise sensitive development if the occupants would experience significant noise disturbance from existing or proposed development;
- development including the use of land, if because of the noise it will create, the occupants of housing and other noise sensitive development would be exposed to significant noise disturbance, unless there is an overriding need for the proposal which cannot be met elsewhere.

The NPPF advises that local authorities should aim to avoid noise from giving rise to significant adverse effects on health and quality of life as a result of new development.

The PPG advises that local planning authorities' plan-making and decision taking should take account of the acoustic environment and in doing so consider:

- whether or not a significant adverse effect is occurring or likely to occur;
- whether or not an adverse effect is occurring or likely to occur; and
- whether or not a good standard of amenity can be achieved.

In line with the Explanatory Note of the Noise Policy Statement for England, this would include identifying whether the overall effect of the noise exposure (including the impact during the construction phase wherever applicable) is, or would be, above or below the significant observed adverse effect level and the lowest observed adverse effect level for the given situation.

Concern has been expressed from local people that future occupants of the proposed development would be adversely affected by aircraft noise from RAF Brize Norton. Whilst it is fully accepted that noise is an important material consideration for the site given the proximity of the airbase, there is no technical evidence to suggest that the noise issue is significant enough to prevent development from coming forward.

The ES considers the impact of noise from RAF Brize Norton but also from traffic and during construction on existing and proposed housing and the proposed primary school.

The conclusions of the ES are that subject to the installation of double glazing to some properties to mitigate the effects of road and aircraft noise, acceptable internal noise standards would be achieved. Construction could cause a short term noise impact of moderate significance but for most of the time would be of minor significance. The effects could be controlled to acceptable levels by the adoption of best practice mitigation means and conditions limiting hours of work. The effects of additional traffic on the surrounding road network were assessed as negligible and during construction would be no more than 'minor adverse'.

The Council's Environmental Health Service has raised no objections on grounds of noise subject to a condition requiring approval of a scheme of noise insulation for buildings to ensure that internal ambient noise standards in accordance with BS8233:2014.

In terms of **air quality**, the principal issues relate to pollution from road traffic and from aircraft linked to activities at RAF Brize Norton. Consideration should also be given to whether the development would cause unacceptable harm to air quality particularly from dust during construction and traffic generated by the development.

These matters are addressed in the submitted ES which concludes that pollutants from road traffic and aircraft would be below accepted levels and air quality for future residents would be good. Dust could on occasions be a nuisance but the effects would be short term and could be mitigated by best practice measures which should be included in a Construction Environmental Management Plan agreed by the Council.

The Council's Environmental Health Service has concluded that there are no issues of air quality concern such as would be caused by pollution emissions from road or air traffic that would create an Air Quality Management Area.

The **daylight, outlook and privacy** currently enjoyed by the occupiers of existing properties that would be surrounded by the new development need not be unacceptably harmed and this would be ensured by control of the layout and design of the development at the reserved matters stage.

In summary, it is considered that the development would provide acceptable living and working conditions in terms of noise and air quality and, subject to control of the layout and design of the

development at reserved matters stage, would secure a good standard of amenity for existing and future occupiers of the site and nearby in accordance with the NPPF, PPG and relevant LP and DLP policies.

Other matters

DLP Core Policy 3 requires all development to demonstrate high standards of sustainable design and construction methods, with a high level of energy efficiency in new buildings including the achievement of at least Code Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes (the Code). It also sets out standards for non-residential buildings. However, these are not formally adopted policies. The Code is also currently the subject of a Government review. In these circumstances it is considered that the issue could be addressed by a condition requiring details of measures to minimise water and energy use and maximise the proportion of energy from renewable sources. The acceptability of these details would be assessed in the context of any national and local standards applicable at the time.

LP Policy BE20 states that development which would adversely affect safety near safeguarded airfields will not be permitted and concerns have been expressed that the proposed flood water attenuation ponds could attract water birds which would constitute a hazard to aircraft at RAF Brize Norton. However, these would not comprise permanent water storage areas and could be designed in accordance with recommendations within guidance provided by the MoD to minimise their attractiveness to water birds. Furthermore, the MoD has not raised any objections on these grounds and the development is not therefore considered to be unacceptable in this respect or to conflict with Policy BE20.

LP Policy BE2 (g) requires the use of good design to help reduce the opportunities for crime. The Design and Access Statement is considered to incorporate principles that are compatible with measures to minimise opportunities for crime. However, this can be secured by control at the reserved matters stage and by a planning condition requiring measures that would enable the development to gain Secured by Design accreditation.

CONCLUSION

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The application site is not allocated for development in the adopted Local Plan and the proposed development does not accord with policies for the location of new housing (Policies H4 and H7).

The proposed development would take place within a strategic gap around Carterton in conflict with LP Policy NE2. It would also be harmful to the countryside, local landscape and character of the area contrary to LP Policies NE1, NE3 and BE2.

However, there are other material considerations in this case that need to be taken into account.

Paragraph 49 of the NPPF states that, '*Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites*'.

The Council is unable to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply. The policies for the supply of housing in the Local Plan are not therefore up-to-date.

The NPPF introduces a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision making this means (paragraph 14) '*that where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, granting permission unless:*

- *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or*
- *specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.*

One of the core planning principles in the NPPF is that every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing needs of an area. Considerable weight should therefore be attached to meeting the identified need for housing.

The development would make a significant contribution to meeting the overall need for new housing. This is an important material consideration that must be weighed in the overall 'planning balance' against any potential harm caused by the development.

There are not enough previously developed 'brownfield' sites available to meet the identified housing need. Inevitably that will require some development on undeveloped Greenfield land and on land allocated in the new draft Local Plan. The release of Greenfield land in the meantime to meet the shortfall in the 5 year land supply is not considered to be unacceptable on grounds of prematurity.

The need for additional housing necessitates careful consideration of the weight to be given to Policy NE2, which effectively precludes the development of Greenfield land beyond the built-up areas of Carterton and Witney.

The conflict with Policy NE2 needs to be considered in the context of the need for housing on Greenfield land and the Kirkham report and officers' views that the harm to the landscape and rural character of the countryside would be significant. The main area of built development would also be isolated from the built-up area of Carterton and would not be an integral part of the town.

These conclusions are reflected in the new draft Local Plan (DLP), which does not allocate the site for development. The exclusion of the site in the DLP in itself can only be accorded limited weight, but it does reflect the Council's emerging policy position.

The development would offer some benefits in terms of biodiversity and reduced flood risk off-site, although those benefits are uncertain and unlikely to be significant.

Overall, it is considered that the adverse impacts of permitting the development in terms of the impact of the development on the local landscape and its failure to integrate successfully with the existing built-up area of Carterton would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits in terms of a significant increase in the supply of new housing to meet identified needs together with the local benefits of reducing the risk of flooding and increasing biodiversity, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.

It is therefore recommended that outline planning permission is refused.

Although the applicant has not disputed the need for a planning obligation to secure necessary supporting infrastructure and affordable housing, no such obligation is in place. This needs to be reflected in an additional reason for refusing planning permission.

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse outline planning permission for the following reasons:

1. The development would represent a substantial intrusion of built development on relatively elevated land in the countryside well beyond the existing built-up limits of Carterton, which would cause significant harm to the character and landscape of the area and would relate poorly to existing built development. Those adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits arising from the development. As such the proposal would conflict with Policies H4, H7, NE1, NE2, NE3 and BE2 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 and with the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance.
2. In the absence of a completed planning obligation, no mechanism exists to secure the provision of affordable housing and necessary transport, employment, service and community infrastructure to mitigate the impact of the development and meet the needs of future occupiers in accordance with Policies H11 and BE1 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Carterton West - A Summary of the Proposal

The outline planning application for Carterton West has been submitted by West Waddy ADP on behalf of Crest Nicholson. Carterton West will deliver a mixed use proposal that will provide a high quality and sustainable development of approximately 1,000 new homes, meeting the vision for the site and embracing Crest Nicholson's vision for delivering new homes through the creation of a Garden Village. This will include the provision of 350 affordable homes to meet an identified local need within West Oxfordshire and the ability to deliver new homes for the elderly.

The proposal will also deliver a local service centre including shops and community buildings; approximately 4 hectares of mixed use development, including employment land; a new primary school; public open space, including formal and informal sports pitches and children's play areas, a new Shill Brook Ecology Park and allotments. Vehicle and pedestrian/cycle access and sustainable connections will be successfully provided from Upavon Way across the Shill Brook Valley, with further accesses provided from Alvescot Road.

The development of the Masterplan for Carterton West has been led from inception by the constraints of the site and a landscape-led design approach. This approach has led to the development of a Masterplan that defines and demonstrates extensive green corridors acting as landscape, amenity, recreation, play and functional movement spaces. The Shill Brook Ecology Park retains the focus for the development providing significant enhancements and benefits for the existing and future community of Carterton. The benefits resulting from the creation of the Shill Brook Ecology Park cannot be delivered through any other development proposals.

The evolution of the Carterton West Masterplan has followed a rigorous and extensive process of assessment, focusing on balancing the objectives of delivering a sustainable development whilst responding to constraints and concerns that have been identified. This rigorous process of assessment, and demonstration of the sustainable benefits of the proposal has led to a lack of objections during the consultation on the application from statutory consultees. There are no objections to the outline planning application from the Environment Agency, Natural England, or the County Council as Highway Authority and Ecologists.

The proposed site is in a location which, unlike other development proposals put forward, does not create coalescence with neighbouring settlements or change the character of neighbouring settlements. The site is able to provide for the long-term future of Carterton whilst still ensuring that an attractive green buffer between the surrounding settlements and Carterton is retained. The relationship between Carterton and the adjoining countryside would be improved so that Carterton can enjoy its surrounding landscape without impacting on other settlements.

The site is available, developable and deliverable and presents the Council with a clear opportunity to address their current and future housing shortfall. The proposal can demonstrate that it meets the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The application has been submitted on the basis that the Council does not have an up-to-date local plan or a 5 year supply of land for housing and therefore the Council should grant planning permission without delay. As required by the NPPF there are no adverse impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of providing much needed additional housing within the District.

The proposal for Carterton West has a clear Vision, this is: *'To work, to plan and to provide a sustainable extended community that will meet the social, economic and environmental needs of the town of Carterton and its residents now, and for the future, whilst respecting the unique and sensitive characteristics of its location.'*

Carterton West - A Summary of the Benefits

- The proposal is promoted by an award winning house builder with a proven track record for delivering sustainable design
- A mix of new homes for existing and future residents, including affordable housing, family homes and homes specifically for the elderly
- Development in this location does not result in coalescence that would be caused by the development joining Carterton up with surrounding villages
- The location on the western side of Carterton makes the town centre a more convenient shopping destination for prospective residents than Witney, encouraging local people to spend with local businesses and assisting with town centre regeneration
- New development will support existing primary schools on the western side of Carterton. Land for a new primary school is provided should it be required in the future
- The proposal includes the provision of land for employment purposes to support new and existing employment opportunities, this could include live/work units, and providing new jobs during and post construction
- The Shill Brook Ecology Park will be opened up as a valuable recreational and educational resource for all and the Shill Brook Valley will be enhanced ecologically
- A development that through a rigorous design process integrates with the existing landscape
- Positively addresses the risk of flooding for neighbouring villages through the implementation of a sustainable drainage strategy
- New recreational opportunities include a network of foot and cycle paths, parks and public open space, sports facilities and allotments
- The location of the development does not give rise to any significant concerns regarding noise from RAF Brize Norton
- The outline planning application has demonstrated that the site is deliverable and viable, bringing certainty as to when new development will come forward in Carterton to address the needs of the District