

On behalf of the Windrush Valley Protection Group, our supporters, and the 2,500 Witney petitioners, the following presents our deep collective concern regarding the effect this development will have on Witney and the Windrush Valley.

- The Windrush Valley landscape is one of the most beautiful and scenic parts of Witney.
- This area brings the countryside within easy reach of the town, and is quiet, peaceful, and a haven for wildlife including some rare and protected species (***FOR EXAMPLE – water voles / otters / lapwings / skylarks, song thrushes, amongst others***)
- The green valley walls and surrounding floodplain act as an unspoilt natural barrier to nearby villages with popular walking routes enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. Developing this land will have a huge detrimental effect to our quality of life and our wider rural environment.
- This unspoilt area is classed by Natural England as 'Environmentally Sensitive' (***it is part of an Environmental Stewardship Scheme whereby farmers are provided incentives to manage their land in a way that is environmentally sensitive***).
- As your officers have already identified, developing here will create significant and problematic issues that our community will struggle to absorb. (***It is not in local plan therefore has not effects have not been factored into the infrastructure plan***)
- WODC has a commendable record of historical over delivery of its housing requirements. The emerging Local Plan demonstrates a 5 year housing land supply whereby housing need can be met without developing this sensitive site.
- As OCC have clearly stated, the proposals will increase traffic on an already overburdened sensitive junction, which is currently failing to meet air quality targets. In fact OCC state the developers have failed to appropriately appraise the traffic impact and adequately address this issue. This area is also not well served by public transport links given the S2 has recently been re-routed away from the area.

- The HSE has stated the development of this site is UNACCEPTABLE on public safety grounds due to the proximity of the adjacent Flogas plant.
- The land currently acts as significant buffer between Burford Road and the Conservation Target Area. The effects of the development to this area have not been adequately addressed (***recommendation to do additional studies from OCC***).
- If development is allowed, a precedent will be set that will ensure the demise of the unique character and landscape of the Windrush Valley. You as Councillors and we as a community have a duty to safeguard and protect this landscape
- The other major factor of deep concern is that we do not believe there has been an adequate assessment of the flood risk given the sensitivity of this site and the vulnerability of the surrounding area. It seems the developer has done the absolute minimum to gain outline planning consent, placing profits before adequately addressing the issues associated with this sensitive site. (***We have commissioned our own independent expert review of the Draft FRA, which summarised and concluded the draft FRA was weak in areas and required additional work in order to adequately assess the off-site risk of flooding***).
- The definition of sustainable development is 'to meet the needs of the present without compromising the needs of future generations'. We have asked the developer to provide us with their environmental and sustainable development policies, to which we have not received a response. This is unacceptable.
- As stated on their website, the developer is 'obsessed with winning consent'. This obsession seems to have clouded their assessment of sustainability as this development is not sustainable. Attempting to develop the Windrush Valley shows no consideration for what Witney needs.
- We consider the demonstrable harm of this unsustainable development will significantly outweigh any potential benefits the development may present. Therefore we respectfully request that you reject this application.

Appendix B

Outline Planning Application 14/1215/P/OP Burford Road

Witney Town Council's planning committee held on the 23rd Sept 2014 was also attended by 60 constituents and 2 members of the press.

Witney Town Council are extremely concerned that Gladman Developments Ltd have not taken the opportunity to consult with them regarding this Outline Planning Application for a new road junction and development of 270 dwellings; despite the developer's claims to the contrary.

Had they done so they would have heard of WTC concerns regarding the lack of supporting infrastructure to cope with the addition of circa 630 residents at this location i.e. Roads, Flooding, Schools, Health Provision, Ecology, Environmental impact, AONB Preservation and Safety etc for those proposed to live there.

The proposed location of a singular steep Junction to access this site would be wholly unsuitable and a dangerous addition for the road infrastructure, Witney is unable to cope with the existing peak traffic without any addition at this location; particularly travelling down Mill Street, High Street and across the Windrush into Bridge Street towards Oxford.

It must also be noted that these roads fail the environmental pollution levels and this development would only act to increase congestion and pollution further.

Within the 2012 Local Plan Consultation WTC proposed a link from Tower Hill Roundabout to the Northern Link Road proposed in WODC's 2014 Local Development Framework which I note; is also supported by Hailey Parish Council (reference representation 1.8) requiring a route across the proposed site be reserved for future use within the Developing Local Plan.

It is not only the roads in and around Witney that cannot cope, this year Tower Hill school took on an additional class of 30 pupils due to the demand for primary school places and further expansion of it may unacceptably reduce amenity space. Therefore primary school children are likely to be sent to Queen Emma's Dyke requiring parents to drive, increasing congestion.

Secondary School catchment in this area is Wood Green School (the other side of the Windrush!) generating more morning and afternoon traffic across a congested Bridge St and it must also be remembered that currently secondary school places in 3-4 years are already forecast at capacity!

Health Care; Doctors are also in short supply, in particular Doctor Hours; resulting in waiting times of up to 3 weeks to see a GP contrary to Policies BE1, T1 and T6 of the WOLP.

Flooding;

The Northern aspect of this site as per the Environmental Map attached is subject to Level 2 & 3 Flooding with historical development to the East of the proposed site has been limited to above the 90m Contour to avoid flood risk. This development proposes the majority of development around 70% within the known flood zone risk of 80m to 90m contours.

Flooding at River Side Gardens, Bridge Street, West End & Aquarius, the Western aspects of Cogges area occurred in 2007 and in parts again from November 2013 through February 2014 when the Windrush Valley flooded and the Riverside Gardens level peaked at 81.07m,

and for reference the 2007 level was around 82m (Down Stream of the site, although no exact measurement is possible due to the construction of the level monitor in 2008).

Contrary to the support by the EA of a Bund of some 2078m³ being advised as acceptable, Witney Town Council are concerned the location and siting is insufficient to prevent surface water flooding with development likely to cause additional flood risk downstream and surface water runoff pollution to the River Windrush; detrimental to native wildlife present such as otters which have recently returned to the area, and water voles contrary to policies NE15 and NE7 of the WOLP.

The proposed water catchment area is also considered to be insufficient to cope with a continuous 3 month rain fall as experienced from Nov13 through Feb14; the Bund is located very close to the 2007 peak it will more than likely remain full due to the level of the local water table, resulting in stagnant poisonous water endangering both ecological and human life.

The statement that the whole of the red line area falls within the flood zone 1 is incorrect as the online EA flood plan for planning purposes (attached) clearly shows ingress of water onto the northern edge of the site to be a flood risk Category 2 & 3.

Witney Town Council therefore considers that construction at this site can only exacerbate the problem of flooding elsewhere in Witney.

The EA have recently supported the idea of combining construction of the West End Link with a £2m program of damming the valley to inhibit the flow of water thus protecting Witney; The outline application for the first phase of the West End Link's Environmental Study recommended the road level to be set above the 86m Contour, It would therefore be folly to even consider any development below the 86m to 90m Level in this location which is contrary to Policies NE8 and NE9 of the WOLP

Safety;

Witney Town Council Planning Committee considered the impact of Flogas who occupy the North West corner of the site; and in light of the Buncefield explosion the HSE investigation which took place recommended that an area of at least 250m radius be considered "a Casualty Risk" with an increased risk if you are inside a building.

History wise; A previous explosion that occurred in the 1970's buildings along Burford Road suffered damage due to one gas canister exploding and during a recent fire on Woodstock road where gas canisters were stored the police concerned of the risk of explosion enforced a 200m cordon to protect against the risk of loss of human life.

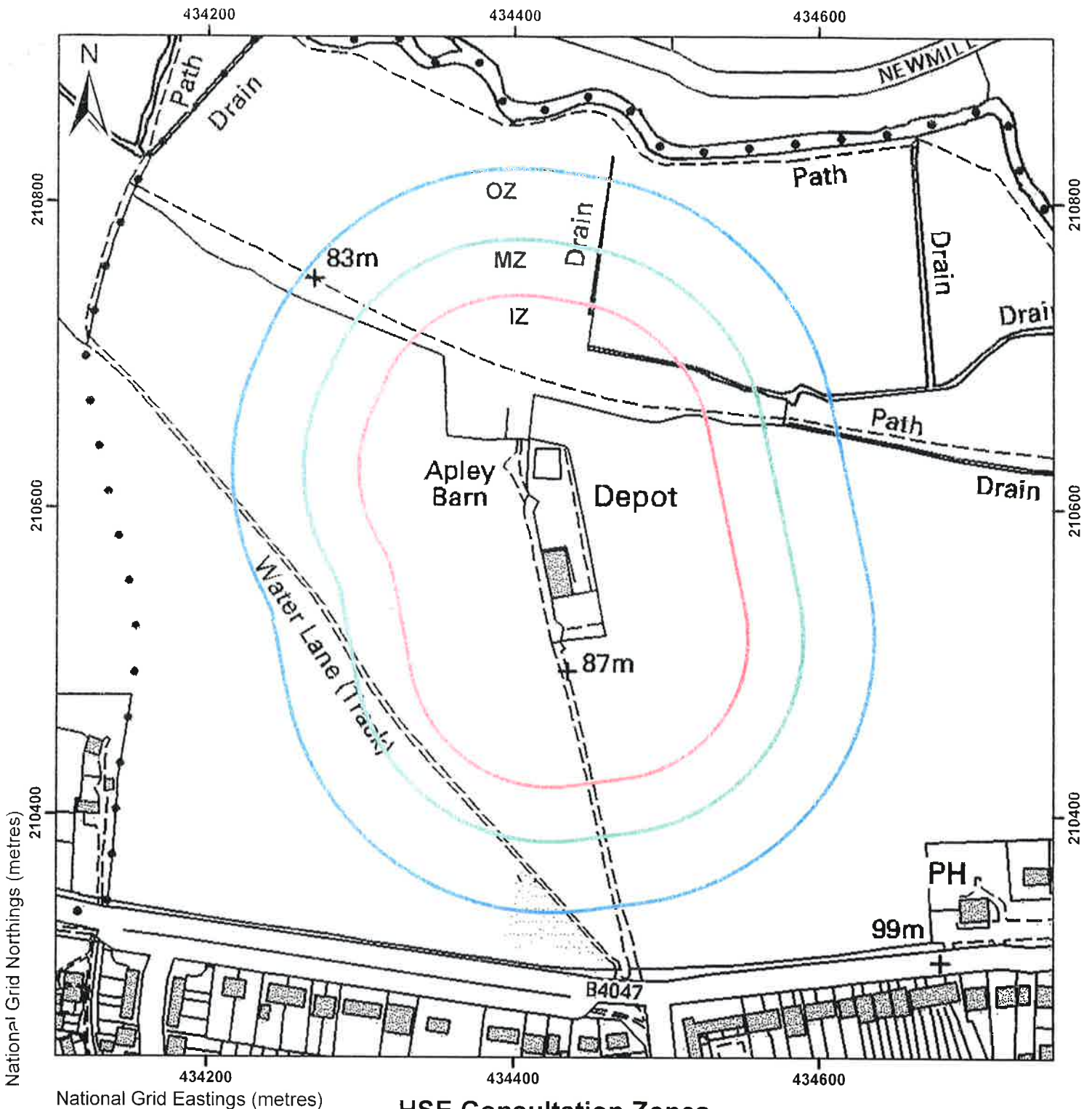
WTC support the site specific HSE report that recommends against development of this site on public safety grounds.

Witney Town council consider that development of this site will also harm the visual impact of the environment and be detrimental to the views from Burford Road across and from within the valley which gives a special and unique to the setting to Witney.

On this basis Witney Town Council do not consider this site suitable for development and support the Officer recommendation for refusal.

2014 Environmental Agency map of Flood Zones 2 & 3.





HSE Consultation Zones

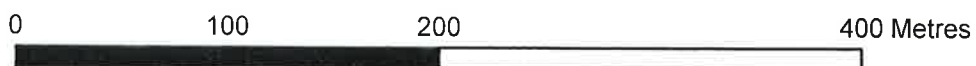
Supergas Limited

HSE HID CI5 Ref: H0527
Grid Ref: SP 344 105

Approved - 20/02/2009
Prepared - April 2009

This map supersedes all previous or undated maps

IZ = 1800 tdu
MZ = 1000 tdu
OZ = 500 tdu



Councillor Coles's speech to Lowlands Planning Sub-Committee – 17/11/14

Good afternoon, I'm speaking on behalf on myself and Cllr Pete Dorward.

Councillors, we believe we have a **duty** and a **responsibility** to ensure that the homes we build are built in the right locations. On the basis of the evidence presented here, we believe considerable harm will be done to our community if this development goes ahead.

We'd like to focus to two key areas:

Firstly...we remain deeply troubled by the close proximity to the Flo-Gas plant. The threat to the safety of residents in the proposed development is significant and we believe it folly to allow a residential development so close to such a high-risk industrial plant. The very recent fire at Didcot B power station is an all too clear reminder that even the most stringent health & safety procedures do not stop accidents from happening. Can I remind you of the views of one of the objectors, Mr Graham Smith, who served as the Deputy Chief Fire Officer for Oxfordshire for 12 years, he said in his objection letter that ***it would be irresponsible to introduce risks where they do not need to exist and that it is a generally accepted principal that sites, such as the gas plant, should be in an isolated areas well away from other buildings and in particular residential developments.***

Our second major area of concern regards flooding and it's impact on the rest of town. We know this area has flooded on numerous occasions and although the developers have been very clever in building just outside the current flood zone what no-one has been able to say is that these current flood zones won't have moved, they won't have shifted, in 10 years, in 20 years, in 30 years time. One of the effects of climate change is the increase in extreme weather and an **increased** risk of flooding. We have already stolen much of the river's natural floodplains in this area and have given the Windrush very little room when waters rise and the river tries to take back what is rightfully hers. I genuinely believe that this development will lead to further flooding downstream in places like Woodford Mill, Mill Street, Riverside Gardens. It will also affect your ward Councillor Langridge in Bridge Street, Grangers Place, Millers Mews and West End. Councillor Enright it's going to affect your ward at the Aquarius development.

To conclude colleagues I'd like to leave you with this final thought, it was a question asked of me when this proposal first came to light, ***where does Witney end and the countryside begin?*** For many residents the answer is the Windrush Valley. We must safeguard it not only for us but for future generations to come, the impact on our landscape will be devastating and once it's developed then there's no turning back, can't be undone, it's final, absolute...do you really want that on your conscience? I urge you to follow the good advice of the officers and reject this application. Thank you

Appendix D

Presentation to Planning Committee – November 2014

Good afternoon Chairman, Members. I am Simon Firkins, the agent for this application.

Thank you for the chance to speak to you today. I hope you received the email I sent to you over the weekend and have had the chance to review that. I do not wish add much, if anything, to that email.

The application before you is recommended for refusal on design grounds only. Officers are happy with all other aspects of the scheme.

We met with officers about 2 weeks ago to discuss the design and at that meeting agreed an alternative design approach that we think officers will be happy to support. This is a cottage style rather than the farmyard or barn style of the original submission, also bringing the dwellings slightly closer to the road to reflect the established building line, removing the detached garages and creating more space between each unit.

We were regrettably unable to submit those new plans with sufficient time for officers to carry out fresh consultation before this meeting.

What I am asking today therefore is if members would consider deferring this application in order for those revised plans to be dealt with by officers. We are happy to agree with officers an extension of time for the application; and this approach would avoid the costs and time for both the Council and my client associated with preparing, submitting and processing a completely fresh application; which would also benefit from a free go.

If we had not reached what I hope you and officers agree is a very acceptable design solution, then I would not be making such a request today. As it seems however that we are close to resolving all matters I hope you will agree to my request to defer the application, and to grant delegated authority to officers to approve the revised plans in due course.

Thank you for your time

NEW ROAD SITE PHASING

My name is Trevor Milne-Day and I am Chair of The Society for the Protection of Bampton. I was here and spoke against when this committee was considering the application to build 160 houses off New Road, Bampton. I was here when Councillor Booty spoke in the proceedings and said he was going to propose something that might well be equally unacceptable to both sides of the pro and anti development argument. This in essence was the proposal to phase but at the time phasing was also linked into flooding so that if the development at any time flooded no further houses were to be built.

It's a shame that that provision never survived into the conditions and in these days of transparent democracy I find it odd that no-one thought to inform my Society or indeed the people of Bampton of that. Now it is a double shame because propensity to flood is a material

I have read the legal opinion submitted by the Applicant in this case and I do not find it as convincing as the officers here. I do not accept that better assimilation of a development into a community is not part and parcel of the test of sustainability of that development. I do not see what the barrister finds difficult to understand about the word “built”. To me it is clear. It means a house is finished. It does not mean and cannot mean it is under construction. Even if there was a scintilla of doubt all you need to do is look at the reason – for better assimilation – and surely the purpose is as clear as daylight.

I sometimes think that planners do not inhabit the real world but barristers I know don't. It cannot be unreasonable to impose a sporadic or phased rate of build when all of us in this room know that that is precisely what builders do themselves. If finances get tight again will the builders build on regardless – NO. If it booms will they clear off the site – NO. As a President once said “It's the economy stupid”

planning consideration overruling any presumptions in the NPPF. See footnote 9 to paragraph 14. We need not have been here today if what was decided on 17th March last had actually come to pass.

With respect to the officers their summary omits an important point and that is the proposal to build 116 houses in Bampton off Aston Road. The appeal is part heard and adjourned to April. Of course my Society will continue to fight hard to oppose the appeal but when I last looked at their website, the developers, Gladmans were claiming a success rate of 40 out of 42 cases so the chances must be that these 116 houses will be allowed. If that happens Bampton faces nearly 300 new houses in five years. Using the upper end SHMA figures of 660 houses per year this District is predicated to grow by approx. 25% over the period to 2029. Bampton is facing more than that rate of growth over the next 5 years. This cannot be right or good planning.

Please vote to retain the phasing and give time to the people of Bampton to assimilate all this.