

**East Area Planning Committee**

3<sup>rd</sup> March 2016

**Application Number:** 15/02269/RES

**Decision Due by:** 11th November 2015

**Proposal:** Construction of 140 residential units consisting of 91 houses (6 x 1bed, 13 x 2bed, 50 x 3bed and 22 x 4bed) and 49 flats (12 x 1bed, 25 x 2bed, 12 x 3bed). Provision of 258 car parking spaces, cycle parking, landscaping and ancillary works. (Reserved matters of outline planning permission 12/02848/OUT, seeking details of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) (amended plans)

**Site Address:** Land North Of Littlemore Healthcare Trust, Sandford Road, Littlemore (**site plan: appendix 1**)

**Ward:** Littlemore Ward

**Agent:** Mr Robert Froud-Williams

**Applicant:** Vanderbilt Homes

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## **Recommendation:**

The East Area Planning Committee is recommended to approve planning permission for the reserved matters for the following reasons

## **Reasons for Approval**

- 1 The overall design of the layout, scale, appearance, and landscaping for the development would follow the basic principles of the illustrative masterplan approved at outline stage. The scheme would establish a balanced and mixed community within the Littlemore Neighbourhood Area, in a manner that would be of a suitable scale and appearance for the site and its setting without having an adverse impact upon the adjacent neighbouring areas, Green Belt or Sites of Special Scientific Interest. The development would be energy efficient, and would not have a significant impact upon biodiversity; trees; archaeology; flood risk; drainage; air quality; land contamination; or noise impact and any such impact relating to these matters could be successfully mitigated through appropriate measures secured by condition on this application, outline planning permission or associated legal agreements. The proposal would accord with the overall aims of the National Planning Policy Framework and relevant policies of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026, Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016, and Sites and Housing Plan 2011-2026.

- 2 In considering the application, officers have had specific regard to the comments of third parties and statutory bodies in relation to the application. However officers consider that these comments have not raised any material considerations that would warrant refusal of the applications, and any harm identified could be successfully mitigated by appropriately worded conditions.
  
- 3 The Council considers that the proposal accords with the policies of the development plan as summarised below. It has taken into consideration all other material matters, including matters raised in response to consultation and publicity. Any material harm that the development would otherwise give rise to can be offset by the conditions imposed.

### **Conditions**

1. Time Limit
2. Development carried out in accordance with the approved plans
3. To exclude the landscaping details and seek revised landscaping proposals in accordance with condition 6 of outline planning permission 12/02848/OUT
4. Detailed car parking plan
5. Parking and Turning Heads provided before occupation
6. Details of cycle parking provision
7. Detailed method statement for the extent and design of groundwork within the Iron Age banjo enclosure
8. Detailed lighting scheme for the development
9. Details of bat and bird boxes
10. Updated badger survey and mitigation plan
11. Details of the photovoltaic panels to be used on properties
12. Noise attenuation for properties
13. Assessment of ground borne vibration from railway line
14. Restriction on conversion of garages to habitable accommodation

### **Principal Planning Policies:**

#### Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016

**CP1** - Development Proposals

**CP6** - Efficient Use of Land & Density

**CP8** - Design Development to Relate to its Context

**CP9** - Creating Successful New Places

**CP10** - Siting Development to Meet Functional Needs

**CP11** - Landscape Design

**CP13** - Accessibility

**CP14** - Public Art

**CP17** - Recycled Materials

**CP18** - Natural Resource Impact Analysis

**CP19** - Nuisance

**CP20** - Lighting

**CP21** - Noise

**CP22** - Contaminated Land

**TR1** - Transport Assessment

**TR2** - Travel Plans  
**TR5** - Pedestrian & Cycle Routes  
**TR8** - Guided Bus/Local Rail Service  
**NE14** - Water and Sewerage Infrastructure  
**NE15** - Loss of Trees and Hedgerows  
**HE2** - Archaeology  
**SR9** - Footpaths & Bridleways  
**SR10** - Creation of Footpaths & Bridleways

#### Core Strategy

**CS2\_** - Previously developed and greenfield land  
**CS9\_** - Energy and natural resources  
**CS10\_** - Waste and recycling  
**CS11\_** - Flooding  
**CS12\_** - Biodiversity  
**CS13\_** - Supporting access to new development  
**CS14\_** - Supporting city-wide movement  
**CS17\_** - Infrastructure and developer contributions  
**CS18\_** - Urban design, town character, historic environment  
**CS19\_** - Community safety  
**CS22\_** - Level of housing growth  
**CS23\_** - Mix of housing  
**CS24\_** - Affordable housing

#### Sites and Housing Plan

**HP2\_** - Accessible and Adaptable Homes  
**HP3\_** - Affordable Homes from Large Housing Sites  
**HP9\_** - Design, Character and Context  
**HP11\_** - Low Carbon Homes  
**HP12\_** - Indoor Space  
**HP13\_** - Outdoor Space  
**HP14\_** - Privacy and Daylight  
**HP15\_** - Residential cycle parking  
**HP16\_** - Residential car parking  
**SP25\_** - Land N of Littlemore Mental Health centre

#### Other Planning Documents

- National Planning Policy Framework
- Balance of Dwellings Supplementary Planning Document
- Affordable Housing and Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document
- Natural Resource Impact Analysis Supplementary Planning Document
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule

#### **Public Consultation**

#### Statutory Consultees

- Oxfordshire County Council

Highways Authority: No objections subject to conditions requiring details of the parking and turning heads, cycle parking, drainage, construction traffic management plan, and a travel plan.

Drainage Authority: No objections to the revised drainage strategy

Ecology: The council should seek the advice of their ecologist

- Oxford Civic Society

We believe that this application cannot be approved without changes in respect of the inadequacies of the road design, cycle parking and the Travel Plan as detailed at length in the Oxfordshire County Council comment.

- Thames Water Utilities Limited: No objection

- Highways England : No objection

- Natural England: No objection

- Littlemore Parish Council

Whilst the Parish Council was in agreement in principle with the proposed development of the site (especially the positive level of Social Housing proposed) its concerns were as follows:

Vehicular Access: Whilst it was welcomed that the developer had proposed the addition of new traffic lights (at its own expense) on the A4074 and that this had been accepted by Oxfordshire County Council Highways, the Committee (all of whom know the location as motorists) foresaw the specific location of the traffic lights could create an adverse effect in creating tail-backs to the Heyford Hill 'Hamburger' junction nearby, and conceivably cause issues to/from Sainsbury's Heyford Hill entrance.

However, that the Committee suggested this concern could possibly be alleviated by moving the location of proposed new traffic lights and entrance to the proposed development further down site's frontage onto the A4074, and away from the close proximity to the Heyford Hill 'hamburger' junction, and Sainsbury's entrance.

The Committee also suggested a 30mph speed limit be introduced on the relevant section of the A4074 near to proposed new footpaths, and in the general vicinity of the proposed new development.

Pedestrian/Disability Access: Proposals, as outlined, would almost totally isolate (other than by vehicular access) the tenants and residents of the proposed new 140 homes from the rest of the community in Littlemore. The proposed new and/or existing footpaths do not (as shown) effectively address pedestrian, disability and cycle connectivity of the proposed new residential housing development with the existing community infrastructure of Littlemore. This would include lack of adequate and viable connectivity to:

- Existing public transport to/through Littlemore
- Littlemore sub-post office, Community Centre, Public Library and Village Hall

- Littlemore's two public houses, cafes and fast-food outlets
- Churches - including main Anglican, Baptist Catholic churches, plus other faithgroup worship locations
- Two local shopping precincts and convenience shops (other than Sainsbury's)
- The Littlemore Parish Council's sport and recreation parks
- Littlemore's City-Council-owned Public Toilets
- Littlemore's pre-schools, three primary schools and secondary education at the Oxford Academy - which also includes sports and other facilities used by the local community.
- Pedestrian access to the Littlemore Kassam Stadium (home to Oxford United football club) and Littlemore Ozone Leisure Complex - including swimming pool, sports facilities, multiplex cinema and restaurants.

Furthermore, one of the LPC Planning Committee (chosen as a fit and active person used to small children and working with elderly people) conducted a test-walk of the pedestrian/disability footpaths which the Developer has proposed. It was found that on a bright, sunny late September's day, it still took approximately 20 minutes to reach the bus stop at Rose Hill Oval, and 17 minutes to reach Gwyneth Road, via Sainsbury's Car Park. The Committee Member further stated that in adverse weather and Winter conditions, this could easily become 30 minutes, and was concerned about children/schoolchildren having to use the pedestrian crossing at the very busy Heyford Hill junction.

That pedestrian/disability access via the Developer's indication of a 'possible tram/light rail halt/stop' near to the proposed development would not necessarily provide easy and/or any access to/from the proposed development to the existing community infrastructure, nor provide access over the railway track.

The Committee agreed that a more viable solution would have to be the construction of a new pedestrian/disability access point to/from the proposed new housing development to link-into existing accessibility - probably with a new footpath and pedestrian/disability bridge over the railway/tram tracks near to Railway Lane - which already has a disused former level-crossing. However, there would be a potential issue with the former Dominion Oil site on the other side of the railway track, which is not owned by either Vanderbilt, or Oxford City Council.

#### Public Transport/Residential Travel Plan:

Despite the provision of two new bus stops on the A4074 adjacent to the entrance/exit of the proposed new housing development. Objectively, the Committee agreed that all public transport provision has to be seen as being positive (especially with regard to recent major cut-backs in public transport subsidy in Oxfordshire) but, that the new bus stop provision on the A4074 would only address (regardless of frequency) the public transport needs of tenants and residents of the proposed new housing development wishing to travel (mainly) to/from Oxford, and possibly to use coach and rail links from central Oxford and likewise, any tram/rail link in the future.

That neither buses using the A4074 or the #3 Rose Hill bus actually serve Littlemore, nor to Cowley Centre and its large selection of banks, shops,

supermarkets, dentists and GP services - and an important connection for the #10 bus to Oxford's hospitals and clinics, used by people of all ages.

That without pedestrian/disability access (as described above) the tenants and residents of the 140 homes in the proposed new housing development will be denied easy direct access to the #16/16A Minchery Farm/Oxford (Cowley Road Littlemore) and T2 Abingdon/Oxford Science Park/Oxford (Sandford Road) regular bus services - both of which also go to/through Cowley Centre.

#### Other Infrastructure Concerns:

Healthcare: Possible over-loading of existing healthcare provision. Currently, people in Littlemore use the Donnington Health Centre in Florence Park, and also in Temple Cowley, Manzil Way and the health centre for the Leys/Blackbird Leys. The once-projected new GP facilities at the new Rose Hill Community Centre will not now be happening.

Schools: Already an issue for Littlemore, with many older children going to St Gregorys The Great and Oxford Spires Academy in Cowley, together with those attending the Oxford Academy in Littlemore. The addition of 140 new homes will add to existing pressure.

Sense of Community: Without ease of pedestrian/disability and cycle access from the proposed new development, its tenants and residents will become isolated and unable to integrate with the rest of Littlemore, its people and facilities.

The Parish Council broadly supported the proposed new housing development (on land north of Littlemore Healthcare Trust) and welcomed the proposed 50% social housing element, provision of traffic lights and bus stops on the A4070.

The Parish Council also appreciated the proposed sympathetic design and layout to the development, by a Developer previously known to the LPC Council, and to the extent that plans, drawings and other information had been supplied in-depth. However, the Council voted unanimously to clearly indicate the concerns shown above) - and added that all CIL moneys (Community Infrastructure Levy, ie) from this particular new development should be for specific use and/or for the benefit of Littlemore.

- Network Rail

After studying the documents submitted and consultation with our Earthworks and Drainage Engineer, Network Rail objects to this application in its current form.

The plans show loading along the crest of the cutting, particularly in the eastern corner where proximity to the cutting is smallest, no slope stability analysis or information regarding the effect of the development on the cutting assets is provided, therefore, this information is required prior to our objection being removed.

#### Third Parties

### 26 Oxford Road:

The entrance and exit to this site will increase traffic which is already a serious risk due to excessive speed and volume on Oxford Rd leading to the ring road. I would ask that CIL money is used to pay for further traffic measures on this route so that the issues identified above can be better managed. I am a resident on Oxford Rd which is a residential area and would ask also that resident only parking could be considered for this route or that the road is closed to traffic completely from access to the ring road for any traffic other than residents who live there. Traffic on this route is a menace and is not only a risk to residents who live there but also ruining the history and general atmosphere.

### Oxford Design Review Panel

The application as originally submitted was subject to a desktop review by the Oxford Design Review Panel. A copy of their letter is included in **appendix 2** of this report.

The panel considered that the principle of a residential development is sensible in order to provide much needed housing in the city while also adding to the character of Littlemore and better defining the southern boundary of Oxford. It went on to state that they were unable to support the application at this stage and recommended that a much more ambitious and creative design approach is required and fundamental areas of the design approach needs to be addressed.

- Increase the amount of public open space and develop a landscape strategy
- Simplify the road layout including the cul-de-sacs and parking courtyards
- Improve the pedestrian accessibility across the site

### **Officers Assessment:**

#### **Background to Proposals**

1. The site comprises an area of open land approximately 3.72ha situated on the southern edge of the city and within the Littlemore Neighbourhood Area. It is bordered to the west by the A4074; to the north-east by a railway line with Sainsbury's beyond; and Littlemore Hospital to the south (**appendix 1**).
2. The site lies adjacent to Oxfords Green Belt whose boundary is on the opposite side of the A4074. In addition there is the Littlemore Railway Cutting Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Site of Local Importance to Nature Conservation (SLINC) to the north. The site is currently accessed from the A4074.
3. In May 2015 the East Area Planning Committee granted outline planning permission for the erection of up to 140 dwellings with access on this open land, together with 258 car parking spaces, 356 cycle parking spaces, landscaping and open space under reference number 12/02848/OUT.
4. The outline application sought to reserve all matters such as appearance, landscaping, layout, and scale for consideration at a later date. The access arrangements for the development were approved at outline stage, and included the following works
  - The provision of an all-movements traffic signal junction to the A4074 for

vehicles incorporating a pedestrian and cycle crossing to the south-western side of the road

- The provision of bus laybys on each side of the A4074
  - The provision of a new footpath link for pedestrians and cyclists on the south-western side of the A4074 into Heyford Hill Lane
  - The provision of a new footpath link for pedestrians and cyclists on the north-eastern side of the A4074 providing a route from the site to Sainsbury's superstore and the pedestrian and cycleway along the eastern bypass.
5. This current application is seeking approval for the detailed design of the remaining reserved matters required by condition 4 of the outline permission 12/02848/OUT. The layout has been amended since it was originally submitted to incorporate comments made by the Oxford Design Review Panel.
  6. The outline planning permission 12/02848/OUT included some 26 conditions and a legal agreement for affordable housing and the off-site highway works. These conditions and legal agreement remain in force and will only need to be supplemented by additional conditions above relating specifically to the reserved matters application.
  7. In this context officers consider the principle determining issues in this case to be as follows
    - Residential Development
    - Site Layout, Scale, Form, and Appearance
    - Highways, Access, and Parking
    - Landscaping
    - Ecology
    - Archaeology
    - Flood Risk and Drainage
    - Sustainability
    - Community Infrastructure Levy
    - Other Matters

**Residential Development**

8. Policy CS23 of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026 requires residential development to deliver a balanced mix of housing to meet the projected future household need. The Balance of Dwellings Supplementary Planning Document (BoDSPD) identifies the site as being within the Littlemore Neighbourhood Area.
9. The proposed layout would provide 140 dwellings through a range of dwelling sizes and mix of dwellinghouses and apartments. This would be made up of the following

<b>No. of bedrooms</b>	<b>Dwellinghouses</b>	<b>Apartments</b>	<b>Total</b>
1	6	12	18
2	13	25	38
3	50	12	62
4	22	-	22



10. This mix of dwelling types which would satisfy the aims of Oxford Core Strategy Policy CS23 and the strategic mix of housing expected on sites of this size in the Balance of Dwellings Supplementary Planning Document.
11. The outline application included a legal agreement that secured the provision of 50% affordable housing in accordance with the requirements of Sites and Housing Plan Policy HP3. It is intended that the social rented accommodation will be owned and managed by a registered social landlord, although one has not been specified at this stage.
12. The legal agreement specified the proportion, tenure mix and dwelling sizes of the affordable housing. In accordance with this legal agreement a total of 70 affordable homes would be provided and would have the following tenure mix.

No. of Bedrooms	Social Rent (56 units)		Affordable Rent (14)	
	Dwellinghouses	Apartments	Dwellinghouses	Apartments
1	-	6	-	6
2	-	16	3	-
3	14	12	5	-
4	8	-	-	-

13. The affordable housing plan shows that the social rented units will be located to the north of the spine road interspersed between market housing, and the affordable rented properties will be located on the southern side of the spine road to the east of the area of open space.
14. The Sites and Housing Plan sets out the required standards for residential accommodation. In terms of the internal space standards the units would be self-contained with their own entrance, kitchens, bathrooms, adequate storage space, generous floor to ceiling heights, and orientated to receive adequate natural light and ventilation. There would be a varying range of internal floor sizes dependant on the types of properties with the apartments ranging as follows – 1 beds (39m<sup>2</sup>), 2 beds (67m<sup>2</sup>), and 3 beds (77m<sup>2</sup>) – and the dwellinghouses varying between terrace, end of terrace or semi-detached – 1 bed (51m<sup>2</sup>), 2 bed (70m<sup>2</sup>), 3 beds (84 – 130.5m<sup>2</sup>), and 4 beds (108-137m<sup>2</sup>). With regards to external space, all dwellinghouses have private gardens of adequate proportion for the type of property. The flats will be provided with either a private balcony or terrace of usable space which would be suitable for this type of accommodation, and in addition they have access to the central open space. As such the proposal would accord with the aims and objectives of Sites and Housing Plan Policies HP12 and HP13.
15. Policy HP2 requires all residential development to be designed to Lifetime Homes Standards, with at least 5% of all new dwellings in schemes of this size to be fully wheelchair accessible or easily adaptable for full wheelchair use and at least 50% of these to be provided as open market dwellings. The Lifetime Homes Standards have now been superseded by Part M of the Building Regulations. Therefore the housing will need to demonstrate that they satisfy these standards. In terms of providing wheelchair accessible or easily adaptable homes for

wheelchair use, a total of 7 units are to be designated across the scheme. This will include at least four of the ground floor flats in the affordable homes, and three of the ground floor flats in the open market properties.

## **Layout, Scale, Form, and Appearance**

16. The outline application was accompanied by an indicative masterplan which set out how the development could be laid out through any reserved matters application. The application has now provided detailed design drawings for the approval of the layout, scale, and appearance of the development which follows the principles of the indicative masterplan. The scheme has been amended to address the comments of the Oxford Design Review Panel (**appendix 2**).
17. Layout: The proposed site layout shows a residential development consisting of detached and terraced properties with a small number of apartment buildings that are laid out around groups of courtyards and shared surface roads that lead from a central spine road that connects from the A4074. The layout attempts to establish a residential scale and character to the site after entering the development from the A4074. The apartment buildings are used to frame the access and create street frontages with active frontages to encourage natural surveillance and a safe and secure environment for the family housing. A landscaped buffer to the northern and southern boundaries as well as the A4074 is provided, along with a central area of public open space which provides a green core to the development.
18. The Oxford Design Review Panel considered that the basic design principles for the scheme were sound but recommended that the design approach should address the following points before they were able to support the scheme:
- Increase the amount of public open space and develop a landscape strategy
  - Simplify the road layout including the cul-de-sacs and parking courtyards
  - Improve the pedestrian accessibility across the site
19. The layout has been amended to respond to these comments in a manner that is mindful of the basic principles agreed at outline stage. The perimeter blocks have been tightened to enable more public space across the development and opening up the cul-de-sacs and reducing the number of parking courtyards. The linear open space that was originally proposed along the southern boundary has been reduced in size to enable a belt of dense tree planting. The central open space has been increased in size as a result to create a more substantial village green and focal point for the development and a better buffer to the SSSI is provided to the north. The central spine road has been realigned to link to the potential rail halt and enable better pedestrian accessibility from the bus stops on the A4074. The flats adjacent to the entrance have also been repositioned to establish a better gateway to the development.
20. Having reviewed the amended site layout, officers support the changes and consider that it has resulted in a more coherent sense of place for the development. The layout has also addressed officers concerns with the illustrative masterplan tabled at outline stage whereby there is a better public and private realm relationship with building frontages facing onto the main public

realm across the site. There are still a number of cul-de-sacs in the northern section but the open space at their entrances make them feel like part of the central spine. Despite the fact that the development is relatively high density, the orientation of the plots within the layout has successfully avoided any overlooking or overbearing issues between the units.

21. The layout has also made good provision for future links to be developed to the rest of Littlemore. The layout has incorporated space for a potential pedestrian and cycle access across the railway line easily visible and accessible at the end of the central spine road. It has also indicated how this could provide space for a potential halt for the Eastern Arc Rapid Transit System in the north-eastern section.
22. Scale of Development: The overall scale of the built form across the development reflects the parameters set out at outline stage. The dwellings are primarily two or two-and-a-half storey where rooms are provided in the roof space, and the apartment blocks will have three-storeys. The variation in heights of the dwellinghouses allow better articulation for the rooflines across the development, while the taller apartment buildings are strategically placed to create focal points and more dominant built form at the entrance to the site. The Design Review Panel considered that the scale of built form across the site was appropriate and in keeping with the surrounding residential suburb. Officers would concur with this conclusion.
23. Appearance: The dwellings are to have a contemporary appearance while using traditional materials such as brick (red and buff) with pitched tiled or slated roofs. The design and access statement recognises that there is no clear vernacular pattern throughout the area which would influence the appearance of these units and so the materials have been chosen to help create points of emphasis across the site and some variation in the detailing. The use of the more traditional materials would certainly be in-keeping with the residential properties that are in the surrounding area.
24. Having regards to the above, officers consider that the proposed layout has created a sense of place and neighbourhood feel for the development. Although the Design Review Panel were unable to support the original scheme, officers consider that the amendments have improved the scheme while also respecting the parameters of the outline application and responding to the relative constraints of the site. As such officers consider that the overall layout, scale and appearance of the development would satisfy the requirements of Policy CS18 of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026, Policy HP9 of the Sites and Housing Plan 2011-2026, Policies CP1, CP8, CP9, and CP10 of the Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016.

### **Highways, Access, and Parking**

25. The outline application approved the access arrangements for the site. These arrangements included the signalised junction with the A4074, and off-site highway works that provided the footpath links to the wider area and the bus laybys on the A4074. These were secured through the S106 agreement on the outline application.

26. During the consultation process, the Littlemore Parish Council raised concerns about the segregated nature of the site which required better access to the wider suburb of Littlemore. These concerns are understood and were fully considered at outline stage. They are not a matter for this reserved matters application which is only seeking approval for the layout, scale, appearance and landscaping of the development.
27. Internal Road Layout: The proposed road layout has a central spine road that leads through the development from the signalised junction on the A4074 and links the courtyards and shared surfaces. The internal road layout has been designed to adoptable standards, although it is only intended that a 20m section from the junction will be offered for adoption at this stage.
28. The amended road layout would encourage pedestrian access across the site and connects appropriate routes from the footpaths and bus laybys on the A4074 in the west with the potential rail crossing and halt in the east. This improves accessibility throughout the site, and future proofs the creation of links to the wider area via the rail crossing by means of an access point onto the central spine road. The Local Highways Authority has raised no objection to the internal road layout.
29. The Local Highways Authority have stated that should the potential rail halt or crossing come forward such that it can only be accessed through the development, then a Right of Way for Non-Motorised Users through the development should be provided and this would need to be secured by way of a legal agreement. It is noted that the Local Highways Authority did not request this at outline stage, which is where such a matter should have been secured by legal agreement. It is not possible for reserved matters applications to secure details that should otherwise have been agreed at outline stage. The Local Highways Authority has also asked for a legal agreement to safeguard the land for the bridge link as shown on drawing no.5092:P03. This would not be necessary as there is an appropriate condition attached to the outline permission to secure this land.
30. Car Parking: The outline planning permission includes a condition (12) that requires the parking provision for the development to meet the maximum parking standards set out in Sites and Housing Plan Policy HP16. The planning statement submitted with the application has indicated that the parking levels within the scheme will meet the maximum standards set out within the policy. A plan has been requested detailing how the spaces will be allocated throughout the development. This parking would be provided within dwelling boundaries on either hard-standing or in garages. All other parking will be provided on hard-standing to the front of properties or in courtyards. These would accord with the standards set out in Sites and Housing Plan Policy HP16.
31. Cycle Parking: The outline planning permission includes a condition (13) that requires the cycle parking for the development to meet the maximum parking standards set out in Sites and Housing Plan Policy HP15. The dwellings will be provided with cycle storage areas within garden sheds or designated storage

areas, whilst the flats will have designated stores. The level of parking would accord with the standards set out in Sites and Housing Plan Policy HP15

32. Travel Plan: A Travel Plan has been submitted which sets out measures and initiatives to encourage residents and visitors to travel to the site by non-car modes of transport. These measures would include appointing a Travel Plan co-ordinator; providing a residents information pack that provides details on local cycling and walking routes, bus services, average journey times to key facilities; encouraging car share opportunities, and cycling initiatives.
33. The requirement to provide a Travel Plan is set out in condition 23 of the outline planning permission. However the Local Highways Authority has indicated that the submitted Travel Plan does not meet their requirements. The identified measures within the document, with the exception of the travel information pack and car sharing promotion are all 'hard' engineering measures and some more 'soft' behavioural measures should be added such as how home working and home shopping could be promoted. There is no mention of cycle parking within the document. There is also no timetable for implantation or an action plan.
34. The submitted Travel Plan is only a draft document however, and as such a further plan will need to be submitted and approved separately under condition 23 of the outline planning application.

## Landscaping

35. A landscape strategy has been provided as part of this reserved matters application which has sought to provide more detail on the key masterplan principles for landscaping and public realm that were required as part of condition 6 of the outline planning permission. The proposed Landscape strategy has identified the following landscape enhancement objectives.
- Village Park in centre of the site (including grassland, play area and structural tree planting).
  - Street tree planting from site entrance to the A4074 and along internal access roads and car parking, grass verges and ornamental shrub planting.
  - Green corridor along the western boundary adjacent to A4074 (with conservation grassland, wildlife pond, tree and shrub planting and wildflowers).
  - Green corridor along southern boundary (with conservation grassland, wildlife pond, tree and shrub planting and wildflowers).
36. Having reviewed the Landscape Strategy, officers initial concerns were that the species selection for the central park area within the landscape, wildlife and biodiversity plan needed amending to include trees with larger ultimate size potential, greater longevity and more biodiversity value. The depth of the buffer zone along the western A4074 boundary had been reduced in size from the landscape masterplan and this would have an impact on its aims to provide landscape screening of a negative visual feature (the A4074) while also including space for conservation grassland, wildlife pond, tree and shrub planting and wildflowers. The depth of the buffer zone along the southern boundary with the Mental Healthcare Trust site had also been reduced from outline stage which

would also prevent successfully achieving the aims of providing landscape screening/softening to the Mental Healthcare Trust site, and a linear park amenity including conservation grassland, wildlife pond, tree and shrub planting and wildflowers.

37. The Oxford Design Review Panel also considered that the proposed landscape strategy needed further development and the amount of public open space increased throughout the scheme (**appendix 2**). They recognised that more public open space was needed to support future residents in this housing development, and this should be achieved through a larger central open space and streets with green verges to ensure that the neighbourhood feels more homely. They went on to state that the landscape strategy should ensure that all open space is truly active and that users can feel safe and comfortable in these spaces throughout the day and night. They recognised that the treatments to the northern and western boundaries would be crucial given the proximity to the A4074 and railway and so needed further work. They did consider that that concept of the central open space around the historic banjo enclosure was a positive.
38. The layout has been amended to address the design review panel comments and this has resulted in changes to the landscaping proposals and notably some of the elements of concern for officers. The central open space has been increased in size in order to create a larger central open space for the development. This allows a better design for the space which would also enable the archaeological significance to be better revealed. The layout would also ensure that the main public streets are better defined with green verges in order to improve their quality. This has resulted in the reduction in size of the linear open space proposed at masterplan stage, and whilst regrettable, officers were concerned that the depth of this park was not sufficient to establish a linear park and screen the adjacent hospital. The circular walk around this park is removed, but with that a greater emphasis is placed on the main public thoroughfares through the scheme and the open space which encourages more activity in these areas. The buffer zone to the A4074 has not been increased as a result of these amendments, but again the improvements within the development would outweigh the benefits in landscape terms that the buffer to the A4074 would achieve. A more substantial buffer to the SSSI in the north is provided. Whilst the changes made to the scheme as a result of the comments by the design panel have altered some of the landscaping proposals set out within the masterplan, the basic principles would remain and a better balance achieved for the landscape strategy between the needs of the development and future residents in the housing development.
39. Notwithstanding these comments with respect, a number of concerns would remain with respect to the design detail of the landscaped elements.
- The central park provides an opportunity for tree planting with species attaining large ultimate sizes, substantial longevity and with biological diversity, that are appropriate to the alkaline calcareous conditions. A centrally located specimen beech tree and group plantings of beech on the road-side, as well as individual small-leaf limes dotted around the park would be a more appropriate design for the central park.

- The species selections for the built areas include cultivars exclusively (inherently clonal stock without biological diversity); and of these there are just four types. *Carpinus betulus* 'Frans Fontaine' is overly used and can become a broad tree in maturity. More diversity could be introduced to the species palette for the urban areas without losing unity of a coherent landscape design. At least some species types should be employed to provide genetic diversity (avoiding *Fraxinus excelsior* due to *Chalara fraxinea*).
- The design of the green corridor along the western boundary now allows views, from the proposed site, to the greenbelt land to the west by mixing groups of tall native trees within a belt of lower growing native shrubs. The buffer of this size is unlikely to support the mixed aims of providing landscape screening/softening of a negative visual feature (the A4074) with conservation grassland, wildlife pond, tree and shrub planting and wildflowers. Therefore the boundary treatment for this buffer would need to be revisited. It may be better served by employing a native hedgerow mixture (with small groups of native trees as proposed) subject to any issues with the need to provide the conservation grassland.
- The proposed green corridor/ buffer zone along the along the southern boundary is also reduced significantly in its depth. The southern boundary requires more robust landscape planting than hedge planting to screen and separate the development from the Mental Healthcare Trust site and to support a wildlife corridor. Ideally there should be sufficient space to allow for native shrubs to reach full heights and spreads along the boundary, with an adequate residual space for the other landscape features.

40. The amended landscaping proposals would be acceptable in principle, having regards to the basic principles at outline stage and the comments of the design review panel. However it is clear that the proposed planting within the scheme requires further development in order to take on board the comments above, and also those made in relation to biodiversity issues in the section below. As such officers suggest that the landscaping strategy and plans put forward within this reserved matters application are excluded at this stage and further details are sought by condition.

## Ecology

41. The outline application imposed a condition which requires details of the wildlife and biodiversity enhancements to be incorporated into the scheme to be submitted before development commences. This would include providing details of the habitat compensation measures, together with their future management and timetable for implementation. This condition will need to be complied with irrespective of this reserved matters application.

42. The application has submitted an amended document 'Reserved Matters and Schemes pursuant to condition 17' and cover letter (Feb 2016) by SLR which outlines the applicant's approach to landscaping enhancements, wildlife and biodiversity compensation and offsetting as well as implementation. This has been submitted to support the landscaping proposals for the site, and contrary to the heading of the document is not seeking discharge of the biodiversity condition imposed on the outline planning permission, the details of which will be finalised

at a later date, including biodiversity the compensation when the discharge of the condition is sought.

43. With respect to the landscaping proposals for the site, the depth of the buffer along the southern boundary has been reduced in size. This has resulted in a very limited wildlife corridor along this boundary with the landscape plan showing that the landscape belt discontinues altogether towards the eastern corner of the site. This would have an impact on the ability of species to commute and as such the revised landscaping proposals should ensure that appropriate planting is provided along this boundary. The landscape management plan required by condition 9 of the outline permission should also include details of how all landscaped areas within the site are to be managed and the 'aftercare periods' for all landscaping.
44. The Ecological Survey and Evaluation Report (September 2012) submitted with the outline application made recommendations for the following biodiversity mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures:
- Creation of species rich grasslands in the site's boundary habitats, principally along the eastern and southern edges of the site and within the public open space;
  - Providing bio-diverse habitat within the SUDS scheme;
  - Managing and reinforcing the site's boundary hedge;
  - Assisting in the management of habitat at Littlemore Railway Cutting SLINC;
  - Taking precaution to avoid damaging active bird nests (which may include ground nesting birds) through management of habitat and timing of works;
  - Maintaining a dark corridor along the south-eastern and northern boundaries of the site for nocturnal species such as bats through control of lighting.
45. Firstly with regards to the creation of species rich grassland in the sites boundaries, the report has identified that it is not possible to mitigate for the loss of grassland habitat within the site because the ground investigation has identified a lack of calcareous soils in the part of the area where calcareous grassland has been proposed. Therefore the scheme now proposes compensation for the loss of this grassland in the form of management of adjacent off-site habitats to increase their biodiversity value. This would include seeking the agreement of the landowner of the adjacent SLINC land to deliver the biodiversity compensation within the Ecological Appraisal.
46. Despite this recommendation the applicant has not yet reached an agreement from the adjoining landowner to achieve this, and therefore it cannot be considered as an appropriate mitigation measure as part of condition 17 at this stage. Furthermore the Ecological Appraisal presents an estimation of the biodiversity loss as a result of the development utilising Defra's biodiversity offsetting approach. However officers consider that the value of the development has been overestimated. As the applicant is pursuing this approach, it is essential that we have agreement on the level of units that must be offset. The condition could not be discharged on the basis of the information that has been submitted at this stage and further discussions are required to determine the true biodiversity value of the site.



47. The 'Reserved Matters and Schemes pursuant to condition 17' by SLR also sets out the proposed mitigation measures for the potential impacts upon badgers, breeding birds, and reptiles. These include further monitoring of a badger sett to the north of the site and if it is found to be active, a disturbance licence from Natural England sought in advance of works, and adequate protection provided during the construction phase of the development. All site clearance will be carried out outside the breeding season for birds and there will be a watching brief for any reptiles found on site. A 3m wooded buffer to the SSSI will be provided. The Oxford City Council Ecologist has recommended that in order to ensure the objectives set out within this document are achieved, then conditions should be imposed to the reserved matters application seeking permission for the lighting scheme for the development, the details of the bat and bird boxes for the development and an updated badger survey and mitigation plan to be submitted before development commences.

### **Archaeology**

48. An archaeological field evaluation report by Thames Valley Archaeological Services (2013) was submitted with the outline application. The evaluation confirmed the presence of an Iron Age 'banjo' enclosure, previously suggested by geophysical survey. A ditch of medieval date, a possible Roman cremation burial, a single struck flint and small quantities of Roman, Saxon and medieval pottery were also recovered elsewhere on the site. The banjo enclosure is the only one of its kind recorded in the local authority area and is the easternmost recorded example of a likely subgroup of such enclosures on the Thames gravels which have been interpreted as outlying examples of more tightly defined cluster of banjo enclosures recorded in the Cotswolds. Other such clusters are recorded on the Berkshire Downs and in Hampshire and Wiltshire. The enclosure is likely to be related to stock management, its location perhaps influenced by the presence of Calcareous grassland. The enclosure is an asset of local and regional interest.

49. A condition was imposed on the outline application requiring a scheme of archaeological mitigation involving the preservation in situ of the Iron Age Banjo enclosure and mitigation of the full engineering impact of the development. The central open space has been positioned above the enclosure, and the amended scheme has removed the proposed electric substation. The banjo enclosure is to be preserved in-situ and there would be opportunities for the landscaping treatment of the central open space to reflect the banjo enclosure that lies below ground. This could be secured by condition. A further condition should also be attached to require a detailed method statement for the extent and design of all groundwork within the Iron Age Banjo enclosure.

### **Flood Risk and Drainage**

50. A Flood Risk Assessment has been submitted for the reserved matters application. The site is located within Flood Zone 1 which is considered an area where there is a low probability of flooding. A drainage strategy has also been prepared in accordance with Condition 15 of the outline permission. This would include a sustainable urban drainage scheme to discharge surface water run-off

to the ground through the use of infiltration techniques. The scheme will employ a combination of rear garden soakaways, porous paving, and swales to facilitate the discharge of surface water to the underlying soil strata.

51. The Oxfordshire County Council Drainage Authority had initially raised concerns that the drainage strategy showed two sections of the estate roads as tarmac with a soakage trench under a permeable sub-base which the gullies discharged too. This would have raised maintenance issues and therefore the scheme has been amended to include porous paving. As such the Drainage Authority are satisfied with the proposed drainage strategy for the development.

## **Sustainability**

52. Oxford Core Strategy Policy CS9 has a commitment to optimising energy efficiency through a series of measures including the utilisation of technologies that achieve zero carbon developments. The Sites and Housing Plan Policy HP11 then goes on to state that a development of this size will need to include at least 20% of its total energy needs from on-site renewables or low carbon technologies.

53. A Natural Resource Impact Analysis and Energy Statement have been submitted with the application in accordance with Condition 14 of the outline permission. The NRIA scores 7/11 which exceeds the minimum score of 6. The Energy statement sets out that the housing will be designed and constructed to reduce energy demand through the building fabric and orientated to maximise solar gain and natural ventilation. The housing will exceed current building regulations with respect to insulation, and will include efficient lighting and water management. The use of renewable technologies has been considered with Flue Gas Heat Recovery units which to recover heat exhausted by gas-fired boilers, and photovoltaic tiles considered the most appropriate technologies to apply to the development. In terms of construction all materials will be locally sourced and a Site Waste Management Plan developed to reduce carbon impacts. The Energy Statement has confirmed how these methods will deliver the 20% of the total energy needs.

54. Although photovoltaics are proposed for the scheme, the statement has indicated that they would not be used on all properties but there does appear to be scope to include this on more properties than shown on the plan, given the orientation of the plot. It is also important to ensure that the panels are appropriately integrated into the design of the buildings at an early stage, and this is especially important when applied to the apartment buildings. A condition should be imposed seeking further details of this aspect of the proposal.

## **Community Infrastructure Levy**

55. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a standard charge on new development. The purpose of the levy is to help fund the provision of infrastructure to support the growth of the city, for example transport improvements, additional school places and new or improved sports and leisure facilities.

56. Having regards to the overall scale of the development, the scheme would be liable for a CIL charge of £1,376,266

### **Other Matters**

57. Contaminated Land: A Ground Investigation Report has been submitted with the application. The report concludes that no elevated levels of contaminants were encountered during the site investigation for the proposed end use and therefore the site does not require any remedial action to be taken. Further, only a small amount of made ground was found on site, and therefore was not deemed a risk for ground gas. Groundwater was only found in one borehole, and although samples were not taken, the lack of elevated soil contaminants and low occurrence of groundwater under the site poses minimal risk to groundwater.

58. Having regards to the conclusions of the report, officers are satisfied that site is suitable for use and therefore suggest that the terms of Condition 18 of the outline planning permission which requested further surveys to identify if there was any land contamination to be submitted have been met. Officers would recommend that a condition be attached requiring a watching brief for any unexpected contamination during the course of the redevelopment.

59. Noise: The outline planning permission includes condition 19 that requires details of the noise attenuation measures for the development to be submitted and approved before development commences. Having reviewed the original noise report (1570.11/1) alongside the detailed layout now proposed, officers have recommended that further conditions be imposed to ensure that all residential units are designed to comply with the internal ambient noise values in BS8233:14. This should include ensuring that the applicable rooms are capable of meeting these levels when the windows are open, but where windows need to be closed then the details of acoustic ventilation to ensure adequate fresh air supply. In addition to this, given the adjacent rail line, then a condition should also be imposed to assess the impact of ground born vibration on the properties and proposed mitigation.

60. Network Rail: Network Rail has objected to the application as it has not included information with respect to the effect of the development on the railway cutting. This information has been prepared by the applicant and has been forwarded to Network Rail for consideration. However, officers would advise members that this is a matter for the applicant to resolve in order to ensure that they can implement the permission and not a material reason for the committee to withhold permission.

### **Conclusion:**

61. The proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of the relevant policies of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026, Sites and Housing Plan 2011-2026, and Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016 and therefore officer's recommendation is to recommend approval for the reserved matters application subject to conditions.

**Human Rights Act 1998**

Officers have considered the Human Rights Act 1998 in reaching a recommendation to grant planning permission for the reserved matters, subject to conditions. Officers have considered the potential interference with the rights of the owners/occupiers of surrounding properties under Article 8 and/or Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Act and consider that it is proportionate.

Officers have also considered the interference with the human rights of the applicant under Article 8 and/or Article 1 of the First Protocol caused by imposing conditions. Officers consider that the conditions are necessary to protect the rights and freedoms of others and to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest. The interference is therefore justifiable and proportionate.

**Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998**

Officers have considered, with due regard, the likely effect of the proposal on the need to reduce crime and disorder as part of the determination of this application, in accordance with section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. In reaching a recommendation to grant planning permission for the reserved matters, subject to conditions, officers consider that the proposal will not undermine crime prevention or the promotion of community safety.

**Contact Officer:** Andrew Murdoch

**Extension:** 2228

**Date:** 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2016