

East Area Planning Committee

4th December 2013

Application Number: 12/02848/OUT

Decision Due by: 30th January 2013

Proposal: Outline application (fixing access) for up to 140 residential units together with 258 car parking spaces, 356 cycle parking spaces, landscaping and open space. (Additional Information) (Amended access arrangement)

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

Ward: Littlemore

Agent: Kemp & Kemp

Applicant: The Donnington Hospital Trust

Recommendation:

The East Area Planning Committee is recommended to resolve to grant outline planning permission, subject to the satisfactory completion of an accompanying legal agreement and to delegate to the Head of City Development the issuing of the Notice of Permission upon its completion.

Reasons for Approval

- 1 The proposed development is submitted in outline form with only the means of access fixed, and matters such as landscape, scale, appearance, and layout reserved for a later date. The proposed development would make an efficient use of a site which has been allocated for housing as part of the Councils five-year housing supply in order to provide much needed good quality affordable and market housing while at the same time establishing a balanced and mixed community within the Littlemore Neighbourhood Area. The application has demonstrated that it would not have an adverse impact in highway safety terms and could provide sufficient off-street cycle and car parking. Furthermore given the constrained nature of the site the proposed access arrangements would be the most appropriate in terms of enabling better links to shops, services, and public transport for modes of transport other than the private car and to ensure that the site is not entirely segregated from the local area. The outline application contains sufficient supporting information to demonstrate that it 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 and

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 the reserved matters applications and appropriate measures secured by condition 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

To include the following:

- 1 Reserved Matters within time limit
- 2 Commencement 5/2 years detailed approval
- 4 Approved Plans and Documents
- 5 Reserved Matters Applications
- 6 Scheme of enabling infrastructure works
- 7 Phasing of development
- 8 Materials
- 9 Landscaping and Public Realm Plan
- 10 Landscape Implementation
- 11 Tree Protection Plan
- 12 Landscape Management Plan
- 13 The provision of rail crossing area
- 14 Lifetime Homes Standards
- 15 Car Parking Standards
- 16 Cycle Parking Standards
- 17 Sustainability and Energy Strategy
- 18 Site Wide Surface Water Drainage
- 19 Foul Water Drainage Scheme
- 20 Archaeology - Preservation of Banjo enclosure
- 21 Biodiversity enhancements - Habitat creation / Grassland mitigation
- 22 Ground Contamination and Remediation
- 23 Details of all external lighting
- 24 Noise attenuation
- 25 Protection of the SSSI and SLINC through construction phase
- 26 Secure by Design Principles
- 27 Construction Environment Management Plan
- 28 Highways: Travel Plan

29	Details of access roads
30	Removal of PD Rights
31	Public Art

Legal Agreement:

A legal agreement will be required with the outline planning permission to secure the following:

Affordable housing

- A minimum of 0.5 hectares (or approximately 25 dwellings) should be developed for key worker housing which could be provided as market housing or affordable housing. If the key worker housing is provided as affordable housing, as defined in the glossary, it will contribute towards the general provision of 50% affordable housing on the site.
- A minimum of 50% affordable units (80% social rent / 20% intermediate housing) as defined by the Sites and Housing Plan and AHPOSPD
- The mix of dwelling sizes within those tenures to be Social Rent – 1 bed (0-10%), 2 bed (15-25%), 3 Bed (35-45%), 4 bed (10-20%) and Intermediate Housing - 1 bed (0-10%), 2 bed (15-15%), 3 Bed (0-10%), 4 bed (0%) in accordance with the Sites and Housing Plan and AHPOSPD
- The minimum floor space for the on-site affordable homes within the proposed development to accord with the Sites and Housing Plan and the AHPOSPD
- The phasing and distribution of the affordable housing
- The arrangements for the transfer of the affordable housing to an affordable housing provider [or the management of the affordable housing (if no RSL involved)]

Highway Mitigation Measures

- The development is not commenced until the S278 agreement for highway works has been secured

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

MP1 - Model Policy
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 North 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: The Local Highways Authority comments have evolved over the period of the application although they have maintained an objection

throughout this process. The principal concern is that the site is isolated and not accessible on foot. The proposed footway and cycle links to the proposal is still not considered sufficiently attractive and sustainable to encourage end occupiers of this development on a regular basis to access local facilities and services including schools by other means than that of a private car. It is considered that the applicant has not successfully investigated all potential routes into the site to improve this relationship.

The provision of a signalised junction would not have a detrimental impact upon the Heyford Hill Roundabout. The junction would need to have full-sized bus stop laybys to enable use by the X39/40 bus service. There would also need to be an extension of the 50mph speed limit to encompass the new junction and approaches. The pedestrian crossing over the junction and all associated paths should be designed for cycle use but the route on the east side of the A4074 is very narrow. It is recognised that safety audits have been carried out for the junction and all associated footpaths and laybys which have not raised serious safety concerns.

The Transport Statement identifies that the peak hour traffic generation would be between 80 and 90 trips in the peak hour which would have a marginal impact on the road network. The level of parking (258 spaces for 140 dwellings) would be acceptable.

- Drainage Authority: The proposed drainage strategy as outlined in the Flood Risk Assessment is acceptable in principle. However as part of a full application drainage design and construction details supported by ground investigation and infiltration testing results are to be submitted for checking and approval. Details are required for checking and approval of any new surface water drainage system or changes to the existing drainage system where the new access off the A4074 into the site is proposed. No increase in surface water run-off is permitted to enter onto or into the existing highway and highway drainage system without prior determination that the existing system has capacity.

Environment Agency Thames Region:

- The site is located within Flood Zone 1
- A Flood Risk Assessment has been submitted in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF.
- In order for the development to be acceptable in flood risk terms the following points in the standing advice should be considered
- Any surface water should not increase flood risk to the development or third parties. A Sustainable Drainage Scheme should be employed to attenuate to at least pre-development run off rates or where possible achieve a betterment in surface water runoff regime
- An allowance for climate change needs to be incorporated into the drainage scheme which means allowing an extra amount for peak rainfall
- The residual risk of flooding needs to be addressed should any drainage features fail or if they are subjected to an extreme flood event

Thames Water Utilities Limited

- Thames water has identified an inability of the existing waste water infrastructure

to accommodate the needs of this application. A condition should be imposed requiring a drainage strategy should permission be granted.

- An informative should be added which advises the developer of the minimum water pressures for the scheme.

Natural England:

- The scale and nature of proposal would not have an adverse impact upon the SSSI provided it is carried out in accordance with the details submitted in the application.
- The Local Planning Authority should consider the potential impacts from the proposal upon local sites (biodiversity and geodiversity); local landscape character; and local or national biodiversity priority habitats and species
- The applicant may wish to provide opportunities to incorporate features into the design which are benefit to wildlife.

Highways Agency South East

- No objection

Network Rail

- No objection in principle
- Network Rail does not agree with the statement in the transport assessment that those procedural and legal difficulties with crossing live railway lines prohibit the delivery of a crossing via the northern boundary of the site. The provision may not be financially viable for a scheme of this size, but this is a matter for the developer to demonstrate and would be subject to the necessary legal agreement, final technical engineering approval with Network Rail being achieved.

Third Parties

Letters have been received from the following addresses. Their comments are summarised below

- 80 St Georges Manor; 1, 47 Mandlebrote Drive

Comment:

- No objection to the general idea of building more houses on the site, but a number of key issues have not been addressed in the planning documentation.
- The proposed transport access is grossly inadequate for such a large development.
- The north-west access path will leave pedestrians / cyclists in a tricky spot on a busy roundabout. Their only option being to turn into Sainsbury's and into the west side of Littlemore. The roundabout is lethal for cyclists and pedestrians.
- The links to Sandford and Littlemore need to be improved
- The A4074 is a busy road and the proposed slip road system will be dangerous.
- The open space on the site seems minimal given the number of houses. There should be more green space as there is very few areas of green space within walking distance.
- The noise from the A4074 will be significant for residents and the buffer zone is not that big in size. Are there plans for a tree barrier to screen the development from road noise. The houses should be set back further from the road.
- Is there a cycle storage facility

- The transport statement pretends that the site is well located, when in actual fact it is not and it is incorrect to state that the rest of the town is within walking distance is incorrect.
- The left in left out arrangement will put pressure on the surrounding roads.
- There is not any proper pedestrian access for the development
- There is no new public transport provision as part of the plan the nearest bus stop in Littlemore is at least 10mins walk.
- The site will be cut off from all amenities apart from the supermarket.
- The current access arrangements will increase traffic along the Sandford Road which is already busy. This traffic will put pedestrians and patients of the hospital and children from the school at risk during the morning rush hour.
- The proposal should have proper access to the A4074 with a junction that enables a right and left turn. It would not increase road safety risks and would be more convenient to residents of the proposed development

Community Consultation

A Statement of Community Involvement has accompanied the application. It sets out that pre-application discussions were held with the Council prior to submission and a public exhibition held for the local community.

The public exhibition was held on the 22nd November 2012 and was attended by 10 local residents and representatives of the Hospital Trust. The statement indicates that few concerns were raised during the exhibition with most members of the public please to see the site redeveloped for residential purposes.

Officers Assessment:

Background to Proposals

1. The planning application relates to 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 (**site plan: Appendix 1**).
2. The site lies adjacent to Oxford's 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. The application is seeking 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.
4. The application is made in outline form with only the proposed access arrangements fixed at this stage. The proposed access arrangements have been amended since initially submitted in order to improve accessibility to the site. All other matters such as appearance, landscaping, layout, and scale of the development are to be reserved for a later date if the outline permission is

granted.

5. Officers consider that the principle determining issues in this case to be as follows
 - Principle of Development
 - Residential Development
 - Site Layout and Built Form
 - Highways, Access, and Parking
 - Archaeology
 - Landscaping
 - Biodiversity
 - Flood Risk and Drainage
 - Sustainability
 - Community Infrastructure Levy
 - Other Matters

Principle of Development

6. The National Planning Policy Framework encourages the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed provided it is not of high environmental value. Policy CS2 of the Oxford Core Strategy supports this aim and makes clear that the development of greenfield sites will only be allowed where they are specifically allocated for that use within the Local Development Framework or required to maintain a five-year rolling housing-land supply in accordance with Oxford Core Strategy Policy CS22.
7. The site would not constitute previously developed land under the definition within the National Planning Policy Framework. However, it has been specifically allocated for residential development within the Sites and Housing Plan as part of the Councils five-year supply of housing and to meet the overall housing contributions set out within Policy CS22 of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026.
8. Sites and Housing Plan Policy SP25 states that planning permission will be granted for the residential development within the site, and sets out the following criteria that would need to be provided within any proposal.
 - A minimum of 0.5 hectares (or approximately 25 dwellings) should be developed for key worker housing which could be provided as market housing or affordable housing. If the key worker housing is provided as affordable housing, as defined in the glossary, it will contribute towards the general provision of 50% affordable housing on the site.
 - Planning permission will not be granted for any other uses
 - Pedestrian and cycle access from the site to nearby local facilities in Littlemore should be improved to ensure that the site is not segregated from surrounding neighbourhoods.
 - Opportunities should be explored to create a new access across the railway. Improvements should be made to access to public transport. The key worker housing should have good pedestrian and cycle access to Littlemore Mental Health Centre (SP29)

- A buffer zone should be provided during the construction period to avoid disturbance to the nearby Littlemore Railway Cutting SSSI.
9. The way in which the outline application has responded to these points will be discussed in more detail throughout this report. However the site's allocation under Policy SP25 of the Sites and Housing Plan establishes the general principle for providing residential development on this site, and accords with the aims of Policies CS2 and CS22 of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026.

Residential Development

10. 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. The BoDSPD would class this as a 'strategic site' because it would exceed 25 residential units.
11. The application is seeking permission for 140 units, which the illustrative site plan indicates would be made up of the following dwelling types - 1 beds (16%), 2 beds (30%), 3 beds (47.5%), and 4 beds (6.5%). This would be an appropriate mix of units for a residential development of this size and would satisfy the aims of Core Strategy Policy CS23 and the BoDSPD.
12. The Oxford Core Strategy 2026 recognises that the provision of affordable homes is a key priority for the Council in order to deliver a wide choice of quality homes to address the needs of local people and to create sustainable, inclusive mixed use communities. The Sites and Housing Plan makes clear in Policy HP3 that development sites with a capacity for 10 or more dwellings must provide 50% affordable homes on site. It goes on to state that a minimum of 80% of these homes must be social rented accommodation, with the remaining intermediate housing. The Affordable Housing and Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (AHPOSPD) specifies the preferred mix of dwelling sizes for the social rented and intermediate housing within this on site provision.
13. The planning statement makes clear that the scheme will provide 0.5ha or approximately 25 dwellings as key worker housing and will seek to provide 50% affordable housing (70 units) as required by Policy HP3 at a mix to be agreed with the Council. The affordable housing provision would need to be secured by a legal agreement which agrees the proportion, tenure mix, and dwelling sizes within those tenures under the above-mentioned policy requirements. This would need to specify the following
- A minimum of 0.5 hectares (or approximately 25 dwellings) should be developed for key worker housing which could be provided as market housing or affordable housing. If the key worker housing is provided as affordable housing, as defined in the glossary, it will contribute towards the general provision of 50% affordable housing on the site.
 - A minimum of 50% affordable units (80% social rent / 20% intermediate housing) as defined by the Sites and Housing Plan and AHPOSPD

- The mix of dwelling sizes within those tenures to be Social Rent – 1 bed (0-10%), 2 bed (15-25%), 3 Bed (35-45%), 4 bed (10-20%) and Intermediate Housing - 1 bed (0-10%), 2 bed (15-15%), 3 Bed (0-10%), 4 bed (0%) in accordance with the Sites and Housing Plan and AHPOSPD
- The minimum floor space for the on-site affordable homes within the proposed development to accord with the Sites and Housing Plan and the AHPOSPD
- The phasing and distribution of the affordable housing
- The arrangements for the transfer of the affordable housing to an affordable housing provider [or the management of the affordable housing (if no RSL involved)]

14. The Sites and Housing Plan sets out the required standards for residential accommodation. 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. Policies HP12, HP13, and HP14 then set the indoor and outdoor space requirements for dwellings. This is an outline application which has sought to reserve the layout of the development for a later stage, and so details of the internal layouts for the proposed dwellings within the scheme are not included. The planning statement recognises that any reserved matters application will need to ensure that the dwellings satisfy the relevant housing policies of the Sites and Housing Plan.

Site Layout and Built Forms.

15. The outline application seeks to reserve all matters relating to the appearance, landscaping, layout, and scale of the development for a later date. Nevertheless, the application is accompanied by an indicative masterplan and design and access statement which sets out how the development is anticipated to be laid out through the reserved matters application.

16. The application site is an area of open land on the outskirts of the city and is separated from the closest residential areas by the adjacent hospital and Sainsbury's superstore. This means that there are limited contextual cues for the development to respond to within the design. The site allocation policy does acknowledge the proximity of the site to the Green Belt and that any development should attempt to enhance its landscape character.

17. Layout: The illustrative masterplan has shown a residential development at an appropriate density of 46.6 dwellings per hectare. The dwellings consist of semi-detached and terraced properties with a small number of apartment buildings that are generally laid out around cul-de-sacs accessed from the main thoroughfare which leads from the A4074. The layout demonstrates that a good public / private realm relationship could be achieved, with active frontages onto public spaces and although the scheme includes cul-de-sacs the streets are generally linked by footways and open space. The dwellings will all have private rear gardens which are either back to back or enclosed by boundary walls. The development will have landscape buffer zones to the A4074 and along the boundary with the hospital in order to maintain the green character of the site and its relationship with the green belt. There would also be a central area of public open space

which provides a green core to the development.

18. It would be imperative for any layout proposed at reserved matters stage to follow good urban design principles in order to help establish a safe and secure environment. The main concern officers have with respect to the layout relates to the housing in the north-western corner where the frontages of the terraces face onto the landscape buffer to the A4074 but rear gardens and parking areas face onto the main public realm. This would lead to the backs of these properties becoming their fronts, which is contrary to basic urban design principles as it does not encourage the active frontages and passive surveillance which is exhibited throughout other parts of the scheme. Similarly, the road layout in the northern section has a large cul-de-sac which could potentially be opened up to provide perimeter blocks that then improves access throughout this part of the development. These points will certainly need to be designed out in the reserved matters application as officers will require the applicant to demonstrate how the layout is informed by basic urban design principles. It would also be important to ensure that the scheme follows Secured By Design principles as promoted by Thames Valley Police Crime Prevention team, particularly in view of its proximity to the Hospital site.
19. Scale of Development: The design and access statement assumes the buildings to have a residential scale of two-storeys which would be an appropriate for the site and thereby a suitable parameter for the outline permission. The statement suggests that there may be potential for 2.5 and 3 storey buildings within certain areas of the site. This may be the case, however, officers would expect any reserved matters application to include a character assessment for the development which justifies any increase in scale beyond this two-storey parameter and identifies the appropriate locations for these larger scale buildings within the scheme.
20. Appearance: The dwellings are to have a contemporary appearance while using traditional materials such as brick, stone, and render 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 however, officers would expect any reserved matters applications to include a rationale behind the chosen palette of materials.
21. Officers consider that the illustrative masterplan has demonstrated that a residential development of the proposed density could be accommodated within the plot and designed in a manner that could follow basic urban design principles and establish a clear sense of place for the development. Any reserved matters applications would need to demonstrate that 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 & Parking

22. The site allocation policy recognises that the site has inherent constraints which could leave any residential development segregated from the wider residential suburb. The policy makes clear that it is essential for any scheme to improve accessibility through considering the following:
- The provision of pedestrian and cycle access from the site to nearby local facilities in Littlemore
 - The provision of pedestrian and cycle access from the Key Worker Housing to Littlemore Mental Health Centre
 - Opportunities to create a new access across the railway
 - Opportunities to improve access to public transport
23. The outline application seeks to fix the access arrangements at this stage in the process in order to provide a base for the development of the reserved matters applications. A Transport Statement has been included with the application which sets out the general strategy for improving access to the site in order to meet the aims of the policy. This strategy has been amended through the application process following discussions between the applicant, officers and other agencies in order to ensure that all options were investigated.
24. Context: The application site is located to the south of the A4074 which is a dual carriageway that forms a local strategic route between Oxford, Wallingford, and Reading. This road connects to the Heyford Hill Roundabout to the north which provides links to Oxford's ring road and Sainsbury's superstore. The site is bordered to the north by a railway line which separates the site from Sainsbury's and the residential area of Littlemore beyond. To the south-east lies Littlemore Hospital which separates the site from Sandford Lane beyond.
25. Traffic Generation: The Transport Statement has forecasted that the residential development would generate between 80 and 90 trips (total in plus out) in the peak hours. The distribution of traffic onto the road network has been estimated using the journey to work data in the 2001 census. The statement concludes that the additional traffic falls within the daily variation of traffic flows on the existing network and would not have a significant impact on the wider network. The Local Highways Authority has raised no objection to the traffic generation modelling within the Transport Statement.
26. Access: The Transport Assessment Addendum sets out the following site access strategy for the development in order to integrate the site into the surrounding community:
- 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.

27. The Transport Assessment has provided capacity studies and modelling data to assess the impact of the signalised junction upon the A4074 and the Heyford Hill Roundabout, along with independent road safety audits for the proposed bus laybys and pedestrian/cycle links. These have confirmed that there would be no material impact on the existing road network from the signalised junction and that there would be no significant safety implications to the proposed routes. The Local Highways Authority has accepted the findings of the junction modelling and the road safety audits. In doing so they have made clear that full-sized bus stop laybys will be required to accommodate the buses which operate on this route, and that the 50mph speed limit would be needed to encompass the new junction and approaches. The pedestrian crossings and associated new paths will need to be designed for cycle use and recognise that the route on the eastern side of the A4074 is very narrow. In their view though there would be no serious safety implications with these routes provided the recommendations in the road safety audits are followed during the Section 278 works which will be required to provide these highway improvements.
28. The Local Highways Authority's main concern with the proposal relates to the accessibility and sustainability of the site. In their view the pedestrian and cycle links to and from the proposal are not sufficiently attractive and sustainable to encourage end occupiers of this development to access local facilities and services including schools by modes of transport other than the private car. The footway link across the field to Heyford Hill Lane would be a long and counter intuitive detour that would not resolve the segregation issues for the site because of the length of the route and distance to facilities. They consider that the best option to integrate the development into the area would be to provide a route through the Littlemore Hospital grounds along the A4074. This would require negotiations with the Mental Health Trust, but it would give direct access to Sandford Road and provide a more direct route to Littlemore and its schools and services/shops other than Sainsbury's and to additional bus services.
29. Notwithstanding these objections, the applicant considers that their site access strategy meets the aims of the site allocation policy in terms of ensuring that the site is not segregated from the wider area. In developing their strategy they have discarded the originally proposed left-in left-out access onto the A4074 because it did not provide the same benefits of improving connectivity for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport links than the signalised junction. The applicant owns the open space on the south-eastern side of the A4074 and so is able to provide a footway link through to Heyford Hill Lane without having to negotiate with other landowners and this is a route currently used by residents in Sandford on an informal basis to presumably access Sainsbury's. The applicant considered providing a bridge across the A4074 to link through to Heyford Hill Lane but the land levels on both sides made the costs prohibitive which placed further emphasis on the benefits of the signalised junction. Similarly the provision of a footpath from the north-western corner of the site to Sainsbury's would enable access to the wider pedestrian and cycleway network beyond and reinforces another informal footpath which is apparent in this area. It is fair to say that the applicant has not discussed the possibility of providing a pedestrian link through the Littlemore Hospital site to Sandford Road with the Mental Health

Trust. However, this is primarily because there would be security issues with such an arrangement. Therefore they consider that they have exhausted all of the available options to comply with the aims of the policy.

30. Having reviewed the strategy, officers fully appreciate the Local Highway Authority's comments with regards to the sites accessibility and sustainability issues. However, the site has been allocated as part of the Councils five-year supply of housing in order to meet the overall housing contributions set out within Policy CS22 of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026. The site constraints are not ideal in terms of integrating the development into the wider area, but at the same time there is a shortage of land to provide housing within the city and all these factors would have been material in deciding whether to allocate the site within the Sites and Housing Plan. In many respects peripheral sites such as this will always be less sustainable in terms of access to local facilities and services than more centrally located sites. In this case the applicant has made best attempts to provide links that will encourage access to the wider area, and it is difficult to envisage what more could be done other than relying on agreements with third party landowners to enable other links to the surrounding area. The site access strategy would be deliverable and would have additional benefits to the wider area in terms of providing more formal access arrangements across existing well-used desire lines. Therefore on balance officers take the view that the proposed access arrangements would ensure that the site is not completely segregated from the surrounding area and enable the site to provide much needed affordable and market housing within the city. Although these access arrangements would be fixed in the event that outline permission is granted, this would not preclude the applicant from investigating the potential to provide an additional link through the Hospital site with the Trust. As such an informative could be added to encourage the applicant to discuss this matter with the Trust and ascertain whether such a link would be feasible and achievable.
31. Public Transport: The site allocation policy also requires the provision of public transport opportunities for any development to be examined. Having regards to the site constraints and the general issues with respect to improving access to local facilities, officers consider that the provision of a bus link to the site would be critical. The proposed off-site highway works show two bus laybys either side of the signalised junction and road safety audits have been provided which demonstrate that they would not create any serious highway safety issues. The Local Highways Authority has recommended that bus stops would require full-sized off carriageway laybys and that the construction details would need to be agreed through a S278 agreement. However they have not raised any objection to the principal of providing the proposed laybys.
32. The current operator of the Thames Travel X39/X40 service that runs from Wallingford to Oxford City Centre has confirmed that they would be happy for the service to stop immediately outside the site to pick up and drop off passengers subject to the safety of the bus stop configuration. Therefore the proposed access strategy would provide suitable public transport links to the site to further improve its accessibility.
33. Rail Crossing: The site allocation policy also suggests that the potential for the

creation of a new access across the railway into Littlemore should be explored. The applicant has discussed the matter with Network Rail, but their technical requirements would have made a bridge link prohibitively expensive, and they also required a payment from the uplift in value of the site as a result of providing this link. In addition to Network Rail, the applicant would also need to gain access across adjacent third party land on the opposite side of the railway line in order to link into the surrounding area. Therefore the provision of a link over the railway line is not feasible at the present time. That said officers recognise that the Railway Lane site on the opposite side of the railway is also an allocated site for residential use. The site allocation policy (SP48) states that the design of any development on this site should allow for pedestrian and cycle access to be created from this land into the application site. As residential developments on both sites would be liable for a Community Infrastructure Levy charge, then it may be that such monies could be pooled to fund for a bridge link between the sites in future years. In order to future proof such an option, officers would recommend a condition be attached to any outline permission requiring the site layout put forward in any reserved matters application to make allowance for a potential link across the railway line to one of the adjoining sites at a later stage whether the Railway Lane site or Sainsbury's.

34. The Oxford Local Plan also identifies the railway line as a potential route for an Eastern Arc Rapid Transit system [EART] and Policy TR8 states that permission will not be granted for development that would prejudice the implementation of this EART. The Sites and Housing Plan states in the implementation section that opportunities should be taken to improve linkages to a future EART station or include space for an EART transport interchange or station if required. This may require a parcel of land to be identified at the Reserved Matters stage and kept free of built development until such time as it may be required.
35. Car Parking: The required parking standards for residential development are set out in Policy HP16 of the Sites and Housing Plan. The supporting text to this policy makes clear that large scale housing development in areas such as this should provide allocated and unallocated parking spaces. Allocated spaces should generally have at least 1 allocated space per dwelling, although in certain areas it may be necessary to achieve the maximum standards which is 1 parking space for a 1 bed house or flat and 2 spaces per 2-4 bed house or flat. Unallocated provision should be totalled according to the number and mix of dwellings. These spaces must be available to be shared between all residents and visitors in the development.
36. The planning statement accompanying the application states that a total of 258 parking spaces would be provided within the development. As this is an outline application, this would be an indicative figure, and the actual numbers of spaces per unit will come forward in the reserved matters application. The planning statement suggests that this level of parking would accord with Policy HP16, although no breakdown of allocated and unallocated spaces have been provided.
37. A condition should be attached to any outline permission which requires full details of all parking provision to be included at reserved matters stage and that

this should be provided at a level which reflects the parking standards set out in Policy HP16 in terms of defining allocated and unallocated spaces.

38. Cycle Parking: The required cycle parking standards for residential development are set out in Policy HP15 of the Sites and Housing Plan. The minimum provision would be at least 2 spaces for houses and flats up to 2 bedrooms, and 3 spaces for houses and flats up to 3 bedrooms. All cycle storage must be secure, under cover and preferably enclosed and provide level unobstructed external access to the street.
39. The planning statement states that a total of 356 spaces would be provided which would accord with these minimum standards. Again a condition should be attached which requires details of the cycle parking provision to be provided at reserved matters stage and that this should reflect the requirements of Policy HP15.
40. In summary officers recognise the difficulties with access to the site, but consider that the proposal has responded to the requirements of Sites and Housing Plan Policy SP25 in terms of ensuring that it is not entirely segregated from the wider area and improving accessibility for future occupants in accordance with Oxford Core Strategy Policy CS14 which encourages city wide movement. The site is in a peripheral location which has inherent constraints in terms of providing a fully accessible site with better links to shops and services in Littlemore. The application has made best attempts to respond to these constraints and as far as possible encourage cycling, walking and public transport as an alternative to the use of the private car. The signalised junction would enable access into the site from the surrounding road network for vehicles without having an adverse impact upon the adjoining road junctions and also enable the provision of bus laybys to increase public transport opportunities. The proposed pedestrian and cycle links would help integrate the site into the wider area and formalise existing desire lines in the surrounding area for the benefit of the occupants of the application site and also the wider residential community. While it is not ideal that a more direct link into Littlemore could not be provided through either a bridge link across the railway or a pedestrian / cycle link through the Littlemore Hospital site, it is considered that the potential exists to provide such routes through the reserved matters stage or beyond in future years. Therefore on balance officers would raise no objection on highways, access and parking grounds to the outline proposals as now submitted.

Archaeology

41. An archaeological field evaluation report by Thames Valley Archaeological Services (2013) has been submitted for this site. 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. The enclosure ditch and related pits survive as features cut into the natural sand and limestone geology, located approximately 400mm below the current ground surface.

42. 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 and the indicative development layout submitted presents the opportunity of preserving the bulk of this asset within open space.
43. A condition should therefore be attached to secure the substantive preservation of this asset within the layout proposed in any reserved matters application, noting the requirements for additional archaeological recording on surrounding archaeological features that may be impacted by development.

Landscaping

44. A Landscape Statement has been included with the application which sets out the masterplan key objectives for landscaping and open space provision within the site. The total green space provision on the site equates to 25.6% of land area. About 8% of the site is proposed as formal open space including play areas, green verges with seating and a larger, so-called 'village park'. Informal open space equates to 17.5% and involves a proposed woodland belt along the south-western boundary and a habitat belt combined with attenuation ponds along the south-eastern boundary. Further green infrastructure landscaping is proposed in the form of street tree planting along the central site access road and in parking areas.
45. Officers consider that the landscape strategy has identified appropriate objectives and the proposals generally meet these objectives. However, the following recommendations would be made for the reserved matters stage. The proposed woodland buffer along the south-western boundary is unlikely to mitigate traffic noise because vegetation performs poorly in this regard but does provide visual screening. The aim of providing residences with adequate screening from the A4074 is laudable but the proposals risk resulting in the development being excessively enclosed by dense belts of tall tree cover on all sides which conflicts with the aim of creating an attractive environment in harmony with the surrounding green belt. Whilst officers recognise that screening from the main road is vital, consideration should be given in the planting design to the possibilities for preserving some views of the countryside beyond the road to the south (at least from facing properties) the balance might be achieved by restricting dense planting to woodland shrub mixtures and medium height-attaining trees. Taller growing woodland trees could be planted more sparingly at close to final spacing density. The provision for wildlife connectivity would be improved by creating a stronger link at the north-eastern tip of the site, between the hedgerow/ proposed habitat belt along the south-eastern boundary and the railway embankment vegetation beyond the northern boundary.

46. The remnant hedgerow along the south-eastern boundary within the site is seriously blighted by Dutch elm disease. Detailed landscape proposals will need to address the situation and involve reinforcement planting with alternative native species. A green-field site provides an opportunity to plan for the successful integration of street tree planting and green verges into the development. Officers would recommend that corridors for utility services that are accessible and segregated from verge and street tree root zones should be designed at the reserved matters stage. Identified zones for undisturbed tree root growth should be protected from the outset and throughout the construction phase using a combination of fenced construction exclusion zones and temporary ground protection materials as appropriate.
47. The outline application seeks to reserve landscaping for a later stage, and so officers would expect these comments to be taken into consideration in accordance with Oxford Local Plan Policies CS18, CP1, CP11 and NE16.

Biodiversity

48. The NPPF makes clear that new developments should minimise the impacts upon biodiversity and take the opportunity to incorporate biodiversity enhancements. There is also legislation and European directives to avoid harm to biodiversity interests and to have regard to conserving habitats. At a local level Oxford Core Strategy Policy CS12 states that
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) must be protected from any development that would have an adverse impact.
 - No development should have an impact upon a site that is designated as having local importance for nature conservation or as a wildlife corridor; and
 - Species and habitats of importance for biodiversity are protected from harm, unless the harm can be properly mitigated
49. An Ecological Survey and Evaluation Report has been submitted with the application. The site is in close proximity to the Littlemore Railway Cutting which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Site of Local Importance to Nature Conservation (SLINC). Natural England has stated that the proposal would not have an adverse impact upon the SSSI or SLINC. However, they have indicated that the Local Planning Authority would need to satisfy itself that the proposal would not have an impact upon local biodiversity, landscape character or national biodiversity priority habitats.
50. The Phase I Habitat Survey identified that the site is formed principally from species rich, neutral, semi-improved grassland with some calcareous grassland in the north-west corner. It also concluded that no protected species were expected to inhabit the site but that the development would result in the loss of habitat for a range of common invertebrates, birds and small mammals. The survey recommends mitigation measures to preserve the biodiversity interest of this grassland, through creating some of the sites species rich grassland in the sites boundary habitats primarily along the south-eastern and south-western edges of the site and within the public open space.

51. The Landscape Statement has been amended to provide clarity on the extent of the calcareous grassland to be provided within the development to compensate for its loss. It makes clear that this will be located on the western boundary of the site with the tree planting and ground preparation of this area designed to maximise its potential for the habitat to develop. This would also provide a link to the adjacent SSSI and SLINC. The linear park will also include this grassland and be managed to optimise its biodiversity value. There will also be a new area of calcareous grassland located in the form of a linear strip to the north, directly adjacent to the SSSI in order to ensure its connectivity with this adjacent site of importance. Officers consider that this indicative layout is acceptable and would represent adequate biodiversity compensation for this type of priority habitat with the caveat that on the western boundary a continuous belt of trees would not be provided but groups with longer grass cut on a three year rotation to provide invertebrate habitat including over wintering.
52. A Great Crested Newt & Reptile Survey Report has also accompanied the application. The report did not identify the presence of any such amphibians or reptiles but recommends that any site clearance is carried out in a careful and controlled manner which remains vigilant for their presence and for the provision of a reptile-proof fence around the site boundary to prevent any translocation from adjacent areas during the construction phase. These recommendations should be conditioned.
53. Having regards to the details of these reports officers are satisfied that the full mitigation measures proposed within the revised landscape masterplan and the Ecological Surveys would be sufficient to ensure that the biodiversity of the locality can be maintained and represents adequate compensation for the loss of any priority habitat within the site in accordance with the aims of Oxford Core Strategy Policy CS11.

Flood Risk and Drainage.

54. A Flood Risk Assessment has been submitted with the application. The site is located within Flood Zone 1 which is considered an area where there is a low probability of flooding.
55. The Oxfordshire County Council Drainage Authority has indicated that the proposed drainage strategy as outlined in the Flood Risk Assessment is acceptable in principle. However as part of any reserved matters application drainage design and construction details supported by ground investigation and infiltration testing results will need to be submitted. These details will also need to include the drainage for the new access onto the A4074.
56. The Environment Agency has made clear that the surface water drainage scheme should utilise Sustainable Drainage Systems and should be developed so as not to increase flood risk to the development or third parties. There should also be allowance for climate change within any design. These matters will need to be addressed during the detailed design stage of the development through the reserved matters application.

Sustainability

57. 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.
58. A full energy statement which demonstrates how the development would achieve the 20% target would only be possible at the reserved matters stage in this process through the detailed design of the development. The Design and Access Statement acknowledges this, but has included an initial Natural Resource Impact Analysis which identifies some fundamental aims which they anticipate will be incorporated into the scheme in order to achieve this. These would be through using renewable technologies where appropriate; improving energy efficiency through the layout, design and construction of the development; achieving Code 3 or 4 energy performance levels or the prevailing building regulations for all dwellings at the time of construction; achieving a 'very good' grade under the 'Building for Life' criteria; enhancing natural features on site to improve their ecological value and the use of sustainable urban drainage techniques; limiting waste production during construction through a waste management scheme; and incorporating secure by design principles into the scheme.

Community Infrastructure Levy / S106 Agreements

59. The Council introduced a Community Infrastructure Levy on the 21st October 2013 in order to fund the provision of infrastructure needed to support development. As a result the S106 contributions previously sought through the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning document have been scaled back to cover the provision of affordable housing and site specific measures to mitigate the impact of the development.
60. The Oxfordshire County Council originally requested financial contributions towards Education, Libraries, Waste, Highways and Transport, and Museums in accordance with the previous Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document. However, these matters are now covered through the Community Infrastructure Levy. The proposed development would be liable for a CIL charge, but this would not come into effect until the reserved matters application.
61. In accordance with the recently adopted Affordable Housing and Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document, a S106 agreement will be required for the provision of the affordable housing in the terms set out in the report. The application is proposing direct highway mitigation through the provision of the off-site highway works. These will be provided at their expense and would be secured through a S278 agreement with the Local Highways Authority. As the proposal is reliant on the provision of these works then the S106 agreement should require the S278 works to be carried out before development commences.

Other Matters

62. Noise: A Noise Assessment has been included with the application. The survey identified that the primary source of noise at the development site is road traffic from the A4074 and the nearby Eastern bypass (A423/A4142). The railway branch line to the north is only used for occasional freight transport to the BMW factory. The survey recommends that appropriate noise mitigation measures could be incorporated at detailed design stage through the reserve matters application to make this suitable for residential development. The recommendations in the report should be secured by condition.
63. Contaminated Land: It would be necessary for a phased risk assessment to be carried out before any development commences. The site is adjacent to a dismantled railway and part of the site has been used for mineral extraction. The pit that existed may have been filled in with contaminated materials. A residential use on the site would be sensitive to potential contamination and therefore it is important that the developer demonstrates that the site is suitable for use. As a minimum this would require a desk study, with a documented site walkover to ensure that there are no sources of contamination on or near to the site in order to demonstrate its suitability for the proposed use. This should be secured by condition.
64. Public Art: The Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (POSPD) identifies that contributions would be required from the scheme towards the provision of public art. This could be provided by way of a condition or contribution. Although public art has not been specifically detailed in the proposed scheme, this could be secured by condition.
65. Air Quality: Oxford Local Plan Policy CP23 states that permission will not be granted for development that would have a net adverse impact upon the air quality in the Air Quality Management area, or in other areas where air quality objectives are unlikely to be met. The principle of a residential development on the site has been established through the site allocation policy. A condition should be attached to require the applicant to undertake a scheme of air quality monitoring upon completion of set phases of the development.
66. Construction: In the event that outline permission is granted for the proposed development, it should be subject to a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) which would address issues such as working hours, signage, site hoardings, site security measures, piling methods, earthworks, routing arrangements, arrival and departure times for construction vehicles, control of dust and emissions, vibration, materials storage, waste management, and complies with the British Standard BS5228: Noise and Vibration. This should be secured by condition with the principal contractors and plot developers also registering with the considerate contractor's scheme.

Conclusion:

67. 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 approve the development in principle, but defer the application for the completion of a legal agreement as set out above.

Human Rights Act 1998

Officers have considered the Human Rights Act 1998 in reaching a recommendation to grant outline planning permission, 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 outline planning permission, officers consider that the proposal will not undermine crime prevention or the promotion of community safety.

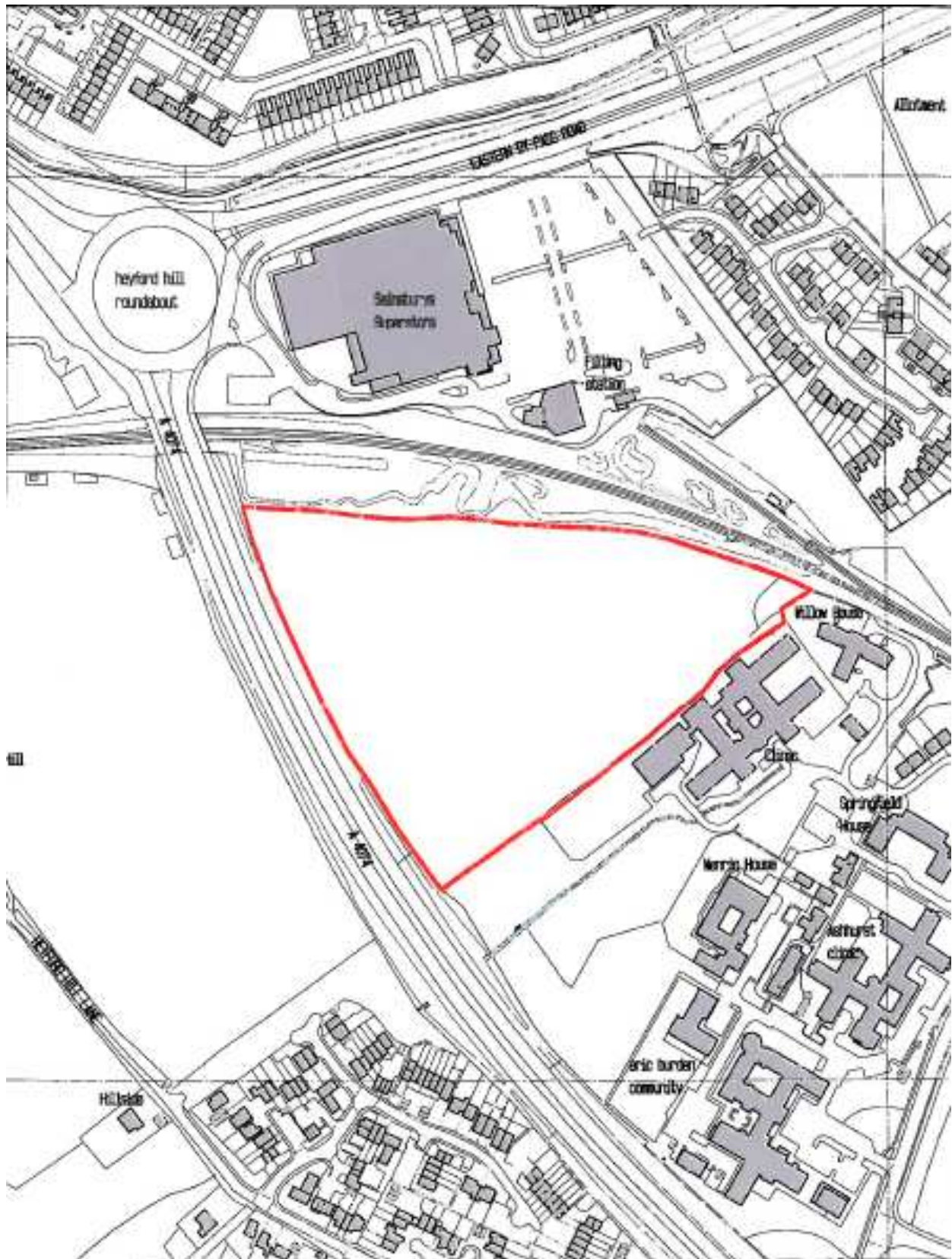
Contact Officer: Andrew Murdoch

Extension: 2228

Date: 23rd October 2013

APPENDIX 1

SITE PLAN



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