



## Wantage Town Council

### Council Offices - Portway - Wantage - Oxon OX12 9BX

4 January 2013

Review Officer  
Vale of White Horse Review  
The Local Government Boundary Commission for England  
Layden House  
76-86 Turnmill Street  
London EC1M 5LG

Dear Sir

#### **Vale of White Horse Review**

The Town Council has considered the recommendations relating to Wantage and Grove and requests modifications to the proposed ward boundaries.

The principle of three, two member wards is supported. The Leader and Chief Executive of the District Council have advised that a review of parish boundaries will follow shortly after the District Council review. Whilst not seeking to pre-empt this review, it makes sense to place District Council boundaries along lines where future parish boundaries are likely to lie.

The District Council in submission of 2018 electorate figures to the Commission has included provision for two developments to occur adjacent to the northern boundary of Wantage. These developments will be directly connected and adjacent to the current Wantage settlement and separated from the existing Grove settlement by open fields. The developments are at Stockham Farm and the western end of Crab Hill and currently would be in Grove parish. The Leader and Chief Executive of the District Council have both acknowledged that it would make sense for the District Council boundaries to be modified, but have not given formal support because they believe it is the Commission's practice to only respond after developments have been completed and occupied. This seems somewhat inconsistent with including these prospective developments in the electorate figures in the first place.

I attach a map detailing the line of the District Council modified boundary proposed by Wantage Town Council. It involves moving the boundary by Stockham Farm northwards to follow a straight line along Downsview Road. As can be seen, this represents a more natural boundary than the current one. This would have the effect of moving the Stockham Farm development from the Grove North Ward to the Wantage and Grove Brook Ward. It also involves moving the boundary to the north of Charlton northwards to follow a line following field edges on a west/east line to the south of the Elm Farm Business Park and marginally north of the eastern end of the Mably Way roundabout. This provides a straight line northern boundary that would contain to the south any development relating to Crab Hill, currently proposed as a Local Plan Strategic Development Site. There are currently no properties or electorate within the areas encompassed by these changes. There is no doubt that future electors, resident in these areas, will have a stronger community attachment to Wantage than Grove and that the developers will promote the sites as being in Wantage.

The District Council in its electorate figures for 2018 has given regard to the above developments. Detailed below is a table that shows figures put forward in your recommendations and the effect that the above modifications would have.

## Commission Proposal

	Ward Name	Cllrs	Electors 2012	Per cllr	% Var	Electors 2018	Per Cllr	% Var
7	Grove North	2	4,357	2,179	-13	5,574	2,787	7
20	Wantage & Grove Brook	2	5,231	2,616	5	5,520	2,760	6
21	Wantage Charlton	2	5,069	2,536	2	5,194	2,597	0

## Town Council Proposal

This involves moving 356 electors in 2018 from Grove North to Wantage & Grove Brook, and 325 electors from Wantage & Grove Brook to Wantage Charlton.

	Ward Name	Cllrs	Electors 2012	Per cllr	% Var	Electors 2018	Per Cllr	% Var
7	Grove North	2	4,357	2,179	-13	5,218	2,609	0
20	Wantage & Grove Brook	2	5,231	2,616	5	5,551	2,775	7
21	Wantage Charlton	2	5,069	2,536	2	5,519	2,759	6

## Conclusion

Whilst it may not have been past practice of the Commission to consider boundary lines where development has not yet occurred, it has been the practice to anticipate parish boundary changes. At the previous review of District Council electoral boundaries in 2000, Mably Grove and Warmans Close were included in the Wantage wards even though they fell within Grove and East Challow parishes. These have now been brought into Wantage parish. Given this past practice, it makes sense to modify the District Council electoral boundary lines now, rather than await the next review in 10 to 15 years' time.

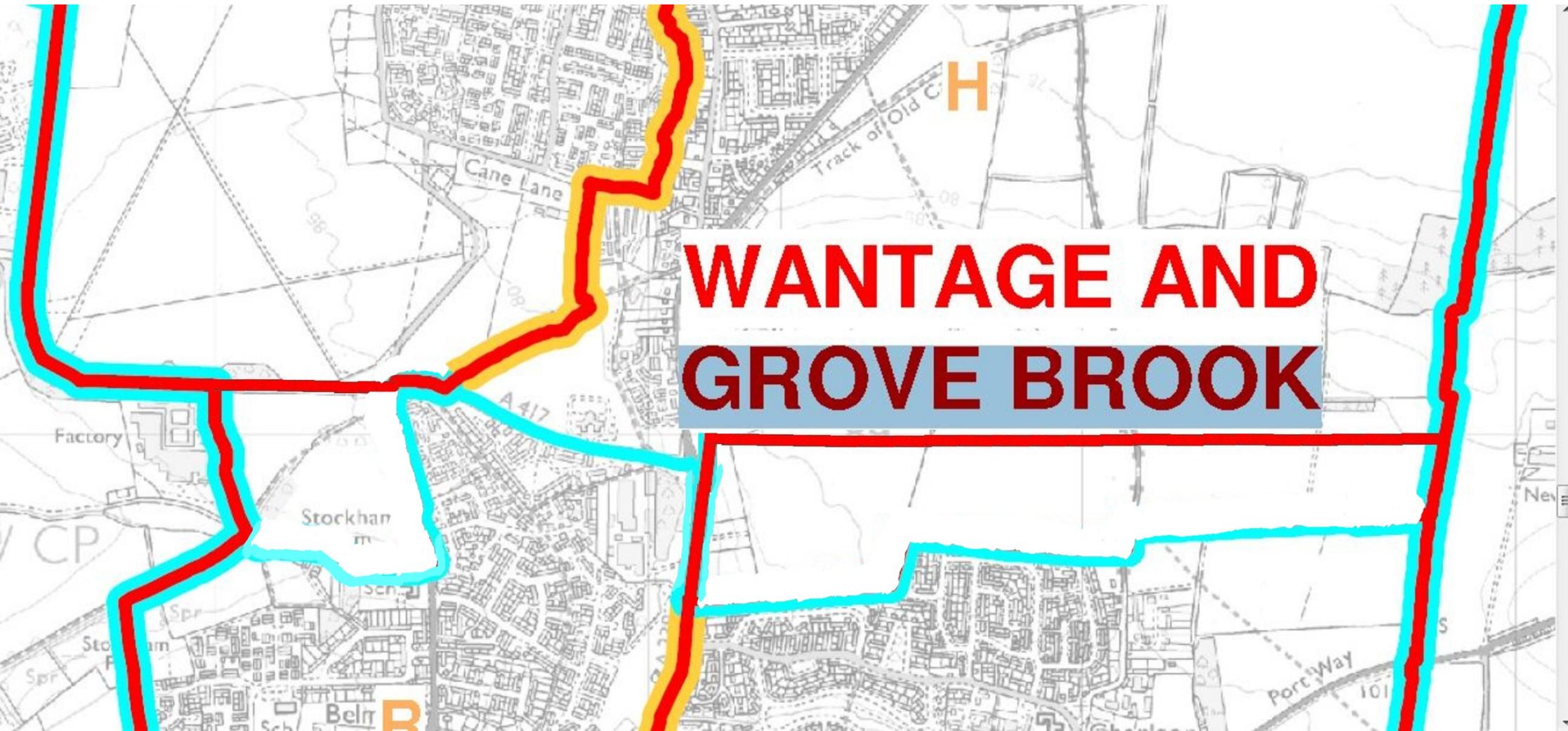
Yours sincerely



WP Falkenau

PS I attach a District Council report relating to Stockham Farm that indicates that this development should proceed within a year of November 2012.

Wantage Town Council proposal regarding District Council Electoral ward boundaries - January 2013  
(same colour key reference as used by Commission)



<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	<a href="#">P12/V1240/FUL</a>
<b>APPLICATION TYPE</b>	FULL
<b>REGISTERED</b>	12 June 2012
<b>PARISH</b>	GROVE
<b>WARD MEMBER(S)</b>	John Amys ; Sue Marchant ; Kate Precious
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Dandara Ltd, Johnshaven Developments Ltd & Maconie Property
<b>SITE</b>	Land at Stockham Farm Denchworth Road Wantage OX12 9BE
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Residential development to provide 200 new homes across private and affordable tenures, with public open space and play space, the protection of the existing route of the Wilts and Berks Canal and the provision of land to allow for a realigned route, on-site car and cycle parking and improvements to site access and egress
<b>AMENDMENTS</b>	12 October 2012
<b>GRID REFERENCE</b>	439273/188877
<b>OFFICER</b>	David Rothery

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The 9.04 ha site lies to the west of Denchworth Road, on the border between Grove and Wantage parishes. The adjoining land to the north is marked by the route of the former Wilts and Berks Canal (part of the canal is still in situ). Beyond the canal is a field in agricultural use which is bounded to the north by the road to the Grove Technology Park, and to the west of this is the Crown Packaging factory. To the west of the main body of the site are other agricultural fields and Stockham Farm itself lies to the south of the site. To the east and south are residential estates and a SEN school site within the built-up area of Wantage.
- 1.2 The site is generally level with some outcrops of small tree copses and mature trees along the field boundaries which provide good screening of the site from external views, particularly along Denchworth Road. The site lies in the Lowland Vale and is currently in agricultural use.
- 1.3 Local facilities to this site lie within 1.2km in Wantage town centre, which is within about a 15 minute walk. Denchworth Road is also the route of a regular bus service between Wantage, Grove and locations further a field.
- 1.4 The application comes to committee because Grove Parish Council objects and letters of objection have been received from many local residents.
- 1.5 A location plan is **attached** at appendix 1.

## 2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 This is a full application for residential development of the site for 200 dwellings. The development would take vehicular access from Denchworth Road to the east and would include roads, footpaths and associated parking areas, landscaping, amenity space, open space, access to the Wilts and Berks canal route, and the use of some open land for a swale to store water during periods of heavy and prolonged rainfall. Pedestrian

access would be available to the open space and footpath / cycleway routes to be formed on the site.

2.2 The proposed housing comprises detached, semi-detached, and terraced houses of a traditional mix of single-storey, one-and-a-half storey and two-storey appearance. The proposed mix of dwellings is as follows:

1-bedroom = 12 units (all affordable)  
2-bedroom = 88 units (43 affordable and 45 market)  
3-bedroom = 37 units (20 affordable and 17 market)  
4-bedroom = 63 units ( 5 affordable and 58 market)

The 200 dwellings include a total of 80 affordable housing units (40%). Across the 9.04 ha site the 200 dwelling units would produce a density of 22 dwellings per hectare. A total of 50% of the dwellings are two-bedroom properties or less and 80% of the properties will be 'lifetime homes' compliant.

2.3 The uses across the 9.04 ha site have been indicated as follows:

Usable open space areas & play space	= 1.41ha (1,4151sqm)
Structural planting areas & tree belts	= 0.42 ha (4,169.4sqm)
Amenity space & verges	= 0.84 ha (8,443.4sqm)
Private rear garden areas	= 1.71 ha (1,682.7sqm)
Great crested newt habitat area	= 0.17 ha (1,682.7sqm)
Canal buffer area	= 0.51 ha (5,133.4sqm)
Retained canal area	= 0.33 ha (3,347.7sqm)
Developed area (roads and paved areas)	= 2.9 ha (2,900sqm)
With housing footprints therefore equating to	= 0.75ha ( 750sqm)

Overall, a total of 5.4ha (54,053.6sqm) of 'undeveloped' land is proposed, comprising landscaped amenity and open space areas and private gardens. This indicates that adequate private and public outdoor space will be provided as part of the development.

2.4 The following documents have been submitted in support of the application:

- Planning Statement (May 2012 – Daniel Watney)
- Design and Access Statement (May 2012)
- Landscape and Visual Appraisal (May 2012)
- Breeding Birds Survey (May 2012 – FPCR)
- Transport Assessment (May 2012 – SMA)
- Travel Plan (May 2012 – SMA)
- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy (May 2012 –SMA)
- Archaeology Desk Based Assessment (May 2012 – CgMg)
- Archaeology Geophysical Survey Report (May 2012 – CgMg / OA)
- Archaeological Watching Brief Report (May 2012 – CgMg)
- Affordable Housing Statement (May 2012 – Pioneer)
- Renewable Energy Statement (May 2012 – Blewburton)
- Statement of Community Involvement (May 2012 – PPS)

2.5 The proposal is a large major development and is contrary to the policies of the development plan. The proposal also affects a public right of way. The application has been publicised on this basis.

2.6 The applicants have been in discussion with council officers and others to agree levels of contribution towards off-site services which this proposal (through the increase in population and the activities they generate) would add to the usage of, and to secure

on-site facilities such as affordable housing. The required contributions cover facilities and services such as waste collection, street name plates, public art, education (primary, secondary, sixth-form and SEN), library and museums, waste management, social and healthcare, fire and rescue, highways and transport, police equipment, provision of an alternative canal route and restoration, and local community and recreational facilities.

2.7 Extracts from the application plans are **attached** at appendix 2.

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 **Grove Parish Council** – Objects to the proposed development. A copy of the parish council's comments is **attached** at appendix 3a.

3.2 **Wantage Town Council:**

“A decision on this development should be deferred until the work involved in developing the Local Plan is complete. There are concerns regarding the impact that the development would have on Denchworth Road and other road junctions in the vicinity and the excessive demand on already at full capacity local infrastructure, such as schools and other amenities.”

3.3 **East Challow Parish Council** – Wish to register a major concern at the proposed development. A copy of the parish council's comments is **attached** at appendix 3b.

3.4 **Representations from local residents** – A total of 62 representations had been received at the time of writing this report, 57 objecting to the proposal, and four in support / not objecting. The objections are made on the following grounds:

- Traffic problems with access onto Denchworth Road
- Traffic problems with overspill parking to surrounding streets
- Highway safety issues for pedestrians and cyclists
- Increased pressure on local amenities
- Inappropriate numbers of houses (density) and houses of poor design
- Loss of open fields and impact on wildlife
- Site is subject to flooding with inadequate drainage
- Need to ensure the former canal route is protected

The letters of support considered the site is close to local facilities in Wantage town centre and nearby employment areas, and the proposal would be helpful to the economy of the area.

3.5 Wilts and Berks Canal Trust – Neither support nor oppose the proposal, but wishes to retain future ability to influence the design adjacent to the former canal route subject to satisfactory engineering design approval of the canal route and works. The alternative canal route alignment is affected by the proposed layout and under local plan policy L14 the Trust wishes to see this safeguarded to enable the canal's future recreational potential to be facilitated by this development.

3.6 Wiltshire Swindon & Oxfordshire Canal Partnership – Proposal will interface with the restored canal alignment and is consistent with local plan policy L14, The housing should fully integrate with the canal and where possible assist its restoration.

3.7 Ramblers Association – seeks to protect local footpath routes FP125/1 including the tow path and new canal route alignment.

- 3.8 Architects Panel – Defer for negotiation – no obvious acknowledgement of local context in materials / details. Some dormer treatments unconvincing and small windows give a heavy quality to some elevations. House types respond inadequately to the historic line of the canal. Should respect the setting of the farm complex more.
- 3.9 County Highways – No objection to the design of the layout and the construction details. Further details including drainage specification will need to be approved before works start on site.
- 3.10 Landscape Architect – The visual impact of the scheme was based on the majority of the Denchworth Road vegetation being retained and therefore a substantial amount of vegetation will be required on this boundary. The needs of the site entrance and vision splays result in the removal of the majority of the road side hedgerow. A new hedgerow needs to be established along the Denchworth Road and clear plans of how this area will be treated, including what will happen to the existing ditch. The alignment of the proposed timber post & rail fence along the eastern boundary should not be a straight, it needs to adjust the position of existing blocks of trees, rather than running through the middle.

I am concerned about the proposed mounds on the northern and eastern side of the site. There are no details of how high these mounds are to be and they are proposed under the canopy of existing vegetation which is unacceptable. Apart from the isolated mounds which appear around the site there are no indications that the ground level will be adjusted to take account of any spoil generated. I am happy with the proposed profile through the Open Space Section number A and would not like to see these ground levels altered at a later date.

With regard to the proposed play concepts, I would like to see some formal play equipment for the younger children within proposed play areas.

The fencing and access gates to the Western Open Space/ Newt Area as required by the ecologist is not shown on the plans.

- 3.11 Arboriculturalist – Concern about protection of tree roots and the retention of trees, due to the new junction access arrangements which include the provision of an additional lane alongside part of Denchworth Road.
- 3.12 Ecologist - No objection as the ecological issues have now been resolved. Conditions will need to be imposed to safeguard bats and great crested newts.
- 3.13 Conservation and Design Officer – This site is part of a larger area identified in the Council's Preferred Options Report as one of the least constrained sites on the edge of Wantage and Grove. The existing planting along the Denchworth Road is an important feature of the site. The site plan indicates that a substantial number of these trees will be lost the necessity for this loss needs to be addressed. Previous comments on building design and appearance have been incorporated into the current scheme.
- 3.14 Drainage Engineer - No objection subject to inclusion of conditions for a sustainable drainage scheme, foul water disposal scheme and flood risk assessment compliance.
- 3.15 Housing Services – Satisfied with the affordable housing provision, housing mix, and tenure mix. However, the distribution of affordable housing across the site should be reassessed to provide clusters of no more than 15 units in one area.
- 3.16 Environmental Health – No objections on noise or air pollution grounds.

- 3.17 Land Contamination – The submitted report has identified some marginal levels of soil contamination. A condition to secure detailed remediation scheme is recommended.
- 3.18 Waste Management – Storage areas need to be provided for wheeled bins per plot with collection points clear of parking areas.
- 3.19 Leisure Services – Maintenance of open space areas should be clarified and secured either by adoption by the parish council or through a management company.
- 3.20 Thames Valley Police Liaison Officer – Proposal should seek to comply with the Secured by Design Award (Part Two) for physical security and amended details are required for securing courtyard parking areas.
- 3.21 Environment Agency – Objects due to the impact the proposal will have on protected species – great crested newts that inhabit the area alongside the former canal.
- 3.22 Natural England – Need to adopt standing advice for protected species of bats and great crested newts.
- 3.23 Thames Water - no objection subject to conditions relating to ground water discharge.

#### 4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 None relevant

4.2 On adjoining land within the applicant's control:

P12/V1250/O - Refused October 2012

Outline application for erection of a single storey Class D1 child day care centre, with new vehicle access provided off Denchworth Road, new landscaping, play space, pedestrian connections, on-site car and cycle parking and the protection of the existing route of the Wilts and Berks Canal.

#### 5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

##### **Vale of White Horse Local Plan**

The local plan was adopted in July 2006. The following relevant policies have been considered to be saved by the Secretary of State's decision of 1 July 2009 whilst the Core Strategy is being produced:

- 5.1 Policy GS1 of the adopted local plan provides a general location strategy to concentrate larger scale development within the five main settlements. Smaller scale development in other villages is enabled by policies H11 (larger villages), H12 and H13 (small villages).
- 5.2 Policy GS2 says that outside the built-up areas of settlements new building will not be permitted unless on land identified for development or the proposal is in accordance with other specific policies in the local plan.
- 5.3 Policy DC1 requires new development to be of a high design quality in terms of layout, scale, mass, height, detailing, materials to be used, and its relationship with adjoining buildings.
- 5.4 Policy DC4 requires development on sites of 0.5 ha or more to contribute to public art to significantly contribute to the scheme or the area.

- 5.5 Policy DC6 requires hard and soft landscaping to protect and enhance the visual amenities of the site and surroundings and to maximise nature conservation and wildlife habitat creation.
- 5.6 Policy DC9 seeks to ensure development will not unacceptably harm the amenities of neighbouring properties and the wider environment.
- 5.7 Policy NE9 says that development in the Lowland Vale will not be permitted if it would have an adverse effect on the landscape, particularly on the long and open views within or across the area.
- 5.8 Policy NE4 covers sites of nature conservation importance and the need to protect valued wildlife habitats.
- 5.9 Policy H13 seeks to limit new housing development outside the built-up areas of settlements.
- 5.10 Policy H16 requires about 50% provision of housing to be two-bedroom or less for schemes of more than 10 dwellings, and 10% should meet lifetime homes standards.
- 5.11 Policy H17 requires 40% provision of affordable housing for schemes of more than 15 dwellings.
- 5.12 Policy H23 refers to housing schemes providing open space at 15% of the site area or, alternatively, a financial contribution if in a small village or it is inappropriate to provide open space on site.

#### **Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)**

- 5.13 Residential Design Guide – adopted in December 2009  
Provides guidance on housing design and layout.
- 5.14 Sustainable Design and Construction – December 2009  
Provides advice and guidance in relation to the Code for Sustainable Homes.
- 5.15 Open Space, Sport and Recreation Future Provision – July 2008  
Provides advice for the provision and maintenance requirements for open space areas.
- 5.16 Affordable Housing – July 2006  
Provides further guidance in relation to local plan policy H17.
- 5.17 Planning and Public Art – July 2006  
Sites over 0.5 ha should provide a contribution towards public art installations in line with local plan policy DC4.

#### **Other Policy Documents**

- 5.18 **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** – March 2012  
Paragraphs 14 & 49 – presumption in favour of sustainable development  
Paragraph 34 & 37 – encourage minimised journey length to work, shopping, leisure and education  
Paragraph 47 – five year housing land supply requirement  
Paragraph 50 - create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities  
Paragraphs 57, 60 & 61 – promote local distinctiveness and integrate development into the natural, built and historic environment

Paragraph 99 – flood risk assessment

Paragraph 109 – contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment

Paragraph 111 - encourage the effective use of land by re-using land that has previously been developed (brownfield land)

5.19 **South East Plan (SEP) – May 2009**

The SEP is still an extant policy document, although the government has made clear its intention to revoke it. The Court of Appeal has ruled that the revocation of Regional Spatial Strategies can be a material consideration in certain circumstances with the assessment of weight given to the SEP being a matter for individual decision makers.

The following policies of the SEP reflect those of the local plan:

Policy CC4 – Sustainable design and construction

Policy CC6 – Sustainable communities and character of the environment

Policy H3 – Affordable housing provision

Policy H4 – Type and size of new housing units

Policy H5 – Housing design and density

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

*Policy position*

6.1 Ideally, the potential development of this site should be considered through the local plan process given its overall size, proximity to other adjoining fields that could be considered as part of a larger strategic housing land allocation, and given the existing and potential housing land allocations within the Wantage and Grove area. This planned process would ensure that the necessary combined infrastructure delivery would be sustainable, correctly planned for and managed to ensure that adverse impacts were avoided. However, the submitted planning application needs to be considered on its own merits and subject to necessary infrastructure being secured, there is no policy opposition to the proposal..

6.2 The Stockham Farm site has been considered as a potential site for proposed strategic growth to be allocated in the emerging Vale Local Plan. Whilst the site was not selected as the preferred option in the Preferred Options Document published in 2009, it was recognised that no one of the three sites considered in Wantage and Grove for possible allocation within the emerging Vale Local Plan could be considered significantly more sustainable than the other two.

*National advice*

6.3 At the heart of the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Within the context of the NPPF, planning permission should be granted where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, unless any adverse impacts would so significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposed development when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole (para.14).

6.4 The current lack of a five year supply of housing land in the district is due to the lack of delivery of new housing by developers rather than an under-supply of allocated housing land. This has primarily been caused by delays in progressing some major allocations due to the economic downturn and the delay in bringing forward the council's new local plan. The NPPF makes it clear that the lack of a five year housing land supply requires some flexibility in the consideration of planning applications which do not accord with current local plan policy.

6.5 This approach, by necessity, is time limited (i.e. until the five year housing land supply has been restored) and needs to be aimed at identifying sites suitable to address the housing

land shortfall whilst still meeting relevant sustainability criteria as set out in the NPPF. Specific local plan and NPPF policies for protecting the countryside and areas of landscape, biodiversity, geological, heritage and agricultural value, and those policies promoting good quality design and the provision of a mix of housing, including affordable housing, are still extant and relevant and so need to be attributed appropriate weight when deciding whether to grant planning permission. These policies are not out of date due to the lack of a five year housing land supply and, in some cases, will justify resisting a proposed development.

- 6.6 It is clear the proposed development is contrary to local plan policies GS2 and H11. However, whilst the council does not have a five year housing land supply, policies GS2 and H11 are inconsistent with the NPPF. The proposed development, therefore, needs to be considered on its site specific merits and, in particular, whether it constitutes a sustainable form of development as defined in the NPPF.

*Sustainability credentials*

- 6.7 The Wantage – Grove location of the application site is considered to be sustainable as it is close to the main town centre and the range of services and facilities available within Wantage. On the basis of the assessment put forward by the applicants that the proposal meets the specifications in the NPPF for providing housing in sustainable locations to address the council's current shortfall in the five year housing land supply, it is considered that this site could be a favoured location.

- 6.8 The assessment of the proposal must be balanced, with the desire that the scheme be considered through a strategic sites allocation process, against the consideration at the present time of the submitted scheme. In addition other factors (apart from location) need to be considered before the proposal passes the NPPF tests of sustainability – e.g. drainage, landscape impact, highway safety, etc.

*Cumulative impact considerations*

- 6.9 This site is one of three that have so far been subject to applications made within the Grove parish area and Ward within the last three months to seek to assist in addressing the identified housing shortfall across the district. The other schemes are at Grove Airfield (2,500 dwellings) and land west of Old Station Road (the Monks Farm site for up to 133 dwellings and northern relief road). Both these schemes are on identified land for housing allocation consideration but are yet to be formally considered and therefore have not added to the housing commitment for the area. The current application would take the total of new dwellings seen as acceptable to be provided to 200 dwellings. This level of development is viewed as being possible to be accommodated in the locality (subject to suitable contributions to on-site and off-site infrastructure) without adverse harm to the overall general facilities and service capacity in the Grove – Wantage area.

*Visual Impact - layout, landscape setting*

- 6.10 Paragraph 109 of the NPPF says that “the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment”, and paragraph 111 says that planning decisions “should encourage the effective use of land by re-using land that has previously been developed (brownfield land).”
- 6.11 The site has been used for agricultural or similar low level uses in the past, so it cannot be claimed to represent brownfield land in this regard. The site lies within the countryside and its development for housing is contrary to local plan policies GS2 and H11. However, as indicated above (para. 6.6) this is not a restricting factor given the current housing land shortfall. In these circumstances, other site specific matters need to be considered, in accordance with the NPPF.

- 6.12 The site is relatively level but with a slight slope down towards the south-west, and it appears to be generally unconstrained by previous uses. The proposed layout of the housing area and the accessibility to the plots shown offers a good use of the land in providing a workable and visually connected residential environment, offering a level of surveillance and visual linkage to the open areas and pedestrian routes.
- 6.13 The proposal retains and maintains the existing field boundaries to the north, west and south of the site with additional landscaping of the open areas to be created within the housing layout. Within the landscape areas to the boundary of the site, particularly to the north, there are indications of mounds being formed. Whilst these may add some variety to the landscaped areas, details of these will be needed.
- 6.14 Adequate private and public outdoor space is provided, and the layout relates well to the surrounding open space areas to the west and south of the site. The open space area to the western boundary would be fenced off (details will be required) to ensure this area is maintained as a separate area for the safeguarding of habitat and access corridor for great crested newts that have been identified to inhabit part of the site. These details are acceptable to the council's ecologist.

*Visual Impact – design and appearance*

- 6.15 The proposed housing comprises houses of a traditional mix of designs. External construction and finish materials are red brick, tile hanging, smooth render, timber boarding and reconstituted coursed stone for walls and plain clay tiles, or slate on the roofs. Some finish options include contrasting brick string courses, plinths and projecting courses. Fenestration will be white timber or pvc frames of traditional proportions and rainwater goods will be black.
- 6.16 Good design in layout and building form is a key aspect of sustainable development and the NPPF is explicit in seeking a high quality outcome. The applicant's case is considered to be in line with the advice in the NPPF and on the basis of the proposed site layout, arrangement and relationship with surrounding land and uses, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of the site specific considerations.
- 6.17 The relationship with surrounding land and uses is considered to be acceptable as it provides an efficient and effective use of the site with a layout and scale of development that does not compromise the proposed on-site landscaping or have an adverse impact on the wider landscape setting of the site. On this basis the scheme is considered to be acceptable in terms of the site specific considerations.

*Access and Parking*

- 6.18 Vehicular access would be taken from Denchworth Road. The County Engineer considers the arrangements are acceptable subject to engineering details to be submitted.
- 6.19 The location of the site is close to a range of existing facilities within Wantage and would be accessible by cycle and foot. There would be no reliance to use the car to access the facilities available in the locality.

*Impact on neighbours' residential amenity*

- 6.20 The layout of the proposed development would not have a harmful impact on the residential amenity of adjacent houses in terms of overshadowing, light pollution, over-dominance or loss of privacy because of the lack of any directly adjoining properties (other than Stockham Farm house itself).
- 6.21 Amenity standards within the council's residential design guide have been observed

and the plans have been amended to reduce the impact on the existing adjoining property at Stockham Farm. Waste facilities (recycle bin storage and collection points) throughout the site are acceptable.

- 6.22 The proposed layout is considered to deter crime and provide adequate levels of surveillance over public areas. Further measures to ensure the long-term retention of the screening natural hedgerow boundaries are necessary and can be covered by conditions.

*Drainage and flooding issues*

- 6.23 The site is considered large enough to dispose of surface water without causing surface water run-off to the highway or onto neighbouring land and the proposal seeks to deal with rare heavy surface water run-off by means of a drainage attenuation pond on the south-western side of the site, which doubles as part of the ecological and landscape feature.

*Heritage assets*

- 6.24 The NPPF requires that account should be taken of the desirability to sustain and enhance heritage assets. The proposal has a direct impact on the siting of both the Wilts and Berks Canal route and of Stockham Farm which has been identified by the council's design and conservation officer as being a local heritage asset that needs to be taken into account.

- 6.25 The proposal has sought to address both of these assets by allowing a clear open space separation between these features and the nearest proposed housing and access routes. In addition, visual approaches to these areas have been provided as part of the negotiation of the scheme to make the most of the heritage assets.

*Affordable housing provision*

- 6.26 The applicants have provided the required number of affordable units in line with local plan policy H17. The mix of units and the tenure split is acceptable to the council's housing enabling team. The distribution of affordable units across the site has been the subject of discussion. The provision of clusters of more than 15 houses is not favoured (one group originally had 19 units) and a more diverse spread across the site, to encourage a more mixed and diverse community, is now proposed, although further pepper-potting is feasible.

- 6.27 The applicants, however, consider that pepper-potting alone does not generate a sustainable mixed community, and that their arrangement provides for a layout which, according to NPPF para. 50, "contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities". The suggestion is that the affordable housing is located for ease of management by social landlords and is situated opposite open market housing to enable social cohesion. There would also be a mix of social economic groupings through the introduction of streets within the scheme defined by mixed private and affordable tenures.

*Social Infrastructure*

- 6.28 Concern has been expressed that current social and physical infrastructure within Wantage could not cope with the increase in residents from this proposal. There has also been concern expressed that this proposal should be considered as part of a wider strategic land allocation approach through the local plan process.

- 6.29 However, contributions to offset the impact from the development have been sought, and the applicant has agreed to the principle of addressing these diverse contribution needs through off-site provision to be secured through a legal agreement / obligation.

The policy approach, whilst justified in considering a plan led development framework, has to acknowledge the submission of this scheme which has to be considered on its own planning merits, especially given the circumstances which have prompted its submission, namely the current five year housing land supply shortfall within the district.

**7.0 CONCLUSION**

7.1 The proposal does not accord with the development plan and has been publicised as a departure. However, in the light of the current shortfall in the council's housing land supply, the proposal's location adjoining the built-up area of Wantage with close availability of services and facilities needs to be afforded significant weight.

7.2 The proposal would result in a sustainable development and, therefore, is in accordance with the requirements of the national planning policy framework (NPPF). In addition, the scheme could come on stream quickly as all the necessary criteria are in place for swift development on site which will assist in quickly addressing the current housing land shortfall.

7.3 The proposal will not be harmful to heritage assets, the character of the area, residential amenity or highway safety and, therefore, complies with the NPPF.

**8.0 RECOMMENDATION**

8.1 **It is recommended that the decision to grant planning permission be delegated to head of planning in consultation with the committee chairman subject to:**

- 1. The prior completion of a section 106 agreement within a deadline of three months to cater for on-site affordable housing provision, contributions toward off-site facilities and services including highway works, education improvements, waste management and collection, street names signs, public art, library and museum services, social and health care, fire and rescue, police equipment, canal restoration measures, recreational and community facility improvements;**
- 2. The following conditions, including the requirement to commence development within 12 months of the date of this committee consideration to help address the immediate housing land shortfall:**

- 1 : Commencement ONE YEAR ONLY - from date of planning committee**
- 2 : Planning condition listing the approved drawings**
- 3 : Materials as on plan**
- 4 : Withdraw permitted development rights (Part 1 Class A) - no extension/alteration to certain units specified**
- 5 : Refuse bin storage**
- 6 : LS1 - Landscaping scheme (submission)**
- 7 : LS2 - Landscaping scheme (implement)**
- 8 : RE6 - Boundary walls & fences**
- 9 : Plot curtilage boundaries**
- 10 : Protect and retain hedges during development operations**
- 11 : LS4 - Tree protection (detailed)**
- 12 : HY2 - Access in accordance with specified plan**
- 13 : HY8 car parking spaces**
- 14 : HY12 new estate roads**
- 15 : HY13 estate roads prior to occupation of dwellings**
- 16 : HY20 bicycle parking**

- 17 : Sustainable travel information pack**
- 18 : MC32 - Construction traffic management plan**
- 19 : Flood risk details**
- 20 : MC24 - sustainable drainage details (surface and foul)**
- 21 : Bats and newts**
- 22 : Land contamination**
- 23 : Maintenance of open space areas**
- 24 : RE17 - Slab levels and dwelling heights**
- 25: roof top ariels**

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