

Planning, Highways & Consultations Committee Monday 11 January 2021

Appendix re item 15.1: [P19/V1998/RM](#), Land North of Dunmore Road Abingdon
OX14 1PU

8 November 2019

RESPONSE TO:

P19/V1998/RM – Major - Land North of Dunmore Road, Abingdon, OX14 1PU

Reserved matters application (Appearance, landscaping, layout, scale) - Residential development for erection of 425 dwellings within 3 phases of the North Abingdon Development: Western Parcel Area A & B and Central Parcel Area A. Associated landscaping and infrastructure works together with additional details as required by conditions attached to outline planning permission (Ref: P17/V0050/O)

Thank you for consulting the Town Council in relation to the above application. This is a major development for Abingdon. The reserved application includes a vast amount of information and detail. The Town Council does not have the resource to explore every detail of what is being proposed and therefore has to rely on the District Council, as the local planning authority, to consider these plans very carefully. However, the Council has the following points to make in relation to the application:

1 Use

The current application provides for 425 dwellings with 35% classified as affordable housing. It is noted from the Design and Access Statement (August 2019) that there have been close communications with the District Council to agree the mix and the location of the housing mix and on pages 46 and 47 of the document it shows that the proposed housing mix for the parcels of land accords with the mix as set out in the "Housing Delivery Document". However, the Council is concerned that the application shows a significant reduction in the number of one and two bedroomed homes and a significant increase in homes of three or more bedrooms compared with the percentage required in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) the percentage agreed at the grant of outline planning permission. The figures are as follows:

1-bed: SHMA 53.9%; agreed at outline stage: 5.5%; now proposed 1.5%
2-bed: SHMA 21.7%; agreed at outline stage: 16.3%; now proposed 9.7%
3-bed: SHMA 42.6%; agreed at outline stage: 43.7%; now proposed 47.5%
4-bed: SHMA 29.8%; agreed at outline stage: 34.5%; now proposed 41%

The Council believes that there should be more one- and two-bedroom properties on this development in order to meet the needs of the town in the future and to make the housing provided more affordable. The Council cannot see any justification within the Design & Access Statement as to why this housing mix has changed and consequently **objects** to the application on this

basis.

2 Open Space

It is noted that there is a total of 20.24 acres of open space provided for within the application and that according to the Design & Access Statement “the open space provision principle is straightforward; the amount, type and disposition of the natural amenity green space, natural green space (including acoustic migration areas), outdoor sports and formal play are mandatory.” As mentioned above, this is a detail which the Town Council relies upon the local planning authority to check. Usually there are Section 106 agreements in place in relation to public open space and the Town Council notes that these agreements have not always been fully implemented in the past. It is noted that normally commuted sums, which provide for the ongoing maintenance of such areas, are paid to the District Council once areas are adopted. It is further noted that the practice adopted by different district councils varies; some district councils pass the commuted sum to the parish council subject to them taking on the land, other district councils retain the commuted sum but pass the responsibility for the land to the parish council. The Town Council’s position is that it wishes to see Section 106 agreements fully implemented and the Town Council would not take responsibility for any of the open spaces unless the commuted sum was passed onto the Town Council.

It is noted that the application allows for buffer planting at the site boundary with the A34 and the construction of an earth bund to allow for acoustic screening. It is not clear within the application as to whether this bund follows the full length of the boundary and there is also concern regarding how high and therefore effective the bund is. There appears to be an ambiguity in the plans as to whether the bund is 3 metres high plus a 2-metre fence or whether it is 1 metre high plus a 2-metre fence. The Council is also concerned that if changes were made to the A34 at a future date, which may include its widening, then the bund might be removed and there would then be no acoustic screening.

3 Sustainability

It is noted that in the Design & Access Statement that the site is able to offer a highly sustainable approach and that the development will promote energy efficient construction and use of resources. The Council supports the various features which are listed within the application in this regard. With the climate emergency which faces us it is important that the development is sustainable both in terms of its design and also the technologies employed within the development. It is therefore recommended that all buildings be constructed to a passive building design, built to the highest environmental standards. The Council would ask that additional sustainability features be included including (but not restricted to) solar panels on buildings, electrical charging points for vehicles (both private charging points for houses where possible and also public charging points), ground source heat pumps, harvesting of rain water and consideration being given to building below ground, with cellars and

underground parking. The Council believes that this is the time to review the plans to ensure that building work meets the latest and highest standards of environmental sustainability. In this regard the Council would make reference to the Goldsmith Street Project in Norwich as an example of best practice which has also recently received RIBA awards for sustainability <https://www.architecture.com/awards-and-competitions-landing-page/awards/riba-regional-awards/riba-east-award-winners/2019/goldsmith-street>

4 Access

The Council is pleased to note that according to the Design & Access Statement “special buildings and spaces are created to add interest and variety within the street scene, calm traffic at key roads and deliver a 20-mph design speed throughout the development”. The Council believes that 20mph speed limits are essential as they improve road safety; reduce the carbon footprint; create a healthier environment through improved air quality and reduced noise pollution; and encourage more physical activity such as walking and cycling.

It is also noted that the Design & Access Statement states that “the proposed movement hierarchy allows pedestrians and cyclists to be afforded simple routes and high levels of connectivity so that sustainable movement is promoted throughout the site”. The Council welcomes the cycle storage facilities that are an integral part of the design. However, the Council, through its Traffic Advisory Committee, has previously expressed concerns regarding junction design in relation to cycling at new developments. At a recent meeting of that Committee concern was expressed that at the recent Drayton Road development there was no consideration made for cyclists and with a lack of road markings cyclists at junctions on Abingdon cycle routes generally. The provision for cyclists at the Drayton Road development was adversely compared with the layout and marking of a junction in Marston Road, Oxford. The Council would ask that careful consideration be given to cycle routes on the development, how these are properly marked, particularly at junctions and how they are maintained.

5 Ongoing concerns in relation to the development

The Council recognises that this application is a reserved matters application and that the outline planning permission for the development has previously been approved. Nonetheless, the Council wishes to emphasise that its original concerns not only remain but are now more acute.

The Council’s overriding concern for this and all similar developments is that infrastructure needs to be delivered prior to housing units being occupied. The Council regrets there appears to be substantial delay in relation to the A34 Lodge Hill Diamond Interchange works and remains of the opinion that until these works are done then the houses should not be occupied. If the houses are occupied before the works are done then the development will significantly

add to local traffic problems.

The Council also remains concerned regarding the other impacts of the development which it does not believe to be properly mitigated. In order to avoid repetition of previous points made by the Council, I attach copies of our previous comments and objections to this development which are not objections to developments per se but strongly make the point that infrastructure must be put in place ahead of housing.

On page 124 of the Design & Access Statement there is a section "Building for Life: Facilities and Services." At part 2A it is stated "this application does not provide new facilities however as part of the wider proposal, at the heart of the development a 5.8ha Local Centre provides the primary gateway and arrival point, creating a hub of activity and range of mixed use and community facilities for both new and existing residential neighbourhoods within the locality".

The Council strongly believes that facilities should be put into place at an early stage of the development, and is concerned that the development has commenced with a phase consisting solely of houses. The Council would therefore ask that a timescale for these facilities be provided.

The document goes on to state: "*Proposed uses comprise:*

- *2.2 ha Primary school*
- *1.8ha mixed-use comprising all or any of the following:*
 - Retirement flats – 50 units*
- *80 bed care home*
- *Public house / restaurant*
- *Community hub*
- *Children's nursery*
- *Doctor's surgery*
- *Retail food*
- *Retail non-food*
- *Commercial / service*
- *Around 22 flats above / beside retail / commercial / service / community uses."*

The Council wishes to receive clarification on the above proposed uses. There is an ambiguity arising from the phrase "all or any of the following" and the lack of a bullet point against "retirement flats." This means that it is not clear as to whether all or some of the above facilities will be provided. Previously the Council has expressed concern regarding the pressure being placed on GP surgeries and the Council's belief that this development requires a new GP surgery. Whilst a GP surgery is listed at part 2A, on the next page (part 2B), there is another list of what will be in the local centre and no mention is made of the GP Surgery; is this now being provided for or not?

With regard to the community hub, part 2b states that “Part of the community hub could provide a dedicated space for the local church group” but there is no further detail. Would the community hub take the form of, for example, a community centre for the local residents?

The Council believes that details on the facilities and infrastructure should be given at this stage, a stage at which is proposed that 425 dwellings are constructed.

Summary position of the Town Council in relation this application

Whilst the Council welcomes some of the aspects of this development, it objects to the application for the reasons set out above.