

Notes on a meeting of the Infrastructure Development Planning (IDP) Team held at Hayesfield, Hailey on Thursday 6th September 2018

Present: Graham Knaggs (chair), Sue Ayres, Ann Evans, Caryl Lansley, Judith Knaggs, Martyn Clark,
Apologies: Dawn Franklin, Monica Hester, Giles Doland, Calvert McGibbon

WODC Local Plan

The Inspector has finally reported on WODC's Local Plan 2031 and, after all of the modifications were incorporated, has found it to be sound. WODC will hold a special council meeting on Sept 27th when the plan will be adopted.

This plan does of course include the North Witney development (all within Hailey parish) of 1,400 houses.

Hailey Neighbourhood Plan

On advice from WODC this was being held back until the Inspector reported on the WODC Local Plan. Now that this has occurred the Neighbourhood Plan has been formally submitted to WODC. They will hold a six week consultation on the plan, the Inspector will then examine it and, if all goes well, a referendum of all eligible voters will be held.

North Witney Infrastructure Development Plan

The following document was tabled and discussed. It is intended to form the basis of a submission to WODC ahead of their infrastructure negotiations with the North Witney developer. The committee then went through the whole of this document – primarily as an education exercise for those not familiar with the contents of the Local Plan or the Neighbourhood Plan. Comments arising from this exercise appear in red.

Action All: Please read carefully and identify any errors or omissions

North Witney SDA – 1,400 homes

WODC Policy WIT2 sets out the policy applicable to North Witney. This WODC policy and supporting text are attached to this document as Appendices A and B. This is the largest proposed development associated with Witney and, on its own, will increase the current population of Witney by about 3,500 (i.e. a 12.5% increase).

The text of this policy clearly identifies the following infrastructure elements:

- **1,400 homes** with a balanced and appropriate mix of accommodation including affordable housing (target 40%);
- Development to be by an agreed **masterplan**
- The **West End Link** road / bridge (from the roundabout at the junction of Hailey Road and West End across the river Windrush) to the traffic light on the Burford Road junction with Woodford Way)
- The **Northern Distributor Road** – route identified on map (Figure 1 below)
- Provision of **appropriate public transport** (services and infrastructure) serving the site – i.e. bus services
- Provision of a comprehensive **network for pedestrians and cyclists** with good connectivity provided to adjoining areas including the town centre and other key destinations;
- Provision of a **new primary school** on-site (2FE including nursery – 60 pupils per year) on a 2.2ha site
- Provision of appropriate **landscaping** measures to mitigate the potential impact of development including a positive landscape framework to create a new town edge;
- Retention of important **on-site hedgerows and plantation woodland**;
- **Biodiversity enhancements** including arrangements for future maintenance;
- Provision of appropriate **green infrastructure** (e.g. playing fields) including **allotments**;
- Appropriate measures to **mitigate flood risk**

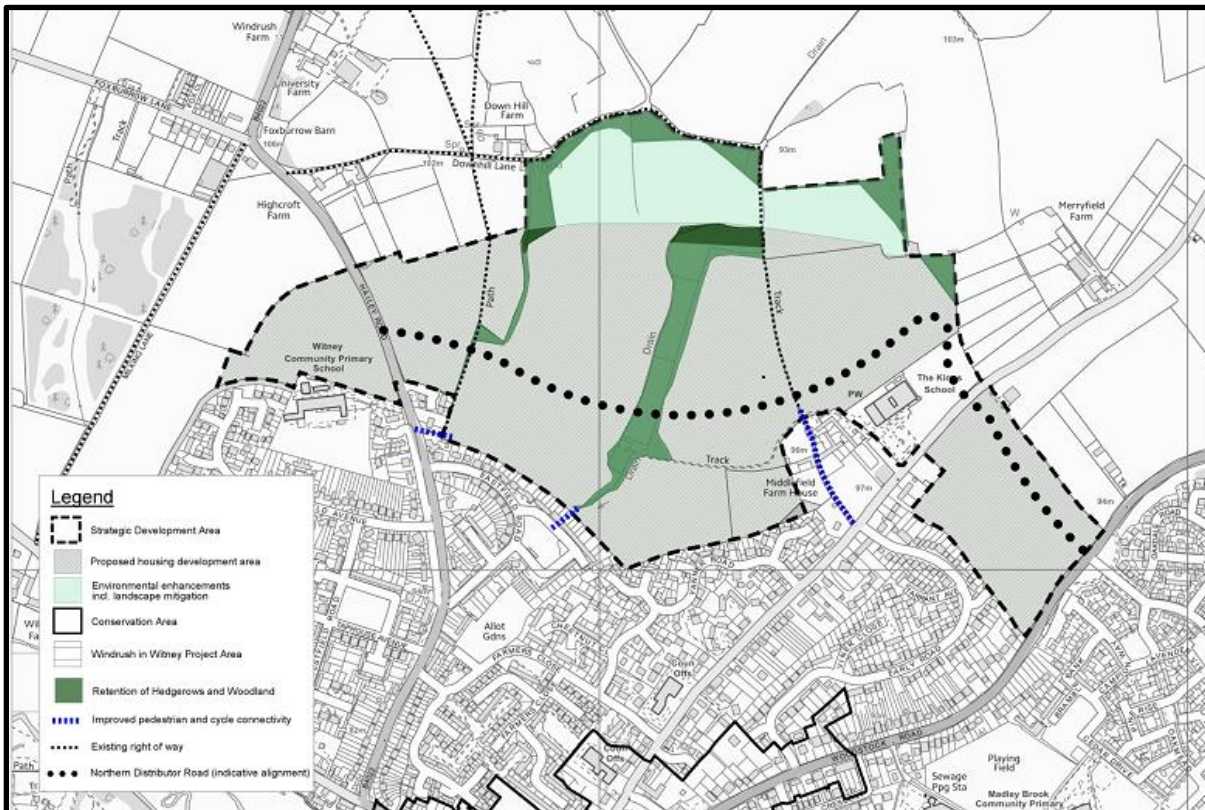


Figure 1 – Map of North Witney site

West End Link road

The Inspector is clear that

“Evidence demonstrates that, to be acceptable in transport terms, development of 1,400 dwellings would require the construction of the West End Link Road”

WODC policies require the link road development to be phased in accordance with the timing of supporting infrastructure (further work needed to identify when this will be) and the developer has to provide appropriate financial contributions. However the Inspector of the Local Plan warns that

“the word “appropriate” ensures that the development would not be required to make unreasonable contributions”.

This combination of policy and guidance could simply stop both the development of North Witney and commencement of the building of the West End link road. If, for example, traffic studies and forecasts indicated that development of the link road should commence once 500 houses were constructed and the “appropriate” contribution from the developer fell short of the full funding required, where would the balance of funding come from?

So, if there is a financial log-jam associated with the West End Link Road (it may also require a Compulsory Purchase Order), construction of the full 1,400 houses should cease, probably disrupting the whole development – including all of the other infrastructure.

West End Link Road

It is critical that, at a very early stage, an updated set of costings for this link road is obtained along with full identification of how the project will be funded.

[A question was raised as to who will fund, other than the developers]

Landscape enhancement

The Local Plan Inspector states:

The site is located in an area of acknowledged high landscape sensitivity and concern has been raised at the intention to provide for around 1,400 dwellings in the light of the 2012 Kirkham Landscape Study, which indicates the estimated housing capacity of the site as 750-800 dwellings. ...

My conclusion that the allocation [of 1,400 dwellings] is likely to be acceptable in landscape terms is based on the area of environmental enhancement shown on the policies map (Fig 1 above) and, on this basis, there is not good reason for this area to be altered or shown to be indicative.

The Inspector is clear that the light green area of the above map (Figure 1) should be developed as a landscape buffer (e.g. woodland) and the dark green areas of existing hedgerows and woodland should be retained.

Landscape buffer

There is a wealth of woodland and landscape development experience within Hailey associated with the recent developments of the Community Woodland (Breach wood) and the Wychwood Foxburrow development. It is recommended that these organisations be approached to provide advice of the appropriate development of the North Witney landscape buffer.

Community Facilities arising from the North Witney development

Funding to develop infrastructure and community facilities associated with the North Witney development will arise from SI06 / Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) negotiations between West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) and the developers of the North Witney site. Against this background this document attempts to define what infrastructure and community facilities should be considered during these negotiations.

Community facilities

Although WODC's policy WIT2 (North Witney) does not specifically define any required community facilities (apart from allotments) the WODC Infrastructure Development Plan refers to :

- Provision for new community facilities as part of large-scale development across the District
- Enhanced Library Provision
- Children's play areas
- New and/or enhanced cemetery provision across the District
- Informal open space – provision of and improvements to including accessible natural green space across the District
- Additional outdoor playing pitch provision and changing facilities in Witney
- Replacement of Windrush Leisure Centre, Witney.

Community Centre

The existing community centres, primarily located in the centre of Hailey, are too small and poorly located to service the needs of the community that will emerge as a consequence of the North Witney development. Equally, most of Witney's community facilities are too far away and primarily located south of the river.

A new Community centre will be required and should include:

- main activity and assembly space
- entrance foyer
- equipment and furniture store
- kitchen
- toilets, including disabled facilities
- changing provision
- cleaner's store
- an office
- changing / dressing rooms and showers
- licensed bar
- permanent or collapsible stage

- meeting or club rooms available for hire
- grass pitch changing rooms
- fitness training room
- community health facilities
- daytime centre for the elderly
- shops / post office
- parking facilities.

Sharing and integrating facilities

As there will be a new on-site primary school (2FE including nursery) on a 2.2ha site, it is recommended that school assembly / community / sports halls, playing pitches, changing facilities and car parking facilities are shared wherever possible. The King's School should also be invited to share in this proposed integration of facilities.

Playing pitch provision

Section 7 of WODC's Playing Pitch Strategy¹ contains suggested standards for grass pitches:

*A new minimum standard 1.60 ha per 1000 people of dedicated grass pitch sport space is proposed both as a basis for a contribution from new housing and as a **minimum target** for provision across the local authority area. In practice, much pitch sport occurs on multifunctional space. As far as possible new outdoor sports space should be dedicated to that use, so avoiding some of the problems arising from multi use cited above. Inevitably, pitch sports will continue to be played in some parks and recreation grounds, and also on school sites. This minimum standard does not cover provision of synthetic turf pitches (STPs) and other relevant outdoor sports spaces.*

Once completed, the population of the North Witney Development will exceed 3,500 using a metric of 2.5 people per household. This equates to a minimum pitch area of 5.6 hectares, using the recommended WODC standards².

Playing pitch provision

Development of community facilities related to North Witney should include the provision of at least 5.6 hectares of land suitable for playing pitches (as set out in WODC's Playing Pitch Strategy). Pitches should be located either on site or within the HNP Area if there is insufficient land available (e.g. Witney Rugby Club and/or adjacent to the Recreation ground).

Play Spaces

The community in Hailey (via Project Hailey) has substantial experience in developing play spaces for children, young people and adults. There will clearly be a requirement for appropriate play spaces within the North Witney development and the community should be involved in its planning and development. Ideally land should be made available to the Parish Council, along with appropriate funding, to enable them to facilitate an agreed play area provision.

Play Area provision

Development of North Witney community facilities should contribute towards the provision of high quality play and activity areas³ for children and young people, designed in consultation with the local community. There should be sufficient funding to ensure that the play spaces can be maintained to an appropriate standard. The location of any new play spaces should be such that access by the local community is maximised.

[Comment that location should be close to the community centre to secure access to toilets etc.]

¹ <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/765284/Playing-Pitch-Strategy-2014.pdf>

² Based on Fields in Trust recommended benchmarks

³ Fields in Trust standards should be applied

Allotments

An allotment is traditionally measured in rods, perches or poles, an old measurement system dating back to Anglo-Saxon times. 10 poles is the accepted size of an allotment, the equivalent of 250 square metres. There is no legal national minimum provision standard, but councils do have to audit allotments, set standards of provision, and assess their actual provision. Most allotment strategies quote the 1969 Thorpe Report which recommends a minimum provision equivalent to 15 allotments per 1,000 households, but this is not legally binding.

The standard adopted by WODC is 0.25 hectares (10 allotments) per 1,000 residents. This would result in the provision of 35 allotments (i.e. 0.875 hectares) associated with the North Witney development.

In the HNP Area there is a short waiting list for allotments indicating that the proportion of allotments per head of population is in balance (currently 30 allotments for just under 500 households). The addition of 1,400 houses would require the provision of an additional 84 allotments to achieve the same balance.

Allotment provision

Development of North Witney community facilities should include the provision of sufficient land to provide for up to 84 allotments (2.1 hectares) either on site or within easily accessible distance.

Burial ground capacity

All 1,210 residents (2010 Census) of the HNP Area have the right to be buried in the Burial Ground, Church Lane, Hailey (previously known as the Glebe Field). There is sufficient capacity to accommodate the current population of the HNP Area for about 44.3 years (based on the average demand over the last five years). However the addition of the residents of the North Witney development (estimated at 3,500 – WODC metric) reduces this capacity to only 11.3 years. This will require the acquisition of additional land suitable for use as a Burial Ground.

Burial Ground provision

Development of North Witney community facilities should include the provision of suitable Burial Ground capacity to accommodate the additional demand arising from the quadrupling of the population within the parish.

Health, Health Care and Wellbeing

As identified above it is essential that sufficient resource is provided to ensure that new development is well connected to Witney and community facilities, especially by public transport, walking and cycle paths and that existing routes are improved.

Almost 19 percent of residents' day-to-day activities are limited by a long-term health problems or disability, reflecting the HNP Area's higher-than-average number of older residents. The existence of Middletown Grange care home contributes to a significant portion of this statistic.

Among older people, Hailey sits within the least income-deprived groups.

There are no medical practices, opticians, dentists or dispensaries located within the HNP Area. Most residents seek health care from one of the three GP surgeries in Witney or from the Witney Community Hospital which contains a Minor Injuries Unit.

More serious medical problems are usually referred to the John Radcliffe hospital complex in Oxford.

In the HNP questionnaire, residents identified the building of an NHS surgery / Health Centre (as part of the North Witney development) as having the highest priority.

Health Care

Development of North Witney community facilities should consider the inclusion of an NHS surgery/ Health Centre, preferably integrated into the Community Centre.

[Also should include some shops, post office etc.]

Appendix A

WODC Local Plan 2031 – North Witney

The following is a renumbered extract from the draft submitted to the Inspector, including Further Main Modifications of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 dated February 2018:

Policy WIT2 – North Witney Strategic Development Area (1,400 homes)

- (i) *Land to the north of Witney is allocated for the delivery of 1,400 homes. The site is considered to be well-related to the main services and facilities of Witney, has no major ecological or heritage constraints and based on the proposed quantum of growth, will not have a significant landscape impact. Importantly, the development will require the delivery of the West End Link (WEL) a second river crossing for Witney, together with a new northern distributor road connecting Hailey Road to New Yatt Road and onto Woodstock Road.*
- (ii) *The proposed allocation is shown in Figure 6.2 (note: the extent of the developable area is indicative only).*
- (iii) *The proposed site allocation comprises three separate parcels of land, a larger area of land (c. 49ha) between Hailey Road and New Yatt Road, a parcel between New Yatt Road and Woodstock Road (c. 7ha) and a smaller parcel of land west of Hailey Road (c. 4ha). It is anticipated that across the allocation as a whole, around 1,400 homes could be provided.*
- (iv) *The land west of Hailey Road is capable of accommodating around 100 new homes, the land between Hailey Road and New Yatt Road, around 1,100 homes and the land between New Yatt Road and Woodstock Road around 200 homes.*
- (v) *In addition to the proposed site allocation shown on Figure 6.2, there may also be some potential for further development on the land further north between New Yatt Road and Woodstock Road. The site has not been promoted for development through the Council's housing land availability assessment and has therefore not been included within the allocation but in principle may be suitable subject to there being a demonstrable benefit e.g. in terms of improved highway access arrangements and Green Infrastructure provision.*
- (vi) *Key considerations for this site include flood risk, ecology, landscape impact, transport impact, deliverability and phasing. Consideration of the archaeological significance of the HNP Area, including historic landscape, will also be needed.*
- (vii) *In terms of flood risk, evidence⁴ suggests that there is scope to reduce surface water run-off from the site itself through the use of sustainable drainage and potential off-site enhancements. The site promoter has identified land to the north of the SDA boundary which could be used for the purpose of off-site storage. Although the associated West End Link falls within an area of designated floodplain, it is classed as 'essential infrastructure' and there are no sequentially preferable alternatives available (other than the A40/Shores Green slip roads scheme which is also being taken forward).*
- (viii) *Importantly, the West End Link could offer the potential to serve a dual role not only in terms of transport but also in terms of flood risk mitigation – the concept of which has the support of Oxfordshire County Council and the Environment Agency. Any development proposal will need to be supported by a detailed Flood Risk Assessment (FRA).*
- (ix) *With regard to ecology, evidence⁵ suggests that both the site and the West End Link have no significant ecological constraints and that the proposed development presents a number of opportunities to deliver positive enhancements.*
- (x) *In terms of landscape impact, evidence⁶ prepared in support of the Local Plan suggested that the originally proposed quantum of development (1,000 homes) was able to be accommodated on the site without undue adverse impact. Taking account of the additional development capacity provided by the inclusion of land west of Hailey Road, a modest increase in the extent of the developable area to the north (see Figure 6.2) and slightly higher density assumptions, it is considered that around 1,400 homes can be delivered on the site whilst ensuring an acceptable degree of impact in landscape terms. A detailed landscape and visual impact assessment would however be required in support of any future application to determine the most appropriate form and layout of development which would ultimately influence final housing numbers.*

⁴ North Witney and WEL Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2015)

⁵ North Witney and WEL Preliminary Ecological Assessment (2015)

⁶ Kirkham Associates Landscape and Visual Review of Submissions for Carterton and Witney Strategic Development Options (2012)

- (xi) *Traffic impact is a key consideration and any development will need to be supported by a detailed Transport Assessment (TA) and Travel Plan. Evidence⁷ prepared in support of the Local Plan suggests that whilst not eliminating congestion in the central core of Witney around Bridge Street, the provision of the West End Link and Northern Distributor Road will, in combination with other strategic highway measures proposed at Witney, have a number of tangible benefits as well as mitigating the impact of the proposed development.*
- (xii) *In terms of deliverability, there are no known constraints in terms of land assembly to prevent the site coming forward and evidence prepared in support of the Local Plan⁸ suggests that the scheme is a financially viable proposition.*
- (xiii) *As a large site, development of the North Witney SDA is likely to fall into a number of phases. There is already a current planning application on part of the site for 200 dwellings between the Woodstock and New Yatt roads which is likely to form 'Phase 1' (subject to a comprehensive masterplan/delivery framework for the whole site). Because of the lead-in times associated with larger strategic sites, it is likely that the majority of the site will come forward later in the plan period after 2021 unless delivery can be accelerated. Delivery of the bulk of development in the medium to long-term would however offer the following advantages:*
 - *help to ensure that housing delivery is provided evenly across the whole of the Local Plan period;*
 - *ensure the transport impact of the scheme is minimised by allowing for the new A40/Down's Road junction and A40/Shores Green improvements to come forward first;*
 - *allow time for the east and west Witney schemes to come forward in advance; and*
 - *allow time for the West End Link element of the scheme to be phased in appropriately as an integral part of the development.*

Appendix B

WODC Policy WIT2 North Witney Strategic Development Area (1,400 homes)

Land to the north of Witney to accommodate a sustainable, integrated community that forms a positive addition to Witney, including:

- a) about 1,400 homes with a balanced and appropriate mix of residential accommodation to meet identified needs, including affordable housing;*
- a) comprehensive development to be led by an agreed masterplan;*
- b) development to be phased in accordance with the timing of supporting infrastructure and facilities including delivery of the West End Link and Northern Distributor Road;*
- c) the provision of other supporting transport infrastructure, including mitigating the impact of traffic associated with the development; the provision of appropriate financial contributions towards LTP4 transport schemes; provision of appropriate public transport (services and infrastructure) serving the site,; and provision of a comprehensive network for pedestrians and cyclists with good connectivity provided to adjoining areas including the town centre and other key destinations;*
- d) the provision of a new primary school on-site (2FE including nursery) on a 2.2ha site together with financial contributions towards secondary school capacity as appropriate.*
- di) the conservation and where possible enhancement of the setting of the Grade II listed Middlefield Farmhouse and dovecote and the Witney and Cogges and Hailey Conservation Areas;*
- dii) the investigation, recording and safeguarding of the known and potential archaeological significance of the Area prior to any development taking place. The results of the investigation and recording should inform the final layout of the development and should be deposited in a public archive;*
- e) the provision of appropriate landscaping measures to mitigate the potential impact of development including a*

⁷ Technical Note: Witney Development and Infrastructure Strategic Modelling (White Young Green October 2014)

⁸ Aspinall Verdi – SDA appraisal North Witney (2015)

- positive landscape framework to create a new town edge;*
- f) retention of important on-site hedgerows and plantation woodland;*
 - g) biodiversity enhancements including arrangements for future maintenance;*
 - h) provision of appropriate green infrastructure including allotments;*
- i) appropriate measures to mitigate flood risk including the use of sustainable drainage methods to ensure that post-development surface water run-off rates are attenuated to achieve a reduction in greenfield run-off rates. This may include consideration of 'off-site' solutions. The sustainable drainage systems should be designed to provide a biodiversity enhancement;*
- j) all development should be steered to areas at least flood risk within Flood Zone 1 and flood alleviation measures to reduce flood risk associated with the Hailey Road Drain should be incorporated where appropriate;*
- k) connection to the mains sewerage network which includes infrastructure upgrades where required including any necessary phasing arrangements;*
- l) ensuring that the design and construction of the West End Link has no undue impact on heritage assets and biodiversity and provides for mitigation and enhancements to biodiversity where feasible;*
- m) demonstrate the use of renewable energy, sustainable design and construction methods, with a high level of energy efficiency in new buildings;*
- n) the developer will be required to set aside 5% of the developable plots for those wishing to undertake custom/self-build.*

Date of next meeting: 7.00 pm, Thursday 18th October 2018 at Hayesfield