

# PLANNING STATEMENT

Site Location: Land East of Heyford Road,  
Kirtlington

Proposal: Erection of 14 two storey  
dwelling houses, upgrade of  
existing access, together with  
garaging, parking and  
landscaping



Abbeymill Homes

ESTABLISHED 1991

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# 1.0 Introduction

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- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Abbeymill Homes in support of their full planning application, for the development of land east of Heyford Road, Kirtlington. The full description of development comprises the following:

*'Erection of 14 two storey dwellings and upgrading of existing access onto the Heyford Road, together with garaging and parking, footpath link, the removal and reinstatement of a section of existing wall and its repair along the Heyford Road frontage, and landscaping and all enabling development.'*

The application site lies within the administrative area of Cherwell District Council with the site forming part of the north eastern edge of the village of Kirtlington.

- 1.2 Kirtlington is categorised as a category A service village which forms one of the more sustainable rural settlements in the district, offering a good range of facilities and services for residents of the village. As a result, the village has a specific housing requirement to help meet the district's housing needs but which remains to be fulfilled.
- 1.3 The site comprises grazing land on the immediate edge of the village, and is visually well contained by its tree lined boundaries and drystone wall along the Heyford Road, together with screening provided by the Jersey Cottages.
- 1.4 The application site is located within the Kirtlington Conservation Area and Kirtlington Park although it exhibits a very different character to that of the parkland as it was not historically within the boundary extent of this designated heritage asset. The site is though sensitively located requiring a heritage led approach toward a development proposal on the site.
- 1.5 The site has been the subject of a number of previously unsuccessful planning applications which were refused due to concerns that the proposal amounted to an inappropriate form of development which would cause harm to the rural character and setting of the village and to designated heritage assets. This proposal has been

designed to respond to these concerns with a much more sensitively considered scheme.

- 1.6 Abbeymill Homes is a medium sized developer based in Buckinghamshire, and specialises in high quality bespoke developments on the edge of towns and villages. The company adopts a selective approach towards site selection seeking prime residential locations where it can create high quality residential schemes of a sympathetic architectural design, which make a positive contribution towards the character of an area.
- 1.7 In support of this application, a Design and Access Statement has been prepared which has informed the preparation of the planning application.
- 1.8 The purpose of this statement is to demonstrate how the proposal accords with the relevant policies of the development plan, together with national planning guidance. The document has been structured with Section 2 identifying the 'Site and Surrounding Area', followed by Section 3 which seeks to explain the 'Planning History' of the site. Section 4 describes the 'Proposal', whilst Section 5 establishes the 'Planning Policy Context' of the development, 'Planning Considerations' of the development are explored in Section 6 and the statement concludes with a 'Summary and Conclusion' in Section 7.

## 2.0 The Site and Surrounding Area

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- 2.1 The site lies on the immediate north eastern extent of the village of Kirtlington, with Heyford Road aligning its western boundary and Akeman Street to the north. It is formed of an area of grazing land with tree lined boundaries to the south and west. The site area extends to 2.2 ha (see Site Location Plan at **Appendix 1**).
- 2.2 The site has extensive boundary screening which provides a visual buffer with surrounding areas, including Home Farm and Kirtlington Park to the east. The existing Jersey Cottages and the drystone wall along the Heyford Road provide further screening of the site from public views into the site from within the village.
- 2.3 The main area of the site is laid to pasture with the topography of the land relatively level with a gentle gradient towards the south of the site. A power line crosses the central area providing a grid connection for the adjoining Home Farm.
- 2.4 The drystone wall defines the site's western boundary is a notable feature along this part of the Heyford Road. However, this circa 1.3m high wall varies in condition along its some 300m length with its coping missing or having been replaced with inappropriate modern materials, and the wall having collapsed in areas.
- 2.5 Access into the site is currently provided via an agricultural access off Akeman Street to the north. This adjoining field is also used for grazing purposes and forms part of the settlement edge on the approach to Kirtlington from the north.
- 2.6 A prominent feature within the site are the existing Jersey Cottages. These post war properties are two storeys in height and both detached and semi detached in form. They are of a low aesthetic quality and constructed from both red brick and reconstituted stone. These properties sit within the designated settlement limits of Kirtlington.
- 2.7 To the east of the site is Home Farmhouse, a Grade II listed property built of limestone rubble with plain tile roof and likely of 16<sup>th</sup> century origin. The building adjoins a cluster of agricultural buildings which include large scale modern portal framed structures. Intervisibility between Home Farmhouse and the application site is limited by the existing vegetation framework on its boundary.

- 2.8 Beyond Home Farmhouse to the east and to the south of the site is Kirtlington Park, a Grade II listed park and garden. Whilst the application site forms part of this designation, it has long since been in separate ownership and maintains a very different character to that of the formally landscaped main parkland area.
- 2.9 On the eastern side of Heyford Road are residential properties which extend up beyond the application site to the new development at Akeman Spinney, and extend in depth from the main road. These properties are typically two storeys and constructed from natural stone with slate or stone tiles. A number of these properties are listed buildings.
- 2.10 The village of Kirtlington offers a good range of local facilities to meet residents' day to day needs including two public houses, a primary school, village hall, recreation and sports ground and church. These facilities are within walking distance of the application site and connected via the existing pedestrian footpath network.
- 2.11 Regular bus services also exist within the village providing connectivity to higher order service centres including Oxford and Bicester. Mainline rail services are also available at nearby Tackley offering hourly train services to Didcot Parkway via Oxford.
- 2.12 The application site is located where a good level of facilities and services exist to meet residents' day to day needs, and offers viable alternative transport options to the private car. It is therefore considered to occupy a sustainable location for new residential development.

## 3.0 Planning History

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- 3.1 A search of Cherwell District Council's planning history database has confirmed that the application site has been the subject of a number of recent planning applications for residential development of the site.
- 3.2 In 2015, an outline planning application (Application Ref: 15/01128/OUT) was submitted seeking consent for the demolition of the existing Jersey Cottages and the erection of up to 34 dwellings with open space. A copy of the indicative sketch layout is included at **Appendix 2** illustrating that development was proposed across the entire site. This application was withdrawn prior to determination.
- 3.3 In 2017, two further outline planning applications (Application Refs: 17/00539/OUT and 17/01688/OUT) were submitted with both proposing the erection of up to 20 dwellings on the site and in a similar arrangement.
- 3.4 A copy of the indicative site layout for application ref: 17/00539/OUT is included at **Appendix 3** with development extending along the full length of the site. This application was also withdrawn prior to determination.
- 3.5 The other outline application ref: 17/01688/OUT included a more illustrative proposal as included at **Appendix 4**, which also included development across the full length of the site. This application was refused by the LPA by a decision notice dated 24<sup>th</sup> November 2017 (included at **Appendix 5**), which included 4 reasons for refusal.
- 3.6 The substantive reasons for refusal related to concerns over the scheme being an inappropriate form of development that would harm the rural setting and character of the village. The LPA also considered that it would result in harm to the character and significance of heritage assets although it was acknowledged that it would be less than substantial. The other reasons concerned that the LPA considered that it could demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply so the proposal was unnecessary, whilst the absence of a legal agreement meant planning obligations to mitigate the impact of the development had not been secured. This decision of the LPA was not challenged and tested on appeal by the applicant.

- 3.7 Within the Officers report for this application (included at **Appendix 6**) it is noteworthy that at the time, Officers advised (Paragraph 4.2) that if the scheme received clear support from the Parish Council and village residents and any harm to the heritage assets and visual amenities of the area could be shown to be limited and outweighed by public benefits, it may result in a positive Officer recommendation.
- 3.8 The Parish Council at the time supported the application and expressed the view that they considered it the most suitable site in the village to meet Kirtlington's housing commitments without adverse impact on its linear settlement form, or on its heritage assets (Paragraphs 6.2 / 6.3). It also received quite significant support from local residents.
- 3.9 Despite the level of support for the proposal at the time, Officers considered in the context of the Council being able to demonstrate an up-to-date 5 year housing land supply and given the level of harm toward designated heritage assets, it was not sufficient to outweigh the harm in this case (Paragraph 8.34).

#### **Pre-application Advice**

- 3.10 Prior to submission of this application, the applicant formally requested pre-application advice from Cherwell District Council. The submitted scheme related to a proposal for 14 two storey dwellings with a number of different access arrangements proposed.
- 3.11 The LPA issued its pre-application advice in January 2022, with a copy of the issued advice letter contained at **Appendix 7**.
- 3.12 The advice highlighted that since the previous applications on the site the Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Pla has been adopted which requires Kirtlington to deliver 17 new houses in the plan period to 2031. To date, no new dwellings have been permitted at the village in this plan period.
- 3.13 The Officer's also acknowledged that the LPA could not currently demonstrate sufficient housing land supply in the district although this is tempered by the protected status of heritage assets in accordance with the NPPF. Overall, the advice



was not however favourable with the Officer considering that the previous concerns remain with development of the site.

- 3.14 At this time, the proposal had not been fully developed and Officers would not have been aware of the full extent of public benefits associated with the proposal. A planning balance exercise was not therefore possible in providing this advice and assessing the proposal.

## 4.0 The Proposal

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- 4.1 This proposal seeks full planning permission for the erection of 14 two storey dwelling houses, together with garaging, parking, public open space and landscaping. It will also involve the upgrading and widening of the existing access off the Heyford Road requiring the realignment of the existing boundary wall to allow.
- 4.2 The properties will comprise detached and semi-detached units, including a mix of sizes including 2, 3 and 4 bedroom houses. These will provide new housing opportunities within the village for families, built to a very high design standard and utilising materials identifiable within the local vernacular, including Cotswold stone on the elevations and slate on the roof.
- 4.3 The proposed housing mix of the scheme is detailed at Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Proposed Housing Mix**

<b>DWELLING SIZE</b>	<b>MARKET HOUSING</b>	<b>AFFORDABLE HOUSING</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>2 Bed</b>	2	2	4
<b>3 Bed</b>	4	4	8
<b>4 Bed</b>	2	0	2
<b>Total</b>	8	6	14

- 4.4 The proposal includes a total of 6 affordable housing units offering both 2 and 3 bed units that will provide a tenure mix including affordable rent and shared ownership. These could potentially also include First Homes subject to negotiations with the LPA.
- 4.5 The layout of the scheme has been heritage led with development located in the least sensitive part of the site wrapping around the existing Jersey Cottages, and much less extensive than previous proposals on the site. A significant open buffer has been maintained with Home Farm to the east.
- 4.6 Unlike the previous applications on the site, this is a detailed proposal with the scale and massing of the proposed dwellings in keeping with their immediate surroundings at two storeys with a traditional architectural design of the elevations. This includes

the use of appropriately scaled dormers in the roof of some properties adding interest to the roofscape of the dwellings.

- 4.7 A criticism of the previous scheme was that the proposal was inward looking, whereas this scheme has been designed to engage with public spaces and face onto the Heyford Road continuing the linear arrangement that exists on the opposite side of the road. This natural surveillance across the site will serve to reduce the opportunity for criminal activity.
- 4.8 Each property has been designed to provide a good level of private amenity space for residents with garden depths of at least 10m. In addition, the extensive public open space proposed within the site provides additional amenity opportunities for residents.
- 4.9 The existing access into the site is proposed to be upgraded to accommodate the additional traffic movements associated with the development. This will require the removal and realignment of the existing boundary wall on the north side of the existing access.
- 4.10 The existing Jersey Cottages will be provided with 2 dedicated offstreet parking spaces each as parking arrangements are currently fairly informal. These will be onplot with the exception of no.2 Jersey Cottages which will have one space on the proposed development site.
- 4.11 An extensive pedestrian footpath network is proposed within the site and runs along the southern side of the access road before joining the Heyford Road. A dropped kerb arrangement is proposed to enable crossing to the other side of the road where the existing footpath runs. A further more direct footpath is proposed to the south through a break in the boundary wall and will also involve the installment of dropped kerbs.
- 4.12 With the exception of a few trees around the access and some existing scrub north of Plot 6, existing trees and landscaping within the site are proposed to be retained with a sustainable relationship with new development. A comprehensive landscaping proposal is intended to be implemented across the site in accordance with a landscape strategy proposal submitted with this application. This will help mitigate and soften

the development with the use of native plant species providing additional biodiversity opportunities within the site.

- 4.13 As part of the development, it is proposed to carry out repairs to the historic stone boundary wall along Kirtlington Road, reinstating the coping style to match existing sections where the coping survives. It is also proposed to widen the road access involving the removal and reinstatement of a small section of walling which will curve into the site as is commonly found in the Conservation Area.

#### **Benefits of the Scheme**

- 4.14 This proposal will offer a number of material benefits that weigh in favour of the application, and are identified as follows:

- It is a windfall site that can be delivered relatively quickly to contribute toward the outstanding housing requirement of Kirtlington;
- The proposal will fulfil a local housing need for those properties most in demand in the district;
- It will deliver affordable housing at a village location where such housing provision has not come forward in recent times;
- The site is in a sustainable location and the scale of development is entirely suitable and accords with the existing pattern of development;
- The site is well screened and public views of the development will be heavily filtered by the existing and proposed landscaping;
- Its development will support the vitality and viability of existing village facilities;
- It will deliver a positive biodiversity net gain through onsite enhancements to encourage wider biodiversity interest;
- It will deliver heritage benefits through the repair and reinstatement of the boundary wall of the listed parkland;
- It will secure a management plan for the existing woodland which will ensure it is positively managed and improved in the long term; and
- It will fulfil the social, environmental and economic objectives of sustainable development.

## 5.0 Planning Policy Context

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5.1 This section of the Statement considers the relevant planning policy framework for the site having regard to the development proposal. It considers the statutory development plan, any emerging local planning policy guidance together with national planning policy.

5.2 Under the provisions of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, there is an obligation to determine planning applications in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

### **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

5.3 The Government revised the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in July 2021 with this document acting as an overarching framework for the production of local policy documents and the consideration of development proposals. At the heart of the framework is the presumption in favour of sustainable development which should be a central consideration with both plan-making and decision-making.

5.4 The NPPF identifies three dimensions to sustainable development which include economic, social and environmental considerations. It states that these roles should not be undertaken in isolation as they are mutually dependent.

5.5 An objective of the planning system as defined by the Framework is to ‘significantly’ boost the supply of homes through ensuring that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forwards where needed and meet the needs of groups with specific housing requirements.

5.6 Paragraph 69 of the Framework recognises that small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution towards meeting the housing requirement of an area, and are often built out relatively quickly.

5.7 In rural areas, Paragraph 78 of the Framework requires planning policies and decisions to be responsive to local circumstances and support developments that reflect local needs. Further, to promote sustainable development in rural areas housing should be

located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities as specified by Paragraph 79.

- 5.8 In relation to promoting sustainable transport, the framework recognises that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas and that this should be considered in both plan-making and decision-making (Paragraph 105).

### **Development Plan**

- 5.9 The development plan for the application site currently comprises the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 (2015) and the Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan (2019).

#### Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 (2015)

- 5.10 The district plan was adopted in 2015 and provides the development framework for the district over the period 2011 – 2031. Within the Settlement Hierarchy for Cherwell District (Policy Villages 1), Kirtlington is identified as a category A service village.
- 5.11 Those policies in the plan considered to be relevant to this proposal are identified as follows:

*Policy PSD 1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)* - specifies that planning applications in accordance with the local plan will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise;

*Policy BSC 2 (The Effective and Efficient Use of Land)* – requires the effective and efficient use of land in housing developments aiming for a density of at least 30 dph;

*Policy BSC 3 (Affordable Housing)* – all proposed developments of 11 or more dwellings (gross) are expected to provide at least 35% as affordable homes. Of these, 70% should be social rent and 30% intermediate;

*Policy BSC 4 (Housing Mix)* – new residential development will be expected to provide a mix of homes to meet current and future needs;

*Policy BSC 11 (Local Standards of Provision – Outdoor Recreation)* – development proposals will be required to contribute to the provision of open space, sport and recreation, together with secure arrangements for its management and maintenance;

*Policy ESD 1 (Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change)* – seeks to promote measures to mitigate the impact of development on climate change, including distributing growth to sustainable locations, designing development to reduce carbon emissions and use resources more efficiently and promoting the more efficient use of resources;

*Policy ESD 2 (Energy Hierarchy and Allowable Solutions)* – seeks to promote an energy hierarchy through sustainable design and construction measures, supplying energy efficiently, making use of renewable energy and making use of allowable solutions;

*Policy ESD 3 (Sustainable Construction)* - requires all new residential developments to incorporate sustainable design and construction technology to achieve zero carbon development through a combination of fabric energy efficiency, carbon compliance and allowable solutions. Higher water efficiency than building regs will be required to limit to 110 litres / person / day;

*Policy ESD 6 (Sustainable Flood Risk Management)* – site specific flood risk assessments will be required to accompany development proposals than include sites of 1 ha or more in flood zone 1;

*Policy ESD 7 (Sustainable Drainage Systems)* – requires all development to use sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) for the management of surface water run-off;

*Policy ESD 10 (Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment)* – specifies measures to achieve protection and enhancement of biodiversity and the natural environment including seeking a net gain in biodiversity to be secured through planning conditions / obligations;

*Policy ESD 11 (Conservation Target Areas)* – development within and adjacent to a Conservation Target area will require a biodiversity survey and report to identify constraints and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement;

*Policy ESD 13 (Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement)* – requires development to respect and enhance local landscape character, securing appropriate mitigation where harm to local landscape cannot be avoided;

*Policy ESD 15 (The Character of the Built and Historic Environment)* – new development will be expected to complement and enhance the character of its context through sensitive siting, layout and high quality design;

*Policy Villages 1 (Village Categorisation)* – identifies Milcombe as a Category A Service Village suitable for minor development, infilling and conversions;

*Policy Villages 2 (Distributing Growth Across the Rural Areas)* – allocates a total of 750 homes at the Category A villages, in addition to small site windfalls and planning permission for 10 or more dwellings as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014. Sites will be identified through the Local Plan Part 2, Neighbourhood Plans and the determination of applications for planning permission.

- 5.12 As this plan is more than 5 years old, the LPA is no longer seeking to deliver the housing requirements specified under Policy BSC 1 having moved to the standard method which provides a much reduced annualised housing target for the district. On this basis, Policy BSC 1 is no longer up to date.

Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan (2019)

- 5.13 The Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan was made in 2019 and covers an area of North Oxfordshire, taking in 11 Parish Council areas and including Kirtlington. Those policies in the plan considered to be relevant to this proposal are identified as follows:

*Policy PSD 1 (Development at Category A Villages)* – supports in principle residential development within the settlement area at villages including Kirtlington. Where



outside the settlement areas, a number of criteria are specified including being immediately adjacent to the settlement, should conserve and enhance the landscape and should conserve the significance of heritage assets. During the plan period, Kirtlington shall deliver approximately 17 dwellings either within or adjacent to the settlement area;

*Policy PSD 4 (Protection of Important Views and Vistas)* – development within Conservation Areas is required to demonstrate that the proposal causes little harm to an identified view and any harm is outweighed by the benefits of the proposal. The development should not harm the Conservation Area and its setting and other heritage assets;

*Policy PSD 5 (Building and Site Design)* – new development should be designed to a high standard and which responds to the character of the settlement. The policy includes a number of criteria including proposals should include appropriate landscape mitigation, provide a net gain in biodiversity, stone walls should be repaired and retained and provide new and improved footways and cycleways;

*Policy PSD 6 (Control of Light Pollution)* – the design of external and street lighting should minimise the risk of light spillage beyond the development site boundary;

*Policy PH1 (Open Market Housing Schemes)* – any new market housing should favour homes with a smaller number of bedrooms with developments of 10 or more dwellings providing a mix of 30% 1 or 2 bedrooms, 46% 3 bedrooms and no more than 24% 4 bedrooms or more;

*Policy PH5 (Parking, Garaging and Waste Storage Provision)* – requires garaging and parking to be built in direct association with the proposed houses. Dwellings should have adequate facilities for the storage of waste bins.

## Supplementary Guidance

### Cherwell Residential Design Guide (2018)

- 5.14 The design guide was prepared with the objective of promoting good quality design and high quality developments in the district, as well as providing more certainty for developers on the Council's approach to design requirements.

### Developer Contributions SPD (2018)

- 5.15 The purpose of this SPD is to set out Cherwell District Council's approach to seeking Section 106 planning obligations in the absence of the Community Infrastructure Levy, including infrastructure contributions towards transport, education and community facilities, together with affordable housing.

## Other Material Considerations

### Housing Land Supply Position

- 5.16 The Council's most recently published Housing Land Supply Position Statement is dated February 2023 for the five year period April 2022 – 2027 (a copy is included at **Appendix 8**). Within this report, the Council claims to maintain a housing land supply of 5.4 years inclusive of a 5% buffer.
- 5.17 With the Local Plan now more than 5 years old, this figure has been calculated against the standard method which has significantly reduced the housing requirement for Cherwell. The Council is therefore no longer seeking to deliver on its housing commitments under Policy BSC1 (District Wide Housing Distribution) of the Local Plan.
- 5.18 However, this housing land supply figure excludes the Partial Review Area which provides for Oxford's unmet needs. The figure for this area is only 0.2 years supply which is a most severe shortfall. No justification is set out for this approach of publishing two separate figures, which if combined would result in a significant overall shortfall for the district.

## 6.0 Planning Considerations

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- 6.1 This section of the statement addresses the key planning issues that arise from the proposal having been identified through a review of the planning policy framework that applies, together with an analysis of the local context of the site.

### **Principle of Development**

- 6.2 The principle of development forms the initial consideration in assessing this proposal, with the site located beyond the built-up limits of Kirtlington but immediately adjoining its edge.

- 6.3 Within the development plan, Kirtlington is defined as a Category A service village (Policy Villages 1), which form the most sustainable category of rural settlements offering a range of facilities and services. Cherwell District Council has in the past supported major housing proposals including a recent scheme for 75 dwellings at the village of Ambrosden.

- 6.4 Policy Villages 2 of the Local Plan concerns the distribution of growth across the rural areas with it specifying that a total of 750 homes will be delivered at Category A villages over the plan period, which is in addition to a windfall allowance. This figure has yet to be exceeded but is not regarded as a ceiling toward further development in these locations.

- 6.5 Policy Villages 2 sets out a series of criteria against which applications for development in such locations should be assessed. These are considered in detail against the application site as follows:

(1) Whether the land has been previously developed land or is of lesser environmental value – the application site does not comprise previously developed land but is not of any recognised enhanced environmental value;

(2) Whether significant adverse impact on heritage and wildlife assets could be avoided – whilst the proposal will have an impact upon heritage assets, such impacts will not be significant and has been assessed as '*less than substantial harm*'. The Ecological Impact Assessment accompanying the application confirms that the proposal will not have a

significant impact on wildlife assets, and in overall terms it will have positive impact delivering in excess of a 10% biodiversity net gain;

(3) Whether development would contribute to enhancing the built environment – the application represents a high quality residential scheme with a layout which reflects the existing settlement pattern and the use of good quality materials and a high design standard which will preserve and enhance the character of this area of Kirtlington;

(4) Whether best and most versatile agricultural land could be avoided – the site is classified as Grade 3 agricultural land so may comprise either the lowest grade (Grade 3a Good) of best and most versatile agricultural land or land that is not of that quality (Grade 3b Moderate). Either way the amount of land actually being built on is limited and is not currently in productive agricultural use anymore;

(5) Whether significant adverse landscape impacts could be avoided – the site is well screened by existing vegetation and a boundary wall which are all to be retained and supplemented by new landscaping on the site ensuring no significant adverse landscape impacts will arise with the proposal;

(6) Whether satisfactory vehicular and pedestrian access / egress could be provided – a highway access including pedestrian connectivity has been designed which is considered safe and accords with highway design standards;

(7) Whether the site is well located to facilities and services – the application site is well located to access Kirtlington's facilities and services, many of which are located within 500m of the site and connected via existing footpaths;

(8) Whether necessary infrastructure could be provided – the applicant can confirm that there is a willingness to enter into a legal agreement to secure necessary infrastructure to make the development acceptable, with any such obligations discussed during the application process;

(9) Whether land considered for allocation is deliverable now or whether there is a reasonable prospect that it could be developed within the plan period – the applicant can confirm that it has control of the land and there are no constraints that will prevent it being delivered within the plan period if planning permission is granted;

(10) Whether land the subject of an application for planning permission could be delivered within the next five years – there is no reason why this site could not be delivered within a 5 year period if planning is granted;

(11) Whether development would have an adverse impact on flood risk – technical work has confirmed that the proposal will not have an adverse impact on flood risk either onsite or on the surrounding area offering better management of existing surface water runoff.

6.6 The above assessment confirms that the proposal is compliant with the policy criteria of Policy Villages 2 of the Local Plan, suggesting that the principle of development of this site should be acceptable.

6.7 The Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan also contains a policy to assess the acceptability of new residential development at the Category A villages. Policy PD1 states that new residential development outside the settlement areas must have particular regard to the following criteria:

a) The site should be immediately adjacent to the settlement area – the application site is immediately adjacent to the settlement area;

b) The site should not be the best and most versatile agricultural land and the use of previously developed land is particularly likely to be acceptable - the site is classified as Grade 3 agricultural land so may comprise either the lowest grade (Grade 3a Good) of best and most versatile agricultural land or land that is not of that quality (Grade 3b Moderate). Either way the amount of land actually being built on is limited and is not currently in productive agricultural use anymore;

c) The development should conserve and, where possible, enhance the landscape – the proposal will retain and increase existing landscaping through a well-considered landscaping scheme ensuring that the development will not give rise to any significant adverse landscape effects;

d) The development should conserve and, where possible, enhance the special interest, character and appearance of the conservation areas and the significance of other heritage assets – a heritage led approach toward development of this site is proposed which avoids those more sensitive areas and retains all existing features that contribute toward the character and appearance of designated heritage assets. The new development is a bespoke proposal to a high architectural standard which should conserve the character and appearance of the area;

e) The development should not give rise to coalescence with any other nearby settlement. This particularly applies to Steeple Aston and Middle Aston – the proposal will not give rise to any concerns over coalescence.

6.8 Policy PD1 also specifies that Kirtlington will need to deliver approximately 17 new dwellings over the plan period. To date, housing delivery at Kirtlington has totalled zero new dwellings and so an outstanding housing need remains at the village.

6.9 In light of the above, the proposal is considered compliant with the key policies of the development plan which concern whether the principle of new housing growth at this location is acceptable.

6.10 In terms of the sustainability of the site, it is supported by a good range of local services within the village which including two public houses, a post office, primary school, village hall, recreation and sporting facilities and a church. Bus services also exist within close proximity of the site served by bus route 250 which is an hourly service (with the exception of Sunday) between Oxford City Centre and Bicester. In addition, mainline rail services are also available at nearby Tackley. Kirtlington is therefore considered a sustainable location for new residential development as recognised by the development plan.

6.11 The NPPF places great importance on boosting the supply of homes, even more important when an identified housing land supply deficit exists as in this case. The site is also a small to medium sized proposal which can delivered relatively quickly, and certainly within a 5 year period to help reduce the current shortfall.

6.12 In summary, the principle of development of this site is acceptable when assessed against the locational policies of the plan for housing growth in the rural areas and the scheme represents sustainable development as sought by the Framework.

### **Housing Land Supply**

6.13 The LPA had until recently acknowledged that it did not maintain sufficient housing land supply, with 3.5 years supply at the time of the issue of the pre-application advice in January 2022.

- 6.14 In February 2023, this position changed when the LPA reverted to use of the standard method for calculating its housing land supply and abandoning Policy BSC1. This has served to drastically reduce its annual housing requirements from 1,142 new homes to just 742 dwellings per annum.
- 6.15 The applicant has previously commissioned a housing land supply analysis by a specialist planning consultancy to scrutinise Cherwell District Council's housing land supply position statement. This is contained at **Appendix 9** of this Statement.
- 6.16 This statement includes a detailed analysis of the identified land supply position and whether sites are deliverable as suggested. It also assesses the basis upon which the housing land supply position in the district should be calculated.
- 6.17 In particular, the Council's approach whereby it disaggregates Oxford's unmet housing needs is not considered an acceptable approach being contrary to the NPPF and associated guidance. This should be combined with Cherwell's local housing need figure in calculating the 5 year housing land supply position.
- 6.18 In addition, the use of the standard method is cautioned within the Council's own evidence base (HENA) for its emerging Local Plan Review (included at **Appendix 10**) as it will not meet the required housing needs of the district going forward and likely lead to continued housing affordability pressure and greater in-commuting travel patterns. This report recommends much higher rates of housing delivery than the standard method and the likelihood is that the housing land supply requirement for the district will substantially increase in the not too distant future.
- 6.19 Our housing land supply assessment concludes that as at 1st April 2022 the Council is able to only identify deliverable housing land amounting to 3,395 dwellings, with a number of sites within its land supply statement not 'deliverable' and require discounting. When assessed against Cherwell's local housing need combined with Oxford's unmet needs plus 5%, a land supply of only 2.99 years is identifiable. This amounts to a severe shortfall.
- 6.20 Even if the Council's approach toward its 5 year land supply is accepted whereby it disaggregates the unmet housing need for Oxford City, it still does not maintain sufficient deliverable supply with a figure of 4.87 years. Either way, a shortfall exists and the tilted

balance in accordance with Paragraph 11(d) is triggered in determining residential planning applications in the district as the most important policies are deemed out of date.

6.21 In the context of this application, the pre-application response suggested that the tilted balance does not apply in circumstances involving designated heritage assets. This however is not a view shared by the applicant as it states at Paragraph 11(d) that where the policies most important for determining the application are out of date, planning permission should be granted unless:

- i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
- ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

6.22 The assets of particular importance at criteria i. does include designated heritage asset but there is no clear reason for refusing the development proposed whilst the benefits of this application are considered to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the limited harm that will arise. The tilted balance does therefore apply in this instance.

### **Housing Need**

6.23 Within Oxfordshire as a whole, significant housing affordability issues exist compounded by the inability of many of the authorities to deliver the housing needed by their local communities. This is evidenced in work commissioned across the county as part of preparing the now abandoned Oxfordshire Plan 2050.

6.24 The Oxfordshire Growth Needs Assessment (included at **Appendix 11**) highlighted that the area is characterised by high housing costs with median house prices having risen by £100,000 to £350,000 in the county over the last 20 years. This in turn, has contributed towards a significant need for affordable housing which has an estimated requirement of some 3,200 affordable homes per year across Oxfordshire to 2030.

6.25 Within the Local Plan, the Council acknowledge the high level of need for affordable housing within the district (Paragraph B.104), which in 2014 amounted to an annual



requirement of 407 affordable homes per year. Such need is likely to have exacerbated significantly since then due to a combination of both low housing delivery rates and continued house price inflation making property ownership increasingly more difficult for large parts of the population.

6.26 As well as having its own housing needs to provide for, Cherwell also has an obligation to help Oxford City meet some of its housing needs with an agreement to deliver 4,400 additional homes in the district over and above existing Local Plan commitments. This further increased the pressure for housing delivery in the district.

6.27 In terms of housing mix, the Local Plan identifies especially high needs for 3 bed market properties (45%), together with 2 bed (25%) and 4 bed (25%). Demand for affordable housing is most acute for 2 and 3 bed properties (circa 35% respectively), with lesser demand for 4 bed homes. In this respect, the housing mix of the proposal accords with demand based evidence and Policy BSC 4 of the Local Plan.

6.28 The Neighbourhood Plan with Policy PH1 also seeks to specify a housing mix with 30% 1 or 2 bedrooms, 46% 3 bedrooms and no more than 24% 4 bedrooms. The application proposes 2 bedrooms (29%), 3 bedrooms (57%) and 4 Bedrooms (14%) at a ratio that is compliant with this policy.

6.29 It is evident that with a background of insufficient housing delivery to meet the needs of its local community, the application site is needed to increase housing land supply in the district and meet an outstanding local housing commitment. If permitted, it could be delivered relatively quickly providing additional housing opportunities for families at Kirtlington.

### **Affordable Housing**

6.30 All proposed developments involving 11 or more dwellings in the rural areas, are expected to provide at least 35% of new housing on site as affordable homes in accordance with Policy BSC 3 of the Local Plan. The tenure mix of the affordable units will be required as 70% affordable rent and 30% intermediate affordable homes.

6.31 This application proposes 6 dwellings on the site as affordable units which represents 43% of the overall housing provision. This is an enhanced level over the policy requirement in

recognition of the high level of need for such housing that exists in rural areas such as this, as well as the difficulty in delivering such housing opportunities.

- 6.32 The proposed tenure mix is 4 affordable rental units and 2 shared ownership units, although subject to discussions with the LPA these maybe offered as First Homes. The units, Plots 1-6 in the northern area of site, include 2x 2 bed and 4 x 3 bed dwellings. These properties are identified as being in greatest need by both the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan. This element of the proposal also complies with Policy BSC 3 of the Local Plan.
- 6.33 With such a significant level of affordable housing need within the district, the delivery of 6 new affordable homes represents a very significant public benefit associated with the proposal. Furthermore, no affordable housing has been delivered at Kirtlington for a significant period of time nor have any other sites come forward recently offering such housing opportunities.
- 6.34 The applicant intends to ensure that the affordable homes are prioritised for existing local residents with such housing needs. A mechanism to achieve this will be discussed with the Local Planning Authority and relevant Registered Provider during the planning application process.

### **Character and Appearance**

- 6.35 The application site is well contained visually from surrounding areas through a combination of the existing built form of Jersey Cottages, the boundary wall along the Heyford Road, and the trees and vegetation on the site's boundary.
- 6.36 Jersey Cottages lie within the settlement limits and their arrangement is odds with those on the opposite side of the Heyford Road, facing onto the access road rather than the main road. The Jersey Cottages are also of a low aesthetic quality and not considered to reflect positive characteristics of the surrounding built environment.
- 6.37 On the opposite side of the road properties align the Heyford Road but extends in depth in the case of Foxtowns Green and Akeman Close, being up to three properties deep and in a cul-de-sac arrangement.

- 6.38 Surrounding properties are typically two storeys in height, but do include single storey bungalows. A number of these dwellings have dormer windows on the front roof slopes and common materials include Cotswold stone, stone tiles and slate.
- 6.39 The application seeks to reflect these characteristics of this part of Kirtlington, being two storey properties constructed from local common materials and to a traditional architectural design. The scheme is also designed to positively engage with their surroundings where possible, facing onto the Heyford Road and adjoining open land.
- 6.40 The density of development follows that established in this part of the village at 25 dwellings per hectare is appropriate for its edge of settlement context. This excludes the extensive areas of open space which serve to screen the development proposal.
- 6.41 Accompanying the application is a Landscape and Visual Technical Note (LVTN) providing an assessment of the landscape and visual effects of the proposed development. It identifies that the site forms a later addition to the park and is not part of the historic landscape and so has a markedly different character to the adjoining parkland.
- 6.42 The LVTN highlights that there is limited intervisibility with the site from publicly accessible locations including the park due to a combination of land form, built form and the mature vegetation structure surrounding the site and in the localised setting. It therefore makes a limited contribution in terms of open land on the settlement edge and to the character of the wider listed parkland.
- 6.43 The existence of Jersey Cottages has a negative effect upon the site's openness, tranquillity and rural qualities which exert a domestic character on the field, whilst the internal components of the site are considered to offer limited value in terms of landscape. It is also negatively influenced by the modern built elements to the north of Home Farm.
- 6.44 In landscape terms, the site is assessed as being capable of accommodating a small scale residential development in keeping with other recent developments. Whilst its development will inevitably have a landscape impact, this harm is limited to the site and its immediate setting only which will not be significant and can be adequately mitigated.

- 6.45 The scheme is considered to represent a sensitively designed proposal which has purposely avoided extending any further north and wrapping development around the existing properties to minimise its impact. The design, scale, form and layout of the proposal would form a logical complement to the existing scale, pattern and character of development within Kirtlington and would not be out of context.
- 6.46 In this respect, the LVTN concludes that the proposal is supportable from a landscape and visual perspective. It is therefore considered the application complies with Policy ESD 13 of the Local Plan, and policies PSD 4 and PSD 5 of the Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan.

### **Design**

- 6.47 The scale and massing of the properties at two storeys and with traditional architectural detailing, accords with the general vernacular of the area. The properties will be built with locally common and high quality materials, including Cotswold stone and slate on the roof so as to ensure the delivery of a high quality development proposal.
- 6.48 Ensuring that the amenity of adjoining residential properties is maintained has been fully considered in the design of this scheme. The proposed properties are positioned in a manner which does not harm the amenity of the existing Jersey Cottages.
- 6.49 Each of the proposed dwellings will be provided with private garden areas of at least 10m depth and with a good level of amenity. It is the intention that these gardens will be fully landscaped with native plant species with further new landscaping throughout the development on the areas of open space.
- 6.50 The retained open space to the east, south and west will act as a multi-functional green space both to deliver biodiversity enhancements through extensive new planting of native plant species, and for drainage purposes with the creation of a new pond to act as storage for surface water runoff.
- 6.51 The layout of the proposal has been arranged to positively engage with public areas surrounding the development including the Heyford Road and retained open spaces. This design approach of active frontages maximises natural surveillance from the properties onto the public realm within the site, helping to minimise the opportunities for criminal activity within the area.

6.52 Overall, this proposal is considered a sympathetically designed and high quality residential scheme which is responsive to the local design context and in keeping with the character and form of the built edge of Kirtlington. In design terms, the proposal accords with Policy ESD 15 of the Local Plan, as well as the Cherwell Residential Design Guide and Policy PSD 5 of the Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan.

### **Heritage**

6.53 The application site is located within the Kirtlington Conservation Area and Kirtlington Park, a Grade II Registered Park and Garden, and also lies in close proximity to a number of listed properties. A Heritage Statement has therefore been prepared to accompany this application which includes a Significance Assessment to identify the relative heritage value of the site and surrounding assets, together with an Impact Assessment of the development proposal.

6.54 The Statement evidences that the application site originally formed part of the 'Town Green' of Kirtlington and did not form part of the historic parkland, but was brought into the same ownership as Kirtlington Park in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It remained though outside the north-western boundary of the landscaped park itself being a peripheral land area with an indirect relationship with Kirtlington Park.

6.55 The site was included in the designation of the Registered Park and Gardens in 1995, although it is understood that this involved the direct intervention of the then owner of Kirtlington Park, Christopher Buxton.

6.56 The significance of the individual heritage assets have been evaluated within the Heritage Statement, with Figure 30 in the Statement visually illustrating where the values and significance lies. It is materially relevant that the proposed development is restricted to the area adjoining Jersey Cottages that has been assessed as being of low significance overall.

6.57 The scheme has been positioned around the existing Jersey Cottages which is considered the least sensitive part of the site so as to maintain the site's openness as much as possible, together with providing sufficient separation with adjoining Home Farm.

6.58 The impact of the development proposal on heritage assets has been assessed as ‘less than substantial harm’ which means that the application will not cause effects that will involve substantial losses of significance. Furthermore, the proposal will deliver a heritage benefit in the form of a commitment to repair and reinstate the boundary wall which is a notable feature of both the Conservation Area and listed park which helps counter such harm. Overall, the application is considered to comply with Policy ESD 15 of the Local Plan.

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

6.59 The scheme proposes to upgrade the existing access off the Heyford Road to make it suitable to accommodate the additional traffic movements generated by the proposed development. These works will include a widening of the access to 5.5m with a 2m footway on the southern side but narrowed to 1.5m alongside the existing boundary wall.

6.60 The access is maintained as a simple priority ‘T’ junction onto the Heyford Road, with ATC surveys establishing a minimum visibility splay of 49.2m to the left of egress, and 43.1m to the right of egress. These splays are achievable requiring removal and realignment of some existing boundary wall, but does not rely upon third party land and hence a safe means of access into and out of the site is deliverable.

6.61 Two separate pedestrians accesses are proposed onto the Heyford Road, with one alongside the access and a further separate footpath to the south of the proposed dwellings. Both involve the formation of uncontrolled crossings to enable safe access to the existing footpath on the opposite side of the Heyford Road which provides access to Kirtlington’s facilities.

6.62 Kerb side refuse collections are planned within the development with tracking having been carried out confirming that a 11.6m refuse vehicle is able to access the site, turn and exit without issue. Where waste collection points are proposed, drag and carry distances conform with the prescribed guidelines.

6.63 The level of parking provision within the scheme accords with Oxfordshire County Council’s residential parking standards, requiring a maximum of 2 allocated parking spaces for 2, 3 and 4+ bedroom properties. A total of 30 parking spaces are proposed across the site, inclusive of 5 dedicated visitor spaces, in a combination of garages and surface

parking. This provision is considered compliant with Policy PH5 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

6.64 It also includes a parking space for no.2 Jersey Cottages as the other existing properties can all demonstrate they will have 2 onplot parking spaces. This proposed parking space immediately adjoins no.2 so is conveniently located for the residents.

6.65 The scheme makes provision for cycle parking to encourage modal shift within the development, with each property to be provided with two cycle spaces per bedroom. These will be positioned in secure and accessible locations within the plots, either within proposed garages or sheds in the gardens.

6.66 The scale of this proposal means that it will not give rise to a significant level of traffic movements, with the traffic impact of the development on the local road network assessed as imperceptible.

6.67 The application site occupies a sustainable location with regular bus services to Oxford and Bicester available in close proximity, whilst mainline rail services are within acceptable cycling distance too. The village also offers a range of facilities to meet residents day to day needs. In this respect, the proposal accords with Policy PSD 1 of the Local Plan.

### **Flood Risk and Drainage**

6.68 An analysis of the site suggests it is at very low risk of flooding from river, reservoir and ground water sources.

6.69 As part of this proposal, ground condition testing has been carried out to assess the feasibility of infiltration drainage. This confirmed that overlying ground conditions on the site is Oxford clay formation, with poor infiltration qualities and largely impermeable. Therefore, soakaways do not form a viable solution for this site.

6.70 A watercourse exists some 300m to the south of the site which currently receives surface water runoff from the site. A drainage system to replicate this arrangement is proposed which maintains discharge from the site as greenfield run off rates.

- 6.71 The proposed surface water drainage strategy involves the inclusion of porous surfaced systems such as permeable paving and porous asphalt into roads and driveways, discharging attenuated flows into a newly constructed pond in the south east corner whereupon water will distribute over a wider area toward the ditch.
- 6.72 In terms of foul drainage, a foul sewer exists within the Heyford Road, and it is anticipated that this development will connect into this system via a gravity flow. Thames Water has confirmed that sufficient capacity exists to accommodate the additional flows from the proposed development.
- 6.73 Overall, the scheme is considered to accord with Policies ESD 6 and ESD 7 of the Local Plan.

### **Ecology**

- 6.74 The application site has been subject of an up to date ecological survey to assess existing habitats and a condition assessment for undertaking a biodiversity net gain calculation. The survey identified that it is largely made up of improved grassland with areas of semi natural broadleaf woodland along the southern and western boundaries.
- 6.75 The area proposed for development is not considered a valued habitat or suitable for protected species such as reptiles or great crested newts. The more valuable woodland habitat offers potential nesting and foraging opportunities for protected species, and is being retained and enhanced within the proposal.
- 6.76 The scheme will incorporate a number of measures to create new habitat opportunities on the site to secure biodiversity enhancements. These will include using native plant species in proposed landscaping, including fruit trees and wildflowers in the areas of open space, and features such as swift and bat boxes built into the proposed new dwellings.
- 6.77 A biodiversity assessment of the proposal has been carried out confirming that the scheme will deliver +3.23 habitat units and providing a near 20% positive improvement over existing which is double the policy target of 10%. This is a significant benefit of the proposal and ensures it is in compliance with Policies ESD 10 and ESD 11 of the Local Plan.



## **Arboriculture**

- 6.78 As part of this proposal, a tree survey has been carried out to assess the arboricultural quality of the existing trees on the site. This survey has confirmed that the tree stock within the site is generally of a good quality with a number of Category A specimens, with the majority Category B and some Category C trees.
- 6.79 The proposal has been designed to minimise arboricultural impacts in recognition of the value of these existing trees. Only three trees adjoining the access are proposed for removal, together with two domestic hedges and an area of low quality scrub. These trees are unremarkable specimens and their loss will not be harmful toward the character of the area.
- 6.80 All other existing trees will be retained and their relationship with the introduced development is considered entirely sustainable in arboricultural terms. Where some limited root incursion is unavoidable, cellular confinement systems will be used to minimise disturbance. Protective measures will also be installed during the construction phase to ensure no harm arises to these existing trees.
- 6.81 To offset the minor loss, extensive new planting is proposed across the site as indicated on the accompanying Landscape Strategy Plan which includes the planting of a significant number of large canopy bearing trees as well as domestic scale trees. The scheme will deliver a positive net gain in tree numbers, canopy cover and associated amenity benefit.
- 6.82 This application is also accompanied by a Woodland Management Plan setting out how the existing woodland can be positively managed to improve its longevity, resilience and contribution toward biodiversity. The management programme extends over a period of 25 years and includes such measures as pruning, restocking and coppicing.
- 6.83 In light of the above, this proposal is considered to accord with Policies ESD 10 and 13 of the Cherwell Local Plan.

## **Sustainability**

- 6.84 The proposed development has been designed with the objective of ensuring dwellings achieve high environmental standards, and that minimise their resource requirements during the lifetime of the home.
- 6.85 In achieving this, proposed measures include an enhanced specification of building fabric through a combination of upgraded materials and increased insulation, reducing the space heating requirements of the properties.
- 6.86 Renewable technologies are also proposed for inclusion within the properties including solar PV on the roof and PV diverters, helping to meet some of the energy needs of the homeowners. Other features to reduce energy demand include low-E light fixtures and waste water heat recovery systems. Overall, these measures should ensure compliance with Part L building regulations to achieve at least a 31% reduction in carbon emissions.
- 6.87 Water efficiency has also been considered in the design of the properties, with the ambition that no more than 110 litre of potable water is consumed by each resident per day. Measures to achieve this include dual flush WCs, low flow rate taps and efficient specification domestic appliances.
- 6.88 The proposal intends to install EV charging infrastructure for each dwelling to encourage the transition to nil / low emission transport. Each plot will be provided with EV charging points so that it is readily available to residents to use when required.
- 6.89 It is the ambition that this application will represent a sustainable form of development with a limited carbon footprint. The application is considered to comply with Policies ESD 1, ESD 2 and ESD 3 of the Local Plan.

## **Archaeology**

- 6.90 As part of the previous applications on the site, archaeological evaluations were carried out on the land in 2016 by Cotswold Archaeology including a geophysical survey and trial trenching.
- 6.91 Despite the archaeological and historical background of the site, the evaluation unearthed little evidence of anything of archaeological importance. The evaluation was submitted

as part of these previous applications which satisfied the requirements of the County Archaeologist. As the field evaluation has previously been completed confirming no identifiable archaeological constraints, it follows that this proposal is also acceptable in archaeological terms.

### **Planning Obligations**

- 6.92 The development will have an impact upon local infrastructure and thus create a need for financial contributions for certain infrastructure and services to mitigate its impact and make it acceptable in planning terms. Such contributions will though need to meet the defined tests and comply with the CIL regulations.
- 6.93 The application proposes affordable housing which will need to be secured via a legal agreement, together with any financial contributions considered necessary. The Council's pre-application response offered no detail in terms of potential contributions but may include provisions for offsite sport and recreation, education and bus services. It is expected that these matters will be clarified and negotiated with the LPA during the course of the planning application process.

## 7.0 Summary and Planning Balance

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- 7.1 This Statement has been prepared by Abbeymill Homes in support of its full planning application for the erection of 14 two storey dwellings, on land east of the Heyford Road, Kirtlington.
- 7.2 The application site comprises grazing land that immediately adjoins the settlement edge, and is well contained visually from surrounding areas. It is sustainably located at a Category A service village which represent the most sustainable rural settlements in the district.
- 7.3 Whilst the site falls within the extent of the listed parkland, it forms a later addition as the land was not part of the historic boundary of the park evidenced by its markedly different character. The existence of extensive landscape belts means it also does not form part of the landscape setting for Kirtlington House, whilst residential development has already been established on the site.
- 7.4 Submission of this application follows a lengthy design process to ensure a sensitively designed scheme which is acceptable in landscape and heritage terms. It also includes significant public benefits which weigh in favour of the proposal.
- 7.5 Under the Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan, Kirtlington is required to deliver 17 dwellings although to date delivery of any new homes has yet to occur. Kirtlington is relatively constrained whilst this proposal is of sufficient scale to offer the opportunity to deliver a wide range of housing opportunities to help meet the needs of the local community.
- 7.6 The applicant also considers that the Local Planning Authority does not currently maintain sufficient housing land supply, triggering the tilted balance in accordance with Paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF. This is however tempered by the application site forming a designated heritage asset but remains a material consideration.
- 7.7 In weighing up this application, paragraph 8 of the NPPF refers to three mutually dependent dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. In relation to this application, these are assessed as follows:

- **Economic:** the construction of the proposed houses will provide a source of employment in the short term and an economic boost to local suppliers. Once constructed, the additional population will increase the level of expenditure in the local economy supporting the vitality and viability of local services. The Council will also benefit financially securing additional funding through the New Homes Bonus. These economic benefits will be of moderate positive weight;
- **Social:** the proposal will contribute towards boosting the supply of housing in an area with significant affordability issues, and a background of housing under-delivery and a current land supply deficit. It will meet a particularly acute housing need in the district for smaller family housing opportunities, and offers choice beyond large scale volume development sites as a small bespoke residential scheme. This is of substantial positive weight.

It will also deliver an enhanced level of affordable housing which the LPA acknowledge as a key issue for the district. As a windfall site that can be delivered relatively quickly and within 5 years, great weight should be afforded towards its development in accordance with national planning guidance. Substantial positive weight should also be attributed towards this social benefits of the scheme.

Financial contributions that will be secured from this proposal that will deliver local infrastructure improvements. This is of moderate positive weight.

- **Environmental** – the scheme will ensure the positive future management of existing woodland on the site, together with its enhancement through new planting. Environmental benefits will also be secured through the delivery of a net gain in onsite biodiversity, together with the repair and reinstatement of the boundary wall. These benefits are individually of modest positive weight.

Countering this is the limited harm to the character of the area that will arise through the change of use of open land to built form. However, residential development is already established on this land area which significantly influences its character. It is visually very well contained, plus the sensitive nature of the proposal combined with the proposed mitigation, will ensure that any effects are not significant and are no more than of moderate negative weight.

The harm to designated heritage assets has been subject to detailed evaluation and assessed as 'less than substantial harm' or no more than moderate negative impact in the planning balance given the sensitively designed nature of the proposal.

In concluding on the planning balance, the benefits identified significantly outweigh any harm arising from the proposal when assessed against the policies of the development plan and Framework as a whole. Therefore any robust planning balancing exercise would determine that the public benefits of this proposal outweigh any identifiable harm, and hence planning permission should be granted for this planning application.