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**Application No: 16/02446/F**  
**Heyford Park Phase 9: Erection of 297 residential dwellings**

Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan Forum wishes to comment on the above planning application.

As you know, the applicants – Dorchester Group – are an associate member of our Forum, and we have discussed the proposals openly in their presence. It is accepted that the Full Member organisations – the 11 parish councils – as the majority group in the Forum, have the right to make their views known on matters affecting Heyford Park, acknowledging Dorchester’s potential conflict of interest.

While the Forum is broadly supportive of the provision of housing in this Phase of the overall development, we have the following concerns:

**1. Absence of overall scheme and design code.** We consider that the recent abandonment of the “Masterplan” for Heyford Park means that each element of development submitted for approval now does so in the absence of an overarching scheme for the physical planning of the site. This in turn means that a consistent approach to high quality design, for example, is no longer governed by a design code, as had been the case for previous housing phases.

Although we appreciate that there are general statements in the Local Plan Villages 5 policy, the statement there that “a comprehensive integrated approach will be expected” is not supported by the detailed planning and development criteria that we assume would have been in place had a “Masterplan” been completed. There is a risk that this application, and future ones, is reliant on yourself and other officers effectively policing the detail without recourse to agreed documents which require high standards and are in the public domain. This is perhaps the major strategic development site in the District, but it does not seem to us that it is now being treated any differently to any other application from a developer elsewhere in the District. That cannot be what was originally intended by the phrase, and we have serious concerns about what will result.

As practical examples of this concern, we note a number of points from your Urban Design colleague: we agree with him that the construction design and landscaping should be sympathetic to the historical ambience of the cold war site. Instead, the scheme as now designed could be anywhere. This is not good enough. We also agree that three-storey buildings on this conspicuous

and non-central site are inappropriate. We completely endorse Mr. Acton's comments regarding the missed opportunity to design this scheme with a more contemporary approach. However, as it stands, as we have already said, this development looks as though it could be anywhere, and has no references to the local vernacular or to the site's history; we particularly agree with his comments about chimneys. We also consider that the buffer zone planting should be deeper than is currently proposed. Our emerging neighbourhood plan policy PH05 recommends refusal for rear parking courts, a point also made by your urban designer.

**2. Affordable Housing.** Local Plan Policy Villages 5 states that there must be "at least 30% affordable housing". The scheme proposes 89 of 297 dwellings as affordable. This is 29.9% rather than 30%. In our view the spirit of the policy requires that Dorchester should err on the side of just exceeding 30% rather than just missing it. This may seem a petty comment, but we put it forward because it is perhaps indicative of an attitude towards provision of affordable housing that is reluctant rather than supportive. In addition, MCNP's emerging policy PH02 states that for proposals of 11 or more dwellings there should be a minimum of 35% affordable housing, as is the case across the rest of the neighbourhood area, in line with Local Plan Policy BSC3. Until the MCNP is formally adopted this proposed policy is of course not enforceable, but we would like its spirit to be respected in the current application. We take the view that the phrase "at least 30%" includes the possibility of "a minimum of 35%", and does not contradict it.

**3. Adopted roads.** We consider that it is most undesirable that the loop road on the westernmost edge of the site is not designed to adoptable standards. The implications of this should be spelt out by the applicants.

Whilst the MCNP Forum does not wish to formally object to the application, we would wish to see further development of the scheme taking into account our comments, and a satisfactory level of improvement on these matters before permission is granted.

Yours sincerely,

Martin Lipson  
Chairman.