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# Planning Statement

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Application for Outline Planning Permission for up to 38 dwellings and associated access

Land off Fewcott Road, Fritwell

On behalf of CALA Homes (Chiltern) Ltd

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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared by Savills on behalf of CALA Homes (Chiltern) Ltd in support of an outline planning application for the erection of up to 38 dwellings and associated access at land off Fewcott Road, Fritwell.
- 1.2. This Statement provides an assessment of the proposed development against the Development Plan for Cherwell District Council, including the Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan, and relevant material considerations including the National Planning Policy Framework and planning history for the site.
- 1.3. In the preparation of this outline application, the proposal has been the subject of considerable pre-application engagement with officers. Three separate pre-application meetings have taken place – once in August 2016, once in September 2017, and again in September 2018. Discussions have, on each occasion, focused on the principle of development alongside specific matters of detailed design. The second round of pre-application engagement specifically sought to address matters raised by officers in September 2017. At the point of submission, the Applicant considers that any outstanding matters of principle, or those of technical disciplines, are now resolved. The proposed design scheme has also been presented to Fritwell Parish Council in November 2018. A summary of pre-application engagement is provided at Chapter 4, with assessment of the proposed development set against relevant planning policies at Chapter 6.
- 1.4. This planning application is accompanied by the following documents:
  - Planning application forms;
  - Planning Statement, prepared by Savills;
  - Design and Access Statement, prepared by CALA Homes Ltd
  - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, prepared by Lockhart Garratt;
  - Extended Phase 1 Ecological Survey Report, prepared by Lockhart Garratt;
  - Arboricultural Impact Assessment, prepared by Lockhart Garratt;
  - Archaeological Desk Based Assessment, prepared by CgMs Consulting;
  - Flood Risk Assessment, prepared by Glaville
  - Transport Statement, prepared by mode transport planning
- 1.5. The following plans have also been prepared to support the application:
  - Site Location Plan
  - Illustrative Site Layout (Rev H)
- 1.6. The above documents should be read alongside the Planning Statement and the planning application forms in order that a comprehensive understanding of the proposal is obtained.
- 1.7. Overall, this proposal is considered to represent a sustainable form of development which is consistent with the relevant provisions of the development plan and the NPPF and one which will deliver quality residential development.

## 2. The Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.1. The site is currently greenfield land to the south-eastern edge of Fritwell. Fritwell lies between the two market towns of Banbury (to the North West) and Bicester (to the South East) approximately 3 miles from junction 10 of the M40 motorway.
- 2.2. The site comprises circa 1.6 ha and is currently used for agricultural purposes, and contains an allotment, paddocks, manège and an informal arrangement of outbuildings adjacent to Fewcott Road. The south eastern extent of the site area is defined by established trees and a hedgerow running adjacent to the vehicular access to Lodge Farm Fishing Lakes. A range of farm buildings associated with Lodge Farm are located to the south west of the site immediately beyond the intervening paddocks. Residential development at Hodgson Close is located beyond the trees and hedgerow forming the north western boundary. The settlement contains a number of existing facilities and resources including the existing primary school, village hall, and public house.
- 2.3. No part of the total site area is subject to any landscape or heritage designations and contains no listed buildings. Fritwell Conservation Area (designated in 1988) falls beyond the east of the site, beyond the site's boundary for Hodgson Close. The majority of the settlement falls within the boundary of the Conservation Area.
- 2.4. According to available resources, the site falls within Flood Zone 1, indicating a low flood risk.
- 2.5. Access is currently taken from Fewcott Road through an un-made gated vehicular access. which lies close to the built up edge of the village where excellent visibility and improved pedestrian access can be provided.

### 3. Planning History and Pre-Application Engagement

- 3.1. Planning history for the site relates to two separate but adjacent parcels. The site (previously promoted as two separate parcels) has been previously assessed as part of the HELAA/SHLAA process, with officers assigning an indicative capacity of 42 dwellings (HELAA 131 and 133). The HELAA concludes that should additional greenfield land be required at Fritwell to meet Cherwell's housing needs, it could be suitable if it is part of a comprehensive scheme incorporating site HELAA 131 and 133, as this would enable a development better related to the existing development and more accessible to Fewcott Road to the north. The HELAA outlines indicative capacity of circa 42 dwellings in total across both parcels (32 dwellings, and 10 dwellings respectively). This position reflects the assessment of the sites in the earlier 2014 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Update, where the sites were assessed under references FR016 and FR017
- 3.2. A planning application for the erection of 34 dwellings with associated access and infrastructure (16/01594/F) was submitted in August 2016 on the basis of a second application across the adjacent site for an additional 9 dwellings. This application was withdrawn prior to determination in October 2016. A number of matters were raised in relation to this earlier application including its relationship to the adjoining parcel fronting Fewcott Road.

#### **Pre-application discussions - September 2017**

- 3.3. Following the withdrawal of the earlier planning application, a further request for pre-application advice was submitted in September 2017. An informal response from officers set out a number of matters to be addressed. Officers raised some concern both regarding the sustainability credentials of the site, and regarding the potential of the site to result in a net loss of biodiversity based on the value of habitat lost against that retained or proposed. Primarily, officers raised concern regarding the need for comprehensive development combining the two adjacent parcels, which at that point had not been proposed for development in tandem. Officers were clear that *"the schemes have clearly not been design to integrate successfully in urban design terms...and would be unlikely to receive a favourable recommendation from officers"*. It was made clear that:

*"it is essential that the two sites come forward as one so that a comprehensive scheme can be designed to deliver a strong relationship with Fewcott Road and links between new and existing housing. The two sites together would enable a better size and shape of site to achieve this".*

- 3.4. This earlier raised matters are considered to have been fully addressed at this stage principally through the submission of a single planning application submission for the whole parcel. The Applicants have sought to respond positively to matters raised in discussions with the Council.

## Pre-application discussions – September 2018

- 3.5. Following the acquisition of the former Oxfordshire County Council land fronting Fewcott Road, further pre-application discussions were held with Mr Matthew Parry in September 2018. The position agreed with officers is that there remains some planning policy support for residential development at the site, or part thereof, subject to the specific quantum proposed. This is based upon the identification of Fritwell in the Category A villages, the support for development in Fritwell as part of the emerging Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan, and other planning benefits which may come forward. It was furthermore agreed with officers that detail of the quantum of development would be important in presenting a comprehensive and appropriately designed scheme. It was also agreed that detailed technical inputs would be required in bringing a scheme forward. Responses to these pre-application discussions are set out in Chapter 6 of this Statement.

## Engagement with Fritwell Parish Council

- 3.6. In addition, Fritwell Parish Council have earlier resolved that it would support the residential development on this land. The Parish Council's support has been predicated largely on the need to provide further family housing on the site to sustain village facilities in particular the village shop/post office and the school that is now half empty. There is a reported perception locally that without some additional housing in the village these key facilities that underpin village life will be lost creating a wholly unsustainable community. This is reflected in the supporting text to the Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan, specifically in relation to the Category A Villages such as Fritwell.
- 3.7. A public consultation event was held in respect of the 2016 planning application, with a summary of responses set out as follows:

**Number of attendees: 63**

**Number of feedback forms received: 31 (2 forms received online so no answer to Q1-4)**

## Sentiment Scorings

1. Do you agree that more homes are required within the district to meet local housing need?

<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
12	12	2	1	2
41.4%	41.4%	6.9%	3.4%	6.9%

2. Do you agree that more affordable homes are needed locally?

<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
10	15	1	2	1
34.5%	51.8%	3.4%	6.9%	3.4%

3. Are you in favour of the development proposals outlined today?

<b>Yes</b>	18	62.1%
<b>No</b>	8	27.6%
<b>No Answer</b>	3	10.3%

4. Are you in support of the mix of house types proposed for the site?

<b>Yes</b>	16	55.2%
<b>No</b>	10	34.5%
<b>Don't Know/unsure</b>	3	10.3%

3.8. This position was reinforced in November 2018, where the Applicant presented the design scheme to Fritwell Parish Council. At this more recent meeting with the Parish Council, questions focused on the specific housing mix of the proposal, including the proportion of affordable housing, and matters of design and scale. On balance and in line with the above, we consider there to be a level of support in principle for the delivery of a mix of dwellings in Fritwell subject to detailed technical consideration.

## 4. The Proposed Development

- 4.1. The proposed development would deliver 38 dwellings across the site. In responding to earlier officer comments relating to application 16/01594/F this proposal would deliver a comprehensive development in one site. These plans also demonstrate proposed parking, open space, and links to Fewcott Road.
- 4.2. The scheme would comprise a mix of housing types with one, two, three and four bedroom homes, including some flats and bungalows together with a number of reasonably sized family houses that will attract families and support local facilities. Specific details of materials to be used would be provided in due course, and would closely reflect local style and vernacular as appropriate.
- 4.3. The scheme has evolved considerably over a period of three years, a direct result of extensive pre-application engagement with officers and liaison with the local parish council. A summary of the design evolution as it relates to the proposed development is set out as follows:

Illustrative Layout – May 2016	This scheme was submitted as part of the earlier planning application, comprising 34 dwellings across an area of 1.3ha. The application was to be considered in conjunction with an adjacent scheme to the Fewcott Road frontage.
Illustrative Layout – August 2018	The Fewcott Road frontage was acquired by the Applicant in 2018, allowing for a more comprehensive scheme incorporating a more logical access and site layout plan. This revised scheme yielded 43 dwellings across the site.
Illustrative Layout – October 2018	Following pre-application discussions, the site layout was again revised to better respond to the immediate site context. This results in 38 proposed dwellings.



- 4.4. Whilst proposed at outline, the above design evolution demonstrates how a quality development could be brought forward at the site in a manner consistent with relevant planning policies.



## 5. Affordable Housing Statement

- 5.1. As part of this full planning application, a mix of dwellings is proposed in a manner considered consistent with the relevant provisions of adopted planning policies for the District.
- 5.2. The proposed development would deliver 13 affordable dwellings, 35 % of the total dwellings proposed.
- 5.3. This includes provision of both affordable rent and shared ownership. The mix of unit sizes has been the subject of previous discussions with officers, and draws on the previous consultation response submitted to the previous Planning Application. The affordable housing units would be transferred to a registered social provider at the appropriate stage in accordance with the requirements set out in the Section 106 agreement.

## 6. Planning Policy

- 6.1. The Development Plan comprises the saved policies of the 1996 adopted Cherwell Local Plan (CLP 1996) and the 2015 adopted Cherwell Local Plan (CLP) (2011- 2031) Part 1.

### ***Adopted Cherwell District Local Plan Part 1***

- 6.2. The Cherwell District Local Plan Part 1 (2011-2031) was adopted on 20th July 2015. The following paragraphs set out the policies that are considered to be most relevant to this proposal.
- 6.3. Policy BSC1 relates to the district wide housing distribution and states that Cherwell District will deliver a wide choice of high quality homes by providing for 22,840 additional dwellings between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2031. 1,106 completions were recorded between 2011 and 2014 leaving 21,734 homes to be provided between 2014 and 2031.
- 6.4. The supporting text for Policy BSC1 acknowledges that the National Planning Policy Framework seeks to boost significantly the supply of housing and deliver a wide choice of high quality homes. The supporting text to this policy also highlights that the Council is “committed to meeting housing needs and accelerating delivery”.
- 6.5. Policy BSC3 relates to affordable housing and states that, outside Bicester and Banbury, all proposed developments that include 11 or more dwellings (gross), will be expected to provide at least 35% of new housing as affordable homes on site. Policy BSC3 goes on to say that all qualifying developments will be expected to provide 70% of the affordable housing as affordable/social rented dwellings and 30% as other forms of intermediate affordable homes.
- 6.6. Policy ESD13 relates to local landscape protection and enhancement and states that opportunities will be sought to secure the enhancement of the character and appearance of the landscape, particularly in urban fringe locations, through the restoration, management or enhancement of existing landscapes, features or habitats and where appropriate the creation of new ones, including the planting of woodlands, trees and hedgerows.
- 6.7. Policy ESD15 relates to the character of the built and historic environment and states that new development will be expected to complement and enhance the character of its context through sensitive siting, layout and high quality design. Where development is in the vicinity of any of the District’s distinctive natural or historic assets, delivering high quality design that complements the asset will be essential.
- 6.8. Policy Villages 1 categorises the villages within the District in accordance with their sustainability credentials. Fritwell is included in ‘Category A’ having been deemed to be one of the more sustainable villages in the District.
- 6.9. Policy Villages 2 states that a total of 750 homes will be delivered at Category A villages, which includes Fritwell. This will be in addition to the rural allowance for small site ‘windfalls’ and planning permissions for 10 or more dwellings at 31 March 2014. The Policy states that this will principally involve the identification of sites of 10 or more dwellings within or outside the built-up limits of those villages

### ***Saved Policies of the Cherwell District Local Plan 1996***

- 6.10. The strategic policies contained in the Cherwell District Local Plan have largely been replaced by more up to date policy in the new Local Plan Part 1 2011-2031. However several policies which relate to the provision of new housing in the District have been 'saved'. These are highlighted below.
- 6.11. Saved Policy C8 states that sporadic new developments in the countryside will be resisted.
- 6.12. Saved Policy H18 relates to new dwellings in the countryside and states that planning permission will only be granted for the construction of new dwellings beyond the built-up limits in certain limited circumstances for example, where required in connection with agricultural undertakings.

### **Material Considerations**

#### *National Planning Policy Framework*

- 6.13. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was originally published in March 2012. While not formally part of the Development Plan, the NPPF is an important material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications. The NPPF emphasises the role that good design can play in the provision of Sustainable Development.
- 6.14. The NPPF was revised in 2018, and the revised NPPF came into force in respect of the determination of planning applications on 24 July 2018. Relevant sections of the NPPF are considered within the Planning Assessment section of this Planning Statement.

#### *Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan*

- 6.15. Residents voted for the adoption of the Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan (MCNP) on Thursday 21 March 2019 and policies in the plan are now a material consideration in the determination of planning applications within the plan area. As such, the MCNP is the most up to date development plan against which planning decisions should be made, and carries full weight in the determination of a given planning application.
- 6.16. Policies which we consider most relevant to the proposed development include:
- 6.17. Policy PD1 – Development at Category A Villages: this policy states that residential development proposals at Fritwell in the form of infill, conversion, and minor development will be supported in principle with the settlement areas. Outside of the settlement areas, residential development must have regard to the following criteria:
- a) The site should be 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.
  - c) The development should conserve and, where possible, enhance the landscape.
  - 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 (see Appendix K: Heritage and Character Assessment).
  - e) The development should not give rise to coalescence with any other nearby settlement.

- 6.18. Policy PD1 is clear that the total indicative number of additional dwellings permitted during the plan period either within the settlement areas of these villages, or adjacent to them, shall be approximately 25 for Fritwell, 17 for Kirtlington, and 20 for Steeple Aston.
- 6.19. Policy PD5 – Building and Site Design: this policy looks to secure a high standard of design which responds to the distinctive character of the settlement.
- 6.20. Policy PH1 – Open Market Housing Schemes: this policy seeks a mix of dwellings on all development proposals, and emphasises favour for homes with a smaller number of bedrooms. On the basis of the 2014 SHMA, in developments of 10 dwellings or more the indicative mix should be: 30% 1 or two bedrooms, 46% 3 bedrooms and no more than 24% with 4 bedrooms or more. Smaller schemes should aim for a similar mix where possible.
- 6.21. The site is not itself discussed or otherwise identified in the 'made' Neighbourhood Plan.

## 7. Planning Assessment

7.1. This section of the Planning Statement provides an assessment of the proposed development against the development plan, National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and any relevant material considerations for the application site. This section of the Statement addresses key planning issues arising from the proposal identified through the pre-application process and set out below.

7.2. This section is provided alongside relevant technical reports which have been submitted in support of this planning application. These reports should be read in conjunction with this Planning Statement.

### **Principle of Development**

7.3. Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) states that if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

7.4. Policy BSC1 of the adopted Local Plan Part 1 relates to the district wide housing distribution and states that Cherwell District will deliver a wide choice of high quality homes during the plan period up to 2031. The supporting text for Policy BSC1 acknowledges that the National Planning Policy Framework seeks to boost significantly the supply of housing and deliver a wide choice of high quality homes. The supporting text to this policy also highlights that the Council is “*committed to meeting housing needs and accelerating delivery*”. The proposed development is a significant opportunity for the delivery of housing in Fritwell, at a scale that can be delivered promptly upon receipt of planning permission, consistent with the thrust of relevant national guidance.

7.5. It is noted that the Local Plan states a clear need for Cherwell’s villages to sustainably contribute towards meeting the housing requirements identified in Policy BSC1. Policy Villages 1 of the adopted Local Plan Part 1 categorises the villages within the District in accordance with their sustainability credentials, as set out in the Settlement Hierarchy. Fritwell is included in ‘Category A’ having been deemed to be one of the more sustainable villages in the District. Fritwell’s identification as a Category A Village reflects its sustainability credentials as pertaining to new residential development. The application site is well located in Fritwell such that the proposed development would be well connected to the existing services and facilities within the village, including access to public transport provision. Given the location of the site adjacent to existing residential development, it is considered that the infrastructure necessary to support the development (particularly electricity and drainage) can be readily provided.

7.6. Policy Villages 2 of the adopted Local Plan states that a total of 750 homes will be delivered at Category A villages, which includes Fritwell, within or outside the built-up limits of those villages. The reason for this, suggested by Cherwell District Council, is: “*To boost housing supply to meet the new objectively assessed need*”. The proposed development clearly aligns with the principle of boosting housing supply, as reflected in both local and national planning policies. Paragraph 68 of the NPPF deals with small and medium sized sites, recognising their contribution to meeting the housing requirements of an area. Criterion (c) is clear that local authorities should support the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions – giving great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes. We submit that the proposed site is consistent with this provision, and should be viewed in this context.

- 7.7. Officers had raised previous concerns regarding the quantum of development proposed, namely whether the delivery of new homes at Fritwell would limit the Council's ability to respond to rural housing need in future years elsewhere, as part of the provisions of Policy Villages 2. Notwithstanding, the delivery of new homes in the district is wholly consistent with the Government's commitment to significantly boosting the supply of housing, wherein Chapter 5 of the NPPF emphasises the importance of a sufficient amount and variety of land come forwarded where it is needed. We refer to the recent appeal decision at Blackthorn Road, Launton which granted planning permission for 72 dwellings in September 2018 (APP/C3105/W/17/3188671) and, in so doing, explicitly acknowledged that relatively slow delivery of permissions granted in the Category A villages.
- 7.8. Whilst the 2017 Annual Monitoring Report for the district identifies that a total of 664 dwellings have been identified for meeting Policy Villages 2, by March there had only been 103 completions. The Appeal Inspector considered that the 750 figure related only to completed dwellings. Whilst the number of planning consents is reaching the 750 dwelling figure, completions are not. The Launton appeal decision makes clear that a delivery rate of only 34 dwellings per annum exists, which would not facilitate delivery of 750 dwellings in the Category A villages during the plan period. Evidently, there is continued need to provide for housing delivery in the Category A villages, particularly where delivery has been slower than anticipated.
- 7.9. Added to this, Fritwell has not had the benefit of recent development, and so has not seen the level of growth as have other such settlements in the district. Whilst development may have come forward, or at least been approved, in other Category A villages such as in Ambrosden, the same is not true of Fritwell where local facilities and services would benefit from additional local spend and proportionate growth. Fundamentally any concern regarding the enforcement of a 'cap' on housing numbers should not preclude the realisation of sustainable development, as such an approach would be in direct conflict with published national policy. The delivery of new homes at Fritwell would not itself be in conflict with the provisions of Policy Villages 2, simply as it would not result in exceeding any such 'cap'. Indeed the Launton appeal emphasised that *"...all parties accept that the headline figure (of 750 dwellings) is not a ceiling"*.
- 7.10. Policy Villages 2 furthermore indicates that sites for development in the Category A Villages will be identified through the local plan process, through neighbourhood plans, and through the determination of planning applications. In line with this, we note the provisions for growth at the Category A Villages as part of the Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan. At the time of writing, the MCNP has been subject to referendum and is now made. The MCNP is the most up to date development plan against which decisions should be made, and carries full weight in the determination of a given planning application.

- 7.11. Policy PD1 of the MCNP is clear that the indicative number of additional dwellings permitted during the plan period either within the settlement area of these villages, or adjacent to them, shall be approximately 25 for Fritwell. However the particular provisions of the MCNP relating to housing delivery at the Category A villages should be viewed only as a minimum requirement for housing delivery, in recognition of the role of the Category A villages in supporting housing delivery across the plan area and across the district as a whole. The MCNP itself acknowledges the flexibility of the plan, noting at paragraph 3.2.14 the potential of windfall development providing more dwellings over the plan period than explicitly identified. The MCNP recognises that the sustainability of the Category A villages can be fragile, and is linked partly to housing delivery. In this regard, the delivery of 38 dwellings should not be viewed as a disproportionate amount of housing for the village, but rather a reasonable amount of dwellings to support existing and future facilities and resources in the local area. We furthermore note earlier support from the Parish Council at various stages of the application preparation, given the potential for further development to better support existing services and facilities, enhancing the sustainability credentials of the village. Paragraph 78 of the NPPF is itself clear that planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. This is clearly articulated in the MCNP which seeks a commitment to sustainable development in the Category A villages. As such it is considered that there is policy support for this proposal for new housing in Fritwell.
- 7.12. Moreover, the HELAA makes clear reference to the adopted Local Plan which allows provision of some development (10 or more homes and small scale employment) at Category A villages. The HELAA concludes that should additional greenfield land be required at Fritwell to meet Cherwell's housing needs, it could be suitable if it is part of a comprehensive scheme incorporating site HELAA 131 and 133, as this would enable a development better related to the existing development and more accessible to Fewcott Road to the north. The HELAA outlines indicative capacity of circa 42 dwellings in total across both parcels (32 dwellings, and 10 dwellings respectively). This position reflects the assessment of the sites in the earlier 2014 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Update, where the sites were assessed under references FR016 and FR017. There is no reason to depart from the findings of the HELAA. The proposed development of 38 dwellings reflects the conclusions of the HELAA, and should be supported on this basis.
- 7.13. In consideration of the above matters, it is therefore considered that the principle of providing new housing in Fritwell is acceptable. The proposed development would provide valuable contribution to the delivery of housing in the district in a sustainable location, in accordance with the relevant policy provisions of both the adopted Local Plan and those of the Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan.
- 7.14. We note further in this Statement that there are no technical constraints which would preclude the delivery of the site for residential development. This is considered below, and should be weighed in the planning balance accordingly.

#### **Technical Matters**

- 7.15. Technical matters associated with the proposed development are hereafter assessed against the principles and relevant policies of the adopted Local Plan, alongside those of the NPPF and other such relevant planning policy documents. The following technical matters are considered hereafter:
- Design and layout
  - Ecology
  - Trees & arboriculture
  - Landscape



- Access & Highways
- Archaeology & heritage

### **Design and Layout**

- 7.16. The application has been submitted in outline with all matters other than access reserved for future consideration. Notwithstanding this the Illustrative Masterplan and the Design and Access Statement have been prepared to demonstrate how a development of up to 38 dwellings could be accommodated across the site.
- 7.17. The accompanying Design and Access Statement clearly analyses the existing character and setting of Fewcott Road and its immediate surroundings, and sets out the design principles which have informed the proposed development. Chapter 12 of the NPPF seeks to achieve high quality design, noting that good design is fundamental to sustainable development. Policy ESD15 of the Local Plan Part 1 is clear that new development should be respectful of its surrounding character, including through sensitive design, layout and siting. The proposed site layout has been substantially revised following pre-application discussions in September 2018, designs which were themselves the subject of substantial design revisions at the advice of officers during the earlier determination process for application 16/01594/F and subsequent pre-application discussions in September 2017.
- 7.18. Previous iterations of this request for pre-application advice have centred on two related (but separate) proposals for adjacent sites. The revised proposal responds to this with the provision of a single comprehensive scheme across both parcels, directly addressing officer's previous concerns which stated that *"...it is essential that the two sites come forward as one...to deliver a strong relationship with Fewcott Road"*. This key matter has been addressed.
- 7.19. Notwithstanding the above, officer advice previously sought a better mix of dwelling sizes, including smaller dwellings or two and three bedroom units, as well as a more even split of affordable and market housing. As noted elsewhere, the submitted plans reflect such changes, and the revised proposal offers a more varied layout and design approach as previously advised.
- 7.20. Pre-application discussions in September 2018 included for a number of design scheme revisions which sought to satisfy earlier recommendations from officers. These included:
- a comprehensive design layout, with a single access from Fewcott Road;
  - an appropriate mix of dwellings – 28 market dwellings (65%), 15 affordable dwellings (35%)
  - an appropriate mix of house types, including flats, bungalows, and houses;
  - a range of dwelling sizes, from 1 bed flats to 2, 3, and 4 bed houses, including bungalows;
  - a 'loop road' through the site to serve all dwellings and provide safe manoeuvring space through the site;
  - sufficient amenity space serving each dwellings;
  - soft landscaping to minimise the impact(s) of the development on the immediate site surroundings.
- 7.21. At the point of submission, the above design scheme has been further refined at the advice of officers. The following principles have been considered in detail, and inform the submitted proposed development:



*Efficient use of land:* developing a design with densities in line with the local and national indicative minimum levels as well as enhancing the natural features of the site.

*Housing Mix:* provision of an appropriate mix of housing to reflect the local demand, ranging from 1 bedroom apartments to 4 bedroom family rooms. The proposal also seeks to provide 35% affordable housing on-site, in line with prevailing local requirements.

*Sensitive layout design:* Provision of a safe and secure environment through the careful layout and structure of the development proposal, orientating frontages towards the streets, footpaths and spaces to achieve natural surveillance of the public realm.

- 7.22. Whilst the proposed development would result in the loss of a currently greenfield site, this should not in itself preclude development of a high quality scheme. External materials would reflect local character and appearance, and could be agreed with officers in due course. It is suggested that an external design approach could comfortably assimilate with surrounding development as required, allowing for a greater sense of local cohesiveness from a design perspective. Both Policy ESD15 as well as national policy in the NPPF promote the importance of local character and distinctiveness as part of good design. We consider that the provision of a single scheme across the whole site affords a stronger opportunity to deliver a more consistent and appropriate response to local character and distinctiveness.
- 7.23. The application provides the opportunity to secure a high quality development which will reflect and respond positively to the existing character of Fritwell, whilst also providing residential development to support local needs.

## **Ecology**

- 7.24. To support the application an Extended Phase 1 Survey was undertaken on 21st September 2018, as undertaken by Lockhart Garratt. The habitat within the Site consisted of buildings, hard-standing, improved and semi-improved grassland, scattered trees, hedgerows and tall ruderal vegetation.
- 7.25. The site is not subject to any specific ecological constraints, and it is considered that the existing use of the site for equestrian purposes reduces the potential ecological value of the site. Nevertheless, the development would retain existing boundary vegetation and trees and the proposed, additional tree planting, public open space and SuDS features present the opportunity for biodiversity enhancements. There is one Statutory site designated for its nature conservation interest within 2km of the Site, the Ardley Cutting and Quarry SSSI located approximately 0.9km to the south-west. The closest non-statutory designation of wildlife conservation interest is the Upper Heyford Airfield Local Wildlife Site, located 1.7km to the south of the Site. A range of protected mammal, amphibian and bird species were identified within 2km of the Site by the desk study. It is considered that, due to the distance between the site and any nearby designated areas, it is highly unlikely that any adverse impacts will result from the proposed development.
- 7.26. The supporting Ecological Survey report finds that subject to the implementation of the recommendations and enhancements set out, the redevelopment of the site will not result in adverse impacts and can attain an overall net gain in biodiversity provision on site.
- The recommendations are set out in the accompanying suite survey report, and include for:
  - A sensitive schedule of clearance and construction works, outside of the main bird breeding season;

- Habitat manipulation, to safeguard any reptiles present in the site;
- The incorporation of native species on site, through an appropriate landscaping scheme; and
- The provision of bat and bird boxes

7.27. As such, it is considered that the development would not have any significant adverse impact on heritage or wildlife assets. We consider on balance that, subject to detailed mitigation to be agreed with officers, that the provisions of paragraph 170 of the NPPF are, and can be, fully satisfied insofar as the proposed development can effectively conserve, and where possible, enhance the natural environment.

### **Trees and Arboriculture**

7.28. An Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) has been prepared by Lockhart Garratt to support the application and proposed development. A Tree Constraints Plan is also submitted alongside the application, along with a technical note. This AIA recognises that construction activities pose a threat to subject trees if treated inappropriately, assesses the likely impacts of the proposals on the tree stock and where appropriate, provides mitigation with the view of achieving a harmonious relationship between the trees and the built form.

7.29. The AIA identifies a total of 33 trees, groups of trees and hedgerows within the site. This includes for 10 moderate quality trees (Category B), 20 low quality trees (Category C), and 3 poor quality trees (Category U).

7.30. Of these, the proposed development will require the loss of 8 such arboricultural features, of which 2 would be recommended for removal given their current condition. 6 features would be removed owing to the direct influence of the proposed design scheme; each of which is characterised as being of low quality. It is considered that the removal of these trees will have only a negligible impact on the visual amenity of the site, due to the presence of existing higher quality trees on the site boundary. As per both the AIA and supporting Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, it is noted that the removal of trees to facilitate this design proposal will not have an adverse impact on the landscape character of the site and therefore is not considered further within this report.

7.31. Specifically, the proposal has been designed to ensure the incorporation and retention of those trees of better quality. The aim has been to utilise trees as key features of the site to create a harmonious relationship between the new built structures and existing natural infrastructure. Where retention of trees has not been possible, replacement planting has been proposed to ensure a net gain in canopy cover and biodiversity benefit. The new planting has potential for greater longevity within the landscape and will enhance the species diversity for the site, whilst also contributing to the green infrastructure for the area. Accordingly, the proposed development is in accordance with relevant provisions of the adopted local plan including policies ESD10 and ESD13, which deal with tree retention, loss, new development and landscape quality respectively.

7.32. Further to the above, and in line with the submitted AIA, we consider that a suitably worded condition can secure any mitigation measures which would be required to minimise harm and ensure safe, long-term retention to trees. This approach will ensure that the key arboricultural features that offer habitat and amenity value are preserved. In light of the above and having regard to the conclusions of the Arboricultural Impact Assessment it is considered that the proposed development would be consistent with the relevant requirements of the Local Planning Authority.

## **Landscape**

- 7.33. A Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has been prepared in support of the present application. The purpose of this is to identify the baseline conditions of the site and its surrounding area, inform the design layout and appearance and provide an assessment of the effects predicted to arise from the development on the baseline conditions. The LVA has been prepared in the context of relevant planning policies, including ESD13 and ESD15 which seek to address local landscape protection, and the character of the built and historic environment.
- 7.34. The application site relates well to the existing built form in Fritwell and from the assessment in the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment it is clear that there will be only a very limited on the landscape. The site does not comprise previously developed land, and although it comprises a Greenfield piece of land it is not subject to any landscape designations. The site is contained to the north by existing residential development, and to the west by agricultural buildings associated with Lodge Farm. The site has been used extensively for the grazing of horses. The site has very limited existing tree cover, with trees and hedgerows generally contained to the peripheries of the site. The concept master plan indicates that the most valuable trees on the site will be retained and that additional tree planting is proposed.
- 7.35. The report concludes that such effects of development would largely be restricted to its close setting. The report ultimately concludes that the proposed development can be accommodated within the setting of the site without resulting in significant long term adverse impacts in respect of character of the site or its immediate context or its wider landscape setting. The report further confirms that the proposed development of 38 dwellings can be successfully integrated into this location, and is wholly supportable from a landscape and visual impact perspective.
- 7.36. When weighed accordingly it is considered that the proposed development affords greater benefits than the adverse impacts highlighted, and such issues should therefore not preclude development of this nature in this location. In this regard, the impact(s) of development are not considered to be in conflict with relevant national planning policies, or those of the adopted Local Plan.

## **Access and Highways**

- 7.37. A Transport Statement has been prepared by Mode Transport Planning in support of this application, which considers the proposed access arrangement, transport strategy, parking provision and trip generation. Discussions with Oxfordshire County Council prior to the submission of this application have directly informed the content of the Transport Statement as it pertains to the proposed development.
- 7.38. In respect of the current arrangements, vehicular access to the site is currently provided via a bellmouth junction with gated access off of Fewcott Road, with a secondary vehicular access located immediately to the south west of the junction.

- 7.39. Matters raised by Oxfordshire County Council during the course of determination for application 16/01594/F raised some concerns on access matters. However, we consider that these are effectively resolved through the proposal of a comprehensive scheme, with a single point of access to Fewcott Road which lies close to the built up edge of the village where excellent visibility and improved pedestrian access can be provided. As part of the development proposals, both of these accesses will be stopped up, with a new vehicular access junction off Fewcott Road provided 120m to the north-west. This access will cater for all mode of transport. Fewcott Road is a single carriageway road subject to a 60-mph speed limit, with the speed limit changing to 30mph upon the approach of Fritwell village. Currently, this change in speed limit is designated by a speed gate and on road markings and is located approximately 40m north of the proposed vehicular access location.
- 7.40. The proposed development proposes to construct a new access off Fewcott Road, approximately 50m north of the existing access to the site. This new access has been designed in accordance with the design principles for a 'Minor Access Road' in accordance with the relevant guidelines. The Transport Statement outlines at drawing J32-3847-PS-005 the proposed access arrangement for the development, which includes for:
- a 5.5m carriageway width for access, with 2m footways;
  - a 6m entry radii at the site access;
  - an extension of the existing footway along Fewcott Road, providing a 2m pedestrian link for the development connecting to Fritwell.
- 7.41. In respect of refuse vehicle servicing, the proposed development is accompanied by tracking plans to demonstrate safe access/egress by a 11.6m length refuse truck. The accompanying plans identify that vehicle can undertake entry and egress manoeuvres from the site but would however be required to use the whole width of the carriageway. Given that refuse collection is infrequent, outside of peak times and the traffic volumes on this section of carriageway would be low, this can be considered acceptable.
- 7.42. Parking provision has been proposed in line with the required standards of Oxfordshire County Council's guidance documents. The Transport Statement concludes a requirement of 72 allocated parking spaces, alongside 13 unallocated spaces as a maximum. The proposed development therefore seeks to provide 71 allocated parking space and 6 unallocated bays. On balance, this is considered sufficient to accommodate the parking needs of the development, in the most appropriate manner. Cycle parking is to be provided within the curtilage of each proposed dwelling in accordance with adopted standards.
- 7.43. Consistent with relevant provisions of the NPPF, transport issues have been considered from the early stages of the development process, as evidenced by extensive pre-application discussions with the Council. The potential impacts of development have been appropriately assessed, and the proposed development is considered to adequately account for any potential impact(s) on the highways network. The development will not result in severe impact upon the safety or operation of the local highways network. The accompanying Transport Statement furthermore considers trip generation impacts arising from the proposed development. Based on assessment, the report concludes that the morning peak hour the site could currently generate in the order of 27 two way vehicular trips; and 28 two-way vehicular trips in the evening peak hour comprising is an additional vehicle in the village every 2 minutes during peak hours. The Statement concludes in regard of trip generation that:

*“the impact on the local highway network from the proposed development can be considered minimal, with the development forecast to generate less than one vehicle trip every two minutes across both peak hours”.*

- 7.44. This is considered a to constitute only a negligible impact on the operation and safety of the highways network. In light of the above considerations, it is viewed that the transport, access and movement aspect of the proposed development would accord with the requirements the NPPF.

### **Archaeology and Heritage**

- 7.45. An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment accompanies this submission, prepared by Oxford Archaeology. The assessment has been prepared and considered in line with paragraphs 189 and 190 of the NPPF alongside relevant policies of the development plan.
- 7.46. This assessment has examined evidence from written, map, archive and published sources for past activity on land at Fewcott Road, Fritwell, Oxfordshire. The site falls outside of the designated Fritwell Conservation Area. The assessment has established that the proposed development area has only low potential to yield prehistoric, Roman and Medieval period archaeology. The desk based work has also indicated that there is no potential for archaeology associated with the Post Medieval and Modern periods. In conclusion, the potential to yield further significant archaeological evidence has not been demonstrated by this desk based study. It has demonstrated that there is at best low potential for significant archaeology and no potential for archaeology of national significance which would preclude development. In this respect archaeology is unlikely to compromise the principle of development or constitute harm for the purposes of the NPPF. The desk based archaeological assessment has been agreed with the County Archaeologist and concluded that there is at low potential for significant archaeology and no potential for archaeology of national significance which would preclude development.
- 7.47. As such the findings of the assessment are not considered to be in conflict with either paragraph 189 or 190 of the NPPF, nor with relevant policies of the development plan. Further reference should be made to the submitted desk based assessment, as appropriate.

### **Flood Risk**

- 7.48. The application site is located in Flood Zone 1. A site specific Flood Risk Assessment was submitted alongside the previous planning application in 2016. An updated assessment is provided as part of the present application on the basis that there has been no significant material change in the status of the site in flood risk terms. The Cherwell and West Oxfordshire Level 1 SFRA does not record any historical flood incidence occurring in or around the site. The accompanying Flood Risk Assessment therefore concludes that the site is at the lowest possible risk of flooding and can be developed safely without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and with due consideration to the potential effects of climate change. In conclusion, the accompanying Flood Risk Assessment report demonstrates that the proposed residential development:
- is in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework;
  - will not be at an unacceptable risk from fluvial flooding;
  - will not increase flood risk elsewhere; and
  - will employ a surface water drainage strategy based on the principles of sustainable drainage

## 8. Conclusion

- 8.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared by Savills on behalf of CALA Management Ltd ('the Applicant') in support of an Outline Planning Application for up to 38 dwellings and associated access.
- 8.2. The proposed development has been the subject of extensive pre-application engagement with officers over a number of years, and represents a logical extension to Fritwell – a sustainable location in the district identified as a Category A village. Core design principles have informed a site layout which respond sympathetically to its surroundings in a policy compliant manner, without unduly detracting from the landscape, ecology or historic setting of the site. The proposals look to achieve a satisfactory balance of quality accommodation, incorporating a policy compliant mix of dwellings within an attractive layout scheme.
- 8.3. The benefits of granting planning permission for the proposed development are multiple, and include the opportunity for a high quality and sustainable residential development to improve housing land supply and meet objectively assessed needs; a boost to the local economy through the creation of jobs and increasing the local workforce; the provision of affordable housing; the opportunity for enhancements to habitats for wildlife.
- 8.4. The proposed design scheme and specialist technical reports have afforded consideration and assessment to matters relating to ecology, heritage, highways and landscape matters. This Planning Statement demonstrates, with reference to technical reports, that the development is sustainable and that there are no detrimental impacts arising which significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of granting planning permission.

# Appendix 1. Draft Planning Obligations

Planning Obligations Schedule for an outline planning application in respect of the erection of 38 dwellings with access from Fewcott Road, Fritwell.

Reference has been had to Cherwell District Council's adopted Developer Contributions SPD. A specific list of potential planning obligations was not provided by officers during pre-application discussions.

It should be noted that this schedule is intended to inform future discussions regarding the structure of any subsequent legal agreement during the determination of the planning application. We consider that this is likely to include the following items:

- Affordable Housing
- Open Space/Play Areas
- Off-site indoor sports contribution
- Off-site outdoor sports contribution
- Education contribution
- Footpath extension along Fewcott Road

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