

GORING NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN HEARING

11th JULY 2018.

WRITTEN STATEMENT ON

SITE REF: GNP13. LAND WEST OF MANOR ROAD,

Prepared on behalf of Peter Byfield.

By Roger Turnbull, Director of Apt Planning Ltd.

8th July 2018.

1. INTRODUCTION.

- 1.1 This Statement seeks an amendment to the Draft Goring Neighbourhood Plan by the inclusion of Site GNP13, Land West of Manor Road.
- 1.2 A Location Plan and Context Plan has been submitted with my Regulation 16 response to the District Council, see Appendices 1 & 2.
- 1.3 The amendment sought is for an additional housing & open space allocation to those proposed housing allocations included under Policies 6, 7, 8 & 9. It is therefore suggested that the proposed additional housing allocation, Site GNP13, Land West of Manor Road, should be inserted as a new Policy 10, that is immediately following the current housing allocation proposals in Policies 6, 7, 8 & 9.
- 1.4 The proposed Site GNP13, Land West of Manor Road, comprises a site of 0.6 hectares in area, of which 0.3 hectares on the Manor Road frontage, within Flood Zone 2, is proposed for housing, and the remaining 0.3 hectares to the west is proposed for public open space.
- 1.5 The 0.3 hectare site proposed for housing, has the capacity to accommodate 4-6 dwellings at a housing density of 13-20 dwellings per hectare. Lower densities than proposed in Core Strategy Policy CSH2 are considered appropriate in this edge of village location by the Neighbourhood Plan Group.

2. THE SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION.

2.1 The site comprises a rectangular site of 0.6 hectares to the west of Manor Road, a residential cul-de-sac that runs southwards from the High Street towards the proposed housing allocation site. The character of Manor Road is of low-density detached dwellings in large gardens, so there are views in the gaps between dwellings from the highway.

2.2 To the west of Manor Road, a number of culs-de-sac serve a substantial number of dwellings e.g. Ferry Lane, Grange Close and Little Croft Lane, with scattered dwellings to the south west of the appeal site. The character of the surrounding area is therefore that of the edge of a larger village of c.1,500 dwellings, within the AONB, a community which contributes to the social, economic and environmental characteristics of the AONB.

2.3 Views from the north are screened by the group of trees on adjoining land and by boundary landscaping of detached dwellings on the Manor Road frontage. To the east, views are screened by the avenue of mature trees on Manor Road, Views from the Thames Path 400m to the west, are screened by Friar Ford to the west of the appeal site, Hartswood House and 1-2 Friar Ford Cottages to the south, and by boundary planting around the 0.6 hectare field, within which the appeal site is located.

2.4 There are public footpaths on the north and east site boundaries, but open views across the field from the north and east will remain on either side of the proposed dwelling, in keeping with the views in the gaps between dwellings in Manor Road, See Appendices 1 & 2 Location & Context Plan.

2.4 The site has good accessibility to jobs, shops and services in Goring, being 800 metres from High Street shops, post office, village hall etc and buses, and 800m via Little Croft Road, Croft Road and Holmlea to the Great Western Rail services to Didcot Garden Town, Reading and London Paddington. The site therefore meets the Institution of Highways and Transportation (IHT) guidelines for a preferred maximum walking distance of 800 metres to Town Centres and 1.2 kms for elsewhere, and hence meets the NPPF definition for a sustainable development.

3. THE KEY ISSUES.

3.1 A recent appeal decision letter on the site considered the key issues to be:

- i) The Landscape Impact on The Chilterns AONB,
- ii) Flood Risk & The Sequential Test.

3.2 Other considerations, which are felt to be able to controlled by planning conditions, in the event that the Principle of Development for housing & open space is acceptable, for a proposed housing & open space allocation, including:

- i) Detailed design of the proposed access,
- ii) Detailed housing design, the proposed housing layout, dwelling mix & tenure, and hence the impact on protected trees, drainage, and mitigation of landscape impact by proposed landscaping of the housing & open space sites.

4. THE LANDSCAPE IMPACT ON THE AONB.

4.1 In the September 2017 District Council's South Oxfordshire Landscape Character Assessment, the appeal site is located in LCA11, Thames Valley and Fringes. Its key characteristics are described on page 190 as:

“Flat low-lying farmland, typically dominated by permanent pasture.....(with) generally low inter-visibility, although views along the river corridor may be possible in some more sparsely vegetated areas.”

4.2 In September 2016, the Goring Neighbourhood Plan Group's Bramhill Landscape Capacity Study, see Appendix 2, concluded that development of the appeal site, Site GNP13, Land West of Manor Road, if mitigated as recommended:

“should not have a significant effect on the visual qualities of the wider area within the Chilterns AONB, owing to low inter-visibility within the Thames Valley floodplain.” (see Appendix 3).

4.3 The Bramhill Report recommendations were:

- . i) “Mitigation in the form of strengthening boundary planning to improve local screening.***
- . ii) The protection of mature trees around the boundary, esp. along the avenue on Manor Road.***
- . iii) Good housing design incl. the restriction of roof heights to no more than 2 storeys.***
- . iv) Planting within the core of the development including medium to large trees to reduce visual impacts.***
- . v) Consideration on how the density, design, and layout fits into the settlement characteristics of this part of Goring.”***

4.4 SITE GNP13 LAND WEST OF MANOR ROAD

The Bramhill Report conclusions on Site GNP13 were:

“The site is not readily distinguished from the surrounding area in wider views, including views from higher ground in the Chilterns & North Wessex Downs AONBs, mainly because of the lines of trees along field boundaries and garden trees.”

“The overall effect on visual amenity after mitigation is identified as LOW ADVERSE. The whole of the site has capacity for development with good mitigation planting and careful design.”

4.5 Similar comments were made for **SITE GNP3 Land East of Manor Road:**

“The site is not readily distinguished from the surrounding area, including views from the higher ground in the Chilterns & North Wessex Downs AONB, mainly because of the lines of trees in field boundaries and in gardens.

“The overall effect on visual amenity after mitigation is identified as LOW ADVERSE, and the whole site is capacity for development with mitigation.”

4.6 The Bramhill Landscape Capacity Study is in line with the District Council’s own Kirkham/Terra Firma 2014 Landscape Capacity Assessment.

The District Council’s 2015 Kirkham/Terra Firma Landscape Capacity Assessment, pages 352-360, recommended land East of Manor Road for further consideration for housing on landscape and visual grounds.

The application site is both smaller and more enclosed by trees and hedges than Land East of Manor Road, and hence has less impact on the AONB than land east of Manor Road.

Like the Parish Council's Bramhill Landscape Capacity Assessment, it does not recommend development on alternative sites also assessed by the Bramhill Landscape Capacity Assessment, e.g.

GOR1 - West of Wallingford Road, 4.1 hectares, not recommended for housing on AONB grounds (Site GNP5 in Bramhill Study).

GOR2 - Springfield Road, a reduced area of the 3.3 hectare site only was recommended, Site GNP6 in Bramhill Study).

GOR4 - Icknield Way, only 0.6 hectares recommended for housing, GNP2.

GOR 5 - Icknield Way, None of the larger site of 7.2 hectares was recommended for housing on AONB grounds,

GOR10 - West of Gatehampton Road, 5 hectares, not recommended for housing on AONB grounds, Sites GNP7, GNP9, GNP11 & GNP14 in Bramhill Study.

GOR11A - East of Manor Road, recommended for consideration for housing on landscape & visual grounds. Site GNP3 in Bramhill Study. See Appendix 3.

GOR11B - South of Elmcroft, not recommended for housing on AONB grounds. (see Appendix 3).

4.7 The District Council's 2017 & 2015 Landscape Assessments and the Parish Council's 2016 Landscape Capacity Study are therefore consistent in identifying the low inter-visibility of the area surrounding the appeal site as a key characteristic of the Thames Valley & Fringes. Hence development should not have a significant effect on the AONB because of lines of trees along field boundaries and garden trees, subject to mitigation & good design.

4.8 The appeal decision dismissing proposals for 35 dwellings on land east of Manor Road, ref: APP/Q3115//W/16/3146109, dated 21st September 2016, says on paragraph 14:

“The proposal is for up to 35 dwellings on the appeal site contained within as proportion of the site...The appellant has suggested that this would equate to 25 dwellings per hectare...

The Landscape Capacity Assessment for sites on the edge of Larger Villages, in reference to site GOR11A (the appeal site), includes a comment that it is likely that a lower density will be required to retain the townscape/landscape character of this part of Goring.” (See Appendix 4).

4.9 He concluded that the increased intensity of development would result in significantly more urban form than would be compatible with the rural character of the area. However, the Neighbourhood Plan has accepted a lower density housing allocation for inclusion in the Plan.

4.10 A recent appeal decision also dismissed proposals for one dwelling on Land West of Manor Road, APP/Q3115/W/17/3185261, on the two key issues of impact on the AONB and the Sequential Test for a site in Flood Zone 2. The Inspector could only give limited weight to the emerging Goring Neighbourhood Plan, and its supporting documents, as they had not been tested at an independent Hearing. He concluded that the proposal would be to ***“consolidate built development along Manor Road and extend the line of dwellings into the countryside, to the detriment to the area’s semi-rural character”***. (See Appendix 5).

4.11 An appeal decision differs from the consideration of a proposed housing & open space allocation as part of the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan, because an appeal decision is based on existing adopted planning policies in the 2012 Core Strategy, whilst a new housing allocation is based on proposed new planning policies to meet the identified housing need in Goring.

4.12 Therefore, it is appropriate that a Neighbourhood Plan Hearing bases its assessment of proposed amendments to housing allocations on the same Bramhill landscape evidence base as used in the Neighbourhood Plan, on grounds of consistency.

4.13 The Bramhill Landscape evidence supported the development of Sites GNP3, Land East of Manor Road, and Site GNP13, Land West of Manor Road. Development of either one or both sites would ***“consolidate built development along Manor Road, and extend the line of development into the countryside, to the detriment to its semi-rural character”***. That characteristic could be applied to almost all the housing allocations in the Neighbourhood Plan.

4.14 As the 2012 Core Strategy housing needs are based on the now withdrawn South East Plan, appeal inspectors have given limited weight to both Core Strategy policies CSH1, CSR1 & G4.

4.15 If the Bramhill Study is “sound”, the Neighbourhood Plan Group are right in accepting that Site GNP13 ***“has capacity for development with good mitigation planting and careful design.”***

5. FLOOD RISK & THE SEQUENTIAL TEST.

- 5.1 This respondent to the Regulation 16 public consultation has been critical of the Neighbourhood Plan Group's assessment of Site GNP13, Land West of Manor Road, as in Flood Zone 3, in its Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA).
- 5.2 The appeal inspector, the Environment Agency & the Council's Drainage & Planning Officers have accepted the Clive Onion Flood Risk Assessment (FRA), (See Appendix 6). Page 7 of the FRA states that the site lies within Flood Zone 2, that a Sequential Test alone is required, and that there is a medium probability of flooding, so development should not be permitted if there were reasonably available sites with a lower probability of flooding. The Neighbourhood Plan Group's SFRA argues that the site lies in Flood Zone 3, and that an Exceptions Test is required. Page 9 of the Clive Onion's FRA also shows that there is no history of flooding in recent years.
- 5.3 Page 10 of the FRA shows the relevant site levels:
- | | |
|---|----------------|
| Housing Site Level (Flood Zone 2)- | 43.0m – 43.8mm |
| 35% Climate Change Adjustment - | 43.7m |
| A Safe Access - | 43.8m |
| Proposed Floor Levels - | 44m |
- (300mm above potential flood level).
- 5.4 The ground conditions over gravel & sand are suitable for soakaways, to be designed to BRE Digest 365 standards, to prevent any increase in runoff (page 10). Safe access is available to north & south (Figs 9 & 10) or through Site GNP3. Foul drainage can be to a public sewer or a septic tank, (page 12).

5.5 Development therefore complies with the NPPF for Flood Risk and for SUDS drainage, Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) Tables 1 & 2 (Under Table 3, No Exceptional Test is required), and the Feb 2016 Climate Change Allowances for Planners. The occupation of the dwellings would therefore be safe for the lifetime of the dwellings, and there are no grounds for excluding it from a housing allocation on flood risk grounds.

5.6 On page 13, Fig 11, the GNPG Public Consultation Presentation Material showed that only three sites, (GNP2, GNP6, GNP10) would be acceptable from an AONB & being in Flood Zone 1 perspective, and therefore two sites within Flood Zones 2 & 3 (GNP3 & GNP13) needed to be considered. The option of including sites within Flood Zones 2 & 3, using the Sequential Test, was described as “***the only viable option***” which delivered a sustainable level of housing, and complied with NPPF advice on development in the AONB

5.7 THE SEQUENTIAL TEST is met on three grounds:

- . i) Land West of Manor Road, is the only assessed site that meets the Bramhill Landscape Report/GNPG criteria on harm to the AONB, and was the highest ranked site on all the criteria, not to be allocated for housing, **see Appendix 4, Site Rankings.**
- . ii) The GNPG assessment of the Housing Site, Land West of Manor Road, is made under Planning Policies for Flood Zone 3, instead of for Flood Zone 2, and does not comply with the PPG.

. iii) The District Council's Emerging Local Plan Housing Need & Supply Topic Paper Oct. 2017, Appendix 5, identified the following Goring Housing Requirement & Land Supply from the 2011 Local Plan, Core Strategy 2012, & emerging Local Plan:	
	Dwellings
. iv) Housing Requirement for Goring	329
. v) House Completions 2011-2017	64
. vi) Housing Commitments at March 2017	32
. vii) Outstanding Requirement	233
. viii) Goring Neighbourhood Plan Sites	94
. ix) Shortfall in Housing Land Supply	139

5.8 Page 7 of the Council's Oct 2017 Report states that the most appropriate figure to plan for at this point in time to meet Oxford's unmet housing needs was 3,750 dwellings, included in the emerging Local Plan, but it is not included in District's the housing requirement.

5.9 The District Council has since published a more recent Housing Land Supply Statement in April 2018. It also omitted making any contribution to the unmet housing needs of Oxford City, identified in the 2012 Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMAA), in its District housing requirement (paragraph 3.4).

5.10 The Planning Inspectors for the Cherwell, West Oxfordshire, & Vale of White Horse Local Plans have all accepted, under the Legal Duty to Cooperate with the Oxfordshire Growth Board that Oxford is unable to meet its local housing needs, and that a proportion of the unmet housing needs will be met in the Rural Districts.

5.11 The only breakdown of the Goring Land Supply is in the Oct 2017 Report, see Appendix 7.

5.12 The recent appeal inspector determined the appeal on the need for the Sequential Test to cover a District wide area. But, the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) on Sequential Tests states that the area for the Sequential Test for plan making differs from the area for planning applications.

5.13 The Neighbourhood Plan Group has prepared a SFRA for their area, and it would be “disproportionate” for the District Council to require the Neighbourhood Plan Group to prepare a Sequential Test for the whole District. Indeed, the District Council appears to have accepted the Goring Neighbourhood Plan designated area as the appropriate area for the Group’s Sequential Test.

5.14 It is concluded that the appropriate area for the Group’s Sequential Test for Site GNP3 & CNP13 is the designated area for the Neighbourhood Plan.

6. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES.

6.1 The recent appeal decision considered the relevant Core Strategy policies to be CSEN1 on Landscaping, CSR1 on development in Large Villages in the Rural Community, and CSQ3 on Design.

6.2 If it is accepted that the Bramhill Landscape Report is “sound” then development would not conflict with Policy CSEN1.

6.3 Policy CSR1 supports development in Larger Villages, so development would be appropriate if it met the need for housing in a Larger Village, without unacceptable environments impacts, which is what the role of the Neighbourhood Plan must address.

6.4 It is not the role of the Neighbourhood Plan to address detailed design issues at this stage, so Policy CSQ3 on Design is a matter for the detailed approval stage.

6.5 I attach as an Appendices the relevant Neighbourhood Plan Policies to the proposed amendment, and a Basic Conditions Statement, on which it is understood the Neighbourhood Plan will be assessed.

7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 Section 1 of his statement seeks an amendment to the draft Neighbourhood Plan, which proposes, under a new policy (Policy 10?), an additional housing allocation at Site GNP13, Land West of Manor Road, for 0.3 hectares of housing & 0.3 hectares of public open space.
- 7.2 Section 2 provides a description of the site location and of the site itself, and its surroundings. It concludes that the site is a sustainable location for development.
- 7.3 Section 3 identifies the two key issues, identified by a recent appeal Inspector on the site, as being the landscape impact on the Chilterns AONB, Flood Risk, and the Sequential Test. Other considerations primarily relate to detailed design matters, e.g. housing design & layout, housing mix & tenure, impact on protected trees, drainage, details of the proposed access, and landscape mitigation,
- 7.4 Section 4 deals with landscape impact on the Chilterns AONB. It concludes that if the Bramhill Study is “sound”, the Neighbourhood Plan Group are right in accepting that Site GNP13 ***“has capacity for development with good mitigation planting and careful design.”***

- 7.5 Section 5 deals with Flood Risk & The Sequential Test. The appeal inspector, the Environment Agency & the Council's Drainage & Planning Officers have accepted the Clive Onion's Flood Risk Assessment (FRA). Page 7 of the FRA states that the site lies within Flood Zone 2, that a Sequential Test alone is required.
- 7.6 Section 5 also deals with the Sequential Test. The recent appeal inspector determined the appeal on the need for the Sequential Test to cover a District wide area. But, the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) on Sequential Tests states that the area for the Sequential Test for plan making differs from the area for planning applications. It is concluded that the appropriate area for the Group's Sequential Test for both Sites GNP3 & GNP13 is the designated area for the Neighbourhood Plan, adopted by the Neighbourhood Plan Group.
- 7.7 As the next highest site to be ranked, but not allocated, the Sequential Test is met. If the Bramhill Report is "sound," there are no landscape grounds for not allocating the site. If the Clive Onions FRA is accepted as "sound, and the area for the Sequential Test used by the Neighbourhood Plan Group is accepted, there are no flood risk grounds for not allocating the site.
- 7.8 Section 6 deals with relevant planning policies. It identifies Core Strategy Policies CSEN1 on landscaping, Policy CSR1 on development in Larger Villages in the Rural Community, and Policy CSQ3 on Design as relevant to the site. It concludes the the proposals comply with Policy CSEN1 & CSR1, but that detailed design is not an appropriate matter for assessing housing allocations. Neighbourhood Plan Policies and a Basic Conditions Statement are set out in Appendix 1 & 2.
- 7.9 This Written Statement therefore supports an amendment to the Plan by the addition of Site GNP13, Land West of Manor Road, for housing & open Space on 0.6 hectares.

APPENDICIES.

1. Site Location Plan.
2. Context Plan.
3. Bramhill Landscape Capacity Assessment.
4. Appeal Decision on Land East of Manor Road.
5. Appeal Decision on Land West of Manor Road, attached.
6. Clive Onion's Flood Risk Assessment.
7. District Council's Housing Need & Supply Statement Oct 2017.

Documents that have been submitted to the District Council in June 2018 include:

1. Location Plan.
2. Context Plan.
3. Flood Risk Assessment.
4. Neighbourhood Plan Group Site Rankings.
5. South Oxfordshire's Housing Need & Supply Report Oct 2017.
6. Tree Protection & Arboricultural Impact Assessment.
7. Ecology Report.