

**Joint Henley and Harpsden Neighbourhood Plan Review Examination –
Response to Examiner’s Questions raised at the Hearing Session held on 1
August 2022**

Site DS7: Northern Field at Highlands Farm

Following the discussion at the Henley and Harpsden Neighbourhood Plan Examination Hearing Session, we are providing this note to inform the Examiner of our position on the housing allocation policy DS7: Northern Field at Highlands Farm, with the clarification that the site is proposed to yield around 130 homes.

Policy STRAT5: Residential Densities in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan requires development proposals to optimise the use of land and potential of a site Clause 3 of the policy states

“Sites well related to existing towns and villages and served by public transport or with good accessibility by foot or bicycle to the town centres of Didcot, Henley, Thame and Wallingford or a district centre within Oxford City should be capable of accommodating development at higher densities. It is expected that these sites will accommodate densities of more than 45 dph (net) unless there is a clear conflict with delivering a high-quality design or other clearly justified planning reasons for a lower density”.

Due to the sites sensitive location in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, clause two of STRAT 5 would come into effect. This states that

“The density of a development should be informed by:

- i) the capacity of the site and the need to use land efficiently in accordance with Policy DES7: Efficient use of resources;
- ii) the need to achieve high quality design that respects local character;
- iii) local circumstances and site constraints, including the required housing mix, and the need to protect or enhance the local environment, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, heritage assets, and important landscape, habitats and townscape;
- iv) the site’s (or, on strategic allocations, the relevant part of the sites’s) current and future level of accessibility to local services and facilities by walking, cycling and public transport; and
- v) the need to minimise detrimental impacts on the amenity of future and/or adjoining occupiers.”

The Landscape Capacity Assessment of the Four Towns, produced as part of the evidence base for the South Oxfordshire Local Plan, identifies on page 137 that at a nominal density of 25dph the site would have capacity to accommodate 130 homes. It goes onto state that a full detailed landscape and visual impact assessment will be essential to inform the final capacity of the site.

In this context we have no inherent concern with the allocation policy DS7 being amended to clarify that the site could yield approximately 130 homes, as this is supported by the Landscape Capacity Assessment. However, we believe it is important that the final capacity of the site is informed by appropriate evidence and therefore we support the town council's proposed amendment to policy DS7 set out in their response to the Examiner's Clarification Note dated the 12 May 2022, which seeks to ensure the final capacity of the site is guided by appropriate evidence at the masterplanning and planning application process.

Paragraph 11.25 Amended Wording

Please find proposed amended paragraph 11.25 as requested at the examination hearing session, to take account of the Landscape and Visual Appraisal process.

11.25 The site is within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). A Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) will be required to inform the Masterplanning of the site from the outset, ensuring any impact from the development on the AONB is minimised. The LVA should be completed in accordance with the latest guidelines available from the Landscape Institute. As part of the LVA, wireframe visualisations should be used to explore the appropriate built height of development while responding to the build character of the adjacent areas. Whilst development would be visible from Greys Road, the impact could be mitigated by retaining existing hedges and trees around the site, incorporating internal open space and tree planting within the site, and introducing a landscape buffer to the northern, eastern and western boundaries. Such landscaping should aim to break up views of the new development. The site is large enough to accommodate the proposed number of dwellings, other uses and to achieve landscaping and open space