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Comments on Planning Application 24/00318/FUL

An application for construction of 24 dwellings, provision of vehicular and pedestrian accesses, landscaping and public open space, on land north of Goose Green Close.

The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum (WNF) seeks to represent the views (in relation to planning matters) of residents in the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan area, which includes the Goose Green Close area. The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan (WNP) was approved overwhelmingly by our residents in a referendum in May 2021 and was subsequently 'made' by Oxford City Council.

The WNF Steering Committee finds that three aspects of the proposed scheme are unacceptable in its present form. We therefore **object** to planning permission being granted.

Reasons for objection

1. The plans propose inadequate car parking provision for residents at the south east end of the development, as described in Section 7.2 of the Design and Access Statement. There will be twelve dwellings located there, but with no 'on plot' spaces for cars and, between them, only six on-street 'dedicated resident spaces', with another two parking spaces for 'visitors'. The DAS does not explain how these few resident parking spaces will be allocated among the dwellings, or whether it will be a free-for-all. Nor does it say whether residents will have access to the 'visitors' spaces. Whatever the details are, this feature of the scheme is certain to be a source of stress and dispute among neighbours: something that must be avoided.

We suggest the scheme could be made acceptable by revising the layout of the south east end of the development to remove the parking deficiency. There needs to be sufficient resident parking spaces for one per dwelling, and some spaces for visitors. In addition, all the on-street parking bays should be provided with access to EV charging (a detail that we could not find mentioned in the DAS, although it was promised at the Hill public consultation event).

2. We share the concern expressed by Natural England about the potential for hydrological problems resulting from changes to ground water and surface water flows arising from this development. Immediately down the hill from it is the ancient right-of-way Joe White's lane and then the precious green space (common land) Goose Green, and housing at Goose Green Close. Also close by is an important SSSI Wolvercote Green, and the Oxford Meadows SAC.

The development should not be permitted to proceed until a hydrological impact assessment has been carried out, that demonstrates beyond reasonable doubt that the scheme will never cause harm to any of these. This is necessary to ensure the scheme's compliance with WNP Policy BES4.

3. We note (from P.24, §6.35 of the Planning Statement) that the developers currently expect a negative Biodiversity Net Gain of -4.52 %. Permission should not be given to this development until the applicant has shown convincingly how this figure will be increased to +10%, as it should be under current legislation and for consistency with WNP Policy GBS5 (which requires a net *gain* of biodiversity).

We are pleased, however, to see that the plans now include a ramp at the far south east end of the development, from the housing down to green space below. In our view that is essential. It is something we asked for at the developer's pre-application consultation. It will be important to ensure the gradient of the ramp is low enough for safe use by wheelchairs.

We ask that planning permission be refused for the scheme in its present form, for the three reasons listed above.

From Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum Steering Committee:

Paul Buckley, John Bleach, Mary Brown, Tony Dale, Suzy Donald, Katherine Kaye, Richard Lawrence-Wilson, Andrew Siantonas, David Stone.

15 March 2024