

Examination in Public Statement Stage 2 - Matters and Questions

In respect of:
Matter 8: Strategy for Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford
Fringe Sub-Area

behalf of:
The Gow Family
879120



1.0 Introduction

- 1.1. McLoughlin Planning is instructed by The Gow Family (hereafter referred to as the respondents) to make written representations to the Vale of White Horse Local Plan Examination in respect of its land and development interests in the village of Appleton.
- 1.2. This document sets out the respondents' position in respect of the Stage 2 questions for Matter 8.2

Question 8.2 Are there other sites which would appropriately meet the identified need for housing?

- 1.3. Other submissions prepared by the respondents have made the case that there is a need for the plan to allocate additional housing sites in the District to ensure that the Plan meets its objectively assessed need and complies with the requirements of the Framework. The purpose of this Statement is to set out the case that whilst the respondents' land at Appleton is not a site which can meet housing needs as an alternative to those already allocated, it is needed to be allocated help meet the need for housing.
- 1.4. There are two aspects to this, the first the need for housing in Appleton and secondly, the merits of the site.

The need for housing in Appleton.

- 1.5. Development of the respondents' site at Appleton will have clear benefits and meet with the objectives of national guidance for promoting sustainable patterns of development in the rural areas as well.
- 1.6. The first issue is that development will help address is the demographic issue the village faces which, in the longer-term puts the provision of existing services and facilities under threat.
- 1.7. Given that the village is in the green belt, the opportunity for additional housing to be provided to maintain and enhance the provision of services in the village is extremely limited. Evidence supporting this can be found in comparisons in census data between 2001 and 2011. In the Parish of Appleton and Eaton, the following should be noted:

Year	2001	2011	Difference
Population	879	915	+18
Households	367	371	+4



1.8. What the above shows is that the number of households in the village has only increased by 4 over the 10 years between census. To support the lack of housing further, an analysis of the Council’s planning application records from January 2001 to December 2015 has been undertaken. This has shown that of a total of 433 planning applications in the Parish:

- 65% were focused on property improvements.
- 30% were not related to residential use.
- 5% were related to building/conversion works, which saw a total of 15 dwellings being granted planning permission. 7 were a change of use, and 8 were new build single plots. In addition, there were 9 replacement dwellings.

1.9. None of the applications provided affordable housing.

1.10. In terms of age composition, Appleton has an ageing population, structured as follows:

Age/Year	2001	2011	Difference
1-15	171	192	21
16-74	651	633	-18
75+	57	90	+33

1.11. Assuming that there are no additional houses built in the village, there is no obvious way of this trend being reversed.

1.12. The above table shows that there has been a notable decline in the working population in the village, matched by the increase in the over 75s. Of the 1-15 age group, the number of pre-school and primary age broadly remains the same at 124 (2001) and 127 (2011). This shows that there is a continuing need for a school in the village. However, analysis of the school admission data from County Council 2014 to 2018 School admission plan shows that out of a school capacity of 189, there are only 173 pupils, albeit the 2013 entry figure was 28 against a posted limit of 26. In terms of Parish population, there were only circa 10 children within the Parish of the admission age that year. This shows that the school is heavily reliant on children coming into the village.

1.13. In terms of economic activity in the village, additional residents (particularly of a working age) will clearly assist in maintaining the demand for a community shop and the pubs in the village. In terms of the village shop, this is run by 90 volunteers and



is open 7 days a week. The shop was founded in 2000 and has a turnover of £250,000. It also serves as a Post Office for the village and sells a wide range of products, from day to day needs as well as more discretionary purchases.

- 1.14. Development will also continue to maintain demand for the surgery which is held in the Village Hall every Wednesday morning between 8.30 to 10.50 am.
- 1.15. Additional residents will also help maintain demand for the village hall, which is host to a number of organisations, including a Pre-School, which has 28 pupils on the roll and a 'good' Ofsted rating (2015). The presence of a Village Hall, which is used for a number of purposes, shows the vitality of the village and the flaws in the settlement hierarchy where other settlements (e.g. Marcham) do not have such a facility but are ranked higher.
- 1.16. New housing development will have the clear benefit of maintaining a demand for school places generated in the village and assist in redressing the decline in the working age population.
- 1.17. Increased children coming from the village will increase the sustainability of the school itself while at the same time reducing the transport issues which are created at the beginning of the day and school leaving time due to large numbers of children coming from outside the village of Appleton.
- 1.18. Should additional housing not be provided in the village, there is the concern that the retired population of the village will increase, resulting in a reduced local demand for school places and services. This links back to matters raised in paragraph 84 of the Framework, where there is the need to "consider the consequences for sustainable development" when deciding on green belt issues and development strategy. Clearly, the ageing population of the village will present problems both in terms of social infrastructure and economic activity because of the documented decline in working age population and the near zero level of household number growth.
- 1.19. Whilst new housing can bring benefits of assisting to support services and facilities in the village, it will also deliver much needed affordable housing for the area as well. Given the low growth in household numbers in the Parish, it is fair to conclude that any affordable housing needs are not being actively met.

Is this a suitable site for housing?

- 1.20. In order for the site to be allocated for housing, there is a need for it to be developable under paragraph 47 of the Framework (3rd bulletpoint). Assuming the prompt adoption of the plan, following receipt of the Inspector's Report and the subsequent removal of the site from the green belt (as per CP13) it is reasonable to



expect that this site will be developed at that point, this could mean that the site could form part of the Council's 5-year housing land supply at point of adoption in that it is also a deliverable site.

1.21. In terms of the technical case for the site, the submissions made by the respondent to the submission version of the Local Plan, include an evidence base demonstrating that:

- There are no highway barriers to development. The site has access onto a public highway and there is good visibility in either direction in excess of Manual for Streets requirements, based on observed traffic speeds. There are also opportunities for safe and convenient pedestrian access into the village centre and the services available there.
- The development in landscape terms would not have any significant effect on the prevailing character of the area and that development could be successfully integrated into the existing village.
- In dealing with drainage, there are no issues of flood risk and the site can be addressed through the use of SUDS.
- In ecology terms, the site is low value for biodiversity and there are no features that would prevent the development of the site.

1.22. Hence the provision of this material corrects an error in the Council's evidence base, in which the SHLAA does not consider the availability of development sites in "small villages" such as Appleton, irrespective of representations by the respondent asking for the village to be upgraded as a Large Village and the fact that CP13 removes land from the green belt adjacent to the village.

1.23. In terms of other policies, the proposals would comply with Core Policy 3 (as drafted) which supports development in Smaller Villages. This is because the policy will allow for proportionate development in such villages. Measuring some 4ha in size, it is anticipated that the site could deliver in the region of up to 80 dwellings. However, this is a generic calculation based on a 20d/ha calculation and would look to be revised following further detailed Masterplanning to overcome limiting factors, such as pylons which cross the site.

1.24. The above serves to demonstrate (when read in conjunction with the material previously submitted) that the site is developable and it is solely a question of green belt policy being revised to allow for the site to come forward.



- 1.25. Therefore, it is proposed that the Plan is modified to include the land at Appleton for housing development, as per the attached plan.



2.0 Location Plan

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PROJECT TITLE

APPLETON

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Figure 2: Pond locations and numbers

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LEGEND

- Site boundary
- Pond



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