

VALE OF WHITE HORSE DISTRICT COUNCIL
LOCAL PLAN 2031: PART 1 – STRATEGIC SITES AND POLICIES
REPRESENTATION ON BEHALF OF
W G CARTER LTD



December 2014

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This representation is made in respect of the Vale of White Horse District Council's (the Council) Local Plan Part 1 consultation on behalf of our client, W G Carter Ltd.
- 1.2 The site currently sits within the Oxford Green Belt but as part of the Council's Green Belt Review Phase 3 November 2014, an area (referred to as Area 7) which includes our client's site is proposed to be removed from the Green Belt in the plan. Our client's site can be developed in isolation or as a larger scheme if necessary to include the whole of Area 7.
- 1.3 The representation is broadly supportive of the plan but seeks some amendments to ensure the plan is **justified** and **effective**. Our client is the owner of a piece of land to the north west of Appleton known as WGC Yard and outlined in red on the plan found at Appendix 1 of this representation. Our client would like to draw the Council's attention to this site which is available and suitable for development as well as deliverable.

2.0 Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031: Part 1 - Strategic Sites and Policies

- 2.1 Preparation of the Council's new Local Plan started in November 2007 and has been through a number of iterations since. The Council published its Local Plan 2031: Part 1 – Strategic Sites and Policies in February 2013 with housing targets based on those in the South East Plan (13,294 new homes over the plan period). However, the South East Plan was revoked in March 2013 meaning that it no longer had any statutory weight in planning terms.
- 2.2 Since then, an Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) has been produced jointly between all the Oxfordshire local planning authorities. This assessed housing need in all of the Oxfordshire housing market areas. The results showed a higher housing need for the Vale of White Horse District than that being provided for in the February 2013 plan. As a result, housing targets for the Council were increased. This was reflected in a further Strategic Sites and Policies 'Housing Delivery Update' version of the plan published for consultation in February 2014. This version had a higher target of 20,560 new homes which matched the requirement for the Vale in the SHMA.
- 2.3 Following the February 2014 Housing Delivery Update consultation, a number of amendments have been made to the plan. These are now being consulted on prior to its submission to the Secretary of State.

3.0 Spatial Strategy / Settlement Hierarchy

- 3.1 The Council's spatial strategy for development is to focus on the market towns, Local Service Centres and larger villages within the district, whilst recognising that smaller villages need appropriate levels of development to support local needs. Our client is generally supportive of this approach and in this respect believes the plan has been **positively prepared** and is **consistent with national policy**. For the strategy to be fully **justified** and **effective** however there needs to be sufficient flexibility to ensure that development is delivered in the most sustainable locations.
- 3.2 Appleton for instance is designated as a smaller village but is still a very sustainable location. Indeed the Council's Town and Village Study (Update February 2014) which

studies services and facilities in settlements and awards a score accordingly, shows that of the 29 designated smaller villages only four receive a slightly higher score than Appleton. The study confirms Appleton as a highly sustainable location by highlighting the village's key services and facilities which include:

- A primary school
- Community Shop
- Church and Chapel
- Public House
- A Doctor's Surgery
- Village Hall
- Visiting Library
- Bus Service (to Abingdon, Oxford and Swindon)
- Park and Playground

- 3.3 Our client would ask the Council, in order for the plan to be fully **justified** and **effective**, that the above is taken into consideration when determining planning applications and making smaller housing allocations in the next phase of the local plan (Local Plan 2031 Part 2: Detailed Policies and Local Sites). Therefore our client seeks the following amendment to the plan (**bold text** is new proposed text):

Core Policy 3: Settlement Hierarchy

Smaller Villages

The Smaller Villages have a low level of services and facilities, where any development should be modest and, proportionate in scale **and to the level of sustainability for each smaller village** and **should** primarily meet local needs **supporting village services and facilities**.

4.0 WGC Yard

- 4.1 The site WGC Yard is some 0.93 ha and lies to the north west of Appleton. It is outlined in red on the plan found at Appendix 1 of the representation. It has been the subject of recent positive pre-application advice from a Council officer on a proposal for approximately 20 dwellings (this is equal to just under 22 dwellings per hectare when local character is considered. This density can be revisited however if considered appropriate). Our client wishes to make the following points relating to the site.

Access – The site can be accessed from the lane serving the paddock leading from Eaton Road past no's 75-81 and through the site of 81A Eaton Road, currently being redeveloped as 2 houses and a small B1 office. Alternatively, if the whole of Area 7 (the area proposed to be removed from the Green Belt -see below) is developed then access could also potentially be achieved from a separate spur road to the north of our client's site.

Flooding - According to the Environment Agency flood maps the whole site is Flood Zone 1 meaning it is at the lowest risk of flooding.

Ecology – According to the Vale proposals map none of the following designations will be affected by development of the site:

- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
- National Nature Reserves
- Sites of Scientific Conservation (SSSI)
- Local Nature Reserves
- County Wildlife Sites
- Ancient Woodlands

Further ecological assessments will be carried out on the site as the proposal progresses. These will check for the presence of any protected species etc...

Heritage – The site is some distance from Appleton’s Conservation Area and according to English Heritage there are no listed buildings or scheduled ancient monuments near or on the site.

Green Belt – It is acknowledged that the site currently sits within the Oxford Green Belt. By the Council’s own admission however, due the level of housing required in the district to meet the Council’s objectively assessed housing need, amendments to the Green Belt boundary are likely to be necessary. Moreover, the current inset boundary at Appleton is drawn tightly around the existing built form making development within this sustainable location difficult. This is confirmed in the Council’s own evidence base (see below).

Notwithstanding this, the Council’s Green Belt Review Phase 3 November 2014 proposes an amendment to the Green Belt at Appleton on an area of land (Area 7) of which our client’s site covers part of. This also shown on the map at Appendix 1 of the representation. This is in line with the previous Phase 2 study which acknowledged:

‘Opportunities for use of derelict or urban land are few in Appleton’ (page 31)

- 4.2 Appendix 2 shows the proposed layout for our client’s site which formed the basis of the pre-application advice as referred to in paragraph 4.1 above. This clearly shows how the site, if necessary, can be developed in isolation from the whole of Area 7 with access from Eaton Road.

5.0 Summary and Conclusion.

- 5.1 Our client generally supports the Council’s proposed spatial strategy in the Publication Version of its Local Plan 2031 Part 1: Strategic Sites and Policies and believes it has been **positively prepared** and is **consistent with national policy**.
- 5.2 That said, in order for the strategy to be **justified** and **effective** our client would like to see an amendment to Core Policy 3: Settlement Hierarchy to ensure the individual settlement’s sustainability criteria is taken into account when making allocations in the Local Plan Part 2: Detailed Policies and Local Sites or determining planning applications.
- 5.3 Our client owns a site to the north west of Appleton. There are no known access, historical / natural environmental constraints to the site and although it currently lies within the Oxford Green Belt, it falls with area identified by the Council as a proposed location for a Green Belt boundary amendment. The site can be developed in

isolation or as part of a larger scheme which covers the whole of the area proposed to be removed from the Green Belt (Area 7)

- 5.4 Our client would like to Council to be assured that the site is available and suitable for development and there are no known constraints to deliverability. The site could deliver in the region of 20 dwellings towards the Council's housing target.

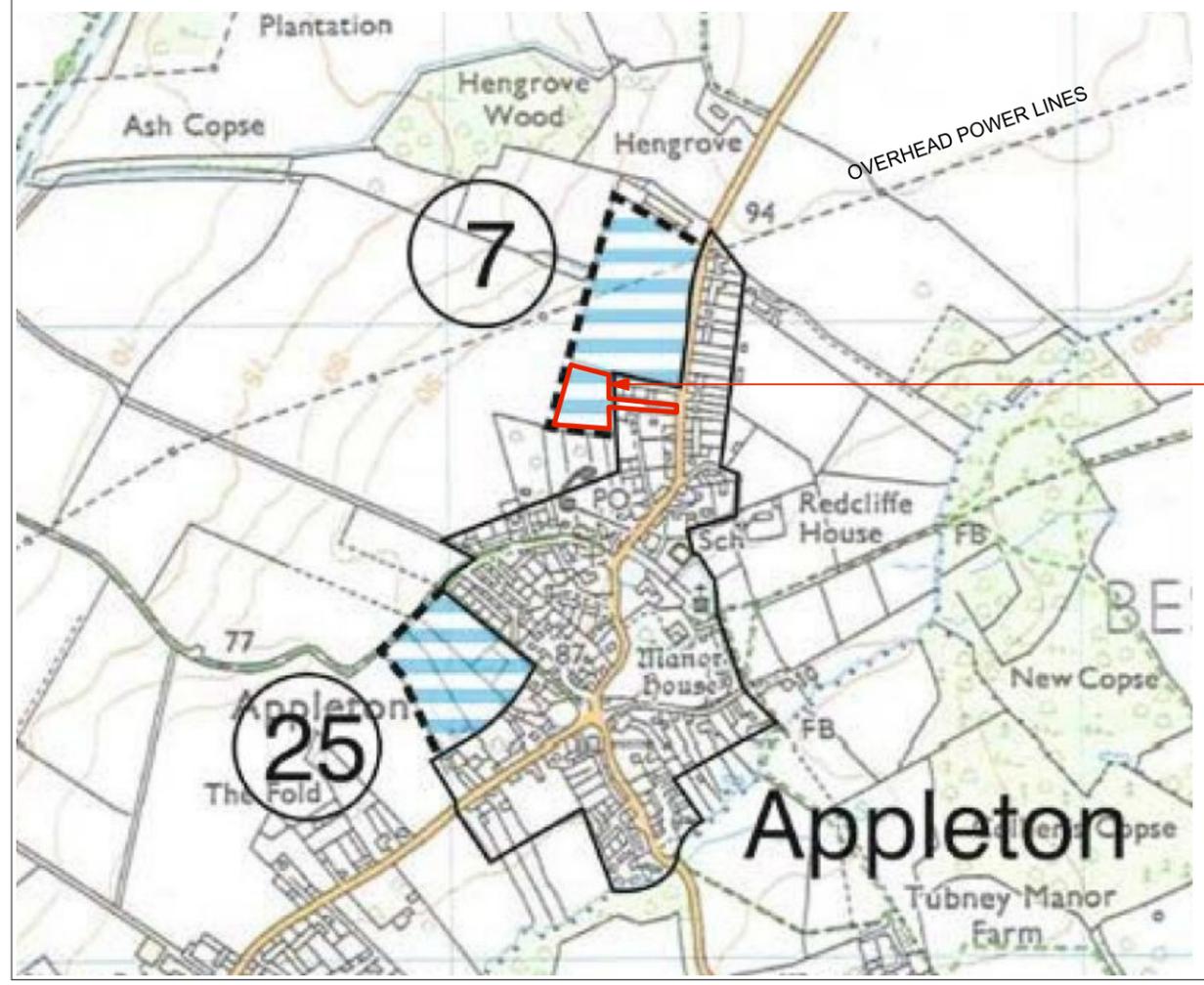
Appendix 1 – Proposed Site Outline and Green Belt Area 7



Dashed lines indicate buildings under construction: consent ref.

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VWHDC GREEN BELT REVIEW MAP (not to scale)



Site

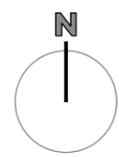
No.	REVISION	DATE
OS import	Checked by AJ	First issued 3.6.14

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PROJECT	81A Eaton Road, Appleton
DRAWING	Location Plan + Green Belt Review Plan
SCALE @ A3	1/1000
DRAWING No.	253 / SK / 37 /
REVISION No.	-



Appendix 2 — Proposed / Potential Layout for Site



Site Area (excluding access) = 0.93 hectares / 2.3 acres.
 18 new houses proposed
 Mix to suit VWHDC policy
 Affordable housing ratio to suit VWHDC policy
 Access lane will serve 18 new dwellings, 5 existing dwellings, and the B1 office.

No.	REVISION	DATE
Drawn by AJ	Checked by AJ	First issued 28.5.14

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PROJECT	
81A Eaton Road	
DRAWING	
Proposed Site Plan	
SCALE @ A1	SCALE @ A3
1/250	1/500
DRAWING No.	REVISION No.
253 / SK / 36 /	-

