

## WRITTEN STATEMENT FOR THE STAGE TWO HEARINGS OF THE VALE LOCAL PLAN

### MATTER 9 (J) EAST SUTTON COURTENAY SITE

*I should like to draw the Inspector's attention to the Redrow Application, which serves to prove that the choice of the East SC site, adjoining a highly sensitive waste site, is unsound and its deliverability is highly questionable.*

*The application and the comments on it can be found on the Vale Planning portal under number P15/V2353/O at:*

*<http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/Main.jsp?MODULE=ApplicationDetails&REF=P15/V2353/O>*

*The District Council has been challenged on the basis of prematurity of any consideration of this application until after the Inspectors Stage 2 Examination. It has subsequently decided not to consider the application until March 31.*

For convenience the following refers to extracts from particularly pertinent comments, which the Inspector might usefully review, with the full comments in the attachments.

**Attachment 1. Health and Housing - Contaminated Land Comments.** The Vale officer highlights that "The ground investigation report provided..... has identified the potential for gas migration from the adjacent landfill sites." He then states that, "the adjacent landfill site poses a high potential gas hazard and that the proposed development is considered to be highly sensitive", and concludes in that light that the monitoring system is inadequate.

Later he also states that he considers "that the soil gas generation potential of the site is moderate to very high risk and the sensitivity of the proposed development is considered as high." As such he has recommended that "the proposed application is refused".

Recently his attention has been drawn to the methane gas bubbling in the water of the newly constructed drainage ditch to the East of the site, which demonstrates the risk of gas escape into the proposed housing area. There is also considerable doubt as to what the historic landfill cells to the immediate East of the site contain and therefore what further toxic leakage might occur.

**Attachment 2 Vale Environmental Officer's Comment.** The officer highlights that the applicant's own consultant has identified odour from the landfill site as "a significant factor". He then states that "If the applicant is (as Redrow is) arguing that a stricter regulatory regime will be necessary to prevent a significant impact on the proposed development, then it would appear that the development will have an impact on the existing lawful operation of the landfill/composting site. In that case, I would have to object to the proposed development on the grounds of its impact on an existing lawful use".

### Attachment 3. Environment Agency Comments.

The EA comments alarmingly state that it does not currently have the resources to properly assess the application and its comments do not indicate that permission would be given by the EA as a regulatory body.

- a. It acknowledges that there is a groundwater protection problem with the site. It rules that SUDs “must not be constructed in ground affected by contamination”. As mentioned above, in the drainage ditch just to the East of the site there is evidence of methane bubbling through the water. Insufficient analysis has been made of the risk of this and other toxins, especially as the landfill site has insufficient monitoring facilities. Clearly any such toxins could gravely affect any housing on the site.
- b. (1) It should also be noted that the applicant has identified “a high groundwater table with results ranging from 0.22-2.20m below existing ground level “. Their tables actually show a much narrower gap across most of the site. The EA states that “all SUDS Infiltration require a minimum of 1m clearance between the base and peak seasonal groundwater levels”. On the 0.22 to 2.2m estimate this site is just outside the minimum SUDs requirement and as the Ground Water monitoring took place over three months from March to May 2015, a period of low rainfall, it is contended that for much of the year the clearance would be much below the minimum required. This discrepancy would be even greater with the with narrower groundwater ranges across most of the site.  
  
(2) In addition given the above groundwater figures an attempt to relieve the problem through attenuation pools would be destined to fail.  
  
(3) The year on year flooding of the Recreation Ground to the north of the East SC site and the severe flood damage to nearby houses already demonstrates that there is a risk that flood problems will be exacerbated by any development on this site, especially as under the current application 45% of it would be hard paving.
- c. **Odours.** The EA acknowledges that there is a history of unacceptable odours affecting the village. Not mentioned, is the fact that there is an ongoing EA enforcement action on this issue. There is however, a mention of the Permit Conditions having a condition that “Emissions from activities shall be free from odour likely to cause pollution outside the site” but also includes the caveat “ unless the operator has used appropriate measures to...minimise the odour” . In this case the EA’s view is that the community would just have “to tolerate the odours”. This EA caveat is an abnegation of its responsibilities and whilst it might have force concerning residences 1000 metres away, the proposed new development will have housing less than 700 metres from the composting site.

**Attachment 4. Thames Water (TW) Comments .** TW clearly states that it has “ has identified an inability of the existing waste water infrastructure to accommodate the needs of this application”. This undermines the deliverability of the site at least in the medium term. Moreover, the addition of this site to the other recent Pye, Linden and Redrow developments and the permitted development of a giant warehouse all using the same historically inadequate drainage provision , running through the centre of the village, raises a question of the long term deliverability of the East SC site.

**Attachment 5. Traffic Solution Comments.** These comments counter the County Council views on the viability of the access to the East SC site through Frilsham Street and raises a fundamental question on the soundness of its inclusion in the Local Plan. In particular it highlights that it is not possible “ to improve the carriageway and footway to even meet the minimum UK standards.”

***R A Draper***

***Sutton Courtenay***

***4 Jan 2016***

***Attachments:***

- 1. Vale DC Health and Housing ( Contaminated Land) comment on East Sutton Courtenay Application P15/V2353/O dated 11 November 2015***
- 2. Vale Environmental Health Officer's response dated 22 Oct 2015***
- 3. Environment Agency Comments on East Sutton Courtenay Application P15/V2353/O dated 7 Dec 15***
- 4. Thames Water Comments***
- 5. Traffic Solutions Comments***

## APPLICATION WEB COMMENTS FORM

Your name :	Health & Housing - Contaminated Land
Your address :	(South Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse District Councils)
Date :	11 November 2015

Information available for public inspection and available on our website

Location : Land off Hobbyhorse Lane Sutton Courtenay Abingdon OX14 4BB  
Proposal : Outline planning application for up to 200 dwellings, including vehicular access, pedestrian and cycle links, public open space, car parking, landscaping, drainage and associated works.

Application Reference : P15/V2353/O - 47 Please complete

Use the space below for your comments

Thank you for consulting the Environmental Protection Team on this application in respect of contaminated land.

The site lies immediately adjacent to a historic licensed landfill (Hobbyhorse Lane North) and in close proximity (circa 25m) to a permitted landfill (Sutton Courtenay) and a historic landfill (Sutton Courtenay Waste Recycling Centre). The ground investigation report provided has not identified the presence of any soil contamination on site or any landfilling encroaching onto the site although it has identified the potential for gas migration from the adjacent landfill sites. When assessing migration from an off-site source CIRIA C665 and the Ground Gas Handbook highlight an initial nominal spacing of gas monitoring wells to demonstrate whether gas migration is occurring. The spacing of gas monitoring wells is dependent on not only the location and number of potential gas sources, but also the sensitivity of the proposed end use to soil gas ingress and the permeability of the ground. Given that the adjacent landfill sites pose a high potential gas hazard and that the proposed development is considered to be highly sensitive, guidance in CIRIA C665/Ground Gas Handbook indicates that the initial nominal spacing of gas monitoring wells should be very close (<25m). To date one round of gas monitoring has been undertaken in a series of monitoring wells located around the boundary of the site, however, the spacing of the monitoring wells does not currently appear sufficient given the above guidance. I would subsequently recommend that the number and spacing of the gas monitoring wells is reviewed in accordance with guidance contained in CIRIA C665/Ground Gas Handbook.

In respect of the proposed frequency of monitoring, this should be sufficient to allow prediction of worst case conditions which depends on various factors such as the age of the waste, geology, control measures in place, sensitivity and proximity of receptors and results of previous monitoring. The report provided states that the gas hazard for the site is considered to be moderate (adjacent old landfills) and that an initial monitoring programme will comprise of six visits over a 3 month period and that depending on the findings of this

assessment the monitoring program could be extended. I have reviewed the suggested periods and frequency of monitoring within C665/Ground Gas Handbook and consider that the soil gas generation potential of the site is moderate to very high risk and the sensitivity of the proposed development is considered as high. The suggested minimum periods and frequency of monitoring is therefore between 12 visits over a 6 month period and 24 visits over a 24 month period to characterise the site. Guidance also states that at least two sets of readings must be at low and falling atmospheric pressure (but not restricted to periods below 1000mb). It should also be noted that BS8576:2013 highlights that if the source of gas is off-site and gas migration is being assessed consideration should be given to increasing the periods of monitoring to cover the range of critical influences.

At present, the gas monitoring undertaken is not currently sufficient to meet the minimum suggested requirements to characterise the gas regime on this site and to assess the risks it may pose to end users of the site and demonstrate that these can be satisfactorily reduced to ensure that the site is capable of being redeveloped and suitable for the proposed use, I therefore recommend the proposed application is refused. I would also recommend that the Environment Agency are consulted on the proposed development as they are the enforcing authority on the adjacent permitted landfill site.

**From:** Alick Natton

**Sent:** 22 October 2015 12:14

**To:** Shaun Wells

**Subject:** P15/V2353/O

Hi Shaun,

Further to my recent comment on this application, I have been in discussion with my colleagues at the Environment Agency, who are the enforcing authority for the landfill site and the composting operation.

As I previously noted, the applicant's own consultant has identified odour from the landfill and composting site is a significant factor. The consultant states that the regulatory regime will prevent odour from this source having an impact on the proposed development site. However, this regulatory regime is not preventing complaints by residents of Sutton Courtenay about odour from the landfill/composting site at present. The current regime cannot guarantee that operation of the site will be completely odour free in Sutton Courtenay.

If the applicant is arguing that a stricter regulatory regime will be necessary to prevent a significant impact on the proposed development, then it would appear that the development will have an impact on the existing lawful operation of the landfill/composting site. In that case, I would have to object to the proposed development on the grounds of its impact on an existing lawful use. I must add the caveat, though, that I do not represent the enforcing authority for the landfill/composting site.

Regards

Alick Natton

Environmental Health Officer

Mr Shaun Wells  
Vale Of White Horse Council  
Planning  
135 Eastern Avenue  
Milton Park  
Abingdon  
Oxon  
OX14 4SB

**Our ref:** WA/2015/121551/01-L01  
**Your ref:** P15/V2353/O  
**Date:** 7 December 2015

Dear Mr Wells

**Outline planning application for up to 200 dwellings, including vehicular access, pedestrian and cycle links, public open space, car parking, landscaping, drainage and associated works**

**Land off Hobbyhorse Lane, Sutton Courtenay, Abingdon**

Thank you for consulting the Environment Agency on the above planning application.

Due to increased workload prioritisation we are unable to make a detailed assessment of this application. We have checked the environmental constraints for the location and have the following guidance.

The proposal is for residential development on land potentially affected by contamination and the environmental risks in this area relate to groundwater protection. In particular, the site lies over the Northmoor Sand and Gravels, designated as a Secondary A Aquifer.

We have the following guidance to give on groundwater protection, and the implications of the site's proximity to waste sites.

### **Groundwater Protection**

If infiltration drainage is proposed then it must be demonstrated that it will not pose a risk to groundwater quality. We consider any infiltration SuDS greater than 3m below ground level to be a deep system and generally not acceptable. All infiltration SuDS require a minimum of 1m clearance between the base and peak seasonal groundwater levels. All need to meet the criteria set out in our Groundwater Protection: Principles and Practice (GP3) document<sup>1</sup>. In addition, they must not be constructed in ground affected by contamination.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/groundwater-protection-principles-and-practice-gp3>

Cont/d..



There must be no direct discharge to groundwater from any soakaway or infiltration drainage system which may contain contaminated run off (such as oil from cars), this could in theory result in a breach of the Environmental Permitting Regulation 2010.

## **Waste sites**

We have received a number of complaints from residents of Sutton Courtenay in recent years in relation to odour coming from the nearby composting and landfill operations. A number of these complaints have been from the Hobbyhorse Lane area. Further information on odour complaints can be obtained by contacting us.

It should be noted that the wording of the permit conditions and guidance relating to odour for these sites makes clear that as long as appropriate measures are in place, odour will have to be tolerated by the community.

### *Composting site*

Sutton Courtenay Composting Facility is approximately 750m east of the proposed development and there is an environmental permit in place (EPR/BP3295ET), issued by the Environment Agency.

The Air Quality and Odour Assessment documents rely heavily on measures that can be imposed through the permitting regime to control odour impacts at the proposed development. The wording of the permit condition relating to odour from the composting facility is shown below.

‘Emissions from the activities shall be free from odour at levels likely to cause pollution outside the site, as perceived by an authorised officer of the Environment Agency, unless the operator has used appropriate measures, including, but not limited to, those specified in any approved odour management plan, to prevent or where that is not practicable to minimise the odour.’

It should be noted that Section 2.1 of our ‘H4 Odour Management’ guidance states that if appropriate measures are being used, residual odour will have to be tolerated by the community. The H4 guidance can be found at [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/296737/geho0411btqm-e-e.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/296737/geho0411btqm-e-e.pdf).

### *Landfill site*

The perimeter of the permitted Sutton Courtenay Landfill site is approximately 15m from the proposed development. The permit number is BV7001IK and the operator is Waste Recycling Group (Central) Ltd.

There is active landfill gas collection and utilisation at the landfill. There are gas monitoring boreholes around the perimeter of the landfill site, many along Hobbyhorse Lane. One aim of this monitoring is to confirm that engineering measures are controlling landfill gas.

The gas boreholes are routinely monitored for the presence of carbon dioxide and methane and the results are reported to us in line with the environmental permit. It is our responsibility to assess the results to determine compliance with the carbon dioxide and methane trigger levels as specified in the permit. The presence of gas, particularly methane, can be indicative of landfill gas migration.



Over the last year there have been sporadic exceedences of the 1% methane trigger level along the stretch of monitoring boreholes along Hobbyhorse Lane. The closest gas boreholes with elevated methane are approximately 350m from the proposed development boundary. The carbon dioxide trigger level has also been exceeded but it is widely recognised that background carbon dioxide levels could be an influence. However, for this site this has not been formally explored with the Environment Agency. The routine monitoring data is public register information and can be obtained upon request.

Landfill gas will tend to travel down preferential pathways, i.e. service ducts and/ or pipelines. We recommend discussing with the Council's Environmental Health officer the potential impact of the housing development introducing new preferential pathways in such close proximity to a gas producing landfill site.

The closest area of the landfill site to the proposed development boundary is restored and has surface water perimeter ditches. Some of the run-off from the landfill site is directed to the north western corner of the landfill site. This is adjacent to the south east corner of the proposed development. This flow then runs eastwards along the ditch on Hobbyhorse Lane. Separate work to the surface water drainage system, unrelated to the permitted landfill site, has just been undertaken. It is recommended that the influence of the surface water drainage from the proposed development takes into account these two regimes.

The landfill permit has a condition relating specifically to odour. The wording of the condition is shown below.

'Emissions from the activities shall be free from odour at levels likely to cause annoyance outside the site, as perceived by an authorised officer of the Agency, unless the operator has used appropriate measures to prevent or where that is not practicable to minimise the odour.'

To reiterate the comments made for the compost site, it should be noted that Section 2.1 of our 'H4 Odour Management' guidance states that if appropriate measures are being used, residual odour will have to be tolerated by the community. The H4 guidance can be found at [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/296737/geho0411btqm-e-e.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/296737/geho0411btqm-e-e.pdf).

## **Other Consents**

As you are aware we also have a regulatory role in issuing legally required consents, permits or licences for various activities. We have not assessed whether consent will be required under our regulatory role and therefore this letter does not indicate that permission will be given by the Environment Agency as a regulatory body.

The applicant should contact 08708 506 506 or consult our website to establish if consent will be required for the works they are proposing. Please see <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/business/topics/permitting/default.aspx>

Any works in, over, under, or within 8 metres of the top of the bank of a designated Main River will also require our formal consent. Please contact 08708 506 506 to find out more information about Flood Defence Consents.

If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

**Mr David Griggs**  
**Planning Advisor**

Direct dial 01491 828490

Direct e-mail [planning-wallingford@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:planning-wallingford@environment-agency.gov.uk)

cc Bidwells

End

Vale of White Horse District Council  
PO Box 127  
Abbey House  
Abingdon  
Oxon  
OX14 3JN

Our DTS Ref: 37039  
Your Ref: P15/V2353/O

3 November 2015

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: LAND OFF, HOBBYHORSE LANE, SUTTON COURTENAY, ABINGDON, OXFORDSHIRE, OX14 4AU

#### Waste Comments

Following initial investigation, Thames Water has identified an inability of the existing waste water infrastructure to accommodate the needs of this application. Should the Local Planning Authority look to approve the application, Thames Water would like the following 'Grampian Style' condition imposed. "Development shall not commence until a drainage strategy detailing any on and/or off site drainage works, has been submitted to and approved by, the local planning authority in consultation with the sewerage undertaker. No discharge of foul or surface water from the site shall be accepted into the public system until the drainage works referred to in the strategy have been completed". Reason - The development may lead to sewage flooding; to ensure that sufficient capacity is made available to cope with the new development; and in order to avoid adverse environmental impact upon the community. Should the Local Planning Authority consider the above recommendation is inappropriate or are unable to include it in the decision notice, it is important that the Local Planning Authority liaises with Thames Water Development Control Department (telephone 0203 577 9998) prior to the Planning Application approval.

Surface Water Drainage - With regard to surface water drainage it is the responsibility of a developer to make proper provision for drainage to ground, water courses or a suitable sewer. In respect of surface water it is recommended that the applicant should ensure that storm flows are attenuated or regulated into the receiving public network through on or off site storage. When it is proposed to connect to a combined public sewer, the site drainage should be separate and combined at the final manhole nearest the boundary. Connections are not permitted for the removal of groundwater. Where the developer proposes to discharge to a public sewer, prior approval from Thames Water Developer Services will be required. They can be contacted on 0800 009 3921. Reason - to ensure that the surface

water discharge from the site shall not be detrimental to the existing sewerage system.

Water Comments

Thames Water recommend the following informative be attached to this planning permission. Thames Water will aim to provide customers with a minimum pressure of 10m head (approx 1 bar) and a flow rate of 9 litres/minute at the point where it leaves Thames Waters pipes. The developer should take account of this minimum pressure in the design of the proposed development.

Yours faithfully  
Development Planning Department

Development Planning,  
Thames Water,  
Maple Lodge STW,  
Denham Way,  
Rickmansworth,  
WD3 9SQ

10 Church Street  
Sutton Courtenay  
Abingdon  
OXON  
OX14 4NJ

15<sup>th</sup> December 2015

Vale of White Horse District Council  
135 Eastern Avenue  
Milton Park  
Milton  
OX14 4SB

FAO Mr Shaun Wells

Dear Mr Wells

**Planning Application P15/V2353/O, Land at Hobby Horse Lane, Sutton Courtenay**

I am writing in response to the recently posted submission from OCC One Voice. This submission sets out evidence from various sections within OCC and I would particularly like to focus on the Transport element within it.

I live in the village and I am a director of Safer Traffic Solutions, a company that specialises in road safety schemes and road safety audits. I have more than 20 years working in these disciplines, and reading the planning application does fill me with a number of concerns about the sub-standard practises and the potential to compromise safety.

The Key Points to my objections are bulleted below, and these are followed by detailed evidence that supports my submission.

**Key Points**

1. The Hobby Horse Lane proposal is one of five developments that have been proposed in the local vicinity. The other four are under construction.
2. The feeder roads to each of the other four sites all have a carriageway width of 5.5 metres
3. The feeder roads to each of the other four sites each have at least one continuous footway of 2m wide
4. The parameters set out in 2 and 3 above are requirements imposed by OCC. The same requirements have been imposed on Frilsham Street/Hobby Horse Lane – the road which is intended to become the feeder road for the Hobby Horse Lane development.
5. Despite the developers drawings claiming a 5.5 metre carriageway is achievable, my measurements on street show this is not physically possible in at least three positions.

6. There is no continuous footway of 2m wide on Frilsham Street or Hobby Horse Lane, and the footway is narrowest (1.4m) where there isn't any verge segregation from the carriageway
7. OCC Highways states in its submission that at one of the three narrow carriageway positions it is acceptable to have a substandard carriageway, yet this is contradicted in the same submission that Hobby Horse Lane is "well below the expected standard for commuter cycling".
8. Neither the carriageway nor the footway of Frilsham Street can be modified to the standard that is claimed in the proposal.
9. Such a failure to achieve the requisite standards for footway and carriageway will result in a situation that cycling and walking will never be encouraged, which directly contradicts the statement that the "thrust of land use and transport policy is to promote and encourage the choice of walking and cycling above all else." (quote from developer's transport assessment).
10. The failure to be able to improve the carriageway and footway to even meet the minimum UK standards will compromise the safety of the children who currently reside in the existing dwellings and use their front gardens as play areas.
11. The planning application cannot be accepted purely on the content of the developer's submission, which I believe is inaccurate and misleading. I believe an independent detailed survey of both the horizontal and vertical alignments (the latter isn't even included in the submission) of Frilsham Street and Hobby Horse Lane must be carried out prior to any decision as these surveys will demonstrate that OCC's requirements cannot be met and so the development should not proceed.

### **Evidential detail to support the objection**

My overall concern is the use of Frilsham Street as the feeder road (the road linking the new dwellings to the nearest classified road) to provide access to the proposed conurbation.

The One Voice submission states in its Key Points that "Facilities for residents in Sutton Courtenay are limited and most local facilities that residents will need on a day to day basis are going to be accessed by private motor car. "

It also states that it

*"is concerned that new development sites should have access to high quality public transport, in order to mitigate the impact of additional traffic generated onto an already congested local and strategic road network."*

These statements justify OCC's Highways department's insistence on the provision of a 5.5 metre carriageway and upgraded footway facilities, parameters which align with the requirements set out in DMRB (Design Manual for Roads and Bridges).

Further, the Redrow application also claims to be supporting sustainable transport, and as such encouraging cycling and walking, so it is even more important that the DMRB requirements are met.

OCC Highways has been largely consistent in its use of the requirements, but my investigations of some other housing developments in the area have shown some anomalies between those and the Hobby Horse Lane application. I also believe there are some fundamental flaws in the Redrow submission for the Hobby Horse Lane proposal, and both these issues render the use of Hobby Horse Lane/Frilsham Street as wholly inappropriate as the feeder road for the development and it should not proceed.

I would now like to explain my reasons that support the above claim.

I have investigated the feeder road and footway provision on four other developments in the Sutton Courtenay area, and these are summarised, along with Hobby Horse Lane in the table below - with the worst condition in each category highlighted red.

Site detail	Number of dwellings	Feeder Road width, narrowest	Footway 1 width, narrowest	Footway 2 width, narrowest	Other vehicular access private	Other vehicular access public	Localised throttle
Linden Homes Milton	32	5.5	2.0	1.5	None	None	None
Pye Homes, Sutton Courtenay	c.30	5.6	2.0	n/a	None	None	None
Linden Homes, Sutton Courtenay	26	5.6	2.0	n/a	None	None	Yes, one
Redrow Sutton Courtenay	70	5.5	2.0	2.0	None	None	None
Redrow Hobby Horse Lane	220	4.9	1.5	1.5	22 cross over licences for off street parking	2 junctions with other roads	At least 3

From this analysis the facts are clear. The proposed scheme, which has more than three times the number of dwellings than the closest comparison, has

- 1 the narrowest carriageway (even after the alterations)
- 2 The worst footway facilities (even after the alterations)
- 3 The highest number of potential conflicts (vehicle to pedestrian/child/pedal cycle)

I would now like to put some detail to the findings above.

## Carriageway

It is agreed by all that the carriageway is of a substandard width. OCC's One Voice submission states

*"At present it is considered that Frilsham Street/Hobbyhorse Lane is inadequate in terms of its width to serve the proposed development with convenience and safety. However, the submitted preliminary site access & junction features plan Dwg No. W141603/B/02A, indicates off-site improvement works to Frilsham Street/Hobbyhorse Lane. Improvements to the horizontal alignment are widening to 5.5m in width in the main, although having a localised throttle in the vicinity of the Village Hall access, which would serve in part as a traffic calming feature. These are considered to be acceptable."*

There are three issues with this statement.

Firstly, whilst the drawing quoted shows a widening of the carriageway to 5.5m, this is slightly disingenuous as even printed to the recommended A1 size, it is difficult to see that it is actually not possible to achieve 5.5m along its length (not including the localised throttle which detailed in the second issue point below).

I have been on site and have measured the carriageway at various points and the devil is in the detail - it is not feasibly possible to achieve the required 5.5m carriageway width at three different points. These three points are detailed in an objection document already submitted and for reference I have appended this submission to this document.

As it is not feasibly possible to achieve the 5.5m the OCC requires then the planning proposal should be rejected on this issue alone as conditions cannot be met.

Secondly, let's assess the localised throttle referred to. It is difficult to understand that having a localised throttle is beneficial. If this was the case, then why has only one of the four other schemes assessed been required to construct a throttle? The fact is there are three throttles on Frilsham Street/Hobby Horse Lane (these are detailed in sections 4, 5 and 6 in the Appendix) which just means the road is not fit for purpose. The last of the throttles is the one the OCC One Voice submission states that it

*"would serve in part as a traffic calming feature".*

However, another voice in the One Voice submission also states

*"In addition, the short section of Hobbyhorse Lane in its current condition is well below the expected standard for commuter cycling and will require substantial improvement."*

So, one part of OCC has deemed it not possible to widen/improve the carriageway at this point and so refers to it as a throttle, yet another department recognises that it needs substantial improvements. As these improvements are just not possible, I would again suggest that the proposed scheme does not meet the requirements and should be refused.



Thirdly, The OCC One Voice submission states that improvements to the horizontal alignment would satisfy the 5.5m width requirement. The above shows that this is not the case, but OCC has not made any reference to the vertical alignment.

A number of inhabitants of dwellings on Frilsham Street park “on-street”. The propensity for this to occur at any of the four other schemes assessed is minimal as there are no properties on the feeder roads.

The developers have recognised this and suggested that some parking bays are installed at one particular point on Frilsham Street. These look fine on the plan drawing, until the levels are assessed.

Again I have been to site and assessed the vertical levels, and it is just not possible to accommodate the parking bays. The details of which are shown in section 5 and fig 2 of the appendix. The outcomes of a vertical alignment assessment shows that carriageway widths will, once again, be affected such that the required 5.5m cannot be achieved and so the planning permission should be refused. The vertical alignment also has implications on the footway design which I shall move onto now.

### **Footway**

Frilsham Street and Hobby Horse Lane have the worst footway provision of all the five schemes considered. The average footway width is around 1.5 metres yet it is intended to service 220 additional dwellings and the 500 people that come with them. This is more than 3 times the number of any of the other schemes assessed.

As a feeder road, Frilsham Street/Hobby Horse Lane is unique amongst the five schemes assessed in that it has 20 vehicle crossovers to private properties and two junctions with other roads. These features all result in the lack of continuity of the footway and introduce the potential for vehicle/pedestrian/child conflicts. None of the other schemes assessed has any crossover or junction features, yet the OCC has still insisted on 2m footways for the other schemes. It seems odd then that a 1.5m footway is acceptable here.

The OCC One Voice submission hasn’t stipulated a required footway width, just “footway improvements”. However, in order to bring footways up to the minimum standards in DMRB they should be 2m wide with a crossfall of less than 3.3%. Section 5 of the appendix sets out how this is not achievable at one section of Frilsham Street, and at the localised throttle there is no room to widen the carriageway or the footway (which is currently 1.2m in places).

As it is not achievable to bring the footway provision up to minimum standard widths, and none of the footways are continuous (unlike the other schemes assessed), this would result in child and pedestrian safety being compromised and so the planning application should be refused.

### **Safety**

The footway section above refers to child and pedestrian safety. Road safety is all about conflicts, and these conflicts occur between all road users when the paths they are travelling on

converge or cross, and where there is a potential for conflict then the risk of a collision is raised. The severity of the collisions range from a damage only, through slight and serious injuries to death. Invariably in conurbations large and small, the more severe injuries and fatalities occur outside a motorised vehicle (around 70%), i.e. to cyclists and pedestrians (including children). So it is the very people we are trying to protect that we are putting at risk.

A basic principle of road safety states that if you remove conflicts then the risk of collisions is reduced. Conversely if you increase the potential of conflicts then you increase the risk of injury.

It is therefore logical to assume that any increase in pedestrians/cyclists along the feeder road (solely due to this planning application) will increase the potential conflict points between the additional vehicles and the additional cyclists and pedestrians (including children) and so the risk of collision will increase. The increase in conflict points will occur at the usual places such as high pedestrian crossing points or road junctions, but in the case of Frilsham Street there is an added factor that children play in their gardens and the road as this is a quiet cul-de-sac. Any increase in vehicular traffic that because of the substandard carriageway width requires those vehicles to pass too close to the substandard width footways and reduces the proximity of children to those vehicles, increases the risk of injury.

By allowing the planning proposal to proceed, there will be a significant increase in conflicts, between vehicles and cyclists and pedestrians without any improvements in safety. On this issue alone the planning application should be refused.

### **Sustainable transport**

Lastly, the developers claim to have submitted a proposal that

*“provides full details of opportunities for public transport use, cycling and walking for future occupants of the proposed development.”*

This is clearly not the case. How can a scheme that

- 1 has sub-standard carriageway widths without any room for improvement
- 2 substandard footway widths without any room for improvement
- 3 compromises safety by increasing the risk of conflict between pedestrians and vehicles
- 4 is well below the expected standard for commuter cycling

ever encourage anyone to cycle or walk.

This brings me back full circle to the first quote from OCC One Voice submission that I used at the beginning of this submission.

It is very true that *“Facilities for residents in Sutton Courtenay are limited and most local facilities that residents will need on a day to day basis are going to be accessed by private motor car”* and this will not change as a result of anything the developers have submitted.

Unfortunately the planning application put together by the developers cannot physically deliver on any of its promises for the feeder road to the proposed dwellings.

I therefore urge the council to reject this planning application before it is too late. To let it proceed and find out further down the line that it cannot be delivered is a massive failing on the council's duty to its residents.

Yours faithfully

Tom Duckham  
10 Church Street  
Sutton Courtenay

## APPENDIX

Dear sir

I am writing to strongly object to the selected route (Frilsham Street) for the only access road to the proposed 220 dwelling development at the end of Hobby Horse Lane.

I am aware that there is a proposal in the Council's Master Plan document to develop this particular piece of land and so we have to accept the houses will undoubtedly be approved but the proposed access route is wholly inappropriate and should be refused, with the alternative route stated in the Master Plan used instead.

My reasons for objecting are as follows, Frilsham Street is a cul-de-sac which allows access to the 50 or so dwellings therein. The existing road layout reflects this minor use with its characteristics including,

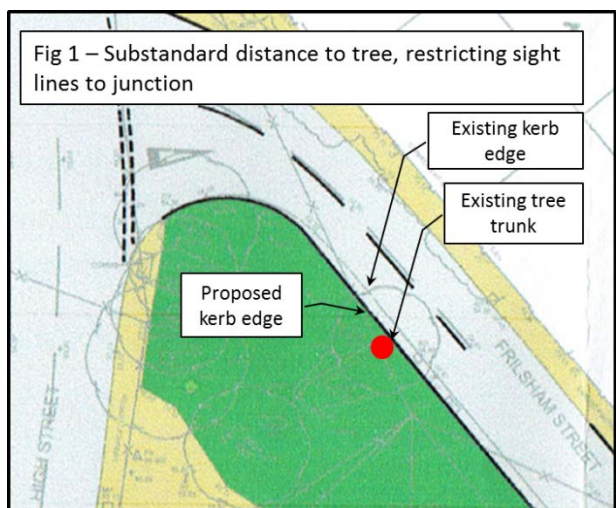
- 1 a carriageway width of less than 5 metres throughout its length,
- 2 substandard footways of 1.5m wide
- 3 on street parking allowed on both sides of the carriageway

Oxfordshire County Council has tacitly admitted that the Frilsham Street is inappropriate by its stipulated requirements that Frilsham Street carriageway would require widening by 0.5m.

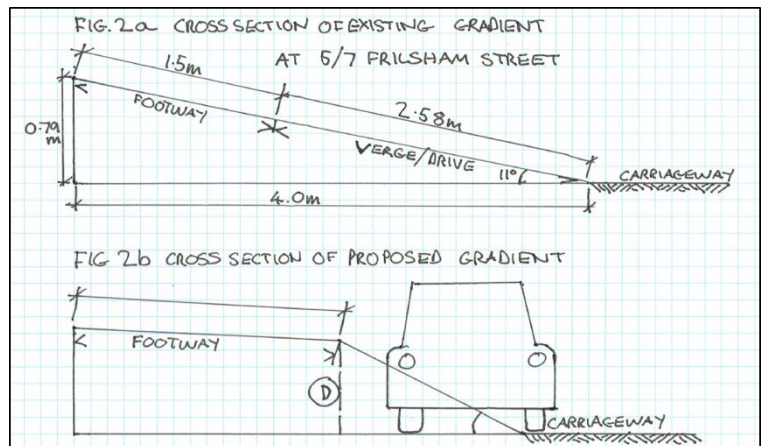
#### **Carriageway width of less than 5m**

On the face of it this carriageway widening might resolve some issues but, if investigated in detail, this proposal is just not possible, and I would like to offer three of the many reasons as to why not. Working from west to east,

- 4 The carriageway is due to be widened on the south side from the junction with High Street by 0.5m for around 40m. However, there is an existing mature poplar tree, around 20m from the junction with High Street, whose trunk is 0.65m from the kerb edge on the south side (see fig. 1.). If the carriageway is to be widened at this point, then the tree will only be, at best, 0.15m from the live carriageway. Best practice states that for a 30mph road the minimum distance should be 0.45m, and the resultant 0.15m would impact the sight lines to the junction where there is a pedestrian crossing facility. By allowing this scheme you would be permitting a substandard layout to be adopted, and this shouldn't be allowed to happen.



- 5 The next issue starts on Frilsham Street some 50m from the junction with High Street, but on the north side of the carriageway. From number 3 Frilsham Street to the corner with Town Close, the verge/footway is situated on a slope whose crossfall is around 10%. The slope also accommodates vehicular access to some of the properties with dropped kerb access. The tarmac footway is currently substandard both in its own crossfall and width (see fig.2a).



However, it is at this location that it is proposed to introduce some parking strips to accommodate the current on street parking. This raises a number of issues.

- i. If the scheme goes ahead, and the layout must encourage walking, as the proposal claims, then the extra footfall and the ability to accommodate double buggies passing each other, a footway that complies with standards must be introduced. This should be a 2m wide footway with a max crossfall of 3.3% (as shown in fig. 2b.).
  - ii. If the above is accommodated then the 1.5m parking strip (which should use the same crossfall as the footway) would have a vertical drop to it of up 0.6m (see fig. 2b at D) and this would be in place for the 20m of the parking strip.
  - iii. The 1.5m allowance for the parking strip is inadequate but cannot be increased and it will mean that vehicles will stick out onto the carriageway thereby reducing it down to the 5m width that the OCC found unacceptable in the first place.
  - iv. The parking strips are not fit for purpose as the proposed width does not take into consideration occupants of the vehicle opening the doors. In order to do so the vehicles would have to park even further out from the retaining wall at D and so the vehicles would be even further out into the carriageway than stated in iii. above.
  - v. Further, car occupants would have to then walk into the live carriageway to access the footway as to scale the retaining wall at D would not be possible.
- 6 The last element of concern is the carriageway at Hobby Horse Lane. This cannot be widened at all, rendering the widening exercise pointless in the other locations as this will be substandard as OCC has already declared.

#### **Substandard footways of 1.5m wide**

Section 4 above demonstrates that a footway width that meets the required standards is just not possible and there are further locations throughout the north side of the route to the proposed development that do not meet standard specification. Further, there is no scope to improve the pedestrian facilities as the land required just doesn't exist.

### **On street parking on both sides of the carriageway**

The proposal does state that some parking strips will be provided to assist with the on street parking requirement, but as stated in 5 above, these are not fit for purpose.

Further these cannot be accommodated anywhere else on the route where the desirability for people to park on street still exists. Just because a few parking strips have been provided (albeit inadequate ones) does not mean that on street parking elsewhere will not continue, it is down to drivers' preference.

The slalom effect that is caused by the current on street parking on both sides of the road is totally manageable because of the cul-de-sac nature of the road and the current minimal usage. However, making Frilsham Street and Hobby Horse Lane the main thoroughfare and adding a potential further 400 vehicles to the road will cause immense problems and delays, conflicts and inconvenience to both existing residents and any new residents.

### **Summary**

Frilsham Street is not fit for purpose to be used as the access route to the proposed development.

- The carriageway cannot be widened to the recommended width that OCC has insisted on and as such, it will be substandard and will not safely manage the increased traffic levels.
- The on street parking which can be perfectly accommodated in the existing road set up, will only serve to cause conflict, delays and inconvenience to all.
- The footway facilities are substandard now and with the proposals they will be wholly inadequate and cannot be improved.
- Some of the scheme proposals will not pass a Stage 1 Safety Audit

It seems that the developer has desperately tried to make the proposed access scheme work as it obviously the cheaper of the two options available. However, it is not fit for purpose and will undoubtedly bring a much poorer quality of life to those living on the access route, and cause inconvenience to those using the new development. You will be approving a scheme that is dangerous.

The Master Plan refers to the alternative access route going out to the east and if the development is to go ahead it is the east route that should be adopted.