

# WOODCOTE PARISH COUNCIL

**MINUTES** of the Parish Council meeting held in the Function Room, Village Hall, Woodcote  
Wednesday 16th November 2016 7.30pm.

## **PRESENT**

Chairman	Mr. R. Peirce
Vice Chair	Dr. G. Botting.
	Mrs. D. Hadaway
	Mr. A. Crockett
	Mr. M. Smith
	Mr. B.. Williams
	Dr. P. Sudbury (arrived later)
	Mr. R. Lewin
	Mr. D. Booth
Parish Clerk	Ms. Jenny Welham

1. To receive apologies for absence.  
Mrs. S. McGurk.

2. To Receive declarations of interest.  
Cllr. Crockett declared interest in Planning App. P16/S3306/O and P16/S3267/O.

3. **Public Forum:** Opportunity for members of the public to address the Council, the public may also speak about specific items of business as they arise, with the permission of the Chairman.  
Ten residents present to speak on planning application P16/S3306/O also to observe proceedings.

4. To approve Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2016.  
Approved as true record.

5. Matters arising from those Minutes not on the agenda elsewhere.  
Cllr. Smith raised the matter of the Village Green Committee referring to writing a process for obtaining funds for their various projects. He referred to the procedure he had already written regarding Section 106 funds that had been agreed by the PC and already circulated. The Clerk had resent this procedure to the VGC requesting that they refer to it rather than write another process.

Cllr. Crockett advised that he had spoken to Mr. Smallbone regarding him maintaining the War Memorial Garden, Mr. Smallbone had advised that he is willing to continue, and when he retires his Son will take over the maintenance. The Chairman and the Councillors wished to thank Mr. Smallbone for his excellent work and keeping our War Memorial garden looking wonderful.

## **6. Reports from County Councillor/District Councillor.**

District Cllr. Nimmo-Smith had sent his apologies.  
County Cllr. Kevin Bulmer had sent an electronic report.

## **7. Planning Applications**

**P16/S3306/O (Outline)** Major Proposal: Outline planning application for the erection of up to 65 homes, access, parking, landscaping, open space, play area and associated infrastructure, including removal of existing paddock structures. All matters reserved except for access. Address: Land South of Bridle Path Woodcote.

Cllr. Smith had circulated a draft response to this application to all councillors prior to the meeting. He had added two more paragraphs referring to planning applications outside of Woodcote that had been refused to show a precedent.

CPRE had recorded their objections to this application, also 66 residents of Woodcote had sent comments to SODC. Cllr. Smith had not read all of them but the majority were objecting.

SODC Urban Design Officer also has not had favourable comments.

Thames Water have also responded stating that the main sewage system is insufficient to support this development.

The Chairman invited the public to speak;

A resident from Bridle Path felt that all the utilities would be unable to cope with this referring to the doctors, and schools as well as sewage, gas and electricity. He asked if the Neighbourhood Plan had a timeline. The PC replied that the NHP is robust and that this site is not a designated site in the existing plan, and that the Revised Plan will look at other pieces of land for consideration and check their suitability. The revision to the NHP will go into more depth to consider the services and utilities within the village for supporting any potential future development.

A further resident from Bridle Path spoke saying he had attended as he wanted to be encouraged that the PC was in support of objection to this development. He was pleased that the PC are objecting and thanked them for all the background work they had done in this regard.

A resident from Goring Rd asked the timescale of the progress of this application. The Chairman replied that it is a major application and that 13 weeks is the normal timeline. SODC website is stating a target date for a decision of 6<sup>th</sup> January 2017.

Megan asked how developers can put in planning applications when the village has an NHP? The Chairman advised that the Law does not restrict anyone from making a planning application and that the policy is that they should be granted unless there are local policies that have sound planning reasons for refusal. As such Woodcote NHP does cover this.

The Parish Council Recommend Refusal – Full detail can be seen in Appendix 1 to the minutes.

**P16/S3267/O (Outline) Amendment : No. 1** - dated 25th October 2016

Proposal : Outline application for the demolition of existing buildings and end gable wall of existing dwelling and erection of 5 dwellings and associated works including provision of new access onto Bridle path with all matters reserved except for access (parking dimensions altered and footpath added as shown on amended plan received 25th October 2016). Address : 14 Bridle Path Woodcote RG8 0SE.

Cllr. Smith advised that this amendment just covers the dimensions of the garages and the parking spaces and does not address any of the objections already submitted by the Parish Council, which all still stand. Recommend Refusal.

*Cllr. Crockett returned to the meeting*

**P16/S2714/FUL (Full Application) Amendment : No. 2** - dated 31st October 2016

Proposal : Demolish and replace existing dwelling with a two-storey 5-bedroom dwelling. Demolish and replace existing stables with a 3-bedroom bungalow (revised plans received 26th September 2016, relocating first floor window opening and detached garage; revised site layout plan received 31st October 2016). Address : Goats Gambol Beech Lane Woodcote Oxfordshire RG8 0PY.

Woodcote Parish Council have reviewed the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment and feel that this revised site plan would seem to cause very significant problems. The Council still feel that this application is not viable by the nature of demolishing one part of a semi-detached building and leaving the other parties adjoining section intact. This approach is unprecedented in Woodcote Parish Councils experience within Woodcote.

The House has been moved by 5.5 metres also the garage has moved, though not by a large amount and the north-west facing window that was overlooking has been removed. However, the house has shifted forwards (north-east) so that

(a) according to simple calculations using basic trig and solar azimuth / sunrise bearing tables, the house, which has moved so as to be due east of the neighbour's dwelling, will block all sun currently available to the neighbour from the Autumn equinox right through to the Spring one, as well as a significant proportion of that available for a month or so either side. In fact, between them, the house and garage between them will obstruct almost any view of the horizon and up to 20 degrees above it stretching over a 90 degree angle from north-west to south east.

(b) windows at the back of the house will now overlook a part of the neighbour's property, especially from bedroom 1 (south-west facing window) and to a lesser but significant extent bedroom 4 (also south-west facing window).

Bearing in mind that the neighbour's property is set down in a hollow, and shielded by mature trees from south -east and south. The proposed development will disproportionately affect their access to sunlight. It would require a very significant shift of the house to the south-east (at least half way to the south east corner of the plot for it to become acceptable to the neighbouring property.

Woodcote Parish Council are still strongly recommending refusal, should the Officers be minded to approve this application the Council will request that their District Council call this into the Full Planning Committee and the PC will send a representative to speak.

**P6/S3371/FUL** (Full Application) Proposal: Erection of garage. Address: New Dormer Bungalow The Conifers Beech Lane Woodcote RG8 0PY.  
Recommend Approval.

**P16/S3675/HH** (Householder) Proposal: Dormer roof and alterations. Address: 37 West Chiltern Woodcote RG8 0SG.  
Recommend Approval.

**P16/S3654/LB** (Listed Building Consent) Proposal: Repairs to barn with alterations to valley gutter detailing Address: The Folly South Stoke Road Woodcote Oxon RG8 0PL.  
Recommend Approval.

### **7.1 Applications Granted by SODC:**

None.

### **7.2 Applications Refused by SODC**

None.

### **7.3 Other Planning Matters**

Tom Wyatt SODC Planning Officer had sent an email in respect of the Old Reservoir site in response to the PC's comments;

*I am finding it difficult to provide justification for the traffic calming in light of this application. I have discussed this with the Highway Officer and he does not consider that there is sufficient justification to request speed cushions in relation to the development. He has referred to the Manual for Streets, which states that there is a kind of edge friction by a built frontage to a highway and that the presence of an access tends to slow people down.*

*As such he intimates that the presence of the development itself would act to control speeds along the highway to some degree.*

*I think it is very unlikely that the developer would be willing to provide traffic calming, particularly in light of the CIL liability for the development. In light of the substantial CIL receipt from the development, 25% of which will go to the Parish, would it be conceivable that traffic calming could be provided from these funds in due course?*

*We are in discussions with Mr Dixon regarding the affordable housing mix and I will update you on this as soon as possible.*

The PC asked the Clerk to reply asking why there is now a reluctance as the original application did show traffic calming measures. Also to send the speed data collated for Greenmore which shows speeding is regularly occurring. There are other access points present along Greenmore and the data shows they obviously do not deter speeding.

Cllr. Crockett advised that he had heard from SODC Planning Enforcement regarding the case for the floodlights installed around the menage to the rear of Bridlepath. The applicant had stated they were not connected. However, Cllr. Crockett has photographs of them operating. The Clerk to write on behalf of the PC and send in the photographs.

The Clerk referred to the email from SODC Planning Officer;

Re: application P16/S3043/FUL, Woodcote PC has objected for the following reason:

*Woodcote Parish Council recommend Refusal. The Condition 5 - Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes on the application Ref. P14/S2378/Ful which was granted on Appeal was included by the Inspector and Woodcote Parish Council strongly object to its removal and see no reason for the need to remove this condition.*

The planning team no longer attaches this condition to planning approvals, the Code for Sustainable Homes is no longer dealt with at application stage and current building regulations require an efficiency level that is between the old Code for Sustainable Homes Levels 3 and 4. As such it is entirely reasonable for the developer/applicant to want to remove it as a condition of the approval as sufficient controls are still in place to require the Code Level of this dwelling through building control. If this application were to be submitted now, we would not attach this condition as it is not reasonable or necessary to make the development acceptable at the planning application stage.

Is it possible for Woodcote PC to re-assess their objection to this application and get back to me – otherwise this application would have to be referred to a planning committee meeting. Which would be a waste of time for both myself and Woodcote PC.

The PC asked the Clerk to reply stating that it should be built to Code 4 and not Code 3 and to ensure that building regulations state code 4.

**8. Finance** To approve payments, note receipts.

Date Paid	Payee Name	Ref	Amount Paid	Transaction Detail	
05/11/2016	HMRC	SO	£300.18	Tax & NI October	
16/11/2016	Glanville Consultants Ltd	597	£1,500.00	Fee for design Pedestrian X	
16/11/2016	RBL Poppy appeal	598	£50.00	Annual donation	
16/11/2016	Mr. R. Peirce	600	£120.00	Chairmans expenses	
16/11/2016	K. Smallbone	601	£30.00	War Mem Garden Nov.	63

16/11/2016	SODC	602	£170.00	Fee plan app basketball extns
16/11/2016	WVHMC	603	£191.00	To cover roof tile replacement
28/11/2016	J. Welham	SO	£814.13	November Salary
28/11/2016	L. Crockett	SO	£200.00	Nov Salary Litter picking
			£3,375.31	

APPROVED

Noted no receipts

**8.1 Quotations/Grants** received for review/approval.

ARD – patch repair to wet pour, internal inspection of Carousel Roundabout. Total £246.50 ex VAT  
PC agreed.

Butler & Proctor grade and gravel allotment entrance and part of entry road to the allotments. Total  
cost £800 plus VAT. PC agreed, will be paid from Allotment Accounts.

**9. Budget review for 2017/2018**

The PC looked at the amounts in Ear Marked reserves and agreed these.

The Chairman asked if there were any new budget items that needed to be included? Cllr. Botting  
suggested that an amount for the Neighbourhood Plan should be added to a value of £2K. The PC  
agreed this.

The Clerk had uplifted the figures by 2%, as requested by the Chairman, however the PC advised that  
for FY2016/17 the uplift had been 5%. It was agreed to uplift the precept amount by 5% again for  
FY2017/18 bearing in mind OCC budgets being cut and highways, verge maintenance is all greatly  
reduced. It is likely that parish councils will need to meet some costs in these areas to maintain the  
village.

The final budget to be agreed at the meeting 7<sup>th</sup> December 2017. Clerk to circulate Draft report prior  
to meeting.

**10. Transfer of Woodland from Millgate Homes to PC** – review transfer documents from Blandy  
& Blandy and execute.

Cllr. Smith had reviewed the transfer Deed and agreed that he could find no issues or clauses within it  
that were a matter for concern.

The Chairman signed the Deed in the presence of the Council and the Clerk witnessed his signature  
on the document.

**11. Other Committee Reports**

Primary School – Cllr. Hadaway reported that the school was nearly up to capacity. She will attend  
the Governors meeting Thursday 17/11.

Village Hall MC – meeting next Monday.

Cllrs. Booth advised that the internal alterations are still being discussed.

Village Green – Cllr. Booth reported

The Outdoor Table Tennis table base has been installed. The board to the rear of the Basketball goal  
has been sprayed with graffiti.

Police – no new issues. Cllr. Williams is still working on gathering the Neighbourhood Watch Representatives names. He will draft a letter to Mark Harling of TVP regarding the increased vandalism/graffiti that is happening in Woodcote.

Youth Club – Next meeting Thursday 17/11.

Traffic Group – Next meeting is 1<sup>st</sup> December, the Pedestrian Crossing, lighting and speed cushions are all on the agenda to be discussed.

Neighbourhood Planning Advisory Group – Cllr. Botting reported, the second meeting will be held on 17/11. The group will look at the survey that is to go out to the village and work on the detail. He had spoken to Chiltern Conservation Board and is meeting with them in January 2017. He will also attend a meeting with John Cotton leader of SODC and John Howell our MP in January regarding NHP's.

**12. Other Matters for Chairman**

None.

**13. Correspondence**

None.

**14. To note date of the next PC meeting: Parish Council Meeting Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2016.**

*Meeting closed at 10.00pm*

Signed.....Date.....

# Appendix 1 Woodcote Parish Council Minutes 16 Nov. 2016

## Response to Outline Planning Application P16/S3306/O

16 November 2016

**Proposal:** Erection of up to 65 houses, access, parking, landscaping, open space, play area and associated infrastructure, including removal of existing paddock structures.

**Address:** Land South of Bridle Path, Woodcote, Reading, RG8 0SE

**Woodcote Parish Council considers that this application should be REFUSED because the proposed development:**

- I. Encroaches upon the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- II. Fails to comply with policies in the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy;
- III. Fails to comply with policies in the Woodcote Neighbourhood Plan; and
- IV. Has a significant negative impact on traffic on Bridle Path and the junction between Bridle Path and Goring Road.

These are expanded upon in the succeeding sections.

### 1. Context

Planning applications in Woodcote must be considered against:

- the Woodcote Neighbourhood Plan (WNP);
- the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (CS); and
- the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The NPPF requires Local Planning Authorities (LPA) to maintain a five year land supply. NPPF paragraph 49 says that decision makers should not consider the housing policies within the local plan (which the Neighbourhood Plan forms part of) to be up to date if a five year land supply has not been identified. In these situations paragraph 14 of the NPPF states that permission for development should be granted unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole, or unless specific policies, for example relating to sites designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), indicate development should be restricted.

Planning Practice Guidance (11 February 2016) advises that such adverse effects not only include policy on specific types of development contained within the NPPF but also paragraphs 183-185 and paragraph 198 which state where a development conflicts with a Neighbourhood Plan that has been brought into force planning permission should be refused.

This application of the NPPF is supported by several recent appeal decisions for development within Woodcote and other villages:

- a. Appeal Ref: APP/Q3115/A/14/2223330  
Land at 'Goats Gambol', off Beech Lane, Woodcote, Oxfordshire RG8 0PY  
In refusing the appeal the inspector said (paragraph 54)  
*'I have given full consideration to the NPPF's aim of encouraging sustainable development. But given the harm that I have identified, and especially the harm to the AONB, it seems to me that the development now proposed cannot properly be considered as sustainable. And in any event, the presumption in favour of such development, as set out in NPPF paragraph 14, does not apply in AONBs.'*

17 June 2015

- b. Appeal Ref: APP/Q3115/W/16/3147625  
Land north of Beech Lane, Woodcote, Reading RG8 0PX  
In refusing the appeal the inspector said (paragraphs 6 and 22):  
*'The appeal site lies within the Chilterns AONB, and consequently the presumption set out in Paragraph 14 of the Framework applies only after consideration of the effects on the AONB, and where the balance weighs in the scheme's favour. In this context, Paragraph 115 of the Framework requires great weight to be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs, and Policy CSEN1 of the Core Strategy also gives high priority to the conservation and enhancement of the AONB and states that planning decisions will have regard to its setting'*

*'I appreciate that the development would provide five additional dwellings in an area which does not have a five year housing land supply, as well as some associated economic and social benefits. However, this limited benefit would not outweigh the harm to the AONB identified above.'*

11 October 2016

- c. Appeal Ref: APP/Q3115/W/16/3146109  
Land at Manor Road, Goring-on-Thames, Oxfordshire  
In refusing the appeal the inspector said:  
*'I have concluded that the proposals would harm the character and appearance of the area, the village setting of Goring and hence the Chilterns AONB. Consequently the proposal conflicts with policies in the Framework that indicate development should be restricted. The proposals do not meet the requirements of sustainable development and are not afforded the presumption in favour of sustainable development in paragraph 14 of the Framework. The material harm that arises also conflicts with policies in the development plan and whilst I have reduced the weight I give to these, as they are policies that affect the supply of housing in the absence of a demonstrable five year housing land supply, I still afford them significant weight as they are consistent with the restraint policies in the Framework with regard to the AONB. The conflict with the Framework is a significant material consideration as is the effect on the AONB; and to this I add the general harm to the character of the area. The proposal is in conflict with the development plan in this regard and the material considerations add to this conclusion, the scheme is therefore unacceptable. I have afforded positive weight to the additional housing that would be provided and noted the level of shortfall in the five year housing land supply, as well as the affordable housing that would be secured through the planning obligation but none of these are of such weight as to outweigh the harm that I have identified.'*

9 August 2016

- d. Appeal Ref: APP/V3120/W/16/3153209  
Land to the north of Lower Road, Chiton, Oxfordshire, OX11 0RR  
In refusing the appeal the inspector said:  
*'The appellants have satisfactorily addressed 3 of the Council's 4 original reasons for refusal. However, of much greater significance is my view that the proposal fails to comply with the provisions of either the existing or the emerging development plan, taken as a whole. There are no material considerations which have been drawn to my attention which would warrant a decision other than in accordance with the development plan. Furthermore, the proposal does not comply with the Framework's policy approach to major development in an AONB. The harm which I have identified to the setting of the village, and to the AONB landscape in which it lies, is of significant weight. My overall conclusion is that the appeal must fail.'*

8 September 2016

**These appeal decisions all support the view that the potential harm to the AONB significantly outweighs any benefits from the developments.**

The weight to be given to a Neighbourhood Plan where there is a lack of a five year housing land supply is supported by two further decisions:

- a. In the high court case of *Crane v. Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government [2015] EWHC 425 (Admin)* there was an unsuccessful challenge to a decision by the Secretary of State to dismiss an appeal for housing based on conflict with a Neighbourhood Plan. There was no five-year housing land supply, and so the housing policies in the plan were out of date. The main implications are:
  - A proposal on an unallocated site can be in conflict with a Neighbourhood Plan which allocates land for housing, even if it does not contain explicit policies to restrict housing elsewhere, such as a settlement boundary.
  - Conflict with a plan that is out of date can be given very substantial negative weight in the planning balance. Neither the NPPF nor case law prescribe the weight that attaches to such a plan - it is a matter of planning judgment.
- b. The Communities Secretary Sajid Javid has blocked plans for up to 100 homes at a site in Herefordshire after concluding that the development would be contrary to an emerging Neighbourhood Plan, despite the local authority being unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply.

The appeal, made by Gladman Developments, was against the decision of Herefordshire Council to refuse its application for the homes at a site at Bartestree outside Hereford.

A decision letter sent this week (week ending 29 Oct 2016) on behalf of the Communities Secretary said that there was agreement between the parties that the council is currently only able to demonstrate a housing land supply of 3.63 years. As such, the letter said, in accordance with measures in the National Planning Policy Framework, the council's relevant policies for the supply of housing could not be considered up-to-date. The letter said that the emerging Bartestree with Lugwardine Neighbourhood Development Plan (BLNDP) contained settlement boundaries for Bartestree which excluded the appeal site.

The inspector had given the emerging plan moderate weight, but the letter said that since the inspector's report, the plan had been recommended to proceed to referendum and as the BLNDP is now at an advanced stage, the Secretary of State "attributes significant weight to the plan".

The Secretary of State attached "significant weight to the economic benefits of the scheme and to the social benefit in terms of providing much needed market and affordable housing" but, the letter said, also gave "significant weight" to the adverse impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the surrounding area and further significant weight to the proposal's "failure to protect or enhance ... valued landscape". The letter added that Javid gave significant weight "to the inappropriate level of growth the scale of the proposed development would impose on this settlement and would fail to support the settlement's health and well-being". Overall, Javid concluded that the proposal "is not compliant with the development plan as a whole and cannot be considered sustainable development".

**The reasons given by the Secretary of State in supporting the Council's refusal of planning permission apply to this application in Woodcote. The application conflicts with the made Neighbourhood Plan, is of a scale that will have a considerable adverse effect on the character of the area and if approved will be a failure to protect the valued landscape of the AONB .**

The Planning Statement, supplied as part of the application, refers to the emerging Local Plan from SODC and the contingency policy for larger villages which states that "If a Neighbourhood Plan does not adequately progress with allocating sites (and has therefore at least been submitted to the Council) within 12 months of adoption of this Local Plan, planning applications for housing in the larger villages will be supported provide that: i. Proposals comply with the overall housing distribution strategy and ii. Proposals comply with the housing and other applicable policies in this plan." The Local Plan is not yet completed nor adopted so this contingency plan is not yet in force. Woodcote has already started to update its Neighbourhood Plan and intends to submit the revised plan, which will cover all land use in the village, soon after the Local Plan is adopted and certainly within the 12 month period. Woodcote also has an excellent record of delivering the houses in the plan.

**As such the emerging Local Plan and its contingency for lack of progress with Neighbourhood Plans is not a relevant consideration in assessing this application.**

The Planning Statement refers to the Landscape Capacity Assessment for Additional Sites on the Edge of Larger Villages (prepared by Kirkham Landscape Planning Ltd for SODC) which included an assessment of the proposed site as WOO12. The assessment indicated the potential for 38 dwellings on this site but rated the landscape value as medium/high.

**This assessment is in draft form and has not yet been adopted by SODC so is not a relevant consideration in assessing this application.**

The Planning Statement refers to the reserve sites as being only allocated if the other sites fail to deliver and therefore they cannot be considered to cater for any uplift in housing requirement. They claim, therefore, the WNP does not cater for the additional housing requirement that will be necessary to meet the Local Plan 2032 requirement.

**This is irrelevant as the Local Plan 2032 has not yet been adopted and, as indicated, work has already started to update the WNP to meet the additional housing requirement.**

## **2. Impact on AONB**

The site lies within the Chilterns AONB. As such paragraph 115 of the NPPF applies. **This requires great weight to be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs (as does policy CSEN1 of the CS).**

The site is situated behind the existing developed frontage and cannot be considered as infill within the terms set out in the CS and WNP. Furthermore, the site is not allocated for development in the WNP, and the proposal is not in any way related to agricultural or other special needs.

**Consequently, the proposed development would not come within any of the categories allowed by Policies CSR1 or H10.**

The Inspector in the appeal decision on the Goat's Gambol site (Appeal Ref: APP/Q31115/A/14/2223330) made the following comments about the effect of the development on the area's character and appearance (paragraphs 24-26:

*"The landscape of the Chiltern escarpment in South Oxfordshire is described in the Character Assessment report (South Oxfordshire Landscape Character Assessment, 2003) as the most visually distinctive in the district, with gentle slopes and a mosaic of woodland, scrub and open grassland, which give it an intimate, enclosed character. The appeal site comprises an enclosed area of grass paddocks, bounded by woodland and a tree belt, and thus exhibits several of these characteristics. As such, it seems to me that the site represents a good example of the type of landscape that the AONB designation, and CS Policy CSEN1, are intended to recognise and protect.*

*The effect of the development would be to change the site from its present mainly undeveloped state, into a fully developed housing site with roads and buildings. This would mean the loss of those characteristics which best reflect the local landscape's prevailing character and distinctiveness. The effect would thus be damaging to the AONB, and to the character and appearance of the area generally.*

*It is true that the site is not particularly prominent. However, the proposed development would be clearly seen from the site entrance in Beech Lane, especially since, as was established at the site visit, the existing hedge alongside the access would have to be removed, and could not be replaced on land within the appellants' control. The development would also be visible from the attractive public footpath that runs just to the east, from Wood Lane to Lambourne's Wood. Both of these are public views of some significance. I agree that in these views, the site appears as a discrete, self-contained landscape compartment, rather than as part of a wider open landscape. But in this respect the site is typical of this part of the AONB. This reinforces my view that the impact on the AONB would be harmful."*

The application clearly constitutes backland development. If allowed the effect would be to change the site from its present undeveloped state into a fully developed housing site with roads and buildings. This would mean the loss of those characteristics which best reflect the local landscape's prevailing character and distinctiveness. The site is clearly visible from the public footpath (411/9) that runs from Bridle Path to Potkiln Lane, a public view of some significance, and its development would damage both the AONB, and the character and appearance of the area generally.

**The proposed development would not conserve or enhance the area's natural beauty, but would have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the local landscape and on the setting of the village of Woodcote. A substantial development of 65 homes outside the built-up area of the village cannot be justified when set against the conflicts with the relevant policies for housing in villages and in the countryside, the loss of countryside in the AONB, the harm to the area's character and appearance, the requirement of NPPF paragraph 115 that in AONBs conservation of the landscape should be given great weight, and when the WNP is being revised to comply with the emerging Local Plan,**

Paragraph 116 of the NPPF states that. "Planning permission should be refused for major developments in these designated areas (AONBs) except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

- the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;
- the cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and
- any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated."

There is no formal definition within the NPPF or Planning Guidance for what constitutes “major” development but case law and expert opinion indicate that the common definition of the word major should be used by planning authorities in determining whether a development is major. In this context, recent appeal decisions have identified developments that increase the size of a village by between 4% and 12% to be major developments. This development of 65 houses would increase the size of Woodcote by over 6%.

**This development must be considered as a major development and, therefore, paragraph 116 of the NPPF applies. There is no significant impact on the local economy, there are other locations for additional housing that would better meet the need for additional housing and this development has a detrimental effect on the environment and landscape and should, therefore, be refused.**

### **3. Impact on traffic**

The Transport Statement appears to be, in part, based on out of date information as it implies that both SODC’s Core Strategy and the Woodcote Neighbourhood Plan have yet to be adopted!

In the Design and Access Statement there is an acknowledgement that there are limited employment opportunities within the village so most residents will commute to other locations. Locations such as Wallingford, Henley and Reading are mentioned but there is no mention of residents commuting to other destinations such as Oxford or London. **The Traffic Assessment seems to have been made on the assumption that many residents will travel to work (mostly in Reading) by bus and that most children will walk to school – assumptions that are not supported by experience.**

The assessment of traffic impact in the Transport Statement is based on theoretical models and, not surprisingly, results in minimal impacts on the traffic in the village. For example, they assess that there will only be 31 vehicle movements out of the site during the AM peak period from 8.00am to 9.00am and this from 65 houses many of which are family homes, predominantly 3 and 4 bedroom properties with probably 2-3 cars per property so that there could be 150-180 cars on site. There are 178 bedrooms in this development, assuming 80% occupancy of the bedrooms and 60% of the residents in employment gives 85 residents in employment. Census records indicate that, in this area, 74% rely on a private motor vehicle to get to work, ie 63 vehicles - most of which will emerge during the peak 8.00 – 9.00am period. This does not include additional journeys conveying children to school. **So a more realistic estimate of vehicle movements is at least twice the estimate in the Transport Statement.**

The Transport Statement includes detailed measurements of traffic volumes and speeds on Bridle Path and summary data for other roads nearby. The traffic volumes measured in July 2016 are in broad agreement with results obtained by Woodcote Parish Council in 2015 although the speeds measured are lower than those measured in 2015.

Based on the data for traffic volumes at peak periods and the optimistic assessment of traffic movements into/out of the site there would be an increase of 83% in traffic movements on Bridle Path between 8.00 and 9.00 and an increase of 62% between 17.00 and 18.00. **Using the less optimistic figures calculated above would give increases of approximately 160% and 120% respectively. These increases are dismissed as insignificant in the Transport Statement.**

The Transport Statement also includes detailed assessments of the impact of the increased traffic on road junctions within the village using a theoretical model and the observed current traffic

movements. The most significant junction is the junction between Bridle Path, Goring Road and Beech Lane near to the Cooperative store which was identified in the Woodcote Neighbourhood Plan as a traffic hotspot. **The assessment of the impact on this junction was that it would not be significant, however, the assessment does not appear to take into account local factors such as the on-street parking, deliveries and bus stop at this location.**

#### 4. Failure to comply with policies in the Core Strategy

The application fails to comply with CS policies on both landscape and housing.

a) Policy CSR1 Housing in Villages

Policy CSR1 (CS) allows infill development where infill is defined as the filling of small gaps in otherwise built up frontages, or on other sites closely surrounded by buildings. **The appeal site does not meet this definition and, as admitted by the applicant cannot be considered as infill and therefore permissible under policy CSR1.**

b) Policy CSEN1 Landscape

Policy CSEN1 requires that the district's distinct landscape character and key features be protected against inappropriate development and where possible enhanced and states that:

*"High priority will be given to conservation and enhancement of the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and planning decisions will have regard to their setting. Proposals which support the economies and social well being of the AONBs and their communities, including affordable housing schemes, will be encouraged provided they do not conflict with the aims of conservation and enhancement."*

**The proposed site lies entirely within the Chilterns AONB and its development will neither conserve nor enhance the AONB.**

#### 5. Failure to comply with policies in the Woodcote Neighbourhood Plan

The Woodcote Neighbourhood Plan received a 91% Yes vote on a 60% turnout in the referendum and was, therefore, supported by an absolute majority of the community.

The proposed site was one of 24 considered for inclusion in the WNP for development but comprehensively rejected as contrary to the community's wishes to protect open spaces and the AONB by the community in the consultations run on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> February 2013 and not meeting the site selection criteria developed from the consultations with the community, most notably the requirement for small sites with no more than 24 dwellings. **Therefore, this application does not comply with policy HS1.**

The WNP is delivering the new homes required. Since being 'made' in May 2014:

- 18% of the new homes identified have been built and are occupied;
- planning permission has been granted for a further 32%; and
- the Parish Council has recommended approval for a further 38%.

Thus the evidence suggests that nearly 90% of the new homes identified for development before 2027 will have been built within the next 18-24 months.

The applicant does not claim that this site can be considered as infill and, as 'backland', **the site fails to comply with policy H10(a) and policy H10(c) of the WNP.**

The applicant acknowledges that the development is outside the settlement policy boundary but claims it is a logical extension to the village. **The application will involve significant outward extension of the built-up area of the village and therefore fails to comply with policy H10 (b) of the WNP.**

**The application is for 65 houses and, therefore, fails to comply with policy H9 which requires a maximum of 24 new homes on any site.**

Policy H7 requires that, on sites with 9 or more new homes, up to 10% of new homes should be 1 bedroom, at least 40% 2 bedroom, at least 40% 3 bedroom and up to 10% 4 bedroom. **This application does not comply with policy H7 as there are 20% 4 bedroom and only 34% 2 bedroom dwellings.**

The entrance to the new development is some 180 metres from the junction of the Goring Road and Bridle Path and Beech Lane. This is a busy, highly congested junction with a Cooperative store, limited parking and a bus stop. **This proposal fails to show that it will not, as required by WNP policy T1, exacerbate traffic congestion at this dangerous crossroads.**