

Site for Housing & Employment. Local Plan policies H4, E3 iii) and iv) and L13

Land Between the A420 and Faringdon, North of Park Road, Faringdon

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

1.0 Purpose of Supplementary Planning Guidance

1.1 The purpose of this document is to set out in more detail how the land between the A420 and Faringdon, north of Park Road, could be developed in accordance with policies and proposals contained in the Council's Local Plan to 2011. It provides an overall framework for the development of the area, and gives guidance on issues such as the mix of uses, landscaping, access, linkages and provision of open space. The Supplementary Planning Guidance was first published in draft form in June 2004, it was subsequently revised in March 2006 to take account of; comments received from the public; the recommendations made by the Inspector; and the modifications the Council proposed to make to the Second Deposit Draft Local Plan. The revised draft Supplementary Planning Guidance was amended further in July 2006 before being adopted by the Council.

2.0 Local Plan Context

2.1 The Local Plan 2011 contains three main policies which are particularly relevant to the development of the area, policy H4, in the Housing Chapter, E3 iii) and iv) in the Employment Chapter, and L13 in the Leisure Chapter. The land which was part of the former nursery, the existing cricket ground and Jespers Hill is defined as a comprehensive development area where the individual landowners should work together to produce a comprehensive package for all the land prior to drawing up detailed development proposals and submitting planning applications for determination. Landowners and developers should be aware however, that their proposals will be considered against the policies of the plan as a whole and they should familiarise themselves with the Local Plan accordingly.

Housing

2.2 Policy H4 of the Local Plan 2011 proposes that land between Stanford Road and Park Road on the cricket ground and former nursery be released for housing. Policy H4 requires the site to be planned in a comprehensive manner with the adjoining employment site allocated in policy E3 iii) and an extension to Folly Park policy L13.

2.3 Other specific policies in the housing chapter will also have a major bearing on the development. These are:

- Policy H15, which requires densities in main settlements to be above 40 dwellings per hectare. At 40 to the hectare (16 dwellings per acre) the site could accommodate around 400 dwellings.

- Policy H16, which requires the development to provide a variety of dwelling types and sizes. 50% of the dwellings should be 2 bedrooms or less, and 10% should be designed as lifetime homes.
- Policy H17, which requires that 40% of the dwellings are affordable to local people who are unable to rent or buy a house appropriate to their needs on the open market. The affordable housing will be of a size, type and tenure suitable to meet local housing needs, and arrangements will be required to be in place to ensure the housing remains affordable in the long term. The type and size of the affordable housing will need to be discussed with the Council's Housing Service. The affordable housing should be distributed evenly across the site and be indistinguishable in appearance from market housing. Further information on this subject is given in the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance on affordable housing.
- Policy H23, which requires 15% of the development site to be laid out as open space and that suitable arrangements are in place for its future management and maintenance. The percentage of open space to be provided within the housing development will be negotiable to take into account the location of Folly Park immediately adjacent to the site and the proposed extension to the park which is being offered to the Council as part of the comprehensive development package.

Employment

2.4 Policy E3 of the Local Plan lists all the sites proposed for new business development in Faringdon. Two of these sites are covered by this guidance. The first is a site on the former nursery south of the cricket ground which, due to its proximity to new housing, is proposed for B1 use only. The second is on land adjacent to Park Road and the A420 which is proposed for B1 or B2 use. This second allocation includes a strategic landscape corridor along the southern boundary of the site adjacent to the A420. (B1 uses are business, including offices, research and development and light industry which are compatible with residential development. B2 uses are general industry).

2.5 Leisure

The creation of Folly Park has been a long term objective of the District Council. The proposal for additional housing (policy H4) and employment (policy E3) provides the opportunity to extend the park and also relocate the cricket ground. The development of the park must be planned in a comprehensive manner in association with the adjoining housing and employment development, and arrangements for its long term maintenance will need to be secured. Policy L13 in the Local Plan 2011 allows for the extension of the park but requires buildings to be kept to a minimum.

3.0 Site Description

3.1 The site the subject of this Supplementary Planning Guidance includes all the land between the A420 and the existing built up area lying between Stanford Road and Park Road, Faringdon, (excluding the Esso garage) an area in excess of 30 hectares (74 acres). The Comprehensive Development Area included in the Local Plan covers

the Former Nursery, Jespers Hill and the cricket ground. The area covered by this SPG and that included within the Comprehensive Development Area are shown on the plan attached to this SPG.

- 3.2 The site is bordered by housing developments at Berners Way, Nursery View and Volunteer Way to the north and west, Park Road to the south, the A420 to the south east and Stanford Road to the north.
- 3.3 There is a mixture of uses on the site including an existing cricket ground, the former nursery, Jespers Hill (a former quarry which has been restored) the first phase of Folly Park, and a paddock adjacent to the A420. There are few existing buildings except for a number of semi-derelict buildings on the former nursery and some employment buildings to the north of the Esso garage.
- 3.4 The topography is complex and greatly influences the visibility of different parts of the site. The paddock adjacent to the A420 is relatively flat and is below the level of the A420 by-pass. The paddock is open to views both from the by-pass and Park Road. North of the paddock the land rises steeply in Folly Park to Jespers Hill, and continues to rise more gradually to Stanford Road. The cricket ground and a small part of the former nursery site to the east are reasonably flat but to the south the land drops steeply to the access road to Folly Park. The rest of the former nursery slopes steeply up to Nursery View and Tuckers Road.
- 3.5 Throughout the site there are significant landscape features including areas of tree planting around the lake, hedges and trees around the edge of the cricket ground and along the access to the park. There are also individual trees of merit within the former nursery. Many of the established trees are the subject of a tree preservation order. Recent tree planting has been carried out within Folly Park and in the paddock adjacent to the A420.
- 3.6 Development on the steeper sections of the former nursery and on the paddock adjacent to the A420 will be visible from Park Road and from some sections of the by-pass. As Park Road is a main approach road into Faringdon and the development will be viewed from the very busy A420 the whole of the area covered by this guidance will need to be sensitively designed and carefully laid out.
- 3.7 A detailed ecological study of the site will need to be carried out. The study should identify important features that should be retained and what, if any, mitigation measures are necessary to protect these features, as well as how the wildlife and biodiversity of the site could be improved.
- 3.8 There may be a need for the site to be evaluated in line with the advice from the Government in Planning Policy Guidance note 16, Archaeology and Planning. This evaluation would not need to include areas of low level disturbance such as the park.

4.0 Development Principles

- 4.1 In addition to satisfying the requirements of the local plan policies set out above the development of this site covered by this guidance will need to address a number of general development principles as follows.

Design and Layout

- 4.2 Development should be of a high design quality, it should take account of Faringdon's heritage including its traditional street pattern, landscape setting and views into and out of the site. The development should be attractive and have a sense of place. Important landscape features on the site should be retained and new features introduced.
- 4.3 Car parking, turning and loading requirements will need to conform to the County Council's standard in operation at the time planning applications are submitted.
- 4.4 Through Local Plan policy DC2 the Council will require consideration to be given to measures to conserve energy including the use of passive solar design (which involves influencing the layout, design, orientation and shelter of buildings) and other energy efficient technologies. Measures to conserve the use of water will also be required, such as provision of grey water schemes and water butts. The Eco Homes environmental rating for new dwellings is a flexible and independently verified environmental assessment method. It rewards developers who improve environmental performance through good design rather than high cost solutions. The Council will expect all new dwellings built to Eco Homes 'very good' rating or in the future to the Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 or 4. The Council will expect an energy strategy to be submitted alongside the planning application setting out what energy conservation measures have been incorporated into the detailed design of the development.
- 4.5 The design and layout of new buildings and the spaces between them should be arranged to increase security and deter crime. New development should be laid out to incorporate the principles of 'Secured by Design' which is a police initiative to encourage the building industry to incorporate measures to reduce crime. Further advice can be obtained from the Thames Valley police Crime Prevention Design Advisor for Oxfordshire on (01993) 893875. Opportunities for re-use and recycling of waste should also be taken, for example, adequate space should be provided to sort recyclable waste and facilitate home composting.
- 4.6 There are three existing drainage ditches within the development area. During the course of construction work all of these ditches will need to be protected. After development, drainage from the site should not exceed the existing discharge. In order to comply with this requirement designs may need to incorporate the latest techniques for disposal and storage embodied in Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS). The Environment Agency have indicated that a flood risk assessment of the site will be required at an early stage in the design process.
- 4.7 In order to achieve a satisfactory design the developers will need to carry out a contextual analysis of the site and its surroundings and produce an urban design statement setting out their approach to the site's development. The design statement should follow the objectives of urban design and the 8 aspects of development form set out in the DETR publication 'By Design'. These studies should underpin and feed into the preparation of a masterplan for the development of the site.

- 4.8 The Council will also be seeking a contribution to public art from the development, in accordance with policy DC4 of the Local Plan. Detailed information is given in the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance 'Planning and Public Art' and specialist advice is available from the Council's Arts Development Manager on (01235) 540338.

Access and Permeability

- 4.9 The main access to the development area should be from Park Road. One access would be preferable west of the Esso garage, but if this could not cope with traffic from both the housing and employment developments, the Highway Authority has indicated that it may be possible to provide a second access 120 metres west of the A420 roundabout. The access will require a safety audit and capacity check. Provision will need to be made for an emergency access to serve the housing development. The standard and arrangements of the access will need to meet the requirements of the Highway Authority. The developer should refer to Oxfordshire County Council's "Residential Road Design Guide".
- 4.10 To be permeable and well linked to the surrounding development, footpath and cycle links will need to be provided within and from the development area to link up with the adjoining network at Berners Way, Nursery View, Volunteer Way, Park Road and Folly Park.
- 4.11 The design of the development should minimise conflict between the pedestrian and car users, and provide easy access for pedestrians, cyclists and to public transport including the community bus.
- 4.12 The developers of the housing and employment sites will be required to carry out a transport assessment (TA). The assessment should illustrate accessibility to and from the site by all modes, including public transport, walking and cycling, as well as the impact of additional traffic generated by the development on the existing highway network. As the new development will put additional pressure on car parking in Faringdon, the developers of both the housing and employment sites are being asked to pay for an on and off street car parking study of the town centre site leisure centre and school sites.

5.0 Detailed Guidance

- 5.1 Within the context of the general principles set out above and the need to produce an urban design statement, and master plan, there are additional factors which will need to be taken into account in the preparation of detailed designs.

Housing

- 5.2 The site proposed for housing is over 10 hectares (24.7 acres) in extent and is suitable for a high quality development of approximately 400 dwellings. The dwelling types, size, and tenure will need to meet the requirements of the Local Plan 2011 as referred to in para 2.3 above.

- 5.3 The new housing should be sympathetic to the surrounding development in terms of its scale, materials and style. Attention will need to be given to the grouping and orientation of new buildings in order to take account of the views of the site from the south, avoid overlooking of adjoining properties and create streets and open spaces that have a sense of identity. Housing adjacent to the park, should front it.
- 5.4 The style of housing should reflect that found in Faringdon. Due to the site's elevated position buildings above two storeys may not be appropriate on most of the site, but with careful thought higher buildings of 2½ storey could be used in a limited number in less prominent locations to give variety and interest to the development.
- 5.5 The traditional building material found in Faringdon is stone with either slate or tile roofs. Render and orange brick work are also found, and windows are white painted timber. A mixed use of these materials will help the development harmonise with the character and appearance of Faringdon and create visual interest and a sense of place.
- 5.6 There are a number of important landscape features on the proposed housing area which should be retained, in particular the substantial hedge along the western edge of the site and along the northern and eastern edge of the cricket ground. The hedge along the east side of the cricket ground contains Poplars, which are a valuable visual screen and should be retained in the short term but could be replaced in the longer term by more appropriate trees. A tree survey will need to be undertaken to determine which trees within the whole site should be retained and or relocated within the site. It is proposed that the wooded area around the lake and the tree line along the access road to the park should be retained and included in the extension to the park.
- 5.7 New landscape buffers will be required on the highest parts of the housing site in order to reduce the visual impact of the development. These buffers will need to incorporate substantial tree belts. Landscaping should also be used to help give the development identity. It should take into account ecological and recreational considerations and could help to enhance footpath and cycle links to the surrounding developments.
- 5.8 Children's play facilities should be provided within the site in a convenient and safe location. Such provision will need to meet the Council's standards as set out in policy H23 of the Local Plan.
- 5.9 The housing should not present a hard urban edge to the existing and proposed extension to Folly Park. This can be achieved by including planting where the development adjoins the park, through the provision of landscape corridors and by ensuring new development overlooks the park.
- 5.10 A noise survey to PPG24 and BS4142 standards, and a contamination survey will be necessary at an early stage in the preparation of a design for the site.

Employment

- 5.11 There are three distinct employment areas covered by this guidance:

- part of the former nursery
- the paddock adjacent to the A420
- the existing employment units north of the Esso Garage.

Former Nursery Site

- 5.12 This site of approximately 1 hectare (2.4 acres) is allocated for employment use in the Local Plan 2011 (policy E3 iii). In view of the proximity of the proposed residential development, the use of the site will be limited to B1 employment use to protect the amenities of adjacent residents. As an additional protection an appropriate buffer zone will be required along the northern boundary between the employment and housing sites. The buildings should be sympathetic to their surroundings in terms of their scale, materials and style. It is unlikely that buildings over 9 metres (30 feet) in height will be acceptable. The Council's preference is for a series of smaller buildings which can be orientated on the site to create an interesting development. No outdoor storage will be allowed on the site.
- 5.13 The existing hedgerows along the western and eastern edge of the site should be retained and the landscape scheme should look to strengthen the planting along the southern edge of the site. It is the only one of the three employment areas covered by this guidance to be within the comprehensive development area.

Paddock Adjacent to A420

- 5.14 This site is over 4 hectares (9.9 acres) in extent and is allocated for business development in policy E3 iv) of the Local Plan. It is reasonably flat, and clearly visible from the A420 and Park Road. Park Road is the main approach road into Faringdon. Development on this site will be the first view most visitors have of the town, it is therefore essential that the new employment development creates a favourable visual impression.
- 5.15 Buildings must be attractive and well designed, respecting the site's location. It is unlikely that large buildings will be appropriate but if they are unavoidable their elevation and roofline should be broken down to reduce the bulk and impact. A series of smaller buildings which can be orientated on the site to create an interesting development, with a sense of place is likely to be more appropriate. Variation in the height of buildings could be used to create more interest with landmark buildings at key locations. Use of high quality materials will be essential.
- 5.16 No outside storage uses will be allowed on the site and external advertisements will be limited to those necessary to identify the business. Illumination of advertisements will be subject to strict control.
- 5.17 To soften the edge of the development and help retain some openness between Faringdon and the by-pass and also to retain views of Folly Park (and the proposed extension to the park) from the A420, a landscape buffer will be required along the south eastern boundary of the site. The extent of the landscape buffer is shown on the attached plan. It is essential this buffer is retained as open land consisting predominantly of soft landscaping, particularly in the most visible part of the buffer close to the roundabout.

- 5.18 Subject to a traffic assessment the access to this site will be from Park Road. Pedestrian and cycle links should also be provided from the site to Folly Park and the new housing development.

Existing Employment Site North of the Esso Garage

- 5.19 The industrial buildings north of the Esso garage have been included within policy E3 iv) of the Local Plan to indicate that their redevelopment would be acceptable. Redevelopment could be undertaken in association with the development of the paddock adjacent to the A420 if this proved to be commercially beneficial. Policy E3 in the Local Plan 2011 allows the land to be developed for B1 or B2 uses.

6.0 Extension to Folly Park

- 6.1 The Local Plan to 2001 contained a proposal for informal recreation use of Folly Park on land around the Folly itself and the former quarry at Jespers Hill. The proposal was well received locally and has been carried forward in the Local Plan to 2011.

- 6.2 Since the idea of the park was first suggested part of the former nursery, around the lake, has been acquired and laid out as the first phase of the park by the District Council. Pedestrian access to and around the site has been provided, a car park and picnic area have been completed and extensive planting undertaken.

- 6.3 In association with the proposed housing and employment development within the comprehensive development area the developer has offered the Council additional land to enable the park to be extended.

- 6.4 A number of benefits can be achieved through such an extension:

- it would reduce the visual impact of the proposed development and help to maintain and enhance Faringdon's rural setting;
- it would link phase one of the park to the built up edge of Faringdon, thus providing an opportunity to improve pedestrian and cycle links from the town to the park and surrounding countryside;
- it would secure an appropriate future use of an area of land which, because of its prominence in the landscape setting of Faringdon would be unsuitable for built development;
- the site is eminently suitable for this type of use, its elevated position offers fine views of the surrounding countryside;
- existing tree cover around the lake and along the entrance to the park can be retained and included within the park;
- the opportunity can be taken to create a better access to the existing park.

- 6.5 The developers will be expected to work with the Council to prepare a comprehensive plan for the future of the park and its on-going management and maintenance.

- 6.6 In association with the park extension it is expected the developers will provide:

- a network of paths perhaps including a jogging trail linking the extended park to adjoining developments and Stanford Road;
- a new cricket and rugby facility including pitches to Sports Turf Research Institute Sport England Standard, a pavilion fit for purpose and a car park to Oxfordshire County Council standards. It should be noted that this site is not considered suitable for floodlights;
- rabbit proof fencing where appropriate around the park;
- improvements to the park entrance;
- seating areas at appropriate locations.

The park might also be an appropriate location for an art feature in accordance with the Council's policy for public art.

7.0 Contributions Towards Off-site Services and Facilities

7.1 In addition to the provision of facilities on site the developers will be expected to make contributions to mitigate the impact of the development on services and facilities elsewhere in the town, in accordance with the principles set out in Circular 05/2005.

7.2 Before the existing cricket ground is developed for housing a new playable cricket facility will need to be provided. Preparatory work will need to be commenced well in advance to ensure it is playable when the use of the existing pitch is planned to stop. It has been suggested that a new cricket ground could be provided on Jespers Hill. At an early stage in the development process a study will need to be carried out to see if the site is suitable for use as a cricket ground. In addition to the pitch a pavilion, car park, services, fencing and landscaping will need to be provided by the developer.

7.3 Oxfordshire County Council will be seeking appropriate contributions from the housing development for:

Faringdon Community College (additional buildings)
 Youth services and adult education
 Junior school (additional accommodation)
 Infants school (additional accommodation)
 Library (23m² extension plus 2,000 additional books)
 Waste management (contributions to traffic and storage)
 Fire and Rescue Service (additional hydrants may be a condition of planning permission)
 Museum store at Standlake
 Social and health care
 Upkeep of rights of ways
 Special education needs facilities.

The housing and employment development will be expected to contribute to:
 Public transport: to enhance the bus service
 provision bus shelters (2 within the site)

These requirements will need to be discussed with the County Council who will provide a more up to date assessment of need at the time planning applications are submitted.

7.4 The District Council will be seeking appropriate contributions from the housing towards:

- The town's leisure centre (extension to car park and provision of a purpose designed crèche, changing accommodation and additional storage to Football Foundation Standards);
- An additional football pitch (in the form of an artificial pitch at the community college/leisure centre);
- Pre-school facilities.

In addition the District Council will be looking for:-

- The developers of the housing site to provide a site and foundations for a skate board park. The site should not be close to the existing or proposed housing (the skate park should be at least 100m (328 feet) from the boundary of any residential properties) and should be visible to allow casual supervision;
- Within the extension to Folly Park the developers of the comprehensive development site will be required to provide a rugby pitch to STRI standards (Sports Turf Research Institute) in accordance with the NPFA's 6 acre standard;
- The developers of the housing and employment sites will be expected to pay for an on and off street car parking study of Faringdon Town Centre and the Leisure Centre. The housing development will be expected to pay for a car parking study at the schools.

7.5 Faringdon Town Council will be seeking appropriate contributions

From the housing development for:

- A performance venue including the Faringdon Pump Rooms where a disabled lift is needed;
- Contributions to youth centre facilities

From the housing and employment for:

- The Faringdon Community Bus.

8.0 Implementing the Development

8.1 Given the scale of the proposed development any planning application will need to be accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment, the first stage of which will be the preparation of a scoping report.

- 8.2 A legal agreement will be required to secure contributions to off-site services and facilities and the maintenance of the extension to Folly Park and the relocation of the cricket ground.
- 8.3 On major applications such as this the Council will expect the developers to carry out pre-application consultation with local residents and organisations, this could take the form of the production of leaflets and/or newsletter, and the holding of public exhibitions.