

DRAYTON PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Special Meeting of Drayton Parish Council
Held on Tuesday 17th April 2012 at 7.30 pm at the Drayton Village Hall, Lockway

Present: Daniel Scharf (Chairman); Naomi Broomfield; Julian Fowler; Jenny Pooley; Richard Webber; Richard Williams; Laurence Zipson **Not Present:** Heather Morrison **In attendance:** David Perrow (Clerk)

018/2012-13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Heather Morrison had notified the Clerk of her apologies for absence and these were **noted** by the meeting.

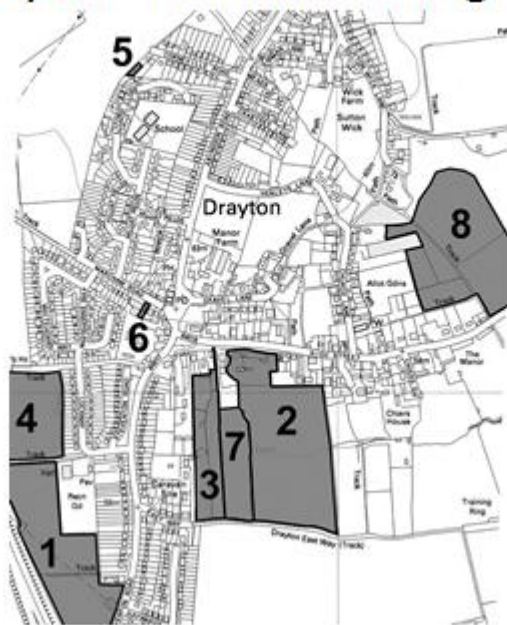
019/2012-13 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

16 members of the public were present.

Daniel Scharf introduced this Special meeting on housing issues. It would be in two parts: The Public Participation session to allow villagers to comment on the housing proposals; and the Parish Council meeting to discuss and decide on the Parish Council’s response to the ‘screening’ sites submitted to VHHDC. This response had to be submitted by Friday 20th April. Individuals were welcome to respond to VWHDC separately. Daniel outlined the current housing activities: the VWHDC’s Interim Housing Supply Policy (IHSP), which is still in its draft form awaiting approval by the full Council in May; the ‘screening’ process launched under the IHSP; the ‘target’ allocation for Drayton of 68 houses in the next 2 years (88 including the 20 houses already with planning approval at Manor Farm); the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); the requirement that 40% of housing be ‘affordable’ (that is offered at 80% market rent); the Parish Council’s own Housing Needs questionnaire (due for return by end April 2012) to determine the level of demand for affordable housing in Drayton [Drayton currently has only 114 affordable houses, 14% of housing stock]; and the Localism Act encouraging PCs to produce neighbourhood plans.

Daniel outlined the 8 Drayton sites put forward by developers under the IHSP ‘screening’ procedure and invited comments from the public. The detailed applications were available to the public as handouts, had been made available on the village website in the weeks previously, and were displayed on a PowerPoint, and on maps on the walls:

Drayton – IHSP Screening Sites



1. Steventon Road – West of (Binning.J ID 73B)
2. High Street – South of (Bishop Park Estates/Nixey)
3. High Street – South of (Carpenter)
4. Lockway, West of (E of Plymouth Estates)
5. Corneville Road (Law)
6. Marcham Road, Ashby Court (Skala Architects)
7. High Street, South of (Late Mrs. Bomford’s Estate))
8. Church Lane (WYG)

Public Comments were as follows:

General: Leaving aside the two smaller developments (Sites 5 and 6), the choices were between siting any major development to the East, West or South of the village. The two West sites (Sites 1 and 4) were too near the A34 to offer homes acceptable noise levels, and were in the area of the village adjacent to the Village Hall where badly needed recreation facilities might be situated; the East site (Site 8) protruded into the countryside and would spoil views and access to footpaths and bridleways which were currently well used. The South sites (Sites 2/3/7) were to be preferred if any development was to take place, since at least these sites were within the existing built perimeter of the village, and road access and proximity to village facilities was better than for sites to the East and West. Points were made about the need for 'community gain' from any development, to improve the bus services, and to provide more school places, allotments and recreational facilities, including refurbishing/re-building the Village Hall.

Site 1. Steventon Road – West of (Binning.J ID 73B)

Comments made pointed out that this site was much too close to the A34 to be suitable for housing. Existing residents in Lockway already complained about escalating noise levels due to increasing traffic on the A34. No mention was made in this application referring to the noise issue, or mitigation measures. It was pointed out that this land was suitable only for agricultural or recreational use.

Site 2. High Street – South of (Bishop Park Estates/Nixey)

Site 3. High Street – South of (Carpenter)

Site 7. High Street, South of (Late Mrs Bomford's Estate)

These three sites are represented by a single land agent, and were discussed together. Resident stated that they were against a large development on these sites (over 250 houses were being proposed). Any development should respect existing residents' privacy.

Site 4. Lockway, West of (E of Plymouth Estates)

Though this application mentioned the A34 noise problem and proposed some counter-measures, comments suggested that these were not likely to be effective. Access to any housing development would have to be from bridleways at either end, and would be constrained. It was commented that changing bridleways to roads was a lengthy legal process and that it was doubtful that any approved development would deliver housing within the two year planning window. E of Plymouth Estates had had planning approval for over 15 years for 20 houses at Manor Farm, but had not yet built these. Richard Williams pointed out that there was a need for 'planning gain' for the community to deliver allotments and better recreational facilities for the village, and that until the IHSP this site had offered an opportunity for such extra recreational use. A Lockway resident asked about why the recreational proposals had now been replaced by plans for housing. Daniel Scharf explained that this was entirely due to the landowner's change of plans due to the opportunities VWHDC had now provided in proposing to relax previous policies on housing development on such sites under the IHSP.

Site 5. Corneville Road (Law)

This site application is for a single house. Discussion concluded that this was not a strategic issue, and that it should be considered as a planning application under normal procedures, not under the IHSP site screening process.

Site 6. Marcham Road, Ashby Court (Skala Architects)

A resident reminded the Council that 4 houses had recently been built and the remaining undeveloped site had been designated for offices. There were problems already with parking on the street and verges from the new houses, since the way the parking had been laid out for the new houses meant that multiple cars had to be parked in line, so that anyone taking out a car at the front had to move those behind first. This meant that parking space was under-used and second and subsequent cars were parked on the street. It was noted that if the developer had built 5 or more houses, one at least would have to be affordable housing. The resident requested that the Council consider responding to VWHDC to ask for the site to remain designated for offices, but that if any further housing was

permitted only one house, not two, be allowed and that car parking space be better designed. It was pointed out that the 5th (and/or 6th) house should, under the 40% rule, be affordable housing

Site 8. Church Lane (WYG)

Points additional about this site to those under the general comments above emphasized the traffic issue: that access via High Street/Sutton Courtenay Road would mean more traffic through the village, and that access would be difficult to make safe.

020/2012-13 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no Declarations of Interest.

021/2012-13 HOUSING ISSUES

Daniel Scharf asked each Councillor for their comments on the 8 schemes:

Richard Webber: pointed out that the key to these ‘screening’ sites was deliverability within 2 years. Drayton was fortunate in the sense that so many landowners had responded that they had a choice of sites and could express a preference. This should be seen as an opportunity, not a threat. Drayton badly needed a Village Plan so that development could be controlled and community benefits specified. It might be in Drayton’s interest to offer to take more than 88 houses.

Richard Williams: commented on the Neighbourhood Planning process (see Minute 22 below). He proposed that Drayton’s response to the IHSP screening process should be viewed as the basis for a Neighbourhood Planning team to build upon. The question for any such group to answer would be ‘What is needed to make Drayton sustainable for extra housing?’

Naomi Broomfield: Had nothing to add to comments already made in this and in the public discussion.

Laurence Zipson: Was against any development alongside the A34, and favoured 68 houses only (max) being built on the sites 3/7/2. The village should seek benefits such as a school extension and modernization of the Village Hall. Extra traffic from any development was a concern.

Julian Fowler: Favoured a Neighbourhood Plan being developed but was concerned about the cost

Jenny Pooley: Preferred development of sites 2/3/7, with access from both High Street and East Way. East Way becoming a proper road would solve existing problems with poor surface on access to existing houses and the mobile home park. Queried how much space was available to extend the school – this might have to be at the expense of school playing fields?

Daniel Scharf asked for Councillors to vote for each site for or against development, with the following results:

Site 1. Steventon Road – West of (Binning.J ID 73B). Against development, due to the noise from the A34.

Proposed: Daniel Scharf **Seconded:** Richard Williams **Agreed**

Site 4. Lockway, West of (E of Plymouth Estates). Against development, due to the noise from the A34, plus area is suitable for recreational development, and access a problem from bridleways.

Proposed: Richard Williams **Seconded:** Laurence Zipson **Agreed**

Site 5. Corneville Road (Law)

It was **agreed** that since this was a such a small development it was not appropriate to discuss it within the strategic framework of the IHSP ‘screenings’ and that the VWHDC should be asked to deal with it under normal planning application procedures.

Site 6. Marcham Road, Ashby Court (Skala Architects)

It was **resolved** that this application should also be referred back to VWHDC as suitable for normal planning application procedures, not to be dealt with under the IHSP ‘screening’ process. It was further **resolved** that the reply should ask that the site remain as an employment site and that should this be changed any house(s) given permission as a part of a new development of over 4 houses should be affordable.

Proposed: Daniel Scharf **Seconded:** Julian Fowler **Agreed**

Site 8. Church Lane (WYG). Against development. It was further **resolved** that in its reply to VWHDC the Parish Council should mention as its reasons against development: the intrusion into the countryside and the spoiling of the rural views over the village; the disruption to the use of footpaths and bridleways; the proximity to the burial ground where tranquility will be spoilt; that though the landowner had consulted the Parish Council and had offered allotments and recreational facilities on site, these were in the wrong part of the village separated from existing facilities;

Proposed: Daniel Scharf **Seconded:** Richard Williams **Agreed**

Site 2. High Street – South of (Bishop Park Estates/Nixey)

Site 3. High Street – South of (Carpenter)

Site 7. High Street, South of (Late Mrs Bomford's Estate)

It was **resolved** that these three sites should be considered together in the Parish Council's response, and that these three sites South of the village should be preferred for housing development (if there is to be any) over the other sites put forward by landowners to the East or West.

Proposed: Daniel Scharf **Seconded:** Julian Fowler **Agreed**

In discussion it was **agreed** that in the Parish Council's reply the following conditions should be placed on any development:

- (a) Access should be from High Street
- (b) The development should start from the North end,
- (c) Up to 68 houses might be built in the next 2 years, but no greater number.

There was some debate about whether maximum, minimum or no numbers of houses should be mentioned in the Parish Council's response. It was **resolved** that as 68 houses were being proposed under the IHSP, no more than 68 houses should be built on these sites 2/3/7.

Proposed: Jenny Pooley **Seconded:** Laurence Zipson **Carried, 4 votes in favour.**

In further discussion it was **agreed** that the following points should be included in the letter to VWHDC:

- (a) The Parish Council and community should be consulted about the community infrastructure needs
- (b) Refer to the NPPF
- (c) Development is not sustainable without key improvements e.g. school/recreation/bus service
- (d) IHSP is not in accordance with NPPF unless it delivers to the sustainability requirements, so any development must address these issues.

The meeting at this point diverted to a part-public discussion on the merits and feasibility of car clubs, but returned to a more general discussion amongst councillors about whether to list sustainability requirements in detail. Richard Webber stated that the Parish Council should keep with the positive. It was suggested that in any letter to VWHDC the deficit in community facilities could be given separately to the site comments, and earlier in the letter. This suggestion gained approval.

It was **resolved** that the Clerk should be asked to draft the letter of response to VWHDC, to circulate the draft allowing Councillors 24 hours to respond with any additions or amendments, and then to submit the letter in time for the deadline of Friday 20th April.

Proposed: Julian Fowler **Seconded:** Daniel Scharf **Agreed**

ACTION: Clerk to draft and circulate to Councillors by email the detailed response from Drayton Parish Council to the 8 sites proposed for housing development under the VWHDC's IHSP 'screening' procedure, and to submit the agreed version to VWHDC before the deadline of Friday 20th April 2012.

[The text of the final letter submitted is given as an Appendix below]

022/2012-13 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

Richard Williams reported on the Neighbourhood Planning process. He had attended a briefing meeting at which three Oxfordshire communities (Thame/Chipping Norton and Woodcote) had reported on their community planning processes. They are 'lead' councils and are receiving government funding to trial the concept. Woodcote is nearest in size to Drayton. Its community planning committee has 15 people involved in addition to Parish Councillors. Costs

of neighbourhood plans vary from circa £20k to £60k, depending on scope and size of the plan and population. Drayton's would probably be around £20k (equal to 50% of the Council's annual budget). Front Runner councils are eligible for a grant of up to £20k. To have validity a Neighbourhood Plan needed to be approved in a local referendum by at least 50% of those voting. Daniel Scharf pointed out that front runners had been grant aided in this process and that Drayton would have to self-finance.

A discussion ensued on the need for a much greater community involvement in order for a Neighbourhood Plan to succeed. Members of the public commented that knowledge of the present meeting was not widespread, even though it had been advertised on noticeboards as usual, on the village website, and details emailed to all community group contacts. One person suggested using local radio to advertise such events.

022/2012-14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING had already been confirmed as Monday 14th May 2012 at 7.30pm, in the Caudwell Day Centre, Gravel Lane, Drayton, OX14 4HX. The next Finance and Personnel Committee had already been confirmed as Monday 14th May 2012 at 7.00 pm in the Caudwell Day Centre, Gravel Lane, Drayton, OX14 4HX

The meeting concluded at 9.50 p.m.

Signed:
Name: Daniel Scharf

Date: 14th May 2012
Role: Chairman, Drayton Parish Council

Appendix: Copy of Letter submitted by Drayton parish Council to VWHDC re: IHSP 'Screening' sites proposed for Drayton

PARISH COUNCIL OF DRAYTON (OXON)

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20th April 2012

Dear Laura,

Re: Drayton (Abingdon) - Site Screenings submitted as part of the Interim Housing Supply Policy (IHSP)

Public Consultation

Further to the requests in your letter dated 9th March, Drayton Parish Council held a Special Meeting of the full Council on Tuesday 17th April to discuss the 8 sites so far submitted for Drayton under the IHSP site screening procedure. This followed on from public awareness raising publicity which included a front page article in the April 2012 Drayton Chronicle (available online at: <http://www.drayton-near-abingdon.org/drayton-chronicle/> and delivered to every house in the village); the availability of the IHSP and the pdfs of the 8 screening sites on the village website (<http://www.drayton-near-abingdon.org/drayton-parish-council/council-meetings/planning/>); and emailing of these details to contacts for each organisation and society in the village. Prior to the Special PC Meeting, the Annual Parish Assembly (APA) and monthly PC meeting held on Monday 2nd April discussed the procedure which would be used to decide on the Parish Council's feedback, and it was at this meeting that the date of the Special Meeting was agreed. The APA was attended by over 40 members of the community, many representing village clubs and societies. 16 members of the public attended the Special Meeting on 17th April.

The Parish Council wishes VWHDC to note that an Affordable Housing Survey is currently being conducted in the village, using the ORCC questionnaire which was delivered to each house for return by end April. The results should be available during May.

Concerns about Sustainable Development

Drayton Parish Council wishes to express its concerns about any substantial new housing development in the village given the current deficit in facilities to support the existing housing stock. The Council drew attention to this issue in its submission commenting on the Draft IHSP (included as Appendix A to this letter, para 13) stating:

“The DIHSP should set out as part of the policy that developers in villages will be expected to contribute as a planning condition to the local infrastructure, directly or to a fund, proportionate to the size of their development, be it a new classroom for the school, new playground, sports facilities, road alterations, pavement or cycle lane improvements, road crossing etc. “

The types of facilities lacking or problems present in Drayton currently include:

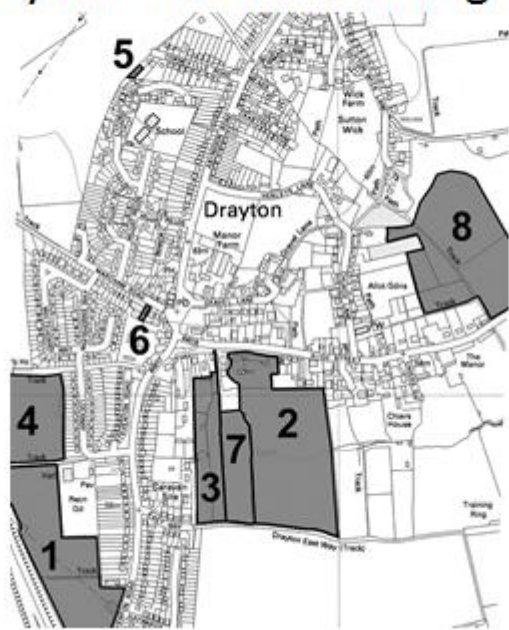
- Traffic congestion on the Abingdon/Steventon Road
- Lack of pupil places in the Drayton Community Primary School
- Severe deficit in recreational facilities
- Outdated Village Hall facilities in need of replacement/refurbishment
- Poor bus service of 1-2 buses per hour with unreliable connection in Abingdon on what is recognised should be a premium route (requires a direct service of 4x per hour)
- Lack of allotment space
- Traffic noise from the A34 affecting quality of life of families in housing west of the village.
- Lack of affordable housing in the village

Any major housing development which VWHDC approves through the screening process should therefore carry the condition that there is a substantial contribution to ensure community gain is achieved to address this deficit and to comply with the requirement under the NPPF that any approved development meets the sustainability criteria.

Comments on each of the 8 sites

For the sake of clarity the Parish Council has numbered the eight sites as follows:

Drayton – IHSP Screening Sites



1. Steventon Road – West of (Binning.J ID 73B)
2. High Street – South of (Bishop Park Estates/Nixey)
3. High Street – South of (Carpenter)
4. Lockway, West of (E of Plymouth Estates)
5. Corneville Road (Law)
6. Marcham Road, Ashby Court (Skala Architects)
7. High Street, South of (Late Mrs Bomford's Estate))
8. Church Lane (WYG)

For each site Drayton Parish Council has given its decision to support or not, with reasons as follows:

Site 1. Steventon Road – West of (Binning.J ID 73B)

Decision: Against Housing Development

Reasons: This site is completely unsuitable for housing development due to the very close proximity of the A34. Existing householders on Lockway already complain about the escalating noise problem from increased traffic on the A34. This area is suitable only as farmland or – as preferred by the village – as additional recreational land adjacent to the existing village green and village hall/football pavilion.

Site 2. High Street – South of (Bishop Park Estates/Nixey)

Site 3. High Street – South of (Carpenter)

Site 7. High Street, South of (Late Mrs Bomford’s Estate)

These 3 sites are contiguous, and are represented by the same land agent. Comments below apply to the three sites treated as one unit.

Decision: In favour of limited development on these sites within the Drayton targeted allocation of 68 extra houses if the IHSP policy and targets are approved at the May VWHDC Cabinet meeting. The developers – over the three sites 2/3/7 South of High Street - propose 250 houses. This is much too large for the village and this site, but the Parish Council would welcome discussion on the appropriate size and nature of any housing development here, and the contribution the developer can make to community facilities to meet the current and future community needs for sustainability.

NB: Any development on these three sites should be to the north of the sites, with road access from High Street, not from East Way (which is a designated bridleway in a semi-rural setting). The privacy of the adjacent houses on Steventon Road and Conifer Drive should be preserved, with any housing on Site 3 suitably distant and screened. Studies of traffic impact on High Street, and careful planning of any junction, needs urgent attention before the site is approved. High Street is already congested at peak times, and consideration should be given to strategies to limit car use as recommended under the NPPF, by improving public transport and encouraging car sharing/clubs.

Reasons: These three sites are nestled within the existing housing envelope of Drayton village. Access, whilst not ideal (see **NB** above) is better than for the other sites put forward under screening. Development to the north of the site would give residents access to the shops and facilities at the centre of the village, within walking range, and this would support local businesses and community facilities (shops/pubs/church/village hall, etc.).

Site 4. Lockway, West of (E of Plymouth Estates)

Decision: Against Housing Development

Reasons: This site, like site 1, is completely unsuitable for housing development due to the very close proximity of the A34. Existing householders on Lockway already complain about the escalating noise problem from increased traffic on the A34, and they are opposed to any housing development at the rear of their properties. Although the developers suggest noise screening this could never be made adequate to sustain quality of life for residents. Access would be problematic to housing on this site: the only public accesses are currently designated as bridleways. This area is also a potential recreation area for the village. Until the IHSP was mooted the developers were prepared to offer the community this field in exchange for access rights to build 20 houses at Manor Farm for which planning permission was granted as long ago as 1997. The Parish Council wishes to resume these negotiations so that the 20 houses at Manor Farm can be built and agreed s106 and other negotiable community benefits of extra recreational facilities delivered for the village.

Site 5. Corneville Road (Law)

Decision: No view expressed

Reasons: This is an individual housing application which is not of strategic importance under the IHSP. It should be submitted as a normal planning application and considered under current planning policy.

Site 6. Marcham Road, Ashby Court (Skala Architects)

Decision: Against Housing Development

Reasons: This site is designated as an employment site. A local resident informed the meeting that the 4 houses recently completed are causing parking problems on Marcham Road due to the in-line parking layout. Drayton needs to sustain its employment base, and this site should therefore remain as an employment site. If VWHDC is inclined to accept the developer's arguments for a change to residential use, Drayton PC is of the view that only one house should be permitted on this site, and that the development should be viewed as a whole with the newly completed 4 houses, so that this 5th house would be affordable housing only.

Site 8. Church Lane (WYG)

Decision: Against Housing Development

Reasons: Drayton Parish Council recognises that this site was listed under the SHLAA, but having taken advice from Vale planning officers at the time, regards this as an incomplete planning exercise not designed to identify either suitable or preferable sites (see Appendix A para 9). Whilst the landowner/developer has been pro-active in consulting the Parish Council, and is the only developer offering on-site community benefits, the Council is opposed to the development since:

- (a) The proposed road access to this site is contrived and potentially dangerous.
- (b) The development would extend the village to the east, beyond the current building line. Drayton is too flat to have many significant views, but this is one of them. From the bridleway to the east there is a view clear across to the church, with only fields, burial ground and allotments in between. The proposed houses would ruin this view.
- (c) Any development would disrupt/destroy the network of footpaths and bridleways which are heavily used by village residents. This would fail the NPPF sustainability test on environment by unnecessary development when an alternative site is available south of the village.
- (d) The development is adjacent to the Parish Council's Burial Ground. Housing development on this site would lead to damage to the tranquil environment currently enjoyed by residents who value regular visits to family graves. The direct route to the village centre from the new houses would be the public footpath through the burial ground. The Parish Council is also cognizant of the need to plan ahead for the expansion of the burial ground on adjacent land, though this is a need on a 25 year planning horizon.
- (e) The offer of recreation space recognises the villages' deficit, but the space allocated is too small and this is the wrong side of the village, splitting the desired benefit from expanded recreation and increasing maintenance costs to the community through two or more sites/buildings requiring upkeep.

Drayton Parish Council is grateful for this opportunity to be consulted on the future housing needs of the village. The PC, and the community, would wish to continue to be involved closely at each stage of any proposed development. The results of the Housing Needs Survey will be available in May, and these will be communicated to the VWHDC so that the types of housing required for Drayton can be established within any approved development. The Parish Council are also discussing the possibility of drawing up a Neighbourhood (or other type of local) Plan, and would welcome the opportunity to discuss financial and practical assistance from VWHDC in this process, in order to ensure that any approved development is sustainable under the NPPF.

Yours Sincerely

David Perrow

Clerk

Appendix A: Response from Drayton Parish Council on the consultation relating to the Draft Interim Housing Supply Policy

Drayton Parish Council have studied and discussed the details of the draft Interim Housing Supply Policy (“DIHSP”) and have the following concerns and points to make in relation to it:

1. Whilst the Parish Council appreciates the problems that the Vale faces in meeting its obligations to maintain and *if necessary* restore the five year housing land supply and that it needs to take steps not to be exposed in the period between having no Local Plan in place and the new Core Strategy coming into force, we have serious concerns over certain areas of the DIHSP, and the possible implications which may flow from it.
2. Given the potential impact of the DIHSP in many villages, the short period given for consideration and comment is unacceptably short as it gives no opportunity for many Parish Councils – Drayton included - to debate the plans at their meetings, so undermining effective democratic input into the policy which could have huge and lasting impact to local communities.
3. The Vale is concerned that the government’s view of there being a *presumption in favour of sustainable development* whilst they have no clear planning policy in force may lead to unacceptable development, compounded by the forecast that the targets for building new homes are not going to be met, owing to the recession slowing down the large developments which were expected to meet them.
4. The PC understands that with the *localism* policy there is an immediate tension between the DIHSP appearing to impose allocated quotas of development on villages and the increased importance of local inhabitants’ views in shaping that development. The DIHSP does not adequately address the consequences of the interaction of these two processes. The PC believes that 3 appeals have recently been dismissed by Mr Pickles because the houses did not have local support. The Vale would therefore need to be mindful of taking on board the views of local parishes in formulating and applying intended policies.
5. The 1000 to 1200 house target – approximately 578 per annum over 2 years – appears driven by the anticipated shortfall in homes completed on the existing and already started major developments, owing to the recession. The Parish Council’s concern is that to meet this target the Vale is intending to “relax” its present guidelines on acceptable development, and the consequence could be permanent detriment to the environment of the affected villages by imposing inappropriate one-size –fits-all developments upon them, with little regard to the consequent shortfalls in infrastructure that additional population will bring – especially to the roads and availability of school places.
6. The slow progress of the larger developments is being blamed on the recession. It is not made clear why it is presumed that these alternative developments are likely to be more successful when the same recession continues. If developments are regarded as inappropriate per the Local Plan, how can it be justified to make them suitable just to satisfy a target? The obvious answer would appear to be for the targets to be revised/deferred in the light of the recession, rather than go for what appears to be a very unsatisfactory way of boosting housing supply.
7. Permission to develop under the DIHSP does supposedly come with a requirement that development must be completed by a deadline - that development must begin within 12 months of grant of planning permission and completed by 31st March 2014 - to achieve the objective of the exercise of meeting the shortfall in the housing targets. However, what will in practical terms happen if development is not completed but has begun, or the dates are challenged as being outwith normal planning requirements? Planning enforcement proceeds at a glacial pace so there must be a severe risk that cash strapped developers will be keen to plant their flag to secure the right to develop whilst conditions are relaxed, but then not proceed to complete development. The consequence would be that the Vale would not achieve its targets but that unwelcome and possibly unsuitable developments would have been given permission.
8. “Screening” requests will be invited from developers, which will be considered by planning officers. It is not made clear where the democratic process fits into this. The implications appear to be that planning officers will examine the requests and if they fit within the DIHSP they will then be invited to make a planning application and only then will the plans be available for comment by residents, parish and town councils, and

possibly ultimately a decision before the planning committee. The Parish Council's concern is that there may be a presumption that following prior discussions with the officers that a subsequent application would be expected to be successful. This would fly in the face of both democratic process and localism.

9. Specific sites in villages have not been identified, but the Parish Council has concerns that the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment exercise carried out by the Vale may give encouragement to developers that those areas identified by the SHLAA would be acceptable sites under the DIHSP, despite the Vale's assurances at the time that there was no such intention or agenda. One such identified site has already brought an approach to the Parish Council from a landowner with plans for development, and it seems inevitable that if the DIHSP is adopted it will result in developers immediately consulting the SHLAA as a guide to where "screening" might be regarded favourably in a particular village.
10. The DIHSP states that any developments should still have "regard" to the "spatial vision" for the area: and that it will still "resist" (but not *prevent*) development in the open countryside. The Parish Council is concerned that the DIHSP could result in significant development outside the village, and this would be directly contrary to current policy GS2 which prevents housing on sites outside the defined settlement boundary of villages, so protecting the countryside and character of its settlements. The Parish Council is very concerned that to meet the short term horizon of achieving a target over 2 years the long term character of the Vale could be sacrificed with potentially permanent degradation of the environment.
11. It is also of concern that the document appears to set out justifications for allowing the DIHSP, by combing through the existing Plan to find points that would support it. There are worrying comments that development would be allowed where the Plan is silent or does not cover a particular situation. It is stated that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, and that any development should provide an "acceptable" living environment for the local population, with development being proportionate to the size of existing development. Development would be allowed in the context of declining average household size; at least maintaining the population size of villages in 2026 at their 2011 levels. This means more dwellings if average household size is falling. It is stated that the DIHSP will not support development that would significantly alter the size of the existing settlements or put pressure on services and infrastructure, but the target number of dwellings per settlement would appear to do exactly this. Given how busy roads already are, and will be even more so when the Didcot and other large developments are finished, it is not clear how this will be delivered. It is admitted in the consultation document that it is not expected to achieve this "proportionate" development in every settlement.
12. For Drayton The DIHSP calculates an additional 68 extra dwellings as "proportionate development", with the 15 house development limit for larger villages being scrapped as a consequence. The scrapping of this upper limit of 15 is in itself a concern as it could lead to a very large single additional development which would radically change the character of the village for ever. Applying a blunt "proportionate development" based on the populations/ existing housing of each village is a very poor approach, assuming that the status quo is in balance, and that the existing environment is ideal. Many settlements already have populations which are in excess of what the infrastructure can manage, and are awaiting improvements to reach an acceptable equilibrium, especially in terms of schools and road capacity. Each village is very different in terms of what potential sites it might have and the quality of those sites, and should be individually assessed. In pursuing the "need" to meet the imposed target, then where there are no suitable sites within villages there is an implication that they are likely to be permitted at the boundaries or outside, a clear concern that there may be ribbon development between villages – for Drayton meaning development out towards Abingdon, or the neighbouring villages of Steventon, Milton and Sutton Courtenay, bringing the possibility of coalescence. The Manor Farm development which has had permission since 1997, and whose 20 unbuilt houses are additional to the 68 allocated to Drayton, cannot obviously be brought within the requirement to complete by March 2014, so if nothing continues to happen on this site, will the target for Drayton revert to the full 88? Both 68 and 88 are a huge number of additional houses relative to the size of Drayton. The Manor Farm development – not yet built - will have a major effect on the village in terms of traffic congestion and pressure on the local school which owing to its recent success is now over-subscribed.
13. The DIHSP admits that there is likely to be an effect on road congestion and busier schools, but rather dismisses this, implying that overall population will not significantly change. Developer contributions are mentioned, but a number of relatively small development will not be big enough to pay individually for significant expensive infrastructure improvements –e.g. to roads and schools, so villages with a number of

smaller developments will not obviously benefit. The DIHSP should set out as part of the policy that developers in villages will be expected to contribute as a planning condition to the local infrastructure, directly or to a fund, proportionate to the size of their development, be it a new classroom for the school, new playground, sports facilities, road alterations, pavement or cycle lane improvements, road crossing etc.

14. The DIHSP states that there will be a benefit in that any new homes will be better built to higher standards – but of course this does nothing to improve the sustainability shortcomings of the existing housing stock which will still exist and adding more houses, however well built, must have effects in terms of increasing demand for water and energy, even if the population remains the same. It is encouraging at least the same number of people to live across more properties.
15. It is not made clear in the DIHSP what sort of development will be permitted. In villages developers much prefer to build large 4 or 5 bed luxury “executive” type homes which bring them more profit. What the village - and country – need are many more smaller 2 or 3 bedroom homes which would be affordable to first time buyers and those at the bottom end of the property ladder. A significant proportion should also be required to be so-called “affordable” housing for rent. Additionally, if there are trends to a larger number of households being of fewer people, smaller homes of attractively high quality and setting should be built to encourage occupation, especially by downsizers later in life, rather than encouraging them to move into 4 to 5 bedroom large properties to maintain their standard of environment. It hardly needs to be pointed out that more smaller homes could be built than larger ones on the same size plot of land, which will help meet the target number of dwellings faster, and would be more suitable to develop as communities rather than dormitory suburbs, the greater density of housing being more able to support local shops, schools etc.

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Drayton Parish Council