

## Examination in Public of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan

### Hearing Statement for Stage 2

Patrick and Heather Moseley, long-term residents of Chilton Village.

In relation to Matter 6 –Proposed Housing Sites in the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - of the Stage 2 – Matters and Questions, we wish to make the following observations:

#### 6.1

(a) We are aware of the nation-wide pressure on housing stock but, in the local context of the VoWH Local Plan, the “Objectively Assessed Need” for housing of 20,560 dwellings within the AONB is based on highly aspirational economic growth figures, and is therefore speculative and unsound. In short the exceptional circumstances test is not met.

(b) We fear that builders’ preference for greenfield land would lead to a more dispersed pattern of development and a diversion of interest and investment away from towns if the Plan were to remain unmodified, and increased house prices would result. Comparison of the selling prices of properties in a recent development in Chilton village with equivalent designs in Didcot show, on average, a 20% premium for housing within the AONB.

(c) There is indeed scope for providing housing development outside of the AONB. A large tract of land to the north west of Steventon was considered as a site for a reservoir a few years ago but that plan has not moved forward. Further a plan submitted by the management of Harwell Campus identifies significant areas of brownfield land that could be used (see item 6.2 below).

(d) The area of the AONB on which the development is proposed stands in a prominent stretch of land openly visible for miles from north and south. The area is presently unspoiled and much prized for the recreational opportunities that it provides. The elevated situation of the site would render mitigation measures futile.

#### 6.2

The alternative development site that has been proposed by the management of Harwell Campus would reduce the impact on the AONB – particularly if it could be modified and confined to brownfield land.