

1 April 2019

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Planning Policy  
Vale of White horse District Council  
135 Eastern Avenue  
Milton Park  
Abingdon  
OX14 5SB

To whom it may concern

## **THE LOCAL PLAN 2031 PART 2: DETAILED POLICIES AND ADDITIONAL SITES - PROPOSED DRAFT MAIN MODIFICATIONS CONSULTATION**

We are writing on behalf of our Clients', L&Q and The Crown Estate, with regard to the Vale of White Horse Local Plan Main Modifications consultation. Our Clients' have land interests to the south of Harwell Campus and have continued to promote the site through the Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 2. As part of the promotion, detailed representations were submitted alongside a vision document which was informed by a series of technical reports to demonstrate the suitability, availability and deliverability of the site to meet the longer term development aspirations of Harwell Campus.

The representations were made in the knowledge of the proposed local plan allocation at Harwell Campus for residential development (to support the specific housing requirements for the Campus). There is strong recognition both nationally and internationally of the role that the Science Vale and more specifically Harwell Campus plays in fostering economic growth and innovation and the proposed allocation would further cement that.

The intention within the emerging Local Plan 2031 Part 2 was to propose an allocation for 1000 tenure specific dwellings to contribute towards the creation of a new Innovation village focussed around a 'live-work-play' environment which was central to this vision and was supported by our Clients. The evidence submitted to the Local Plan process demonstrated the inherent need for a tenure specific form of housing development to support the needs of employees at the Campus and its future economic growth to 2031. The new Innovation village being promoted at Harwell Campus would continue to strengthen the position of the Campus on the global stage and align with the Government's aspirations for economic growth as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019).

The Council produced an Exceptional Circumstances Report (October 2017) which supported the allocation and was clear that the needs of the Campus cannot be delivered elsewhere given *'its unique combination of resources and relationships and would not contribute towards the attributes and assets of*

The Pinnacle  
20 Tudor Road  
Reading  
RG1 1NH

 [turley.co.uk](https://www.turley.co.uk)

*Harwell'*. The Report aligned with the requirements set out within paragraph 116 of the Framework and provided a robust justification to why 'major development in the AONB' was acceptable given the site specific requirements of Harwell Campus and the nature of the employment offer.

Our comments to the submission Local Plan focussed upon supporting the VoWH and the Campus in its proposal to 2031 and sought recognition within the Plan that potential growth opportunities should be assessed beyond 2031 in the event that economic growth is faster than anticipated. Such a position would allow an element of futureproofing of the plan to ensure that there were sufficient suitable, available and deliverable sites when the need arises. Our Clients' site would be appropriately placed to meet such needs towards the end of the plan period providing opportunities for specific occupier requirement for Big Science alongside additional tenure specific residential development to come forward in line with the economic growth that materialises. The proposed allocation at Harwell Campus would be the starting point for the creation of a world renowned Innovation Village and Science Campus given the scale and employment offer within similar initiatives around the world.

The most recent published position from the Planning Inspector is dated 19 December 2018 and merely sets out a requirement for the Harwell Campus allocation to be deleted from the Main Modifications Local Plan. We are disappointed with this and we consider that a comprehensive position was put forward by VoWH within the Local Plan evidence base and subsequent information was submitted following the Local Plan Examination to clarify a number of points for the Inspector.

Our Clients' feel that the rationale and justification supporting the proposed allocation at Harwell Campus meets the tests of the Framework and it is our view that this should be reinstated to ensure that needs of the campus are met in the short to medium term. Given the specific concerns of the Inspector relating to the Harwell Campus allocation have not been published to support the Main Modifications consultation, we reserve our position to comment further once further information has been issued.

Yours faithfully



Hannah Knowles  
Senior Planner

