



Gladman Developments Ltd

Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 2

Examination Stage 1: Hearing Sessions

Matter 2: Unmet housing needs from Oxford

Questions:

1.1 How has the 2,200 working assumption for unmet housing needs from Oxford within the Vale been arrived at and is it supported by proportionate evidence?

1.1.1 Gladman has no comments to make on this question.

1.2 What are the arrangements for reviewing or updating this working assumption?

1.2.1 This will be a matter for the Oxfordshire Growth Board to consider in due course. Gladman notes, however, that South Oxfordshire has not agreed to date to plan for its full apportionment of Oxford's unmet need in its emerging Local Plan, there being a shortfall of 1,200 dwellings which may ultimately need to be redistributed to the other Oxfordshire districts including VOWH. It also notes that work undertaken by Oxford City Council in the preparation of its new Local Plan indicate that the actual unmet need is likely to be higher than the currently agreed 15,000 working assumption. The Oxfordshire authorities have all committed to the recent Growth Deal for the County which obliges them to deliver 100,000 new homes in the County in their local plans. In effect this commits VOWH, West Oxfordshire, South Oxfordshire and Cherwell Councils to delivering all of the unmet need for Oxford in their local plans.

1.2.2 Gladman is concerned therefore that the Local Plan 2 contains no contingency or flexibility in the event that there is an increase in the unmet housing need for Oxford City and the apportionment thereof to VOWH.

1.3 Is the spatial strategy for meeting these unmet housing needs in the Abingdon on Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub Area the most

appropriate when considered against reasonable alternatives and supported by proportionate evidence?

- 1.3.1 Generally Gladman agrees that the Abingdon on Thames and Oxford Fringe sub-area is an appropriate location for meeting the unmet housing needs of Oxford given its proximity to the city and good transport links, however it is not the only reasonable option. The Part 1 Local Plan Inspector and the Council itself recognise this. Paragraph 2.31 of the Part 2 Submission Plan states that *“Whilst the plan identifies sites that are demonstrably close to and accessible to Oxford (Table 2.1), it is also the case that, in reality, any of the homes allocated across the two Sub-Areas (Abingdon and Oxford Fringe and South East Vale) could contribute towards the unmet housing needs of Oxford City, including those located in the Vale to the west of Didcot.”*
- 1.3.2 The Part 1 Local Plan Inspector noted, in paragraph 56 of his report that *“Whilst the Abingdon-on-Thames/Oxford Fringe Sub-Area is closer to Oxford, it is true that more than 3,000 dwellings proposed in the South East Vale (the two Valley Park sites) would also be close to Didcot station with its fast and frequent rail service to Oxford”.*
- 1.3.3 Gladman considers that key settlements in the Western Vale sub-area are also reasonable alternatives for meeting some of Oxford’s unmet housing needs. Settlements such as Faringdon and Shrivenham have the benefit of frequent public transport links to Oxford. The journey time by bus to central Oxford from Faringdon is comparable to that from Abingdon.
- 1.3.4 Gladman considers it would be sensible and contingent to have a wider distribution of sites across the District to deliver Oxford’s unmet needs rather than relying on a significant concentration of housing development coming forward within a small geographical area.

1.4 Is the stated strategy for meeting these unmet housing needs in the Abingdon on Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area followed through in the LPP2?

- 1.4.1 Gladman has no comments to make on this question.

1.5 Given the NPPF requirement for exceptional circumstances to be demonstrated for any alterations to the Green Belt and the availability of potential sites, is the balance of the strategy between Green Belt releases (one site – Dalton Barracks) and sites outside the Green Belt the most appropriate?

- 1.5.1 Generally Gladman considers that the exceptional circumstances required to alter the Green Belt have been demonstrated in the Vale however as indicated in its hearing statement for Matter 5, Gladman has significant concerns that the Dalton Barracks site will not deliver the expected amount of housing during the plan period.

1.6 To what extent is the strategy for meeting these unmet needs deliverable in the necessary timetable?

- 1.6.1 Gladman considers that the proposed strategy is unlikely to deliver housing to meet all the unmet needs in the plan period. This is because a large proportion of the unmet needs are expected to be delivered on one site at Dalton Barracks. Gladman considers that the delivery of homes on this site by 2031 is extremely optimistic for reasons which are set out in Gladman's response to Matter 5.

1.7 To what extent is the strategy for meeting these unmet needs sufficiently flexible if the working assumption figure is revised in future?

- 1.7.1 The Plan contains limited flexibility to react to an increase in the working assumption figure for unmet needs. This is because of:
- a) overly optimistic assumptions regarding lead in times and the delivery of housing on strategic sites e.g. Dalton Barracks; and
 - b) unrealistic expectations in respect of windfall development (see Hearing Statement for Matter 8)
- 1.7.2 The combination of these factors serve to reduce considerably the quantum of housing development that will be provided over the plan period. In order to provide flexibility, the Plan should allocate additional smaller sites that will deliver housing during the plan period.

1.8 What are the arrangements for securing affordable housing to meet the needs of Oxford within this figure? Would they be effective and deliverable?

- 1.8.1 Gladman has no comments to make on this question.

1.9 How would the strategy for meeting Oxford's housing needs within the Vale be monitored to ensure its delivery? Is a housing supply ring fence for Abingdon and the Oxford Fringe Sub Area required?

- 1.9.1 As it stands it would appear that the Plan would not allow for monitoring the delivery of Oxford's unmet housing need within the District. The proposed monitoring regime would only allow for capturing the number of dwellings delivered by sub area and for each allocation. It would be sensible for a monitoring mechanism to be developed which would allow for the delivery of Oxford's unmet need in the District to be measured. Gladman would, however, not be in favour of a housing supply ring fence being established for the Abingdon and Oxford Fringe Sub Area as ideally the unmet need should be met in all the Sub Areas in accordance with the spatial planning framework established in the Part 1 Plan.