



Rockspring Barwood East Hanney Ltd

Hearing Statements for Vale of White Horse Local  
Plan 2031 Part 2: Detailed Policies and Additional  
Sites  
Matter 4

Prepared by WYG Environment Planning Transport  
Limited



## Preamble

WYG are instructed by Rockspring Barwood East Hanney Ltd ('our client' hereafter) to provide planning consultancy advice in respect of their land interests at land South of Steventon Road, East Hanney, which lies within the boundary of the Vale of White Horse District Council.

Detailed comments have been made at all stages of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan Parts 1 Part 2.

WYG have been representing the client since January 2016 and appeared at the Stage 2 Hearings for the emerging Local Plan on Matters relating to Housing Land Supply and the Spatial Strategy. Prior to WYG's involvement, representations were submitted on behalf of the client by Oxalis Planning.

Representations were made to the Council's Call for Sites consultation in July 2016 and these were supplemented in October 2016, in respect of the Local Plan Part 2. Most recently, submissions were made to the Preferred Options consultation in May 2017 and to the submission Version of the Part 2 Local Plan in November 2017.

Our client's site lies adjacent to the settlement of East Hanney, on its eastern edge (identified in Appendix 1 of Appendix 1). East Hanney is a 'Larger Village' as identified in the Local Plan Part 1, providing a number of services and facilities which meet the day to day needs of the area.

An outline planning application for the development of our client's land interests at East Hanney was refused on 25th November 2015 by VoWH District Council, contrary to the Planning Officer's positive recommendation for approval. The grounds of refusal related to matters of heritage and landscape impact and the absence of a Section 106 Agreement at the point of determination.

A planning appeal was submitted against the Council's decision to refuse planning permission on 26th February 2016 and was heard via the Written Representations procedure (appeal ref: APP/V3120/W/16/3145359). On 7th July 2016 the Inspector issued his decision, dismissing the appeal. The sole ground for dismissal related to the scale of the proposed development, which was considered to be *"out of character with the existing form and layout of the village and disproportionate to its existing size"* (para 36, Inspector's report). It is of note that the refusal was predicated only on scale, and not in relation to the principle of development in this location per se, which was acknowledged to be appropriate in all other technical respects, including the absence of *any* harm to heritage assets.

The site is therefore now promoted for a development of 50-75 dwellings, commensurate with the wider housing distribution strategy established by the Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part



1. The merits, benefits and sustainability credentials of the site remain as identified in the May 2017 representations and are not repeated here.

This Hearing Statement seeks to reiterate and update where necessary, comments previously made in respect of the Submission Version Local Plan Part 2 and associated Sustainability Appraisal, to confirm our Client's position. The Statement is structured under the following broad themes, flowing from the Inspector's Matters and Questions:

**Matters to which this Statement refers:**

Matter 4 – specifically inspector's questions 4.1 a) to d) inclusive and 4.5

## **Matter 4: Abingdon and Oxford Fringe Sub Area**

**Inspector's Question 4.1:** *"Other than Dalton Barracks (Matter 5), are the housing allocations listed in Policy 8a the most appropriate when considered against reasonable alternatives in the light of site constraints, infrastructure requirements and potential impacts? Are the estimates of the site capacity justified? Are the expected timescales for development realistic? Are the site development template requirements – both general and site specific – justified, consistent with national policy and would they be effective?"*

- a) *North of East Hanney*
- b) *North East of East Hanney*
- c) *East of Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor (in Fyfield and Tubney Parish)*
- d) *South East of Marcham".*

**Inspector's Question 4.5:** *"Are the proposals to extend the area of safeguarded land for the Upper Thames Strategic Storage Reservoir justified? Would there be any adverse impacts?"*

With reference to the LPA's identification of site and establishment of reasonable alternatives for the Local Plan Part 2, Section 4.0 of the WYG May 2017 representations and Section 3 of the November 2017 representations set out a detailed site specific analysis of the Council's preferred allocations within the Abingdon on Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area, and as set out in respect of Matter 2, and in Section 2.0 of the May 2017 WYG representations, the soundness of the Council's approach to site identification is already in question because of the flaws in the approach to meeting the requirements of the SEA regulations. However, there are also some 'soundness' critical issues which must be taken into account when assessing the Council's preferred allocations set out in the Local Plan Part 2. These are reiterated in respect of the 4 sites in the Abingdon on Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub Area below and should be read alongside the detailed representations made in the WYG May 2017 representations.

**Inspector's Question 4.5:**

It is noted that since the submission of the last WYG representations in November 2017, the LPA has agreed a Statement of Common Ground (Doc Ref: SCG10) in advance of the Local Plan Part 2 Hearings. Paras 2.10 – 2.17 refer to the Upper Thames Strategic Storage Reservoir, with the rationale for the safeguarding of land at East Hanney set out in reference to the awaited Thames Water's Draft Water Resource Management Plan, due to be published in 2019.

However, as set out in WYG's previous representations (November 2017, Section 5.0), the identification of this land for safeguarding for a reservoir has not been fully justified and is therefore not sound because it is not justified, nor effective.

There remains no testing of the proposed safeguarded land against other options, no explicit audit trail as to why this site is the 'preferred option' and no testing of potential environmental, economic and social impacts that could arise from a reservoir. The SA (pages 83-84) makes no reference at all to the Thames Water 2014 Water Resource Management Plan, which was published without the benefit of being able to factor in the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment figures. Rather, any reference at all appears to have been omitted when compared to page 62 of the September 2017 SA Report (Doc Ref: LPP07). The identification of such an exact piece of land for safeguarding therefore appear arbitrary. If the evidence base is not up to date there can be no reliable conclusion on the area of land required for safeguarding and no reliable SA testing can be undertaken. The Policy as it pertains to the extended safeguarded area, including WYG's client's land should therefore be deleted.