



Gladman Developments Ltd

Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 2

Examination Stage 1: Hearing Sessions

Matter 5: Dalton Barracks

Questions:

1.1 Given the NPPF requirement for exceptional circumstances to be demonstrated for any alterations to the Green Belt, is the proposal to establish an inset to the Green Belt at Dalton Barracks justified by proportionate evidence in principle?

1.1.1 Gladman considers that the need to accommodate a significant unmet housing need for Oxford City in locations which provide for a sustainable pattern of development in locations accessible to the city represents the exceptional circumstances that justify alterations to the Green Belt. Dalton Barracks as a previously developed site would normally be a reasonable site to release from the Green Belt, however there are significant concerns about its ability to deliver the anticipated quantum of housing during the plan period.

1.1.2 The Council itself recognises that there is uncertainty over whether Dalton Barracks is deliverable within the plan period. Paragraph 10.2.4. of the ISA states that: *"Proposed figures for Dalton Barracks, Harwell Campus and North West Grove reflect latest understanding of what is deliverable at these sites over the plan period; however, these sites – or at least Dalton Barracks and NW Grove- are associated with specific deliverability issues, which means that there is inherently some risk of deliverability being delayed. There will be further discussions on deliverability with the site promoters and stakeholders, ahead of publication/submission."*

1.2 Is the detailed alignment of the proposed Green Belt inset boundary justified and supported by proportionate evidence?

1.2.1 Gladman has no comments to make on this question.

1.3 Is the housing allocation at Dalton Barracks appropriate when considered against reasonable alternatives in the light of site constraints, infrastructure requirements and potential impacts? Have these been adequately assessed? Are the detailed requirements in Core Policy 8b and the site development template requirements – both general and site specific – justified and would they provide an appropriate basis for preparation of a Supplementary Planning Document for the site?

1.3.1 Gladman considers that the development of this site will be subject to substantial and complex infrastructure requirements as outlined below. These are such that the ability of the site to deliver 1,200 dwellings during the plan period is highly questionable.

1.4 How would the proposal for Dalton Barracks relate to the existing community of Shippon? What new services, facilities and infrastructure links would be provided and is this realistic? Is the proposal viable? Would it comprise sustainable development?

1.4.1 Gladman has no comments to make on this question.

1.5 Would the proposal for a Country Park as part of the development adequately mitigate any impact on nearby ecological sites or be otherwise justified and deliverable? How would it be managed and maintained?

1.5.1 Gladman has no comments to make on this question.

1.6 Are the proposals to safeguard land for bus/cycle links between Dalton Barracks and the Lodge Hill Park and Ride site justified? Would there be any adverse impacts?

1.6.1 Gladman has no comments to make on this question.

1.7 Is the estimate of site capacity justified in the Plan Period and in the long term?

1.7.1 Gladman has no comments to make on this question.

1.8 Is it realistic for 1,200 dwellings to be delivered on the site during the plan period? What are the arrangements for the relocation of the

existing military personnel on the site and are they realistic? How would the development be phased, and how would this relate to the continuing operation of the barracks?

- 1.8.1 Policy 8a of the Part 2 Plan allocates the Dalton Barracks site for 1,200 dwellings during the Plan period and Policy 8b requires the preparation of a comprehensive development framework for the site to be produced as a Supplementary Planning Document.
- 1.8.2 The Part 2 Plan indicates that, whilst originally scheduled for closure in 2029, the Defence Infrastructure Organisation now considers that the military units currently occupying the site will vacate by 2026. The Council's Housing Trajectory Paper Update (February 2018) Table 2, forecasts that 50 dwellings will be delivered on the site in 2024/25, 100 in 2025/2026 and 1050 over the last five years of the plan period.
- 1.8.3 Gladman has significant concerns that the delivery of 1200 dwellings on this site is not feasible in the plan period. These concerns relate firstly to the lead in time for large strategic sites generally and secondly to the specific circumstances pertaining to this site.
- 1.8.4 Gladman understands the need for large scale urban extensions and the role that they can play in delivering the long term supply of housing. However it is imperative that the local planning authority is realistic in relation to the delivery and timescales associated with these types of developments. Delays in sites coming forward are due principally to lead in times, gaining outline consent, negotiations on Section 106 agreements, reserved matters applications, discharge of conditions, the need for major infrastructure investments, site clearance and difficulties caused by sites in multiple ownerships.
- 1.8.5 Generally Gladman considers that the Council is overly optimistic regarding the timing of housing delivery on a substantial number of allocated sites. In considering the Council's trajectory, Gladman refers to a study published in September 2017 by Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners based on an assessment of 70 large sites (500 – 2,000 dwellings). The study found an average lead in time of 3.9 years for large sites prior to the submission of the first planning application, and an average of 5 years for the planning approval period, with a further period of 9-10 months to first housing delivery.
- 1.8.6 In the particular circumstances of this site, firstly it is in the Green Belt and the submission of an outline planning application is extremely unlikely until confirmation of the release of the site from the Green Belt is confirmed when the Part 2 Local Plan is adopted. This unlikely to occur until early in 2019 at best. In addition Policy 8b requires the preparation of a Supplementary Planning Document to guide the development of the site. This will need to be subject of public consultation prior to adoption and one would expect this to be in place prior to the determination of any planning application.
- 1.8.7 The site is currently occupied by military units and although the Defence Infrastructure Organisation says that they will vacate the site prior to 2026, it is unclear as to how development of

- the site might start prior to that date. This is clearly the expectation of the Council which anticipates the delivery of the first 50 dwellings on the site in 2024/25.
- 1.8.8 As a military barracks and former airfield, the site is likely to be subject of contamination which will need to be undertaken prior to any development taking place.
- 1.8.9 The development of the site will require major infrastructure to be undertaken including new schools/local centre/country park, public transport infrastructure and highway works. Gladman notes that in its comments on the Part Local Plan Submission Document in November 2017, Oxfordshire County states that *“there is the potential for significant transport effects from the development at this site. It is understood that the developers consider that the site has a total capacity for some 4,500 houses. The current Evaluation of Transport Impacts is based solely on a plan period development of 1,200 houses and therefore any additional development has not been modelled. Further work evaluating transport impacts is required and we consider further modelling is required in the Abingdon area, along with the A15 (west) and the A338.”* The County Council requires the total capacity of the site to be identified which will need to be tested in additional evidence.
- 1.8.10 In its submission, the County Council states that the Evaluation of Transport Impacts work has been carried out too quickly and does not provide sufficient evidence for it to make an informed decision on the transport impacts of the proposed allocations. It refers to the need for further work to be undertaken in relation to the Abingdon network on the cumulative impacts of the Dalton Barracks site and other allocations. At the moment the County Council assumes that no home occupations at Dalton Barracks before the Lodge Hill slip roads are open. The Dalton Barracks development may also have adverse impacts on the Marcham Interchange and the Frilford lights junction on the A415 and A338.
- 1.8.11 The County Council also raises issues regarding the proposed combined busway/cycleway between Dalton Barracks and Lodge Hill (where a Park and Ride facility is proposed), both of which are underfunded and only likely to be in place after the plan period.
- 1.8.12 Quite clearly the development of the Dalton Barracks site will be extremely complicated and there are numerous fundamental issues which remain to be resolved. Consequently Gladman consider that there is no prospect of:
- a) the first houses being delivered on site in 2024/25 and
 - b) 1200 homes being delivered on site before the end of the plan period in 2031.
- 1.8.13 In order to remedy this shortfall, it will be necessary to allocate additional or alternative housing sites.