

**Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Examination in Public**

**Statement of Common Ground**

**between**

**Vale of White Horse District Council,  
Kemp and Kemp on behalf of Harwell Campus Partnership  
and  
JPPC on behalf of Hendred Estate**

**August 2015**



## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared by the Vale of White Horse District Council ("the Council"), the Harwell Campus Partnership ("the Partnership") (represented by Kemp & Kemp LLP) and the Hendred Estate (represented by JPPC).
- 1.2 The land comprising the North-West Harwell housing allocation (Policy CP4) comprises land owned by the Partnership and land owned by the Hendred Estate. The Partnership and the Hendred Estate are working together to ensure that the allocated land can be developed in a comprehensive manner.
- 1.3 The Partnership and the Hendred Estate have made representations in respect of the Submission Draft Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 ("the Local Plan"). The Partnership has requested to be represented at Stage 1 of the Local Plan Examination in Public by Kemp & Kemp LLP. The Hendred Estate will not be attending Stage 1 of the Examination.
- 1.4 Submission Draft Local Plan Core Policy 6 identifies the Harwell Campus as a strategic employment site. Consistent with this policy and the Campus's status as a centre for excellence for research and development, the Partnership is bringing forward new development. To this end, work is underway on a new site-wide Framework Master Plan, the primary purpose of which is to provide a clear, simple and responsive framework for the delivery of new science and technology focused employment-generating development and new facilities to support Harwell as a world class science and technology centre.
- 1.5 As part of this Framework Master Plan, new homes are planned, which would serve the Campus and add to its vitality and sustainability and assist in promoting the growth of the area. This is consistent with Local Plan Core Policy 4 (North-West Harwell Campus). The North-West Harwell allocation includes land under the control of the Partnership and the Hendred Estate.
- 1.6 For ease of use, the SoCG follows the matters and questions prepared by the Inspector for Stage 1 of the Examination. For the avoidance of doubt, this SoCG relates only to the matters that are to be discussed at Stage 1 of the Examination.

## **2.0 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Harwell Campus is a world renowned major UK Science and Technology Campus that benefits from over £1bn of science infrastructure, including the UK's national synchrotron facility, the Diamond Light Source, and ISIS Neutron facility, plus approximately 5,000 research and support staff spread across approximately 200 organisations. These include Science & Technology Facilities Council, Medical Research Council, European Space Agency, Diamond Light Source, Public Health England, Element Six, Bluebird, Thales Group, Airbus, RAL Space, the Satellite Applications Catapult, and others in related fields.

- 2.2 The Harwell Campus extends to 292 hectares and has a diverse, international and collaborative character, plus an exceptional history of scientific discovery and excellence in multiple fields over many decades. Today, on site research spans an enormous breadth and depth of science, including: aerospace and space, telecommunications, medical and life sciences, physical sciences, mechanical engineering, lasers, plasma physics, nano technology, cryogenics, super-computing and advanced data storage.
- 2.3 The Campus covers an area broadly similar to Wantage. It is categorised in the Council's Town and Village Facilities Study as equivalent to a large village.<sup>1</sup> It is a brownfield site, allocated for development, where there is land available now for employment-generating development, housing and ancillary services and facilities. Part of the site is also an Enterprise Zone. The Partnership is determined to ensure that the Harwell Campus remains at the core of Oxfordshire's science and technology cluster and continues to support science related economic growth across the United Kingdom.
- 2.4 The Partnership values the support it has received from the Council and is committed to bringing forward new development in collaboration with the Council in response to both the requirement for further economic development at the heart of the Science Vale and the need for new housing to serve the growth of the campus.
- 2.5 Consistent with that commitment and pursuant to the emerging site-wide Framework Master Plan, the Partnership has submitted a number of planning applications for new development at the Campus. It has recently secured planning permission for a new Class B1 "high-tech terrace" extending to some 2,686 square metres. It has also submitted detailed planning applications for a new internal link road and a 4,662 square metre Innovation Centre comprising laboratories, office and commercial use and leisure and restaurant development, and an outline application for new buildings extending to 19,345 square metres and comprising space for research and development, laboratories, office and commercial uses, leisure and restaurant uses, a gym, accommodation for staff and visitors and ancillary retail. These applications have yet to be determined. In addition, the Partnership has submitted an outline application for up to 120 new homes on land within the Harwell Campus at South Drive which was formally an area of RAF housing linked to the Campus's former use as II World War Airfield. That application also remains to be determined. The most logical access to the North-West of Harwell allocation is through the South Drive site. This site is outlined in red on the attached plan at Appendix 1.

---

<sup>1</sup> Town and Village Facilities Study, page 6, Table 1



### 3.0 INSPECTOR'S MATTERS AND QUESTIONS

#### Matter 1 – Duty to Co-operate and other Legal Requirements

*"Has the Council satisfactorily discharged its Duty to Co-operate to maximise the effectiveness of Local Plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters, including in particular minerals and waste and housing? (see also Matter 4)*

*Are the likely environmental, social and economic effects of the plan adequately and accurately addressed in the Habitats Regulations Assessment and the Sustainability Appraisal (SA)? Does the SA test the plan against all reasonable alternatives in terms of the overall requirement for land for housing and employment (see also Matters 2 and 4) and its broad spatial distribution? (see also Matter 3)*

*Is it appropriate for the plan to include only Strategic Policies and Site Allocations and for detailed planning policies and non-site strategic site allocations to be devolved to a Part 2 Local Plan document? Is there a clear justification for this and does it accord with national policy?*

*Is the plan compliant with:*

- (a) The Local Development Scheme?*
- (b) The Statement of Community Involvement?*
- (c) The 2004 Act and the 2012 Regulations?"*

#### **Agreed Matters**

- 3.1 The parties to this Statement agree that having regard to the *Oxfordshire Statement of Cooperation*, which has been signed by each of the six authorities in Oxfordshire, the current uncertainties surrounding the extent of Oxford's unmet need and the need urgently to address and provide for the Vale's objectively assessed need for housing and employment land, the Council has satisfactorily discharged its Duty to Co-operate to maximise the effectiveness of Local Plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters.
- 3.2 The parties agree that in the light of the approach taken in proposed Policy CP2 and the matters covered in Topic Paper 1: Duty to Cooperate and Cross Boundary Issues, the Plan is compliant with the LDS, the Statement of Community Involvement, the 2004 Act and the 2012 Regulations.
- 3.3 The parties agree that in the context of the Duty to Cooperate and in particular the *Oxfordshire Statement of Cooperation*, it is in this case appropriate for non-strategic site allocations to be devolved to a Local Plan Part 2.
- 3.4 The parties agree that the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) has tested the plan against all reasonable alternatives in terms of the overall requirement for land for housing and employment and its broad spatial distribution.

### ***Matters on which the Parties Do Not Agree***

- 3.5 The Partnership and the Council do not agree on the reasonable alternatives that have been tested in regards to the strategic housing allocations. The Partnership's position is that the SA does not test the full contribution that Harwell Campus can make in terms of providing housing within the Campus boundaries.

### **Matter 2 – Objectively Assessed Needs for Housing and Employment Land**

*"Is the identified objectively-assessed need for housing of 20,560 new dwellings (an average of 1028 per year), as set out in policy CP4, soundly based and supported by robust and credible evidence?"*

*In particular:*

*Are the SHMA's demographic adjustments to the 2011 CLG Household Projections soundly based?*

*Is it appropriate to include an allowance for addressing past shortfalls in the delivery of housing against the South East Plan housing requirements?*

*Is the SHMA's adjustment to take account of forecast economic growth as set out in the Cambridge Econometrics/SQW report soundly based?*

- (i) Are the report's forecasts of employment growth in the District realistic?*
- (ii) Is there evidence that the forecast employment growth would give rise to demand for new housing within the Vale of White Horse district?*

*What are the implications of the 2012-based CLG Household Projections for the objectively-assessed need for housing?*

*Is the identified need for 219 ha of land for future employment development (policy CP6) soundly based and supported by robust and credible evidence?"*

### ***Agreed Matters***

- 3.6 The parties to this Statement support the decision to meet in full the Council's objectively assessed need for new housing as set out in the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (April 2014) (i.e. 1,028 homes per annum (2011 – 2013)) or a total of 20,560 during the plan period. This figure and the methodology behind it were tested at the Cherwell Local plan Examination in Public and were found by the appointed Inspector to be "sound".
- 3.7 The assumption that approximately 23,000 jobs will be delivered between 2011 and 2031 is soundly based and supported by robust evidence.



### ***Matters on which the Parties Do Not Agree***

- 3.8 The Partnership's view, based on the Council's Employment Land Review, is that 219 hectares of land are not required to support approximately 23,000 jobs. This number of jobs can be delivered on significantly less than 219 hectares.
- 3.9 The Hendred Estate has no comment to make on this issue.

### **Matter 3 – Spatial Strategy and Housing Supply Ring Fence**

*"Is the proposed distribution of new housing and employment land (policies CP4 and CP6) soundly based?"*

*In particular:*

- (a) *Does the proposed distribution of housing set out in policy CP4 appropriately reflect the settlement hierarchy (policy CP3) and the core planning principle of the NPPF (para 17) to actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable?*
- (b) *Does the distribution appropriately reflect the role of Oxford in providing for employment and services for the residents of Vale of White Horse?*

*Is it feasible that a significantly different distribution of housing development from that proposed could be delivered?*

*Is the "housing supply ring fence" approach of policy CP5 to the delivery of housing in the Science Vale area (a) adequately explained in terms of its practical operation, (b) justified, (c) likely to be effective and (d) in accordance with national policy?"*

### ***Agreed Matters***

- 3.10 The Partnership and The Hendred Estate support the Plan's overall spatial strategy. The broader strategy seeks to deliver housing in the same areas where economic and employment growth is planned. This is particularly important for locations like the Harwell Campus where concentrated economic growth is proposed through a number of policy initiatives including the City Deal and the Enterprise Zone designation. To achieve economic growth, the appropriate level and type of housing also needs to be provided for a range of employees in locations that provide convenient and easy access to employment by sustainable modes of transport.
- 3.11 The Partnership and the Hendred Estate support the Science Vale "housing supply ring fence". This approach will assist in prioritising the provision of housing in Science Vale and in promoting a sequential approach to the provision of housing close to the main area of employment. Science Vale is an internationally significant location for innovation and science based research and business. There needs to be a coordinated and joined-up approach to the delivery of employment land and homes.

Housing growth is necessary to supply sufficient labour for Science Vale to achieve its economic potential.

- 3.12 Moreover, co-locating housing employment-generating development will bring clear sustainability and transport benefits, and will add to the attractiveness of Science Vale as a place to work. The type of housing is also important if it is to optimise its contribution to the labour requirements of Science Vale generally and the Harwell Campus in particular.
- 3.13 The Partnership and the Hendred Estate agree with the Council that the international significance of the Harwell Campus, which is an established brownfield strategic, mixed-use development site, is such as to provide the exceptional circumstances necessary to justify further employment and housing development in this AONB location and that this development is in the public interest.

#### ***Matters on which the Parties Do Not Agree***

- 3.14 The Partnership and the Hendred Estate do not agree that the same “exceptional circumstances” and “public interest” case can be made in respect of the proposed Core Policy 4 Land East of Harwell allocation for 850 homes. The 850 homes can and should be located on the Harwell Campus. This can be achieved by extending the North-West Harwell allocation and without affecting adversely the ability of the Campus to deliver its proportion of the 15,850 jobs that are to be provided in the Science Vale area.

#### **Matter 4 – Unmet Housing Needs**

*“Is the approach to meeting within the District any housing needs which cannot be met elsewhere in Oxfordshire, as set out in policy CP2, soundly based and does it accord with national policy?”*

*What is the likely timescale for agreement being reached between the relevant authorities on (i) the scale of unmet needs in Oxford City (and any other district) (ii) the most appropriate way of any unmet needs being provided for?*

*Is it likely that the spatial strategy, policies and allocations proposed by the plan to meet the district’s own housing needs would need to be significantly altered if unmet needs from elsewhere in Oxfordshire are to be accommodated in the Vale of White Horse district?*

*If you contend that the approach set out in policy CP2 is not soundly based should the Local Plan be delayed pending agreement on 5.2 (i) and (ii) above or could modifications to the plan be made to make it sound?”*

#### ***Agreed Matters***

- 3.15 Core Policy 2 explains how the Council will undertake a full or partial review of the Local Plan to help to accommodate Oxford’s unmet need. The Partnership and the

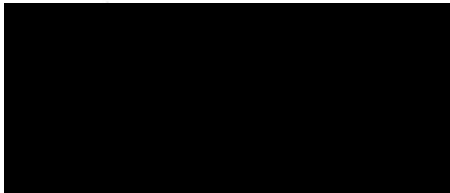
Hendred Estate support the Council's commitment to an early review: more homes will be needed as part of a short term review of the plan – not least to address Oxford's unmet need. The Oxfordshire authorities are working together to establish the level of Oxford City's unmet need and the potential distribution between the authorities. However to ensure that the Vale meets its housing need and boosts housing supply, it is essential that the Plan progresses and is not delayed. ..

***Matters on which the Parties Do Not Agree***

- 3.16 There are no matters of disagreement in relation to Matter 4

**Signatures**

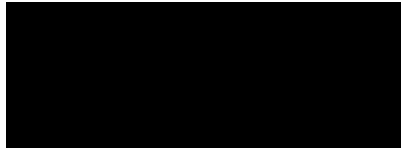
Signed on behalf of Vale of White Horse District Council



Adrian Duffield  
Head of Planning

21 August  
Date

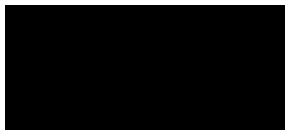
Signed on behalf of Kemp and Kemp



Steven Sensecall  
Partner

21 August  
Date

Signed on behalf of JPPC



Henry Venners  
Associate

21 August  
Date



Appendix 1: North West of Harwell Allocation and Indicative area of access from South Drive

