

VOWH LOCAL PLAN PART 1 EXAMINATION

HEARING STATEMENT

MATTER 3: SPATIAL STRATEGY AND HOUSING SUPPLY RING FENCE

ON BEHALF OF REDROW HOMES

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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? 1

Question 3.1 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?

- 1.1 Core Policies 3, 4 and 6 are all derived from the overarching Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives which underpin the Local Plan. The Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives provide a sound basis for the preparation of a spatial strategy which responds to the aims of the City Deal and the economic / demographic studies undertaken across Oxfordshire.
- 1.2 Redrow Homes support the content of Core Policy 3 which provides the mechanism to deliver the Local Plan's Spatial Strategy. Core Policy 3 will deliver a sustainable response to the ambitious economic goals set out in the City Deal. Adequate housing is needed to deliver the desired economic strategy advocated in the City Deal. The proposed settlement hierarchy provides the necessary framework to manage growth pressures in line with the Local Plan's Spatial Strategy and the objectives established in the City Deal.
- 1.3 The distribution of housing outlined in Core Policy 4 clearly follows the Settlement Hierarchy, with no allocations proposed at any of the smaller villages. The distribution of housing development also responds to the proximity of Oxford with its concentration of jobs and services and the creation of significant new employment opportunities in the Science Vale. The distribution of housing responds to the economic factors, described at Paragraph 4.23 of the Local Plan, in order to manage patterns of growth and ensure that future residential development has efficient and effective sustainable transport links for commuting.
- 1.4 Redrow Homes endorse the designation of the Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area, as outlined in Core Policy 3 and Core Policy 4. Paragraph 5.4 and 5.5 of the Local Plan state that the Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area is a highly sustainable location with excellent public transport connectivity. Accordingly the Sub-Area plays a key role within the district acting as an employment and service centre, this role will be maintained and enhanced over the course of the Plan Period.

- 1.5 Core Policy 3 designates Kennington as a 'Larger Village' within the Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area. Kennington has a population of approximately 4,000 residents and lies 2.5 miles south of Oxford city centre. The village offers a range of shops, services, community facilities employment opportunities and public transport links to support the local community. Paragraph 5.9 of the Local Plan states that Larger Villages, such as Kennington, are "*sustainable locations for development in the Vale with comparatively high levels of services and facilities, good transport connectivity with opportunities for improvement and good access to a wide range of employment*".
- 1.6 In terms of service provision Kennington possesses a number of shops, a post office, a public house, a hairdressers, a hotel and a takeaway. The village also possesses key community services such as a primary school and doctor's surgery, with a secondary school located one mile to the south in Radley. In terms of public transport provision Kennington is served by an hourly bus service (Monday – Sunday) to Oxford city centre and Abingdon. This bus service is set to be enhanced through provisions made in the Local Plan. Figure 5.6c in the Local Plan indicates the ambition to upgrade the existing bus route between Radley and Oxford to four services per hour, Kennington sits on this route. Indeed, the Site Template, within the Local Plan appendices, for the South Kennington allocation outlines that any development will contribute towards enhancing this "*premium bus route, with particularly emphasis on the reliability and frequency of the peak hour service*". Additionally, one mile to the south of Kennington, is Radley railway station from where there is a regular train service to Oxford, Reading, Banbury and London. It is considered, that, in the context of the wider district and its size and service provision, described above, Kennington's designation as a 'Larger Village' in Core Policy 4 is accurate and robust. It can be seen that making strategic provision for some development (up to 270 dwellings) in Kennington, in the context of strategic provision for 1990 dwellings in the Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub Area, accords with the core planning principle of focussing development in locations which are sustainable and in doing so making full use of existing transport infrastructure.
- 1.7 The proposed housing target of 20,560 and the proposed site allocations are fully compliant with the spatial strategy '*building on our strengths*' as evaluated in the Sustainability Appraisal process, and will deliver the required housing and economic growth, which is of national importance. The three sub-areas identified

to deliver the necessary and sustainable growth (Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe, South East Vale and Western Vale) will enable the Council to meet, in full, its objectively assessed housing need, supporting the forecast growth in employment opportunities. Paragraph 4.12 of the Local Plan outlines a range of sources available to the Council to ensure a continuous supply of housing land, at different locations, across the Plan Period. These are the most sustainable locations for new development and to that extent (and to the extent their sustainability can be ameliorated through infrastructure improvement packages associated with the planned developments) comply with paragraph 17 of the NPPF and the principle that plan makers should 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.

- 1.8 Redrow Homes consider that the Council's approach is consistent with the requirements of paragraph 10 of the NPPF which outlines the need for Plans 'to take local circumstances into account, so that they respond to the different opportunities for achieving sustainable development in different areas'. The Spatial Strategy outlined in the Local Plan is considered to be a sound, positive and proactive approach to meeting the Council's full objectively assessed need, meeting the requirements of Paragraph 47 and 182 of the NPPF, among others.
- 1.9 Redrow Homes acknowledge that in *Topic Paper 9: The Natural Environment*, the Council has considered the content of the NPPG in respect of whether meeting their full objectively assessed housing need would result in any adverse impacts which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, particularly in relation to the Green Belt. Accordingly, the Local Plan is underpinned by a robust Green Belt review in order to identify any suitable land which is appropriate for release in the context of the key roles established at paragraphs 7 and 8 of the NPPF.
- 1.10 Having reviewed the evidence base Redrow Homes concludes that the proposed Green Belt releases are a result of a robust Green Belt Review prepared in the light of Paragraph 83 of the NPPF. Accordingly, it is considered that release of the sites currently proposed for removal from the Green Belt will not damage the integrity of the Green Belt. Paragraph 85 of the NPPF advises that the definition of Green Belt boundaries should ensure consistency with the Local Plan strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development and not include

land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open. Appropriate sites, identified following a focused and limited Green Belt Review can be released from the extent of the Green Belt as it would be inappropriate to retain it within the Green Belt, given that it is unnecessary to keep it permanently open.

1.11 Ultimately the Local Plan is shaped by the requirement to meet objectively assessed housing needs, which responds to the aims and objectives of the City Deal, and robust evidence that can be tested. Small and focused Green Belt review, in combination with delivering other non-Green Belt sites will make a material contribution to meeting objectively assessed housing need and accommodating economic growth.

1.12 Whilst we are content that the evidence base supporting Core Policy 4 is sound and robust, we consider that the wording of Core Policy 4 is, in part, unsound in the context of paragraph 182 of the NPPF. To make Core Policy 4 fully reflective of the evidence base, effective and sound, Redrow Homes suggest modifications to be made to Core Policy 4 in order to emphasise that land will be considered for release from the Green Belt where it does not fulfil the purposes at paragraph 80 of the NPPF. Appropriate amendments to the wording of Core Policy 4 will result in the Local Plan exhibiting a direct relationship to the requirement at Paragraph 182 of the NPPF, namely that Local Plans should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies of the NPPF.