

**Matter 6 – Proposed Housing Sites in the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

*6.1 Having regard to the exceptional circumstances and public interest tests set out in para 116 of the NPPF, are the Strategic Housing Allocations (sites 12 and 13) proposed in the AONB soundly based? In particular:*

*(a) what is the need for the housing development, including in terms of national considerations?*

*(b) what is the likely impact of permitting, or refusing, the housing development on the local economy?*

At the Stage 1 examination the Inspector asked of the employment projections for Harwell Campus: Are the jobs likely? If so will people want to live locally?

To provide an objective answer to the question of whether people will want to live locally, Chilton Parish Council undertook in December 2015 a survey of residents in the 275 new houses on Chilton Field, adjacent to the campus.

There were responses from occupants of 168 houses (61.1% of the 275)

Of these, occupants of 25 houses state they work on the campus (14.9% of responses from 168 houses)

Total occupants of working age within the 168 houses are 328, of whom 34 state they work on the campus (10.4%)

Of the 34 who work on the campus, 9 cycle and 9 walk to work (52.9%), while 16 travel by car (47.1%)

These results demonstrate that refusal of the housing development on site 13 will have little impact on the local economy, given the evidence that only a fraction (14.9%) of houses built by speculative developers on Chilton Field are occupied by people who work on the campus. Of these 47.1% still travel to work by car despite living in houses adjacent to the campus.

Housing alongside the campus therefore has a low degree of sustainability.

continued

*(c) is there scope for providing for the housing development outside of the AONB?*

At the Stage 1 examination the SODC representative observed that they had decided not to plan for residents in their district to work on Harwell Campus. I pointed out that Didcot and Harwell Campus are inextricably linked.

It now transpires that the SODC Core Strategy, adopted December 2012, does plan for residents in their district to work on Harwell Campus. I have highlighted the relevant statements in bold type below.

The Core Strategy includes on page 24:

At and around Didcot

We aim to:

- (i) complete a mixed use development on land to the east of the Orchard Centre to be delivering on site by 2016/17;
- (ii) identify land for a further 2,330 new homes ;
- (iii) work with partners to help provide jobs for Didcot residents at Harwell Oxford and Milton Park;**
- (iv) regenerate the area around the station and the Broadway;
- (v) work with the County Council to deliver the package of schemes under the umbrella of Accessing Science Vale UK; and
- (vi) make provision for key infrastructure including a further secondary school, a learning park, a sports centre and green infrastructure.

and on page 44:

**6.18. Most housing growth will be in Didcot. Our strategy makes a strong link between the housing growth in Didcot and the business growth needs of Science Vale UK, including at Harwell Oxford and Milton Park outside the district.**

The full SODC Core Strategy is at:

[www.southoxon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2013-05-01%20Core%20Strategy%20for%20Website%20final\\_0.pdf](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2013-05-01%20Core%20Strategy%20for%20Website%20final_0.pdf)

This proves that the SODC representative's statement at the Stage 1 enquiry was incorrect, and that housing for people working on Harwell Campus is being provided outside of the AONB in Didcot.

Therefore there is no requirement for housing to be provided within the protected landscape on site 13.