

VALE OF WHITE HORSE DISTRICT COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION REPRESENTATIONS TO INSPECTOR'S MATTERS

Stage 2 MATTER 6

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The following representations are made by West Waddy ADP on behalf of our client Mr Robin Herd.
- 1.2 Representations were made to the Vale of White Horse Local Plan Publication Version in December 2014 and to the Inspector's Stage 1 Matters and Questions in August 2015. The following report relates to matters 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 11 of the Stage 2 Matters and Questions as at 17 December 2015.

2 MATTER 6: PROPOSED HOUSING SITES IN THE NORTH WESSEX DOWNS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

- 2.1 **Question 6.1 (c)** - There are two strategic site allocations within the emerging VOWH Local Plan that are situated within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) namely, East of Harwell Campus and North of Harwell Campus.
- 2.2 It is acknowledged that these sites are allocated within the boundary of the emerging Science Vale Area Action Plan¹ where economic and housing growth is focused. However, my client's site is also situated within the Science Vale boundary yet is outside of the AONB.
- 2.3 Paragraph 115 of the NPPF attaches 'great weight' to conserving landscape and scenic beauty of AONBs. Paragraph 116 states that applications should be refused for major developments in these designated areas except in exceptional circumstances. It goes on to state that consideration of such applications should include an assessment of ... *the cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside of the designated area.*
- 2.4 My client's site is available and developable now with no known abnormal costs associated with its delivery. Therefore, the Local Plan is unsound on the basis that it is in conflict with the NPPF as it does not include achievable sites outside of AONB that are in locations also aligned to the

¹ <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/science-vale>

economic ambitions of the VOWH, the wider Science Vale and Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan.

3 CONCLUSION

- 3.1 The Local Plan is likely to be found out of date upon adoption due to a lack of a 5-year housing land supply. However, should the Inspector be minded to proceed to a recommendation to make main modifications to the Plan then my client's site should be allocated so that there is a surety of housing delivery in the 5-year period.
- 3.2 Land at Milton Heights is available now to form a significantly larger allocation to that currently proposed within the VOWH Local Plan, is outside of the Green Belt and North Wessex Downs AONB and sits strategically within the Science Vale area of economic growth.