

VALE OF WHITE HORSE DISTRICT COUNCIL

LOCAL PLAN PART 1

HEAR09

NOTE TO HEARING ON PROPOSED ADDITIONAL MODIFICATIONS TO THE RING FENCE (CP5)

January 2016

1. Introduction

The Inspector raised questions on the clarity and operation of the area for the ring fence, identified within Core Policy 5, during the Matter 3 hearing session that took place on Tuesday 29 September 2015. The Council has reflected upon the discussion and the Inspector's comments and considers a number of minor modifications are required to Core Policy 5 and its supporting text in order to address the concerns raised and to provide a more practical operational area. It should be noted that the calculation of the five year supply is dependent on the specific area proposed for the ring fence. The calculations provided within the Matter 11 paper submitted to the Inspector on Wednesday 6 January 2016, are therefore based on the proposed minor modifications.

2. Summary of Stage 1 Hearing

The Council considers there was general consensus at the hearing session regarding the principle of the ring fence approach within the district, however concerns were raised both by the Inspector and participants reflecting the following points:

- The need for clarification over how the area should be presented within Core Policy 5, inconsistencies between Core Policy 5, Figure 4.3 and the Policies Map and whether the area should be illustrated on a map or explained through policy wording;
- Whether the ring fence area as drafted in the Local Plan included all housing developments that could be argued to contribute to the Science Vale;
- The suggestion that the geography of the ring fence as drafted in the Local Plan may be too restrictive to be effective over the whole of the Local Plan period; and
- Whether the ring fence, which includes part of the North Wessex Downs AONB, would put the AONB at greater risk if there was a lack of five year housing land supply within the ring fence and the implementation of NPPF para 49.

3. Council's Response

The Council has reflected upon the hearing discussion, and considers that the ring fence area should be revised and clarified so as to address concerns raised at the hearing session. It suggests that the whole of the area identified for the Science Vale Area would be a more appropriate and workable ring fence area. This area is currently identified on the Policies Map as the yellow area on Figure 4.3.

The proposed modification aligns the ring fence to reflect the importance of ensuring and maximising growth across the Science Vale area and the delivery of the wider spatial strategy set out by the Local Plan. The revised ring fence area will help direct any speculative development towards the wider Science Vale area ensuring that it contributes towards the most appropriate supply area. It will also ensure development continues to support economic growth, and help attract funding and delivery of infrastructure where needed and planned. The modification will also remove Figure 4.3 and only refer to the Science Vale area as identified on the Policies Map to ensure the policy is clear as to what area the ring fence encompasses.

In respect of the AONB, the Council considers that in practical terms, there would be no increased risk to the AONB as a result of the proposed modification as the Plan will be implemented alongside paragraph 116 of the NPPF.

4. Proposed Additional Modifications

The proposed change to the ring fence boundary requires minor modifications to Core Policy 5 as follows:

Core Policy 5: Housing Supply Ring-Fence

The Council will employ a ring-fence approach to housing delivery in the key development locations within the Science Vale area as shown ~~by Figure 4.3 and set out on the Adopted Policies Map.~~*

For the purposes of the assessment of housing land supply the ring-fence area will be treated as a separate sub-area with a housing requirement of 11,850 homes in the plan period (593 homes per annum) in support of the 15,850 jobs planned in this sub-area and as a contribution towards the district's housing need set out in Core Policy 4.

**Within the North Wessex Downs AONB proposals will need to demonstrate consistency with national policy.*

It will also require the deletion of Figure 4.3 including any references to the Figure elsewhere within the Local Plan and Policies Map. This will result in the current ring fence area being deleted on the Policies Map and the key for the Science Vale Area including reference to CP5.

The supporting text at Paragraph 4.22 also requires a consequential modification as follows:

The ring-fence reflects ~~is a subset of the wider~~ Science Vale geographical area that encompasses the most sustainable locations for development. ~~and intentionally excludes its more rural parts.~~ The ring-fence covers ~~selected the~~ main settlements and villages where growth is proposed in the Local Plan, and land consented or allocated for development around them. The ring-fence area ~~comprises~~ includes the settlement areas of Wantage, Grove, Harwell and Milton and land in the Vale adjoining the Didcot urban area; together with sites for strategic housing and employment growth at Didcot A Power Station, Milton Park, Harwell Campus, Chilton Fields, Milton Heights, Great Western Park and Valley Park (~~Figure 4.3~~).

5. Matter 11 Five Year Supply

The calculation for the five year supply area provided within the Council's response to Matter 11 is therefore based on the proposed modification, realigning the ring fence area to the Science Vale area. Therefore the Council's Matter 11 Statement needs to be read in conjunction with this document to fully understand the area that has been used as the ring fence housing land supply area.