

## **Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 2 Examination**

### **Hearing Statement**

#### **Matter 6: South East Vale Sub Area**

**Reference: PHW839**

**Date: June 2018**

Persimmon Homes  
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- 1.0 This statement is made by Persimmon Homes who control the proposed additional site allocation described as 'North-West of Grove' within the publication version of the Vale of White Horse (VoWH) Local Plan Part 2.
- 1.1 The potential for sustainable residential development in this area has been promoted over an extensive period through successive stages of the formulation of the VoWH Local Plan Part 2. The case for residential development at this location has been reinforced by VoWH council's confirmation of their preference to allocate this land for future residential development.
- 1.2 The site is located to the North-West of Grove. The site measures 28.35 hectares and consists of agricultural land. It is bounded to the south by the Grove Airfield saved housing allocation from Local Plan 2011, to the east by the Monks Farm strategic site allocation as identified in the Adopted Local Plan Part 1, to the west by agricultural land and to the north by the railway line.
- 1.3 This statement addresses the Inspectors question 6.1:  
  
**Other than Harwell Campus (Matter 7), is the housing allocation listed in Policy 15a at Grove the most appropriate when considered against reasonable alternatives in the light of site constraints, infrastructure requirements and potential impacts? Is the estimate of site capacity justified? Is the expected timescale for development realistic? Are the site development template requirements – both general and site specific - justified?**
- 1.4 The site is the most appropriate when considered against reasonable alternatives in the light of site constraints, infrastructure requirements and potential impacts. The Council considered reasonable alternatives within the March 2017 Interim SA report which varied primarily in terms of: the balance of housing between Harwell Campus, Rowstock and Milton Heights; the number of homes to provide for at West of Harwell; and whether or not to allocate North West Grove. The Council in 2017 considered that these variables could not be ruled-out and that an allocation for 400 homes should be a constant across the reasonable alternatives.
- 1.5 Persimmon Homes agrees with the Council that 400 homes at North West of Grove - would complement the existing

committed growth at Wantage and Grove and help to deliver infrastructure. This infrastructure includes assisting with delivering the North Grove Link Road, and hence will assist with strategic planning for the expansion of Grove.

- 1.6 Site constraints are understood in detail owing to the current local plan allocation which is being brought forward by Persimmon which extends to the south of the site for 2,500 homes with associated infrastructure. Persimmon Homes can confirm that the site does not pose any constraints which will impede the proposed residential development coming forward.
- 1.7 With regards to infrastructure requirements and potential impacts the site is well positioned to bring forward residential development in a sustainable manner. Again Persimmon Homes can confirm that infrastructure requirements are understood as are the known potential impacts. The allocated site to the south of the proposed allocation was subject to extensive technical investigation which is relevant to much of the proposed allocation. Persimmon Homes can therefore confirm that potential impacts upon the environment are clearly understood and do not pose a constraint to bringing forward residential development on this site.
- 1.8 There are no statutory landscape or wildlife designations on the site. The site is designated as being within Flood Zone 1 on the Environment Agency's flood risk maps, and as such is not located in a flood risk area. Persimmon Homes control the land and have the ability to develop the site within the timescales proposed.
- 1.9 With regards to site capacity the plan appended to this statement (see appendix 1) demonstrates that the estimate of 400 homes is realistic and achievable. As the Council have made clear the site also has the potential to bring forward additional homes subject to appropriate infrastructure improvements. However, housing which is in addition to the 400 homes is expected to be delivered after 2031.
- 1.10 The site is capable of delivery within the plan period in accordance with the Council's stated housing trajectory. It is proposed that the site will deliver houses in the period 2028-2031, and that there is potential for additional homes to be delivered in the longer term, beyond the plan period.
- 1.11 More generally there is considerable committed growth in the area, which is leading to significant enhancements to

transport infrastructure and bus services Milton Park and Oxford; and additional growth at Grove supports the case for a new train station. Perhaps most significantly, this site would enable the completion of a link road, which will assist in ensuring successful strategic expansion of Grove. In addition the planned and permitted growth at the Grove Airfield strategic site allocation will bring forward additional infrastructure including education (primary and secondary), mixed use local centre, open space, allotments and sports facilities.

1.12 Persimmon Homes is largely supportive of the site development template requirements and would only provide the following observations and comment:

- Urban design principles – noise buffer areas should not be wholly ruled out in supplying recreational space. Often these areas where they are carefully designed and managed can play a role in openspace provision. Noise constraint relating to open space intended for daytime use poses much less of a constraint when compared to residential use.
- Utilities - with regard to utilities the term 'upgrade the sewer network' should include the wording where necessary to facilitate the delivery of the development.
- Social and Community – No evidence has been produced to support the need for funding towards existing healthcare provision and the term 'other community facilities' appears ambiguous compared to the detail of the other requirements. It is important to note that health care funding is largely proportionally linked to patient turnover and demographics. Therefore government funding will respond to local need.

## Appendix 1 - North-West of Grove Residential Allocation Plan

