

Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 2

Examination Hearings

**Written Statement by Vale of White Horse District
Council in relation to**

Matter 6: South-East Vale Sub-Area

June 2018

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?

Introduction

- 6.1.1. The Council's strategy and selection of sites are considered to fully accord with the National Planning Policy Framework and will enable the delivery of a sustainable pattern of development for the area.
- 6.1.2. The South-East Vale Sub-Area contains the market town of Wantage, the local service centre of Grove and the larger villages of Blewbury, East Hendred, Harwell, Harwell Campus¹, Sutton Courtenay and Milton.
- 6.1.3. The sub-area provides the main focus for housing and economic growth within the district, and contains a number of internationally significant employment sites, including Harwell Campus and Milton Park². These sites form part of the Science Vale area, one of the key growth areas set out in the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan (OxSEP) and includes employment sites within South Oxfordshire district.
- 6.1.4. A large part of this sub-area is designated part of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) as shown on the Adopted Policies Map (**CSD06.1**)³.
- 6.1.5. The Part 1 plan allocates eight strategic sites in this sub-area at Wantage, Grove, Harwell, Sutton Courtenay, Milton Heights and land adjoining Didcot (in Vale of White Horse district). The Part 2 plan complements this by proposing two additional sites at Harwell Campus and Grove, to further support the planned economic growth for Science Vale.
- 6.1.6. The Council has followed a comprehensive and iterative approach to site selection informed by technical evidence, informal and formal consultation with key stakeholders, including statutory bodies and infrastructure providers and has been subject to Sustainability Appraisal (SA). The Council's approach to site selection is set out in Topic Paper 2: Site Selection (**TOP02.1-TOP02.3**)⁴ and Addendum (**TOP02.4**)⁵. The process of site selection has also been informed by Sustainability Appraisal (SA; **CSD09**)⁶ and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA; **CSD08**)⁷. Further information on how the Council has prepared the SA and HRA is set out in the response to questions 1.8 and 1.9 of the Matter 1 statement.

¹ Harwell Campus has facilities and services equivalent to a Larger Village

² **CSD01** Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 2: Detailed Policies and Additional Sites (Publication Version), (in particular Paragraph 2.82)

³ **CSD06.1** Draft Adopted Policies Map- South-East Vale Sub-Area (Submission Version)

⁴ **TOP02.1-TOP02.3** Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 2: Detailed Policies and Additional Sites – Topic Paper 2: Site Selection and Appendices

⁵ **TOP02.4** Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 2: Detailed Policies and Additional Sites – Topic Paper 2: Site Selection – Addendum

⁶ **CSD09** Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Vale of White Horse District Local Plan 2031 Part 2 (Publication Version)

⁷ **CSD08** Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 2

- 6.1.7. The approach taken to the selection of sites is consistent with the approach that informed the adopted Part 1 plan. The Inspector concluded in his Report (**ALP03**)⁸ at paragraph 75 that *“the strategic sites were identified through a robust, five stage selection process, which will contribute towards delivering this provision”*.
- 6.1.8. The Council has worked with external consultants, AECOM, throughout the site selection process to ensure reasonable site options were tested through SA (**CSD09**)⁹. The Part 2 plan and SA process has also taken into account the responses received from previous stages of public consultation. This has also included consideration of any alternative sites promoted through the plan-making process, such as formal stages of consultation.¹⁰
- 6.1.9. Following the initial stages of the site selection process (Stages 1 to 3), over 30 sites were taken forward for detailed evidence testing, informal consultation and subject to SA.
- 6.1.10. This stage was informed by a number of technical evidence studies that assessed each site’s impact or capacity to accommodate development, including factors such as landscape, transport, viability, flood risk and drainage and Green Belt. The SA also included an assessment of the cumulative and individual impact of the sites.
- 6.1.11. The SA Report (**CSD09**) established reasonable alternatives (both small and large site options) within the South-East Vale Sub-Area. This is set out in Table A of Appendix IV and Table A of Appendix V of the SA Report to support the Part 2 plan¹¹.
- 6.1.12. The SA appraised the reasonable alternatives against the Sustainability Objectives, including factors such as movement, health, economy, natural environment and landscape. A summary of the appraisal findings identified through the assessment of reasonable alternatives is set out in the SA Report to support the Part 2 plan, in particular Table B of Appendix V and Table B of Appendix IV¹².
- 6.1.13. The assessment of reasonable alternatives through the SA process and a robust and comprehensive site selection process has resulted in two sites being allocated within the South-East Vale Sub-Area, at Harwell Campus and to the North-West of Grove. Further information on the proposed allocation at Harwell Campus is presented in the Council’s Matter 7 statement.
- 6.1.14. A key reason for allocating the site North-West of Grove is to ensure growth is planned for comprehensively in the area in the longer term. The Council considers it is important that the new development planned for Wantage and Grove delivers appropriate infrastructure alongside the delivery of new housing. The proposed allocation North-West of Grove will assist in the delivery of this infrastructure and ensure the masterplanning of this site can be considered alongside planning for

⁸ **ALP03** Inspector’s Report on the examination into Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1, paragraph 75

⁹ **CSD09** Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Vale of White Horse District Local Plan 2031 Part 2 (Publication Version)

¹⁰ **CSD02** Regulation 22 Consultation Statement

¹¹ **CSD09** Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Vale of White Horse District Local Plan 2031 Part 2 (Publication Version), (in particular Table A of Appendix IV, Pages 85-87 and Table A of Appendix V, Page 103)

¹² **CSD09** Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Vale of White Horse District Local Plan 2031 Part 2 (Publication Version), (in particular Table B of Appendix IV, Page 100-101 and Table B of Appendix V, Page 103-109)

other allocations in the immediate vicinity, such as Monks Farm and Grove Airfield. This approach is supported by Grove Parish Council and Oxfordshire County Council through their respective representations to the Regulation 19 publicity period.

Site constraints

- 6.1.15. The proposed allocation North-West of Grove is relatively unconstrained and is not located within the North Wessex Downs AONB. The northern boundary of the site is located close to the existing railway line. The Site Development Template therefore includes guidance in relation to noise, a matter to be taken into account at the design stage with mitigation by the use of buffers as necessary¹³. No technical objections have been received from statutory and prescribed bodies in relation to this site's proposed allocation in the Part 2 plan.
- 6.1.16. The site is located between the Part 1 strategic allocation of Monks Farm to the east, and the saved Local Plan 2011 allocation Grove Airfield to the south. Development of the proposed allocation North-West of Grove is not expected to come forward until the later part of the plan period, when development of neighbouring allocations is expected to be at an advanced stage.
- 6.1.17. Grove Airfield received outline planning permission on 17 July 2017 and a number of reserved matters applications are currently being considered for this site. Part of the Monks Farm allocation has received full planning permission, with the remainder of the site currently subject to an outline planning application.
- 6.1.18. Based on the evidence provided in the SA, in particular Table B of Appendix V and Table B of Appendix IV of the report, the Council considers the site allocations set out in the Part 2 plan represent the most appropriate strategy for meeting sustainable development, having considered a range of alternatives.

Infrastructure requirements

- 6.1.19. As discussed previously in this statement, the Council has followed a comprehensive approach to site selection informed by technical evidence and informal consultation with key stakeholders and infrastructure providers. The Council undertook several rounds of engagement during the preparation of the Part 2 plan. In particular, an initial round of informal consultation was undertaken on a short list of site options. The Council also circulated draft Site Development Templates and invited comments on these. This process ensured the key infrastructure requirements for the proposed allocation North-West of Grove were identified.
- 6.1.20. This initial process also provided an opportunity for stakeholders to identify and inform the Council of any sites they considered were not deliverable. The key issues raised through technical evidence and rounds of engagement are summarised in Appendix B of the Site Selection Topic Paper (**TOP02.3**)¹⁴.

¹³ **CSD01.1** Vale of White Horse District Local Plan 2031 Part 2: Detailed Policies and Additional Sites, Appendices. Appendix A, Pages 11 and 12

¹⁴ **TOP02.3** Topic Paper 2: Site Selection, Appendix B (Publication Version)

- 6.1.21. Furthermore, specific points raised through public consultation, including from statutory bodies and infrastructure providers, are addressed through updates to the Site Development Template for the proposed allocation North-West of Grove (**CSD01.1**)¹⁵. This is documented in Section 5 of the Council's Regulation 22 Statement (**CSD02**)¹⁶.
- 6.1.22. The site allocations in the Part 2 plan are also supported by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP; **CSD10**) which sets out a range of infrastructure requirements for each proposed site allocation in the Part 2 plan. The IDP was updated and published alongside the Submission Version of the Part 2 plan¹⁷. It is expected that the IDP will be further updated as part of a review of the Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- 6.1.23. The proposed allocation North-West of Grove will contribute towards the delivery of the Grove Northern Link Road (GNLR) which will connect the site with the neighbouring allocations and the A338, as well as contribute towards public transport improvements in the area. This will ensure that development at Grove is planned in a cohesive way.
- 6.1.24. The site has capacity to deliver more homes beyond the plan period of 2031 and this may lead to a requirement for a new primary school on site. The site will contribute towards the general enhancement of school capacity in the area, including early years, primary, secondary and special educational needs (SEN) education. The site will also provide contributions towards improvements to the existing healthcare and the provision of Green Infrastructure.
- 6.1.25. These site-specific requirements are set out in the Site Development Template in Appendix A of the Part 2 plan (**CSD01.1**)¹⁸, and are supported by the site promoter in a Statement of Common Ground¹⁹.

Potential impacts

- 6.1.26. The Council has published a series of technical studies including a Landscape Capacity Study (**NAT07**; **NAT07.1**)²⁰ and Addendum (**NAT07.2**)²¹, Evaluation of Transport Impact (**TRA06-TRA06.2**; **TRA06.3**)²², Water Cycle Study (**WWF02.1**)²³,

¹⁵ **CSD01.1** Vale of White Horse District Local Plan 2031 Part 2: Detailed Policies and Additional Sites, Appendices. Appendix A, Pages 11 and 12

¹⁶ **CSD02** Regulation 22 Consultation Statement, Section 5

¹⁷ **CSD10** Vale of White Horse Council Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) of the Vale of White Horse District Local Plan 2031 Part 2 (Submission Version). Information on the infrastructure requirements for North-West of Grove are set out in Section 6 (Pages 34-42) of the document.

¹⁸ **CSD01.1** Vale of White Horse District Local Plan 2031 Part 2: Detailed Policies and Additional Sites, Appendices. Appendix A

¹⁹ **SCG06** Statement of Common Ground with Persimmon Homes on North-West Grove

²⁰ **NAT07** Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan Part 2 Landscape Capacity Study; **NAT07.1** Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan Part 2 Landscape Capacity Study, Appendix 1

²¹ **NAT07.2** Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan Part 2 Landscape Capacity Study Regulation 19 Addendum

²² **TRA06** Evaluation of Transport Impacts- Stage 1- Part 1; **TRA06.1** Evaluation of Transport Impacts-Stage 1-Part 2; **TRA06.2** Evaluation of Transport Impacts-Stage 1-Part 3; **TRA06.3** Evaluation of Transport Impacts-Stage 2

²³ **WWF02.1** Vale of White Horse Draft Water Cycle Addendum Update-February 2018

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (**WWF03.2**)²⁴, Viability Update (**INF02**)²⁵ and Statement (**INF03**)²⁶ and a Green Belt Study (**NAT03**)²⁷.

- 6.1.27. The key issues and potential impacts raised through this detailed evidence testing, SA and engagement, for the proposed allocation North-West of Grove, are summarised in Appendix B of Topic Paper 2 Site Selection (**TOP02.3**)²⁸.
- 6.1.28. The proposed allocation will have limited impact on the landscape, due to the presence of strong physical boundaries to the north and west, and the existing allocations to the south and east. The site has a low risk of flooding, although there is one small area with the potential for pooling of surface water. This will be addressed through a detailed Flood Risk Assessment / surface water drainage strategy²⁹. The potential for noise from the nearby railway line will be addressed at the design stage and mitigated through the provision of an appropriate buffer if required.
- 6.1.29. Access to the site is currently provided from Denchworth Road. Transport impacts as a result of development of this site can be mitigated through the delivery of the GNL. Development of this site is also likely to require enhancements to the sewer network in the area. Measures to mitigate these impacts are adequately reflected in the Site Development Template for this site.

Are the estimates of site capacity justified?

- 6.1.30. The Council has followed a comprehensive approach to site selection, informed by technical evidence and collaborative working with key stakeholders, resulting in justified site capacity estimates. The Council's approach to site selection is set out in the Topic Paper 2: Site Selection (**TOP02.1-TOP02.3**)³⁰.
- 6.1.31. A Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA; **HOU02.2**)³¹ was produced by the Council in accordance with national policy and guidance. In considering the site capacity at a high level within the assessment, a gross density of 25 dwellings per hectare (dph) was applied to each site. This allows sufficient flexibility to adapt to local circumstances³², including the provision of necessary infrastructure and public open space, resulting in an estimated net density of 35dph.

²⁴ **WWF03.2** Vale of White Horse Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) Update-February 2018

²⁵ **INF02** Viability Update

²⁶ **INF03** Viability Statement (Publication Version)

²⁷ **NAT03** Green Belt Study of Local Plan Part 2 Sites and Appendices

²⁸ **TOP02.3** Topic Paper 2: Site Selection, Appendix B (Publication Version)

²⁹ **CSD01.1** Vale of White Horse District Local Plan 2031 Part 2: Detailed Policies and Additional Sites, Appendices. Appendix A, P.4

³⁰ **TOP02.1-TOP02.3** Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 2: Detailed Policies and Additional Sites – Topic Paper 2: Site Selection and Appendices

³¹ **HOU02.2** HELAA Report (Publication Version)

³² CLG (2012) The National Planning Policy Framework, Paragraph 10, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

- 6.1.32. The Council's site selection process, including the approach to estimating site capacity, is consistent with the approach used to inform the site allocations in the Adopted Part 1 plan (**ALP03**)³³.
- 6.1.33. The Site Development Template set out in Appendix A of the Part 2 plan provides sufficient flexibility to deliver a total quantum of development for the proposed allocation North-West of Grove.
- 6.1.34. The Council considers that the proposed allocation has the capacity to deliver more than 400 dwellings in the longer term, beyond 2031. This is subject to appropriate master planning, in accordance with Core Policy 38 of the Adopted Part 1 plan (**ALP02**)³⁴ and further assessment, including wider infrastructure requirements to support development of the site.

Are the expected timescale for development realistic?

- 6.1.35. The proposed allocation North-West of Grove is demonstrably deliverable and this is supported in the Statement of Common Ground with the site promoter, which confirms the site's deliverability later in the plan period³⁵.
- 6.1.36. The Council's Topic Paper 2 Site Selection (**TOP02.1-TOP02.3**)³⁶ and Addendum (**TOP02.4**)³⁷, the Local Plan Viability Update (**INF02**)³⁸ and Statement (**INF03**)³⁹ and the Council's Housing Trajectory (**HOU3.1**)⁴⁰ each provide evidence to support the Council's confidence in relation to the deliverability of the proposed site allocation.
- 6.1.37. Indicative timescales for the delivery of the proposed site allocation North-West of Grove are set out in Table 2 of the Housing Trajectory Update (**HOU3.1**)⁴¹. The projected trajectory for this and other site allocations have been closely informed by discussions between the site promoters and Development Management Officers to ensure that the Housing Trajectory is realistic.
- 6.1.38. The Council's statement on Matter 8 provides further detail on the deliverability of the proposed allocations in the Part 2 plan.

³³ **ALP03** Inspector's Report on the examination into Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1, (in particular Paragraph 75)

³⁴ **ALP02** Local Plan 2031 Part1: Strategic Sites and Policies

³⁵ **SCG06** Statement of Common Ground with Persimmon Homes on North-West Grove

³⁶ **TOP02.1** Topic Paper 2 Site Selection (Publication Version); **TOP02.2** Topic Paper 2 Site Selection, Appendix A (Publication Version); **TOP02.3** Topic Paper 2 Site Selection, Appendix B (Publication Version)

³⁷ **TOP02.4** Topic Paper 2 Site Selection- Addendum

³⁸ **INF02** Viability Update

³⁹ **INF03** Viability Statement (Publication Version)

⁴⁰ **HOU03.1** Housing Trajectory Update

⁴¹ **HOU03.1** Housing Trajectory Update, Table 2

Are the site development template requirements – both general and site specific – justified, consistent with national policy and would they would be effective?

- 6.1.39. The Council consider the Site Development Templates as set out in Appendix A of the Part 2 plan (**CSD01.1**)⁴² are justified, consistent with national policy and effective.
- 6.1.40. The Site Development Templates set out how the proposed allocation North-West of Grove should be planned to ensure the site-specific constraints are adequately addressed and sets out clear requirements relating to matters such as infrastructure provision, urban design, green infrastructure, biodiversity and flood risk and drainage. The general and site-specific requirements provide further detail on the form, scale, access and quantum of development where appropriate, and take into account and respond to local circumstances to achieve sustainable development, consistent with national policy⁴³.
- 6.1.41. The approach taken to produce the General Requirements as set out in the Site Development Templates (**CSD01.1**)⁴⁴ is consistent with the approach that informed the adopted Part 1 plan. The Inspector presiding over the Examination of the Part 1 plan concluded that the site development templates were based on evidence from relevant providers and considered it unnecessary for additional infrastructure/services to be referenced in the Plan⁴⁵.
- 6.1.42. The Site Development Templates have been developed based on formal and informal engagement with neighbouring authorities, key stakeholders and infrastructure providers. The feedback received from the key stages of informal consultation has assisted in refining the site-specific requirements for each site allocation. Furthermore, specific points raised through public consultation, including from statutory bodies and infrastructure providers, are addressed through updates to the Site Development Templates. This is documented in Section 5 of the Council's Regulation 22 Statement (**CSD02**)⁴⁶.
- 6.1.43. The proposed allocation North-West of Grove is supported by an IDP (**CSD10**)⁴⁷ which is consistent with the requirements set out in the Site Development Template and demonstrates that the site can deliver the infrastructure necessary to support development in a timely manner.

⁴² **CSD01.1** Local Plan 2031 Part 2: Detailed Policies and Additional Sites Appendices (Publication Version)

⁴³ CLG (2012) The National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 10 and 175, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

⁴⁴ **CSD01.1** Local Plan 2031 Part 2: Detailed Policies and Additional Sites Appendices (Publication Version)

⁴⁵ **ALP03** Inspector's Report on the examination into Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1, (in particular Paragraph 149)

⁴⁶ **CSD02** Regulation 22 Consultation Statement, (including Appendices 1 and 2), in particular Section 5

⁴⁷ **CSD10** Vale of White Horse Council Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) of the Vale of White Horse District Local Plan 2031 Part 2 (Submission Version)

- 6.1.44. A Local Plan Viability Update (**INF02**)⁴⁸ was prepared by independent consultants HDH Planning & Development Ltd which concluded that the site is fully viable and that the cumulative impact of proposed policies in the Plan did not put implementation of the Plan at risk.
- 6.1.45. The Council highlights support from statutory and prescribed bodies, and infrastructure providers for the Site Development Templates, including from Oxfordshire County Council (relating to matters including highways, education and health), the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group/ NHS England, Historic England, Natural England, Thames Water and Environment Agency. This support is documented within their respective Statements of Common Ground with the Council to support the Submission Version of the Part 2 plan⁴⁹.
- 6.1.46. The Council also highlights support for the Site Development Templates from the site promoter of the allocation North-West of Grove, as evidenced in their Statement of Common Ground⁵⁰.
- 6.1.47. The Council has proposed a number of additional modifications to the Site Development Templates in response to issues raised following public consultation on the Publication Version of the Part 2 plan, including from infrastructure providers and statutory bodies. These additional modifications are set out in the Schedule of Proposed Additional Modifications (**CSD03**) published alongside the Submission Version of the Part 2 plan.⁵¹ The additional modifications proposed to the Site Development Template for North-West of Grove are **AM21**, **AM22** and **AM24**.
- 6.1.48. Oxfordshire County Council, through their representation to the Regulation 19 publicity period, requests an additional policy for North-West Grove to be included in the plan in a similar form to the dedicated policies for Dalton Barracks and Harwell Campus. This should include a requirement to address development comprehensively through a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and provides guidance on how the site will integrate with the existing allocations of Monks Farm and Grove Airfield. The Council agrees with the importance of planning for this area of Grove comprehensively.

⁴⁸ **INF02** Viability Update

⁴⁹ **SCG03** Statement of Common Ground with Historic England, **SCG10** Statement of Common Ground with Thames Water, **SCG14** Statement of Common Ground with Natural England, **SCG15** Statement of Common Ground with Environment Agency and **SCG20.2** Statement of Common with Oxfordshire County Council, 3: Local Plan Sites

⁵⁰ **SCG06** Statement of Common Ground with Persimmon Homes on North-West Grove

⁵¹ **CSD03** Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 2: Detailed Policies and Additional Sites (Publication Version), Schedule of Proposed Additional Modifications

6.2 Are the seven Didcot Garden Town Masterplan Principles justified and would they provide an appropriate basis for the preparation of future more detailed planning policies for the area?

- 6.2.1 The Didcot Garden Town Masterplan Principles are justified and provide an appropriate basis for the preparation of future more detailed planning policies for the area.
- 6.2.2 The Government announced that Didcot would become a Garden Town in December 2015⁵². Following this, a joint Didcot Garden Town team was formed by South and Vale District Councils and work commenced on a Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan early in 2016.
- 6.2.3 The Councils worked collaboratively with Oxfordshire County Council and other key stakeholders in the area to plan effectively for job growth and housing need, alongside supporting infrastructure across Science Vale which has informed the Delivery Plan. A number of public engagement exercises took place in the preparation of the Delivery Plan, including two public consultation events held in January and June 2017⁵³. The Delivery Plan was adopted by Vale of White Horse District Council and South Oxfordshire District Council in October 2017⁵⁴.
- 6.2.4 To support the successful implementation of Didcot Garden Town, the Delivery Plan identifies a number of masterplan principles which are set out in Section 3.1.6 of the document and are reflected in Core Policy 16b of the Part 2 plan. These principles provide a framework for developers and landowners bringing forward new development in the masterplan area.
- 6.2.5 The Council has also undertaken informal engagement with specialist officers and key stakeholders through the preparation of the Part 2 plan to ensure the masterplanning principles to support the Garden Town are aligned to the Delivery Plan and provide the appropriate basis for developing further planning policies.
- 6.2.6 The masterplan principles have been tested at each stage of public consultation and subject to SA. Specific issues raised during public consultation have been addressed through a refinement to the masterplanning principles⁵⁵. The Council highlights support for Core Policy 16b has been received from South Oxfordshire District Council, Oxfordshire County Council and Historic England.
- 6.2.7 The Council will continue to work with South Oxfordshire District Council, Oxfordshire County Council and other key stakeholders to develop a joined-up vision and delivery strategy for the area through a future Development Plan Document (DPD). The Council's latest Local Development Scheme provides a clear commitment and timetable for the councils to produce a future Development Plan Document for Didcot Garden Town⁵⁶.
- 6.2.8 Further information on how the Council has met the duty to cooperate on this strategic matter is set out in the answer to questions 1.1 to 1.4 of the Matter 1 statement.

⁵² CLG (2016) Locally-led Garden Villages, Towns and Cities

⁵³ **OCD06** Didcot Garden Town Delivery Document. Section 2 contains further information on community engagement

⁵⁴ **OCD06** Didcot Garden Town Delivery Document

⁵⁵ **CSD02** Regulation 22 Consultation Statement, Pages.63-65

⁵⁶ **OCD09** Local Development Scheme 2018 – 2020

- 6.3 Are the proposals to amend the safeguarded land for the Culham to Didcot Thames River Crossing justified? Would there be any adverse impacts?**
- 6.4 Are the proposals to safeguard land for access from the A34 to Milton Park justified? Would there be any adverse impacts?**
- 6.5 Are the proposals to safeguard land for a pedestrian/cycle bridge across the A34 at Milton Heights justified? Would there be any adverse impacts?**
- 6.6 Are the proposals to extend the safeguarded land for reopening Grove Railway Station justified? Would there be any adverse impacts?**
- 6.3.1 The following paragraphs (6.3.2 to 6.3.9) respond to the individual points set out in the questions above.
- 6.3.2 The Council considers the proposals to safeguard land within the South-East Vale Sub-Area for highways and rail improvements as set out in Core Policies 18a and 19a are justified.
- 6.3.3 The Council has worked positively and collaboratively with Oxfordshire County Council, as the lead Highway Authority, and other key stakeholders to prepare technical evidence to ensure that highways and transport matters are adequately addressed and planned for. In particular, the Council has worked closely with Oxfordshire County Council to identify land to be safeguarded for future transport schemes within the South-East Vale Sub-Area, as set out in Core Policies 18a and 19a of the Part 2 plan, which are complementary to Core Policies 18 and 19 of the Part 1 plan (**ALP02**)⁵⁷.
- 6.3.4 The Council highlights that the schemes have been safeguarded in the Part 2 plan at the request of Oxfordshire County Council in support of current and emerging evidence prepared by Oxfordshire County Council. This includes the suite of documents supporting Oxfordshire's Local Transport Plan (**TRA01**), including the Science Vale Transport Strategy⁵⁸ and the Rail Strategy⁵⁹.
- 6.3.5 The Council will continue to work in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council and other key partners, such as Highways England, in planning for infrastructure⁶⁰.
- 6.3.6 The Council notes that Core Policies 18a and 19a seek to ensure that land is appropriately safeguarded for transport schemes, so that proposals for development do not harm their delivery. The Council highlights that the policies do not show the precise alignment for each transport scheme as this will be informed by detailed design work as the schemes progress.
- 6.3.7 Any future proposals will need to comply with the policies of the Local Plan 2031 as a whole, including the requirements set out in Core Policies 18 and 19 of the Part 1 plan. The impact of the schemes will also be subject to thorough assessment,

⁵⁷ **ALP02** Local Plan 2031 Part 1: Strategic Sites and Policies

⁵⁸ **TRA01** Connecting Oxfordshire: Local Transport Plan 2015 – 2031, Volume 8 Part ii: Area Strategies, Science Vale Pages 35-75

⁵⁹ **TRA01** Connecting Oxfordshire: Local Transport Plan 2015 – 2031, Volume 3: Rail Strategy

⁶⁰ **SCG02** Statement of Common Ground with Highways England; **SCG20.1** Statement of Common Ground with Oxfordshire County Council, 2: Transport and Safeguarding

including full environmental and archaeological assessments working in association with the relevant statutory bodies.

- 6.3.8 The Council proposed an additional modification to the supporting text for Core Policies 18a and 19a⁶¹. This modification reflects comments made by the Environment Agency relating to land safeguarded for the Culham to Didcot Thames River Crossing and the re-opening of Grove Railway Station. The proposed modification ensures that the impact of schemes are subject to a full environmental assessment and a sequential and exception test where schemes are located in areas of Flood Zones 2 and 3. Support for the modification is contained in the Statement of Common Ground with the Environment Agency (**SCG15**)⁶².
- 6.3.9 The Council has also proposed an additional modification to Appendix B of the Part 2 plan, which amends the area safeguarded for improved access to/ from the A34 to Milton Park⁶³. The proposed modification reflects the latest advice from Oxfordshire County Council and Highways England.

⁶¹ **CSD03** Local Plan 2031 Part 2: Detailed Policies and Additional Sites (Publication Version), Schedule of Proposed Additional Modifications. Modification AM10

⁶² **SCG15** Statement of Common Ground with Environment Agency, (in particular Paragraphs 3.7-3.9)

⁶³ **CSD03** Local Plan 2031 Part 2: Detailed Policies and Additional Sites (Publication Version), Schedule of Proposed Additional Modifications. Modification AM27