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# Examination into the Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 2

Written Statement on behalf of Ptarmigan Land Ltd.

Hearing Statement: Matter 3

June 2018



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**Hearing Statement: Matter 3 - Overall housing provision in the plan and its distribution between sub-areas**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This statement is submitted to the Examination into the Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 2 on behalf of Ptarmigan Land Ltd. (hereafter referred to as 'our client')

This statement refers to the following Issue, identified by the inspector in his Matters and Questions:

- Matter 3: Overall housing provision in the plan and its distribution between sub-areas

## MATTER 3 – OVERALL HOUSING PROVISION IN THE PLAN AND ITS DISTRIBUTION BETWEEN SUB-AREAS

### 3.1 IS THE PROPOSAL IN THE LPP2 TO ALLOCATE 1400 ADDITIONAL HOMES IN THE SOUTH EAST VALE SUB AREA TO SUPPORT ECONOMIC GROWTH OF THE SCIENCE VALE CONSISTENT WITH THE STRATEGY IN LPP1, SUPPORTED BY PROPORTIONATE EVIDENCE AND DELIVERABLE?

3.1.1 We consider the approach to allocating land in the South East Vale Sub Area within the LPP2 to be soundly based. Science Vale is home to world-leading science-based R&D institutes, facilities and companies and is rightly therefore a fundamental arm to the strategy within LPP1 and the housing requirement proposed within it. Furthermore, the Science Vale strategy extends far beyond the LPP1, being a key economic development strategy and funding mechanism for infrastructure delivery and economic growth.

3.1.2 The Inspector presiding over LPP1, in his report, concluded that although the sites removed did not need immediate replacement it would be for the Part 2 plan to ensure the housing needs of Science Vale were met and a land supply maintained in the ringfence. This is now reflected in the associated draft policies within LPP2, in terms of the proposed housing distribution in the sub area. In this regard, alongside the proposed housing and employment, a significant package of infrastructure is also proposed, as set out within the Council's LPP1 Infrastructure Delivery Plan, amounting to over £300 Million within Science Vale. This is also reflected in the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy.

3.1.3 In November 2016, the NIC published its interim report on the Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford corridor. This report argued that:

*"The corridor connecting Cambridge, Milton Keynes and Oxford could be the UK's Silicon Valley – a world renowned centre for science, technology and innovation. But its future success is not guaranteed... The corridor faces a chronic undersupply of homes made worse by poor east-west transport connectivity. Two of the least affordable cities in the UK lie within the corridor, and the area as a whole has consistently failed to build the number of homes it needs. That shortage puts sustained growth at risk. It is already increasing costs for businesses and diminishing their ability to attract employees at all levels... Investment in infrastructure, including enhanced east-west transport links, can help to address these challenges, but it must be properly aligned with a strategy for new jobs, homes and communities, not developed in isolation. This means local authorities working in partnership, and with government, to plan places, homes and transport together. Current governance mechanisms are not sufficient to deliver the step-change in strategic leadership and collaboration needed."*

3.1.4 The balance between housing and employment sought in both LPP1 and LPP2 is therefore fundamental to the economic strategy, linked also to the strategy for infrastructure delivery across Science Vale and the wider area, as well as the wider strategies for Oxfordshire, including for example, the Oxford City Deal, Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan, Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy and the Oxfordshire Housing Growth Deal.

3.1.5 It is also worth noting that the housing requirement to be delivered through LPP1 was derived from (and aligned to) an economic growth strategy, as determined through the Oxfordshire Economic Forecasting report, the SHMA and the policies in LPP1 itself (including the "ring fence" policy). For example, the economic forecasts prepared for the Oxfordshire Housing Market Area indicate that almost 70%, of the 23,000 new jobs

forecast for the district up to 2031 are likely to be located in the Science Vale area<sup>1</sup>. Each of these reports have been considered and tested and the resulting strategy deemed sound and subsequently adopted.

3.1.6 It is noted that Chapter 2 of LPP1 identifies a number of key challenges and opportunities that are faced by the district and these are focused around four thematic areas which are central to the Local Plan up to 2031 and form the threads throughout the plan:

- building healthy and sustainable communities
- supporting economic prosperity
- supporting sustainable transport and accessibility, and
- protecting the environment and responding to climate change.

3.1.7 These challenges provide the background as to why balancing housing and employment growth within Science Vale is so fundamental to the strategy. Within the overview of the above key challenges, there are key messages that emerge through LPP1, including:

- ensuring the delivery of housing to support the economic growth projected
- maximizing the opportunity to nurture science, research and innovation and
- delivering sustainable development and movement through development being located in sustainable locations and associated infrastructure delivery

3.1.8 The spatial strategy (Chapter 4 of LPP1) entitled “Building on our strengths” has three main strands:

- focus sustainable growth within the Science Vale Area
- reinforce the service centre roles of the main settlements across the district, and
- promote thriving villages and rural communities whilst safeguarding the countryside and village character.

3.1.9 The Spatial Strategy is also underpinned by five core policies, each of which helps explain how important Science Vale is to the strategy and the need to balance homes and jobs, including the need to deliver infrastructure to support growth:

- **Core Policy 3: Settlement Hierarchy** – which classifies the settlements in the Vale according to their role and function; ·
- **Core Policy 4: Meeting our Housing Need** – which specifies the scale and location of new housing, ensuring development is built in the most appropriate locations; ·
- **Core Policy 5: Housing Supply Ring Fence** – which identifies a core area within Science Vale where new homes will be provided to achieve sustainable development in accordance with the Spatial Strategy. The area will have a separate housing and supply target from the rest of the district;
- **Core Policy 6: Meeting Business and Employment Needs** – which specifies the scale and location of opportunities for economic growth to ensure that sufficient new jobs are provided across the Vale in appropriate locations; and
- **Core Policy 7: Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services** – to ensure new services and facilities are delivered alongside new housing and employment.

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<sup>1</sup> Science Vale Housing and Employment Study, GL Hearn, October 2014 available at: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2014%20SVUK%20Housing%20and%20Employment%20Study%20FINAL.pdf>

3.1.10 Figure 4.1 in LPP1 is particularly relevant in this regard, as it sets out the three strands of the spatial strategy and how they will be delivered. Within this, under the detail for the first strand of focusing growth in Science Vale, the following is stated:

*"allocating appropriate land for strategic housing growth to help improve the self-containment of the area. New homes will be delivered at five key locations:*

- Grove
- Harwell and Milton Parishes, east of the A34
- Harwell Campus
- Milton Parish, west of the A34
- Wantage"

3.1.11 The Housing Supply Ring-Fence (Core Policy 5) and the supporting text further explains the reasoning behind the approach to securing housing, economic and infrastructure delivery within the Science Vale.

3.1.12 In light of the above interwoven strategy for Science Vale, the importance of re-providing and delivering 1,400 homes within Science Vale is very clear, the evidence for which is significant, tested and determined as sound. It would therefore be inappropriate for the LPP2 to now defer from the previously agreed strategy, either directly or inadvertently.

3.1.13 It is also worth noting that the land supply proposed in LPP1 reflects the need to boost housing supply as advocated in the NPPF; and the housing targets are a minimum in any event, for which a rolling supply must be maintained.

3.1.14 In terms of the delivery of the Science Vale proposals, even with the additional allocations proposed in LPP2, the Councils trajectory is considered to be ambitious, but potentially achievable.

3.1.15 In light of the above, it is concluded that the proposals in the LPP2 to allocate 1400 additional homes in the South East vale sub area are consistent with the strategy in LPP1, supported by sound and proportionate evidence and deliverable.

**3.2 IS THE PROPOSAL IN THE LPP2 NOT TO ALLOCATE ADDITIONAL SITES IN THE WESTERN VALE SUB AREA CONSISTENT WITH THE STRATEGY IN THE LPP1 AND SUPPORTED BY PROPORTIONATE EVIDENCE?**

We have no comment to make on this issue.

**3.3 TAKING THE OBJECTIVELY ASSESSED HOUSING NEEDS OF THE VALE AND THE UNMET NEEDS OF OXFORD TOGETHER, IS THE OVERALL HOUSING PROVISION IN THE LPP2, ITS DISTRIBUTION BETWEEN SUB AREAS AND ITS VARIOUS COMPONENTS, CONSISTENT WITH THE STRATEGY IN THE LPP1, SUPPORTED BY PROPORTIONATE EVIDENCE AND DELIVERABLE?**

We have no comment to make on this issue.

**3.4 HOW WOULD THE OVERALL PROVISION OF HOUSING IN THE DISTRICT BE MONITORED TO ENSURE DELIVERY? IS THE HOUSING SUPPLY RING FENCE FOR THE SCIENCE VALE AEA STILL RELEVANT AND NECESSARY?**

- 3.4.1 As set out above in response to Matter 3.1, the Science Vale is an integrated strategy to balance housing and employment and secure the delivery of strategic infrastructure to support economic growth.
- 3.4.2 The 'housing supply ring-fence' provides the mechanism whereby, in the event of a shortfall in housing delivery and when paragraph 14 of the NPPF is engaged, any development to ensure delivery of the housing needed would be focused within the Science Vale area, thus supporting the objectives of the Science Vale, the proposed distribution of housing and the wider strategy so as to support innovation-led growth and the integrated infrastructure in this locality.
- 3.4.3 Nothing has materially changed since the principle of this approach was examined, deemed sound and then adopted within LPP1. This remains a core policy in LPP1 and it would be inappropriate for LPP2 to undermine or cut across those core policies.

**3.5 DOES THE LPP2 PROVIDE FOR THE HOUSING NEEDS OF GYPSIES, TRAVELLERS AND TRAVELLING SHOW PEOPLE AS ENVISAGED BY, OR IN A MANNER CONSISTENT WITH, POLICY CP27 OF THE LPP1?**

We have no comment to make on this issue.

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