

Comment

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Event Name	Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part One - Publication
Comment by	Dr James Vincent
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Consultation Point	Core Policy 15: Spatial Strategy for South East Vale Sub-Area (View)
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Q1 Do you consider the Local Plan is Legally Compliant? Yes

Q2 Do you consider the Local Plan is Sound (positively prepared, effective and Justified) No

If your comment(s) relate to a specific site within a core policy please select this from the drop down list. N/A

If you think your comment relates to the DtC, this is about how we have worked with the Duty to Cooperate bodies (such as neighbouring planning authorities)

Q3 Do you consider the Local Plan complies with the Duty to Co-operate? Yes

Q4 Please give details of why you consider the Local Plan is not legally compliant or is unsound or fails to comply with the duty to co-operate. Please be as precise as possible. If you wish to support the legal compliance or soundness of the Local Plan or its compliance with the duty to co-operate, please also use this box to set out your comments.

Paragraph 5.59 states that the provision of new housing in this area will help to improve the self-sufficiency of the South East Vale and provide opportunities for living closer to places of work.

The 'How the South East Vale Sub-Area will change by 2031' statement, page 68, says 'New housing at the Harwell Oxford Campus will have provided an exemplar development and function as a thriving community, successfully integrated with the science campus and provide accommodation for many of the site's employees.'

The current Chilton demographic indicates that only ~12% of Chilton residents actually work at the Harwell Oxford Campus (SOURCE: Petition against the Harwell East Development submitted to the VWHDC in Feb 2014).

Nationally, the average commuting distance was 15km in 2011 (2011 census). Furthermore, the 2001 census for the Harwell Ward indicated that 95% of employees in Harwell did not live in Chilton or Harwell villages.

Given that people choose to live in a specific area for a multitude of different reasons, it seems presumptuous for the VWHDC to assume that 'many of the Harwell Oxford's employees' will choose to live on the campus. Indeed, current and historical records and current Chilton demographic demonstrate that this is not the case and therefore is poor justification for an unprecedented level of housing within the AONB.

The average commuting distance within the Vale of White Horse, as at the 2011 census, is 15.9km, with the corresponding figure for South Oxfordshire being 17.2km. It is therefore reasonable to expect that people will continue to commute to the Harwell Oxford Campus from Reading, Abingdon, Newbury and Reading.

In addition, up to a 20% a price premium is applied to housing within the North Wessex Downs AONB compared to the same style of house by the same house builder at Great Western Park in Didcot. A summary of the price premium applied by David Wilson Homes for living in Chilton compared to Didcot is provided below:

- 1 The 'Chelworth': 530,000 at Chilton, 439,995 at Didcot
- 2 The 'Holden': 485,000 at Chilton, 425,000 at Didcot
- 3 The 'Cornell': 415,000 at Chilton, 390,000 at Didcot

Further to this, the URS Strategic Analysis of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan to 2031 Part 1 states: **'There is a likelihood that residents in new housing areas at Harwell Oxford Campus would access employment opportunities further afield. This has the potential to increase traffic on the A34 which is already known to be congested and operating over its designed capacity in peak periods.'**

Summary: The available evidence suggests that the majority of future employees at Harwell Oxford Campus will, for a variety of reasons, elect to travel from distances of up to around 16 km from the site rather than to live on the doorstep.

There is clear evidence that housing built within the AONB (even on Brown Field sites) attracts higher prices (by up to 20%) than like-for-like housing outside the AONB. These high prices are likely to remove houses from the reach of the young scientists the Plan claims to be catering for.

Q5 Please set out what modification(s) you consider necessary to make the Local Plan legally compliant or sound, having regard to the test you have identified above where this relates to soundness. (NB Please note that any non-compliance with the duty to co-operate is incapable of modification at examination). You will need to say why this modification will make the Local Plan legally compliant or sound. It will be helpful if you are able to put forward your suggested revised wording of any policy or text. Please be as precise as possible.

In order to make the Local Plan sound, the following modifications are necessary:

- 1 Remove the entire allocation of 850 homes from the Harwell East Campus.

- 2 Remove the additional allocation of 150 homes from the North West Harwell Campus (eg reduce the number of houses from 550 to 400 (including the 125 already given outline permission)).
- 3 Include provision of up to 400 new homes at the North West Harwell Campus(including the 125 already given outline permission), provided that all development is contained within the perimeter of the Harwell Oxford Campus and is controlled by the Harwell Oxford Campus.
- 4 Reallocate the 850 homes from the Harwell East Campus and the additional 150 houses from the North West Harwell Campus (1,000 houses in total) to other sites already identified by the Vale of White Horse, for example:
 - 1 (a) Valley Park (which has already been assessed as having additional capacity for up to a further 1,200 homes)
 - 2 (b) Didcot A (capacity for 425 houses), or
 - 3 (d) Land West of Steventon (capacity for 350 houses), or
 - 4 (e) Distributed throughout the West Vale in order to encourage and support economic growth and prosperity more equally across the district.
 - 5 Or reduce the total SHMA allocation for the District by 1000
 - 6 Remove the North Wessex Downs AONB entirely from the Science Vale ?Ringfence? in order to protect it from future speculative development should the Science Vale fall behind in delivery of its housing targets.

Please note your representation should cover succinctly all the information, evidence and supporting information necessary to support/justify the representation and the suggested modification, as there will not normally be a subsequent opportunity to make further representations based on the original representation at publication stage.

After this stage, further submissions will be only at the request of the Inspector, based on the matters and issues he/she identifies for examination.

Q6 If your representation is seeking a modification, do you consider it necessary to participate at the oral part of the examination? No - I do not wish to participate at the oral examination