

Response to Local Plan Clive Manvell

The proposed development south of East Hanney is unsound as the proposed housing density cannot be justified. The VWHDC state that "The Vale is a special place, it is uniquely beautiful with a rich natural and man-made heritage; a predominantly rural area located in the south-west of Oxfordshire. It is an attractive and popular place to live". The current housing density within the existing village of East Hanney is 0.88dph yet the proposed new development is at the staggering contrasting level of 25dph*, this being the level currently in areas of the urban centres of neighbouring Grove and Wantage. Core Policy 23: The housing density on all new housing developments a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare (net) will be required unless specific local circumstances indicate that this would have an adverse effect on the character of the area, highway safety or the amenity of neighbours. The new housing development density of around 200 dwellings @ 25dph*, in a village with currently 340 dwellings @ 0.88dph, cannot be justified in that it would have a significant adverse effect on the character of the area.

**It is understood that the proposed figure will be much higher than that since open areas, infrastructure and landscaping have to be excluded from calculations, and no details of these are currently available.*

A 60% increase in the number of dwellings will have a significant adverse effect on the amenity of neighbours, put unsustainable additional pressures on local roads and amenities. The village does not have a commercially viable retail shop, only having a small community shop manned by volunteers and a small part-time post office.

Furthermore the area of the proposed development south of East Hanney is not legally compliant in that it has not been consulted on as part of the due process. An area to the East of East Hanney was proposed and consulted on in February 2014, not this area. A survey of residents quantified this no consultation process in answer to the question: Were you aware before the 15th October (the date on which the revised version of Local Plan 2031 was ratified) that the Vale had changed its original proposal and identified the area for development as south of East Hanney? 234 - Answered NO; 16 - Answered YES; 1 - declined to answer. Additional responses were received from outside the village; 19 - Answered NO; 1 - Answered YES. The same survey, in answer to the question "Are you in favour of or opposed to the Vales proposal to develop 200 houses South of East Hanney? 254 - Opposed to the development; 5 - In favour of to the development; 1 - declined to answer, with responses outside East Hanney: 19 - Opposed to the development; 1 - In favour of to the development.

Given the nature of the proposed development which would be adjacent to the conservation area, with its listed buildings and distinctive building materials, the new development would bring about a major detrimental effect on the appearance and outlook thereby not preserving the character of the village. Even the Vale appraised the proposal as bringing about a major negative effect in respect of heritage and landscape. The proposed site includes evidence of a Roman road; an ancient Manor House and has yielded a number of archaeological artefacts. The NPPF has core principles to conserve heritage assets and these will potentially be lost. The Plan is not justified as being the most appropriate strategy, and is therefore unsound. The question of archaeological issues and potential loss of artefacts suggests that the plan is not effective in meeting NPPF criteria and is therefore unsound.

The area that the Vale have proposed to build on to the South of East Hanney is rich in flora and fauna and is a precious environmental assets. The proposed site is land that runs along Letcombe Brook from Dandridge's Mill through the ancient orchard and into a spinney. It includes the wild life corridor along the brook which although known to be and designated as a wild life habitat of protected species is directly subject to threat by the proposed development.

The habitat here is extremely rare and home to the wildlife and ecology which the residents of East Hanney all have the benefit of enjoying. The proposed development site threatens the breeding ground of many species, some of which are endangered. Their presence helps make East Hanney one of the special places identified by the VOWHDC (The Vale is a special place, it is uniquely beautiful with a rich natural and man-made heritage). Under the plan the proposed development will build across this area which would destroy the habitat. In the spring and the summer many types of rare species can be found here and if the proposed development takes place, this will be lost forever.

The fields are lowland Calcareous Grassland and historic ridge and furrow. According to The Wildlife Trusts since 1984 80% of this type of land in the UK has disappeared. This type of land is the breeding grounds and natural habitat of some of the U.K's most threatened bird life, mammals, wildflowers and insects. Many can live nowhere else. Hanney has ensured this significant and nearly unique area has been protected from destruction through its land management and farming practices and is blessed in still having this rare asset today. It is an essential part of the heritage of the village and forms an important part of the legacy of the village for future generations.

The proposal for the development of this site is unsound and the loss of this significant wild life habitat cannot be justified. The plan is therefore not consistent with national policy to use land of lesser significance for wildlife when considered against reasonable alternatives.

The argument proposed by the Plan that the village is a Large Village is not justified in that East Hanney does not meet all the necessary criteria to be categorised as a Large Village. For example no mobile library service.

Furthermore the village has been appraised as having good access to a primary and secondary school. The village primary school has for some time exceeded its capacity with children already having to attend alternative schools. The nearest secondary school is over 7km distant and requires transport for the children.

The Housing Plan does not include expansion of the capacity of the sewage works which currently struggles to meet the needs of the communities it serves – Grove, Wantage and the Hanneys. During this calendar year there have been several instances where the system in East Hanney has been unable to cope and sewage has emerged through manhole covers. With all the current developments in the village and in Grove the consequences are entirely predictable and unacceptable. In nearly doubling the requirement through the proposed developments without the necessary significant upgrades before any new building commences points to the fact that the Plan is not deliverable and is therefore not effective resulting the conclusion that it is unsound.

East Hanney is prone to flooding – there is plenty of evidence for this 2007, 2008, 2014 and many, many years in the past. The Environment Agency identifies East Hanney as being an area susceptible to ground water flooding. The proposed development to the south of the village increases the risk for the whole village. The Vale's assessment that the effect of the development will be neutral is unsound and the proposed plan, therefore, is not consistent with national policy, as required by the NPPF.

The proposed development south of the village of 200+ dwellings suggests an increase in vehicles of between 300 and 400 vehicles. The village is not served by bus routes anywhere near the areas identified as employment centers namely: Milton Park, Harwell and Didcot, just services to and from Wantage to Oxford. The A338 already approaches capacity at peak times and with these additional vehicles entering and leaving the proposed development the Vale's appraisal as bringing about a minor positive effect in reducing the need to travel and reducing road congestion is farcical and clearly indicates that the Vale's Plan has not been positively prepared and is certainly not consistent with achieving sustainable development which makes the Vale's Plan unsound.

There are no pavements, footpaths or cycle tracks connecting the existing village with the proposed development site south of the village. Pedestrian access to the village from the site would have to be around a narrow, sharp 90o bend where vehicles have to squeeze past each other. The plan is therefore unsound and not justified as being the most appropriate strategy when considered against the reasonable alternatives – the site to the east of the village which is connected by local footpaths.

It is difficult to conclude that the SHMA justification for additional housing needs has been positively prepared. No objective evidence has been presented where the need for assessed development and infrastructure requirements has been quantified. This makes the plan unsound.

