

VALE OF WHITE HORSE LOCAL PLAN 2031 PART 1
EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC STAGE 2
MATTER 9 AND MATTER 6.2
STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF
THE HARWELL CAMPUS PARTNERSHIP
JANUARY 2016



Introduction

1. This statement is made in response to the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 (“the Plan”) Stage 2 Examination in Public (“EiP”) on behalf of the Harwell Campus Partnership (“the Partnership”). It relates to Matter 9 - Strategy for South East Vale Sub-Area (CP15 and CP16) – and Matter 6.2 – Proposed Housing Sites in the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Beauty. It should be read alongside the Partnership’s main representations in respect of the Submission Draft Local Plan, which are dated December 2014, its written responses to Matters 2 and 3 at Stage 1 of the Examination and its submissions in respect of Matter 6.1.
2. The Inspector’s Questions in respect of Matter 9 on which the Partnership wishes to respond are:
 - 9.1 *Other than in connection with AONB issues (considered in Matter 6) are the Strategic Housing Allocations listed in Policy CP15 soundly based and deliverable?*
 - 9.2 *Are there other sites which would more appropriately meet the identified need for new housing?*
 - 9.3 *Are the identified Employment sites listed in policy CP15 soundly based and deliverable?*
3. The Inspector’s Questions under Matter 6.2 are as follows:
 - 6.2 *Would the alternatively proposed housing site at Harwell Campus:
(i) accord with the exceptional circumstances and public interest tests?
(ii) more appropriately meet housing needs?*
4. Under question 9.1, the Partnership’s submissions relate only to the land North of Harwell Campus (site 12) and the land East of Harwell Campus (site 13).
5. This Statement considers each question in turn.

Other than in connection with AONB issues (considered in Matter 6) are the Strategic Housing Allocations listed in Policy CP15 soundly based and deliverable?
6. The Partnership has set out its position regarding the soundness of the North of Harwell allocation (site 12), the question marks regarding the soundness of the East of Harwell allocation (site 13) and its alternative proposal for additional housing on the Harwell Campus in its submissions in respect of Matter 6.1.
7. On the deliverability issue, the Partnership has commissioned a Residential Quarter Masterplan, which illustrates how the North of Harwell allocation (site 12) could be integrated with the rest of the Campus and how it would fit with the Partnership’s alternative to site 13 i.e. an additional 850 homes on the Campus.
8. The Residential Quarter Masterplan, which can be found at **Appendix 1**, has been informed by the following documents:

- A Transport Assessment
- A Ground Condition & Contamination Statement (excluding appendices)
- A Utilities Report
- A Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy
- An Ecology Report
- A Tree Report
- A Sustainability Report

These documents can be found at **Appendices 2 - 8**.

9. The Residential Quarter Masterplan and the supporting documents listed above, show that up to 1,400 homes can be delivered on the Campus. They show also that there are no impediments to early delivery.
10. The Partnership is intending to bring forward an application for a first phase of development in the course of this year. That application is likely to be centred on the South Area, where there is an existing lawful residential use and where there was previously a permission for up to 120 homes. The South Drive area is located immediately to the north of Curie Avenue, which will be the principal access to the Residential Quarter off the A4185. Access to the North of Harwell allocation would be via a new north-south link from Curie Avenue.
11. The early development of the right type of residential accommodation, well located in relation to the Campus, is required to support the continuing success of the research and employment development. Residential development can be accommodated without any harm to the aspirations of both the Council and the Partnership for the future success of the Campus as centre of world leading research and innovation.
12. The Partnership's proposed enlarged housing allocation includes 28.3 hectares of EZ land (areas B – E on Plan KK1). The Harwell Campus EZ extends in all to 94 hectares. There is also a further 28 hectares of EZ land at Milton Park. There is also an additional 35 hectares of non-EZ land at Harwell Campus, which formed part of the allocation in the adopted Vale Local Plan 2011, and which is 'saved' in the emerging Local Plan. The EZ land at Harwell and Milton Park totalling 122 hectares and the additional 35 hectares are identified in Core Policy 6 as strategic sites for future employment development and form part of a total allocation of 219 hectares. It states at paragraph 4.24 in the emerging Local Plan that this land will deliver approximately 23,000 jobs, which is sufficient to meet the Council's assessed need.
13. The Local Plan evidence base includes an *Employment Land Review Addendum 2014* produced by URS. The purpose of the Addendum is to update the Council's Employment Land Review to reflect the projected 23,000 jobs figure identified in the 2014 Cambridge Econometrics report: *Economic Forecasting to inform the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan and Strategic Housing Market Assessment*. It is apparent that the evidence base identifies a significant surplus of employment land compared with that required to meet the job forecasts of the Local Plan.
14. For example, the February 2013 draft of the Local Plan assumed that there was only 143 hectares of employment land available (draft Core Policy 4), compared with the 219 hectares now identified in the equivalent policy. Even that level of

employment land was considered to be more than was required (URS Employment Land Review 2013 page 77). The 143 hectares was assumed to support 14,300 jobs (URS page 50) but the later Cambridge Econometrics Economic forecasting report of February 2014 has confirmed that it is only necessary to achieve 13,800 jobs from employment land (page 40), because the remainder of the forecast requirement of 23,000 jobs will come forward on other land (e.g. hospitals, town centres etc.). Again, the CE report concluded that there is a surplus of employment land (“*plenty of capacity*”) (page 41). The submitted Core Policy 6 identifies 219 hectares of employment land – but this is simply a record of what is now known to exist, rather than a statement of what is required.

15. Some further explanation of this is provided in the most recent Addendum, which states at paragraph 3.1 on page 10 that:

“3.1 The council has identified that an increased amount of available employment land exists in Science Vale than previously understood. This updated understanding of the employment land supply has been informed through consultation with key stakeholders; through the Cambridge Econometrics Report and also as an update to the existing Employment Land Review where previous assumptions have now changed. This does not affect the spatial distribution of employment in the district, nor have any of the employment land boundaries been amended. The changes are identified as follows:

- Harwell Campus Enterprise Zone (EZ) land – The Employment Land Review previously identified the total amount of enterprise zone land at Harwell Campus as being 64ha. This was the total amount of land that was originally applied for by the Local Enterprise Board in 2011. During the application process, a revised boundary was submitted but the revised land area was not updated accordingly. This has now been corrected and the total amount of enterprise zone land at Harwell Campus is 94ha. The cumulative total of enterprise zone land in Science Vale (with Milton Park) is now 122ha. The total number of jobs to be provided specifically on this land, however, remains unchanged at 5,400.
- Other land at Harwell Campus outside of the Enterprise Zone boundary – The Cambridge Econometrics Report identifies that over the plan period, there will be job growth in sectors such as space science, satellite technologies and environmental technologies. The report identifies that this growth would be expected to take place within or adjacent to the Enterprise Zone land at Harwell Campus. This growth is in addition to the 5,400 jobs identified above. Table K.4 of the CE report states that additional land “should be available for development in the short term over and above the EZ area, and more long term”. As a result of this, the council have identified 35ha of non EZ land at Harwell Campus to satisfy the provision of these jobs.”

(our emphasis)

In addition, further long-term employment land will become available at the Campus as land within the ‘licensed site’ is progressively decommissioned.

16. The proposed enlarged housing allocation is a highly sustainable location for housing. The new residential development would be fully integrated with existing and future employment development and local services and facilities making access safe and easy. The site at East Harwell on the other hand is physically separated from the main Harwell Campus by the A4185 (Newbury Road) making access to services and facilities potentially problematic.
17. Land to the North and North West of Harwell is suitable for housing development as it is mainly a brownfield site within the existing Campus, where there is capacity for the additional housing without compromising the Campus' primary focus on employment-generating development. It will also cause less harm to the AONB than development on adjacent green field land to the east of the A4185 (see the Partnership's detailed response on Matter 6.1).

Are there other sites which would more appropriately meet the identified need for new housing?

18. Based on the masterplanning work done to date (see above), the Partnership has identified 46.74 hectares of the Campus (out of a total 292 hectares for the campus as a whole) that is suitable and available for residential development, just over 60% of which is previously developed and all of which, save for the green field element of the North of Harwell allocation, is already earmarked for development in the adopted Vale Local Plan 2011.¹
19. This land comprises 6 distinct parcels of land A – F. These parcels are identified on **Plan KK1** and described in Figure 1 below. They fall partly within the EZ at Harwell, partly within the area highlighted under saved Policy E7 in the adopted Local Plan 2011 relating to development at Harwell Campus and wholly within the ring-fenced area for Harwell proposed under Core Policy 5 in the new Plan.

Figure 1. Areas Suitable for Residential Development

	Land	Brownfield/Greenfield	Hectares
A	The North of Harwell allocation	Part greenfield; part brownfield	18.93 ha
B	Farm land between the former prefabricated housing site and the western-most part of the North of Harwell Campus allocation	Greenfield	7.5 ha
C	The former Aldfield prefabricated housing site	Brownfield	10.2 ha

¹ See Vale Local Plan 201, Policy E7

D	Existing commitment south of Icknield Way/north of Curie Avenue	Brownfield	6.04 ha
E	An area of existing development to the west of the committed site	Brownfield	4.56a

20. The back land nature of the majority of this land makes it less attractive for prestigious R&D employment-generating development – the focus of that development is likely to be the higher profile eastern side of the Campus closest to the A4185. The topography and landscape characteristics of the land to the north and north-west of the campus are such that it is better suited to housing than it is to employment uses.
21. Adopting the Council's preferred density of 30 dwellings per hectare², parcels A – F can accommodate **up to around 1,400 homes** made up of the current proposed North of Harwell allocation of 550 homes and an additional 850 homes in direct replacement for the East of Harwell allocation.
22. The Residential Quarter Masterplan shows illustratively how this quantum of development can be accommodated within land parcels A – E. It shows also a principal means of access via the existing Curie Avenue entrance; a significant area of structural open space centred on the existing lagoon and woodland; areas where by virtue of the existing mature tree cover lower density development is perhaps more appropriate; the scope for integrating housing and employment via the existing north-south link along Eighth Street and by locating the 'mixed use core' along that route; and, in the heart of the development, a site for a primary school.
23. Further housing on the Campus is essential and is required regardless of whether the East of Harwell allocation is confirmed on the basis that it would:
- Add to the vitality of the Campus;
 - Sustain existing and newly planned services and facilities;
 - Contribute directly to the provision of additional social and physical infrastructure;
 - Be phased to suit employment growth rates;
 - Provide the opportunity for the type and tenure of housing to be managed to maximise the benefit to the Campus (including PRS and discounted rents, discounted sales and starter homes); and
 - Make best use of brownfield land in the area.

² Core Policy 23 & Topic Paper 4: Housing, page 48, paragraph 5.48

24. This is in stark contrast to the proposed East of Harwell allocation, which would:
- Detract from the vitality of the Campus by competing for and potentially duplicating services and facilities;
 - Be phased solely on the basis of market demand;
 - Likely be limited to standard market and affordable housing;
 - Prejudice the long term growth of major science development; and
 - Be wholly on green field land.

25. For the reasons set out in this submission, in its response to Matter 6.1 and in its earlier submissions, the Partnership's case is that the Land East of Harwell (site 13) should be deleted from the Plan and replaced by an additional allocation based around land parcels B – E in Table 1 above.

Are the identified Employment sites listed in policy CP15 soundly based and deliverable?

26. The Harwell Campus is a long-established and extensive employment site of international significance. It must be self-evident from these submissions and other submissions made by the Partnership that it is soundly based; is delivering new jobs; and with the appropriate planning policy framework in place, will continue to be deliverable way beyond the period of this Local Plan.

***Would the alternatively proposed housing site at Harwell Campus:
(i) Accord with the exceptional circumstances and public interest tests?
(ii) More appropriately meet housing needs?"***

27. The Partnership has demonstrated in its response to Matter 6.1 that the alternatively proposed housing at Harwell Campus would accord with the exceptional circumstances and public interest tests set in paragraph 116 of the NPPF and that this alternative proposal would more appropriately meet the housing needs of the Campus.
28. The case is also put succinctly and with compelling force in the conclusion to the Partnership's *Needs and Delivery Report*:³ which is Appendix C to its Matter 6.1 submission:
- Existing and emerging "clusters" at Harwell will drive employment growth opportunities;
 - Harwell is currently defective in its provision of amenities and infrastructure;
 - Much improved provision is required for existing users and also to convince new teams to deploy to the Campus in the future;
 - Housing that is fully interwoven into the Campus is a much needed infrastructure item that will accommodate personnel and generate on site

³ See Appendix C to the Partnership's submissions in respect of Matter 6.1

activity and footfall, which in turn will ‘enable’ other infrastructure development; most notably of cafés, bars and other “social amenities”;

- The concept plans for the Residential Quarter incorporate provision for on Campus infrastructure such as primary school accommodation, some convenience retail and healthcare facilities. These would be available to everyone on Campus;
- Properly delivered on campus housing will make Harwell much more attractive to prospective new organisations;
- Consequently, it is the case that the development of new homes will accelerate commercial growth on Campus (rather than dilute or reduce it);
- Conversely (and in the context of recent research output), to not provide new homes and infrastructure would risk thwarting the Campus’ overall science, innovation and commercial growth;
- The Campus Partnership is best placed to properly design and also phase commercial, mixed-use and residential accommodation, because it is in negotiation with occupiers who demand all three in combination and the Partnership will be curating the Campus on a long term basis; and
- The primary objective of the Campus and its Partnership is the continuing growth of research and innovation activity at Harwell; to deliver social, health and economic wellbeing benefits to the UK and its population.

Changes required to the Plan as a consequence of the submissions made above and in response to Matter 6.1

29. Set out below in red are the changes that need to be made to the Draft Plan as a consequence of the submissions set out above and in response to Matter 6.1. Changes will also be required to the explanatory text and to a number of other figures.

Core Policy 4: Meeting Our Housing Needs

Change the “South East Vale Sub-Area” table as follows:

Settlement/Parish	Settlement Type	Site Name	Number of Dwellings
Harwell Campus	Larger Village	East of Harwell Campus	850
		North-West of Harwell Campus	550 1,400
Harwell		West of Harwell	200

Amend the North of Harwell Development Template (Appendix A) as follows:

Use: Around ~~550~~ 1,400 homes, subject to masterplanning

Key Objectives:

- The development of this site shall take into account the design and layout of the existing commitment to the south (permission for 120 homes) and be master planned to collaborate with the East of Harwell Campus to deliver a self-sufficient and sustainable community.
- To contribute to balanced employment and housing growth in the Science Vale area.
- **To ensure that the tenure and type of housing provided is tailored to meet the specific needs of the Campus.**
- To contribute towards infrastructure in the Science Vale Area Strategy as set out in the Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan.
- To ensure that development is sensitively planned to reflect the site's location within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Urban design principles:

- Masterplanning should take into account the strategy for growth in this area and ensure that development positively contributes to the wider objectives of Science Vale; a vital area for UK economic growth.
- Proposals should have regard to the recommendations set out in the Harwell Campus Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA). Higher density development should be concentrated in the southern **previously developed** part of the site.
- The design of development should reflect the **existing character of the Harwell Campus** ~~character of the adjacent Harwell Campus~~, creating a cohesive identity for the **development Campus** as a whole.
- Adopt a permeable, perimeter block layout to optimise connectivity within and beyond the site to employment, housing and facilities.
- Carefully consider street frontages in order to create an appropriate building line and incorporate active frontages.
- Public open space should form a well-connected network of green areas suitable for formal and informal recreation
- Buildings should be predominantly two storey.

Utilities:

- Upgrade the sewer network.

Access and highways:

- Investigate access arrangements.
- Site access would be taken from A4185 Newbury Road at the location of the existing residential access.
- Contribute towards any necessary mitigation measures identified through the site Transport Assessment.
- Provide improved pedestrian and cycle links to Chilton Primary School.
- Site layout should ensure public transport can be accessed through the site or that the site is within walking distance of improved bus services within the campus.
- Construct Curie Avenue and internal roads within the new development to Oxfordshire County Council adopted road standards.

Social and community:

- A new 'two form entry' primary school (on 2.22 ha of land) will be required to accommodate growth at ~~East of Harwell Campus and~~ North West of Harwell Campus. This is likely to be located ~~on green field land within the allocation thereby minimising the impact on the AONB. to the east of the East of Harwell Campus site and contributions will be required towards it.~~
- Contribute towards the expansion of the appropriate secondary school in the area.
- Contribute towards improving the existing services and facilities on the ~~adjacent wider~~ campus.
- Allow appropriate access to existing public open space and recreational facilities ~~opposite the site and/or~~ within the campus.

Environmental health:

- Decommission the sewage treatment works.
- Undertake contaminated land investigations to ensure that the land is safe and suitable for the intended use.

Landscape considerations:

- The site lies within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). A comprehensive landscape scheme will be required to minimise impact on the AONB.
- The mass and scale of the built form will need to be designed to avoid being visually obtrusive when viewed from the surrounding countryside within the AONB.

- Landscaping and design features should be used to minimise any noise and light pollution impacts on the AONB.
- Plant a new woodland edge along the northern and western boundary.
- Retain existing trees and hedgerows where possible.

Biodiversity and green infrastructure:

- A campus-wide mitigation strategy will be required and a suitable receptor site/nature reserve identified.
- Contribute towards redressing the identified Green Infrastructure deficit in the area surrounding Harwell.

Flood risk and drainage:

- Incorporate Green Infrastructure within SUDs to improve biodiversity and water quality.
- Mitigation measures may be required to prevent any detrimental impact on groundwater quality.
- A porous pavement system rather than soakaways should be used due to the underlying chalk geology.

Delete the East of Harwell Development Template at Appendix A.

Core Policy 6: Meeting Business and Employment Needs

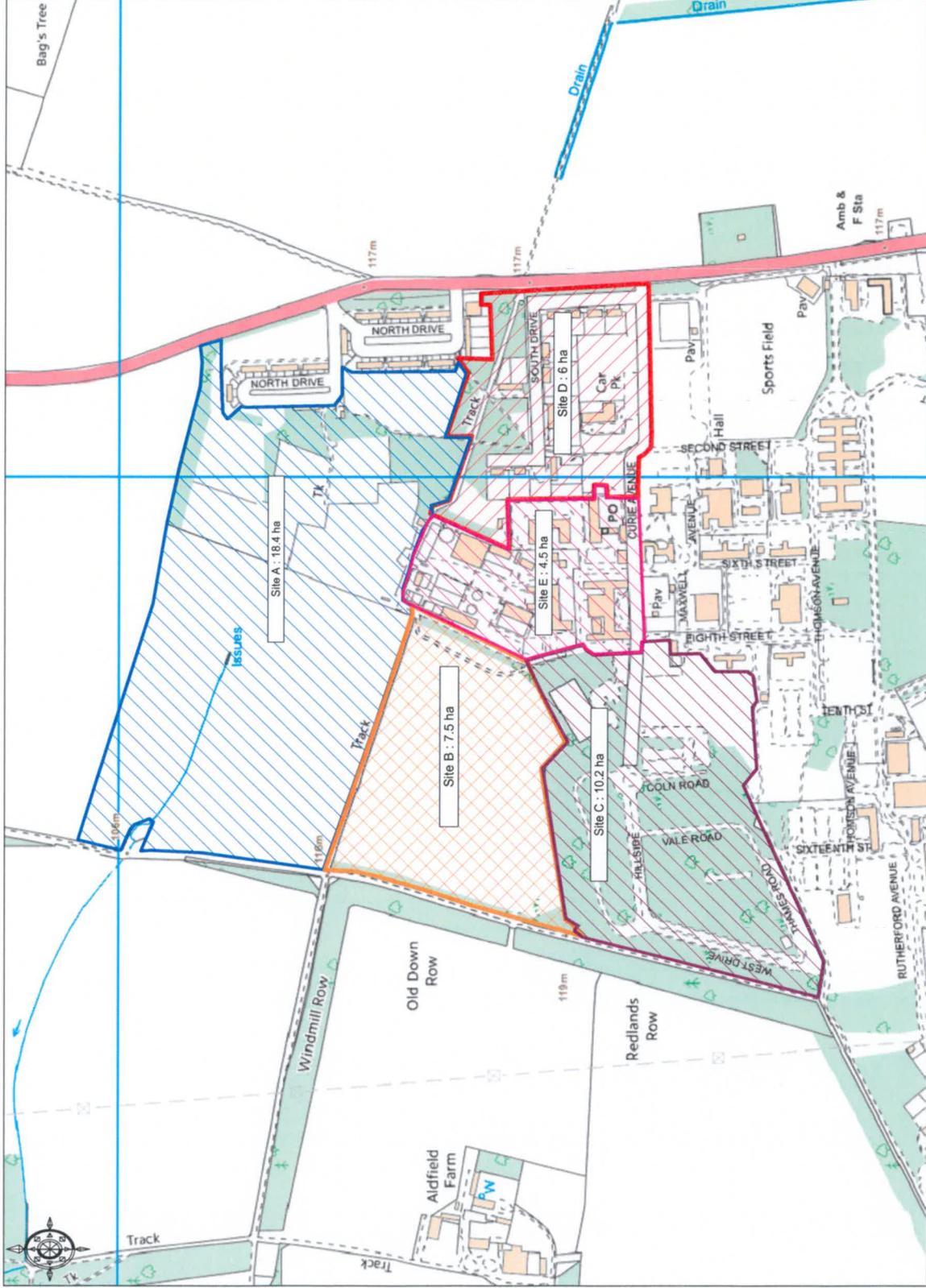
Amend the table in Core Policy 6 to reflect the reduction in employment land at the Harwell Campus.

Amend the table in Core Policy 15 to reflect the increase in housing numbers at the Harwell Campus and the consequential reduction in the allocated employment area and to reflect the deletion of the East of Harwell housing allocation.

Add in proposed policy wording that notes that:

- because investment opportunities will arise at Harwell there will be a need for flexibility and speed of response; and
- development that is not master planned within the vicinity of the Harwell Campus will always be tested to ensure that it does not prejudice the long term growth and success of the facility.

Harwell Science Campus Land Available for Residential Development



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Plan KK1