

VALE OF WHITE HORSE DISTRICT COUNCIL
LOCAL PLAN PART 1 EXAMINATION HEARING
INSPECTOR'S REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION FROM THE COUNCIL

INSPECTOR'S REQUEST:

The Inspector asked to see the formal approvals/announcements from DCLG in relation to the Greater Didcot Garden Town.

COUNCIL'S RESPONSE:

1. The Proposal Documentation has been lodged in the Examination Library as HEAR10 Didcot Garden Town Brochure.
2. A copy of the E-mail announcement (press release of 7th November 2015) from DCLG confirming the introduction of the Greater Didcot Garden Town is attached.

New garden towns to create thousands of new homes

From: [Department for Communities and Local Government](#)

First published: 7 December 2015

Two new garden towns are being supported with £1.1 million of new funding that will help deliver thousands of homes for aspiring homeowners.

Housing Minister Brandon Lewis with homeowner Chris and Sovereign Housing Association's Housing and Communities Director Heather Bowman. Didcot in Oxfordshire and North Essex will be home to new communities that between them are set to provide up to 50,000 new homes, supported by new infrastructure.

The proposals, which have been supported by local leaders, include plans for an additional 15,000 homes by 2031 in Greater Didcot Garden Town and new Garden Communities in North Essex with up to 35,000 new homes.

The money will fund initial work that will enable high quality homes, new transport improvements, good schools, jobs and community amenities to be delivered in a strategic and sustainable way.

Housing Minister, Brandon Lewis said:

I've been really impressed by the level of ambition and vision shown by Didcot and North Essex and their determination to deliver new sustainable communities.

We are determined to support communities that are eager to boost the number of homes in their areas to meet local need and this money will help get work up and running quicker.

The minister heard first-hand how the money will help kick-start work during a visit to Didcot on Monday (7 December 2015).

More people helped into home ownership

The new garden towns announcement comes as the Prime Minister today said that [Shared Ownership will open the door to 175,000 more aspiring homeowners](#).

Radical changes to Shared Ownership rules will remove old fashioned barriers to home ownership.

Those already in a shared ownership property will be able to move to another shared ownership home – putting an end to restrictions that stopped them using the scheme more than once.

The re-invigorated scheme will allow these homeowners to use the capital they have gained to move to a bigger property, as their families grow or circumstances change.

The measures are part of the government's commitment to creating 1 million more homeowners over the next five years.

More Right to Buy

This boost to home ownership comes as a number of Housing Association tenants in Oxfordshire are now able to begin the process for owning their home and making use of the [voluntary Right to Buy](#).

Sovereign Housing Association is one of five associations leading the way by running a pilot that will help tenants in a number of areas around the city to get into ownership.

A voluntary agreement recently reached with the National Housing Federation will ultimately give 1.3million tenants the chance to purchase their home at Right to Buy level discounts once the [Housing and Planning Bill](#) comes into force.

Eligible tenants at Sovereign can begin the registration process that will put them on the path to homeownership once the Bill becomes law.

The Housing Minister met tenants of Sovereign home during his visit to Didcot.

Essex County Council's Cabinet Member for Transport, Planning and Environment, Cllr Roger Hirst said:

We are very pleased to be working in partnership with the three local authorities to find ways to deliver the homes we need and the jobs and infrastructure which must come with them. The advantage of Garden Community development is that we can ensure the right provision of schools, healthcare and transport infrastructure will be in place from the start, and we welcome the opportunity to explore this fully.

Cllr Matthew Barber, leader of Vale of White Horse District Council, said:

People right across our district will benefit from Didcot becoming a Garden Town. This will encourage jobs, better transport links, improved facilities and infrastructure for everyone.