

Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Examination in Public

Statement of Common Ground

between

Vale of White Horse District Council, Kemp & Kemp LLP and

Mactaggart and Mickel Homes

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared by the Vale of White Horse District Council and Mactaggart and Mickel Homes (represented by Kemp & Kemp LLP), hereafter referred to jointly as “the parties”, and relates to the proposed housing allocation on land East of Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor. It is intended to assist the Inspector at Stage 1 of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 (“the Plan”) Examination in Public (“EiP”).
- 1.2 For ease of reference, this SoCG follows the matters and questions prepared by the Inspector for the EiP and, for the avoidance of doubt, it does not relate to any matters that might arise at Stage 2.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Site is owned Mr J Frost, Mr N Frost, Mr G Maclean and Mr D Maclean. Mactaggart & Mickel Homes is promoting the site on behalf of the landowners. The Site measures 11.85ha and is in agricultural use. The site is accessed via Witney Road and Oxford Road.
- 2.2 The site is bound to the north by a 4m dense hedgerow and beyond that the A420. To the east is a mixed woodland plantation bounding the southern field and a hedgerow of trees bounding the northern field. The south is bound by an overgrown post and wire fence and beyond is Oxford Road. To the west is located a hedgerow beyond which is the A415 Witney Road along the northern section and existing housing development along the southern section.
- 2.3 The Site has been the subject of a number of technical assessments, all of which indicate that the site is suitable for development. The key points to arise from these technical assessments are summarised below:
- Transport - A full Transport Assessment (TA) has been prepared which identifies two access points; one from the A415 west of the site and one to the south via Oxford Road. Access via Oxford Road will be limited to the 14 dwellings facing

Oxford Road and an emergency access. The TA demonstrates that the proposed access points can be provided satisfactorily.

- Landscape – A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has been prepared for the site and shows how any impacts on the landscape through the development would be considered low.
- Ecology – An Ecological Appraisal has been undertaken and accompanies the planning application. With regard to protected species, some badger foraging and two badger latrines (dung pits) were found at the north-eastern boundary of the site, although no badger setts were observed on site. Shrubs and trees offer nesting opportunities to breeding birds, but the assemblage is likely to be typical of lowland farmland and thus, of no particular merit. None of the trees offers any shelter to roosting bats and there are no wetlands for breeding amphibians on site. There are no suitable habitats for reptiles.
- Flood Risk – The whole site is Flood Zone 1 meaning it has the lowest risk of flooding. A Flood Risk / Surface Water Drainage Appraisal has also been carried out on the site which concludes that the site is considered to be at low risk of flooding from all sources and is therefore in a suitable zone for development in terms of flood risk. It also states that it should be possible to drain surface water by means of infiltration based SUDS.
- Pollution – A geo-environmental appraisal has also been carried out, which concludes that there should be no significant geo-environmental issues on the site that would prevent it from being developed.
- Heritage - A Heritage Assessment has been carried out to assess the impact of the proposed development on the listed buildings and archaeological significance of the site and accompanies the planning application. In summary, the assessment found that due to the historic agricultural use of the site it is likely that there will be no significant buried archaeological remains. A geophysical survey has been carried out and this supports this with nothing being identified of certain archaeological origin within the site.
- Utilities and Foul Drainage – A Utilities and Foul Drainage Statement has been prepared which concludes that all major service are located within close proximity to the site.

2.4 These technical studies were produced in support of an outline planning application, which was registered by the Council on 4th August 2015 under reference 15/V1808/O. Further reference will be made to submitted application and to the technical studies submitted in support thereof at Stage 2 of the EiP.

2.5 The Council's Sustainability Appraisal (SA) found minor positive effects for the site against SA objectives. The objectives sought to provide suitable homes (including affordable housing), allocate development on sites that have good access to services

and reduce the need to travel and promote sustainable travel. There were also neutral effects on SA objectives which sought to improve health and well-being, support a strong and sustainable economy and protect cultural heritage, townscape and landscape.

3.0 Matter 1 – Duty to Co-operate and other Legal Requirements

- 3.1 The parties agree that having regard to the *Oxfordshire Statement of Cooperation*, which has been signed by each of the six authorities in Oxfordshire, the ongoing processes surrounding Oxford's unmet need and the need urgently to address and provide for the Vale's objectively assessed need for housing and employment land, the Council has satisfactorily discharged its Duty to Co-operate to maximise the effectiveness of Local Plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters.
- 3.2 The parties agree that in the light of the approach taken in proposed Policy CP2 and the matters covered in Topic Paper 1: Duty to Cooperate and Cross Boundary Issues, the Plan is compliant with the LDS, the Statement of Community Involvement, the 2004 Act and the 2012 Regulations.
- 3.3 The parties agree in the context of the Duty to Cooperate and in particular the *Oxfordshire Statement of Cooperation*, it is in this case appropriate for non-strategic site allocations and detailed policies to be devolved to Local Plan 2031 Part 2. This approach also maximises the ability for the district to have in place an adopted local plan prior to 2017.
- 3.4 The parties agree that the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) has tested the plan against all reasonable alternatives in terms of the overall requirement for land for housing and employment and its broad spatial distribution.

4.0 Matter 2 – Objectively Assessed Needs for Housing and Employment Land

- 4.1 The parties support the decision to meet in full the Council's objectively assessed need for new housing as set out in the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (April 2014) i.e. 1,028 homes per annum (2011 – 2013) or a total of 20,560 during the plan period. The methodology behind it was tested at the Cherwell Local plan Examination in Public and where found by the appointed Inspector to be "sound".

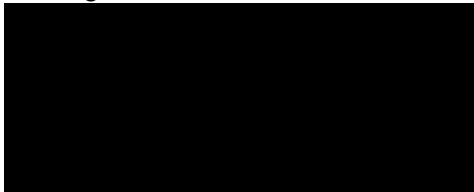
5.0 Matter 3 – Spatial Strategy and Housing Supply Ring Fence

- 5.1 The parties support the overall spatial strategy for the plan. The Vale has an urgent need for housing, including affordable housing. It is therefore important that the Plan can proceed to adoption without delay.

6.0 Matter 4 – Unmet Housing Needs

- 6.1 Core Policy 2 explains how the Council will undertake a full or partial review of the Local Plan to help to accommodate Oxford's unmet need. The parties support the Council's commitment to an early review, should the process result in a level of un-met need that is required to be accommodated in the Vale of White Horse district. The Vale has an urgent need for housing, including affordable housing, and to delay the adoption of the Plan would only worsen the situation still further.

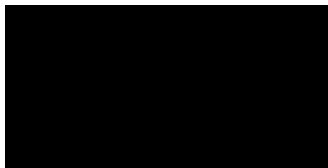
Signed on behalf of Vale of White Horse District Council



Adrian Duffield
Head of Planning

10/09/2015
Date

Signed on behalf of Mactaggart and Mickel Homes



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Steven Sensecall
Partner Kemp & Kemp LLP

20/08/2015
Date