

Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1

Examination Hearings

Examination Stage 2

**Written Statement by Vale of White Horse
District Council**

in relation to:

**Matter 10 – Strategy for the Western Vale
Sub-Area (Policy CP20)**

Version:

Final

Dated:

06 January 2016

Matter 10 - Strategy for the Western Vale Sub-Area (Policy CP20)

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The Local Plan Part 1 sets out a positive vision for the Western Vale Sub-Area and is an important part of the overarching spatial strategy for the Local Plan.
- 1.2 The Western Vale Sub-Area is predominately rural in character with the historic market town of Faringdon identified as the main service centre, providing an excellent range of services and facilities for its residents and its surrounding catchment. The Sub-Area also contains a number of attractive villages with key employment sites, including Shrivenham and Watchfield, home to the Defence Academy of the UK, and a campus of Cranfield University. The A420, a key strategic highway route, runs through the Sub-Area, and provides a key connection between Oxford and Swindon.
- 1.3 The vision¹ for the Western Vale Sub-Area is to maintain and enhance Faringdon as a sustainable market town and as the main service centre within this part of the District, whilst maintaining its historic and attractive setting. Responding to the 'service centre' role of Faringdon, the majority of growth in this Sub-Area is focussed at and around the town with 950 dwellings proposed for allocation in the Local Plan on four housing sites, some 7.4ha of employment land allocated, and key sites safeguarded for on-going employment use. This will provide a housing and employment balance that improves the self-sufficiency of the town and the wider Sub-Area but also supports the delivery of improvements to local facilities in the town including a new primary school, and additional capacity at the Secondary School, new green infrastructure, pedestrian routes, cycleways, and improved bus services.
- 1.4 Growth is also allocated by the Local Plan at the 'Larger Villages' of Shrivenham and Stanford in the Vale. These are sustainable large villages with access to employment and services and facilities providing for local needs. Housing growth at these locations is intended to help support and retain local services whilst also improving local infrastructure and community facilities. Development in these locations is intended to help ensure the vitality and viability of these rural communities, but at the same time respecting the character of the communities, in accordance with the NPPF, paragraph 55 and the PPG².
- 1.5 Alongside maintaining and enhancing the market town of Faringdon and the 'Larger Villages', the distinctive character of the surrounding countryside and rural settlements will be maintained. The growth

¹ **DLP01** Local Plan Part 1, page 84

² Planning Practice Guidance, Ref 50-001-20140306

proposed for Faringdon will also help enable Faringdon town centre to improve and revitalise its shopping and tourism offer, and enhance its reputation as a gateway into the Cotswolds for visitors. Helping to secure the vitality of the town centre as the heart of the community and the local area, and helping it to improve its vitality and viability, taking advantage of its attractiveness and as a gateway for tourism, which also accords with paragraph 23 of the NPPF. The vision for the Western Vale Sub-Area also recognises the importance of preserving the landscape setting of Faringdon, as well as the need for protection of this part of the North Wessex Downs AONB and the Great Western Community Forest.

1.6 The following evidence base references provide support for the Council's strategy:

- Core Policy 20 provides the overarching priorities and development needs in the Sub-Area, supported by Core Policy 6;
- The Site Development Templates³ included in the Local Plan Part 1 Appendices, for each of the strategic sites allocated by the Local Plan, set out the requirements for new development and the necessary infrastructure requirements to ensure a sustainable development is delivered in accordance with the NPPF⁴;
- The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)⁵ identifies the strategic infrastructure items required in the Sub-Area to support and enable development. This includes the timing of delivery and how infrastructure is intended to be funded and delivered;
- The Sustainability Appraisal⁶;
- Habitats Regulations Assessment⁷;
- Landscape Capacity Study⁸;
- Employment Land Review⁹ and Addendum¹⁰;
- Evaluation of Transport Impacts¹¹;
- Town and Facilities Study¹²;
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment¹³ and associated viability assessment¹⁴
- Historic Character Assessment¹⁵,

³ **DLP02** Local Plan Part 1 Appendix 1 Pages 47 to 58, EIP Library Ref

⁴ CLG (2012) The National Planning Policy Framework, Paragraphs 17 and 157

⁵ **DLP07** Infrastructure Delivery Plan, March 2015

⁶ **DLP04** Submission Sustainability Appraisal, March 2015

⁷ **DLP06** Submission Habitats Regulations Assessment, March 2015

⁸ **NAT04.5-4.12** Landscape Capacity Study

⁹ **ECO01** Employment Land Review

¹⁰ **ECO01.2** Addendum to the Employment Land Review

¹¹ **TRA02** Evaluation of Transport Impacts

¹² **COM04** Town and Villages Facilities Study

¹³ **HOU09** Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

¹⁴ **HOU09.29a-e** Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Viability Assessment

¹⁵ **BHE01** Historic Landscape Character Assessment

- Local Plan Viability Study¹⁶,

The Housing Delivery Update Appendix 5¹⁷ and the Strategic Sites Selection Topic Paper¹⁸, explain further the site selection assessment.

2. Site Selection Process

2.1 The Council considers its approach to the strategic housing allocations in the Western Vale Sub-Area to be both soundly based and deliverable.

2.2 The Council has undertaken an iterative process to plan preparation with each stage of the Local Plan considering the different site options to meet the identified need for housing. The outcome and method is summarised within the Strategic Sites Selection Topic Paper 3¹⁹ and reflects the following:

- Stage 1 – Identification of potential sites;
- Stage 2 – Initial Site Filters;
- Stage 3 – Identification of key constraints/ opportunities and further site sift;
- Stage 4 – Detailed evidence testing, informal consultation and sustainability appraisal; and
- Stage 5 - Identification of preferred sites.

2.3 The selection process has ensured that cumulatively the strategic site allocations within the Western Vale Sub-Area will help to fully meet the objectively assessed development needs with the appropriate infrastructure requirements identified consistent with achieving sustainable development. The strategic site allocations will help to ensure an adequate and on-going supply of housing is delivered for the plan area. The sites selected for allocation in the Sub-Area are considered to be the most sustainable available given the reasonable alternatives available at each stage of the process. The site selection process has been closely informed by the Sustainability Appraisal process and a wide range of evidence base studies.

2.4 The outcome of public consultation on the Local Plan has also shaped the Western Vale Sub-Area Strategy and the strategic site allocations. The key issues raised through consultation are detailed in the Regulation 22 Statement²⁰, Appendix 3²¹ and the Supplement to the Regulations 22 Statement²². Appendix 2 of this Statement also provides a summary.

¹⁶ **INF01** Local Plan Viability Study

¹⁷ **PLP01_2** Housing Delivery Update Appendix 5

¹⁸ **TOP03** Topic Paper 3: Strategic Sites Selection

¹⁹ **TOP03** Topic Paper 3: Strategic Sites Selection

²⁰ **DLP09** Regulation 22 Statement

²¹ **DLP09.2** Regulation 22 Statement Appendix 3 (DLP09.2)

²² **PSD01** Supplement to the Regulation 22 Statement – Council Response to Summarised Representations

Question 10.1

Are the Strategic Housing Allocations listed in Policy CP20 soundly based and deliverable?

- a) South of Park Road, Faringdon (site 17)**
- b) South-West of Faringdon (site 20)**
- c) East of Coxwell Road, Faringdon (site 18)**
- d) South of Faringdon (site 19)**
- e) North of Shrivenham (site 21)**
- f) West of Stanford-in-the-Vale (site 16)**

3. The Council's Response to Question 10.1

South of Park Road, Faringdon (Site 17: 350 homes)

- 3.1 The site South of South Park Road, Faringdon is allocated for around 350 dwellings, 3ha of employment land and includes land for a primary school, as detailed in Site Development Template²³. The site has been a proposed allocation in the Local Plan since the Preferred Options Document²⁴ and currently has a 'resolution to grant' (P13/V0709/O).
- 3.2 The site is well contained, is well located to existing employment opportunities along Park Road, to Folly Park, the secondary school, the leisure centre, and is accessible to a frequent bus route (Route 66), has good access to the strategic highway network (A420) and good pedestrian links to the town centre. Many of these advantages were identified within the Sustainability Appraisal²⁵.
- 3.3 The site is also relatively unconstrained. The Landscape Capacity Study²⁶ highlights that the south of the site is visually prominent with some landscape impacts and is adjacent to Wicklesham and Coxwell Pits SSSI, but indicates that these can satisfactorily be mitigated through careful layout, siting and height of the development, the incorporation of appropriate measures to protect the SSSI and extensive landscaping. These requirements are included in the Site Development Template²⁷.
- 3.4 Development is deliverable with the status of the site resolution to grant which is being negotiated. Bloor Homes are the housebuilder and are working with the Council to bring the site forward in a timely manner ensuring effective delivery of the development.

²³ **DLP02** Local Plan Part 1: Appendices, Appendix A, Pages 55 – 56

²⁴ **OCD07** Local Plan Preferred Options Document, Feb 2009

²⁵ **DLP04** Submission Sustainability Appraisal, Section 28.4 page 153,

²⁶ **NAT04.5-4.12** Landscape Capacity Study

²⁷ **DLP02** Local Plan Part 1: Appendices, Appendix A, Pages 55 – 56

South West of Faringdon (Site 20: 200 homes)

- 3.5 This site is allocated for around 200 dwellings and has been a proposed allocation since the Housing Delivery Update, February 2014²⁸. The site provides a sustainable location for development being located adjacent to the western side of Faringdon, and has good pedestrian links to a frequent bus service (Route 66), the secondary school, the leisure centre and the town centre. Many of these advantages were identified within the Sustainability Appraisal²⁹ and the Housing Delivery Update Appendix 5³⁰.
- 3.6 The Landscape Capacity Study³¹ highlights the potential landscape and visual impacts of developing this site, and upon which representations have also been made. The Landscape Capacity Study assessed a wider area than that allocated and found that the site includes a distinctive clump in the eastern part of the site with good views towards the site from Faringdon, Bedbury Hill and from the Thames Valley. Reflecting this, the allocated site is the area with the least potential impact and development will be subject to appropriate mitigation to conserving views, the clump and creating a new landscape structure for the locality. These requirements are included in the Site Development Template³².
- 3.7 The Evaluation of Transport Impacts Study³³ highlights the need to improve access onto the A420 with increased usage cumulatively from this site, East of Coxwell Road and the South of Faringdon sites. Together, these sites provide an opportunity to fund improvements to the existing A420/Great Coxwell Road junction and enable growth to be safely accommodated. Appropriate mitigation is included in the Site Development Template³⁴.
- 3.8 Development at this site is deliverable, as demonstrated through the SHLAA³⁵. Promoters of the site are currently working positively with the Council to bring the site forward in a timely manner ensuring effective delivery of the development.

East of Coxwell Road, Faringdon (Site 18: 200 homes)

- 3.9 This site is allocated for around 200 dwellings at Faringdon, within Great Coxwell Parish. The site was assessed as suitable in the Housing Delivery Update at Appendix 5,³⁶ although it was not included as an

²⁸ **PLP01** Housing Delivery Update

²⁹ **DLP04** Submission Sustainability Appraisal, Section 28.4 page 158

³⁰ **PLP01_2** Housing Delivery Update, Appendix 5

³¹ **NAT04.5-4.12** Landscape Capacity Study, Page 85-93

³² **DLP02** Local Plan Part 1, Appendix A, Pages 53 – 54

³³ **TRA02** Evaluation of Transport Impacts Study

³⁴ **DLP02** Local Plan Part 1, Appendix A, Pages 53 – 54

³⁵ **HOU09_10** Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, Appendix 10

³⁶ **PLP01_2** Housing Delivery Update, Appendix 5

allocation in the Housing Delivery Update as a planning application was submitted on this site. Subsequently, it was considered prudent that the site is allocated, as shown in the Publication Version of the Local Plan³⁷, until full permission is granted. Following this, the site received outline planning permission (P13/V0139/O) in 2015.

- 3.10 The site is visually well contained and provides a sustainable location for development, being located near to the secondary school, leisure centre, along a frequent bus route (Route 66) and with good access to the strategic highway network (A420). Many of these advantages were identified within the Sustainability Appraisal³⁸, and the Housing Delivery Update Appendix 5.
- 3.11 The site is also relatively unconstrained. The Sustainability Appraisal highlights potential impacts from noise from the A420 and appropriate investigation into any potential noise impacts will be required in order to inform any necessary mitigation. The Evaluation of Transport Impacts Study also highlights the need to improve access onto the A420 as a result of increased usage cumulatively from this site, South West of Faringdon and the South of Faringdon sites. Together, these sites provide an opportunity to fund improvements to the existing A420/Great Coxwell Road junction and enable growth to be safely accommodated. Appropriate mitigation is included in the Site Development Template³⁹.
- 3.12 Development at this site is deliverable, as demonstrated through the SHLAA⁴⁰, and the site currently has an Outline Planning Permission.

South of Faringdon (Site 19: 200 homes)

- 3.13 This site is allocated for around 200 dwellings at Faringdon within Great Coxwell Parish. The site has been a proposed allocation since the Housing Delivery Update Document⁴¹.
- 3.14 The site is considered a sustainable location for development being located near to the secondary school, leisure centre, along a frequent bus route (Route 66), and with good access to the strategic highway network (A420). Many of these advantages were identified within the Sustainability Appraisal⁴², and the Housing Delivery Update Appendix 5⁴³.
- 3.15 The site is also relatively unconstrained. The Evaluation of Transport Impacts Study⁴⁴ also highlights the need to improve access onto the

³⁷ **DLP01** Local Plan Part 1

³⁸ **DLP04** Submission Sustainability Appraisal, March 2015, Section 28.4, page 161

³⁹ **DLP02** Local Plan Part 1, Appendix A, Pages 49 – 50

⁴⁰ **HOU09** Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

⁴¹ **PLP01** Housing Delivery Update, Feb 2014, EIP Library Ref PLP01

⁴² **DLP04** Submission Sustainability Appraisal, March 2015, Section 28.4 page 161

⁴³ **PLP01.1** Housing Delivery Update, Appendix 5, Feb 20141

⁴⁴ **TRA02** Evaluation of Transport Impacts Study

A420 as a result of increased usage cumulatively from this site, South West of Faringdon and the East of Coxwell Road sites. Together, these sites provide an opportunity to fund improvements to the existing A420/Great Coxwell Road junction and enable growth to be safely accommodated. Appropriate mitigation is included in the Site Development Template⁴⁵.

- 3.16 Development at this site is deliverable and has a 'resolution to grant' (P15/V1934/O).

North of Shrivenham (Site 21: 500 homes)

- 3.17 This site is allocated for around 500 dwellings and has been a proposed allocation since the Housing Delivery Update⁴⁶. The site is well contained providing a sustainable location for development being located near to Shrivenham Primary School, located within walking distance to a frequent bus route, and close proximity to the facilities along the High Street and the Recreation Ground as identified within the Sustainability Appraisal⁴⁷ and the Housing Delivery Update Appendix 5⁴⁸.
- 3.18 The Landscape Capacity Study⁴⁹ highlights concerns regarding landscape visual prominence from the north-west corner of the site and thus initially it was considered this area should not be allocated. However, in response to the high level of concern raised by the residents of Shrivenham to the Housing Delivery Update, the proposed sites were reassessed. This has led to a reduction in the overall housing requirement at Shrivenham with only this site being allocated, and enabling either the potential relocation or re-provision of the primary school⁵⁰. Therefore the site boundary has been expanded to include the whole land parcel up to the A420 to accommodate around 500 homes with sufficient mitigation measures included within the Site Development Template⁵¹ to mitigate the landscape visual impacts.
- 3.19 The Sustainability Appraisal⁵² raised potential negative impacts on the adjacent Tuckmill Meadows SSSI. However, the Council agree that the recreational impact can be mitigated in which a proposed modification is included within Appendix 3.
- 3.20 Development at this site is deliverable with the site being progressed in two phases by the promoters. Phase 1 is the southern half of the site and has a 'resolution to grant' (P13/V1810/O) for 240 dwellings with land for the delivery of a primary school. Phase 2 is the northern half of the

⁴⁵ **DLP02** Local Plan Part 1, Appendix A, Page 57 – 58

⁴⁶ **PLP01** Housing Delivery Update, Feb 2014

⁴⁷ **DLP04** Submission Sustainability Appraisal, March 15, Section 28.4 page 160

⁴⁸ **PLP01_2** Housing Delivery Update Appendix 5

⁴⁹ **NAT04.08** Landscape Capacity Study, Pages 256-262

⁵⁰ **COR01** Cabinet Report, Oct 2014

⁵¹ **DLP02** Local Plan Part 1, Appendix A, Page 57 – 58

⁵² **DLP04** Submission Sustainability Appraisal, March 15, Section 28.4 page 156

site in which there is a planning application currently under consideration (P15/V2541/O) for 260 dwellings. The promoters are currently working positively with the Council to bring the site forward in a timely manner ensuring effective delivery of the development. This is detailed further in the Statement of Common Ground.

West of Stanford in the Vale (Site 16: 200 homes)

- 3.21 This site is allocated for around 200 dwellings and has been a proposed allocation since the Housing Delivery Update Document⁵³. The site provides a sustainable location for development located near to local employment at White Horse Business Park, has good access to the strategic highway network (A417) and lies within close proximity to local facilities within the village. These advantages were identified within the Sustainability Appraisal⁵⁴ and the Housing Delivery Update Appendix 5⁵⁵.
- 3.32 The site is also relatively unconstrained. The Landscape Capacity Study⁵⁶ highlights that development can be contained with improved tree planting and screening views from the A417, requirements that are included in the Site Development Template⁵⁷. The proposed development will also support the on-going viability and vitality of local facilities, helping their retention and renewal in the long-term.
- 3.33 Development at this site is deliverable. The site is being promoted by two parties, both of which are currently working positively with the Council to bring the site forward in a timely manner ensuring effective delivery of the development.

Question 10.2

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

4. The Council's Response to Question 10.2

- 4.1 As detailed in Section 2 above, the Council assessed all reasonable sites that could help to meet the identified housing needs. In total, 25 sites were considered, with 15 sites being removed after Stage 2 or 3 and 10 reasonable site alternatives assessed at Stage 4. This resulted in 6 sites being allocated and 4 reasonable site alternatives excluded. A full list of

⁵³ **PLP01** Housing Delivery Update, Feb 14

⁵⁴ **DLP04** Submission Sustainability Appraisal, March 15, Section 28.4 page 155

⁵⁵ **PLP01_2** Housing Delivery Update, Appendix 5, Feb 14

⁵⁶ **NAT04.08** Landscape Capacity Study, Page 294-300

⁵⁷ **DLP02** Local Plan Part 1, Appendix A, Pages 47 – 48

alternative sites is included at Appendix 1 to this statement. The four excluded reasonable alternative sites are as follows:

- South Shrivenham;
- South West of Shrivenham;
- North of Stanford in the Vale; and
- Land North West of East Challow.

South and South West Shrivenham Sites

- 4.2 The South Shrivenham site was previously a proposed allocation in the Housing Delivery Update and the South West Shrivenham site was promoted through representations to the Housing Delivery Update and was formally assessed as a result. Representations on the Housing Delivery Update raised concerns over a number of sites being allocated due to the cumulatively impact on infrastructure which could be less if just one site was allocated, in particular in regards to impact on primary school provision in the village. The Council therefore considered that the location and size of the allocated North Shrivenham site would enable either the potential relocation or re-provision of the primary school to be provided with an increase in the number of dwellings proposed⁵⁸.

North of Stanford in the Vale

- 4.3 The Landscape Capacity Study⁵⁹ assessed this site as not having the capacity to be able to deliver the strategic site threshold of 200 dwellings. The Study concludes only 25 dwellings could be delivered on this site.

Land North West of East Challow

- 4.4 The Land North of East Challow site was previously proposed as an allocation in the Housing Delivery Update (February, 2014). Following consultation on the Update, the site was reassessed. It was subsequently concluded there were a number of specific site constraints that could restrict its capacity, including the need for a significant buffer, along the Wilts and Berks Canal corridor to protect Great Crested Newts, the proximity to historic assets and the potential of development to harm the landscape setting⁶⁰. In light of these issues, the site was considered too constrained to be able to deliver to the strategic site threshold of 200 homes⁶¹.

⁵⁸ **COR01** Cabinet Report, October 2014

⁵⁹ **NAT04.08** Landscape Capacity Study, Pages 263-269

⁶⁰ **NAT04.07** Landscape Capacity Study, Pages 205-214

⁶¹ **PLP10** Local Plan 2031 Part 1 Consultation Statement: Covering Consultations Feb – May 2013; Feb – April 2014, Nov 2014, Para 251 on page 56

Question 10.3

Are the identified and safeguarded Employment sites listed in Policy CP20 soundly based and deliverable? Are there other sites that would more appropriately meet the identified need for employment land.

5. The Council's Response to Question 10.3

- 5.1 As explained at the outset of this statement, the vision for the Western Vale Sub-Area is to provide employment provision that maximises the self-sufficiency of Faringdon as well as maintaining the existing key employment areas that support the communities in the Western Vale. Reflecting this, Core Policies 6 and 20 safeguard the strategic employment sites at Faringdon Park Road Industrial Estate for on-going employment use. In addition, 3ha of new employment land is identified as part of the strategic allocation at South of Park Road. This is included within Core Policy 6 and the requirements for development are set out in the Site Development Template⁶². The identification of employment land within the Western Vale is supported by the Employment Land Review⁶³ and Addendum⁶⁴ and the Sustainability Appraisal⁶⁵. A summary is provided within the Economic Topic Paper 5⁶⁶.
- 5.2 The Employment Land Review provides a detailed explanation of the employment land property market⁶⁷ in the District. In regards to the Sub-Area, Faringdon plays a key employment role for the local area with good links to both Oxford and Swindon through the A420.
- 5.3 The Employment Land Review⁶⁸ and Addendum⁶⁹ assessed the quantity, quality and viability of the District's employment land supply and forecasted the future demand for employment land over the plan period. The Addendum⁷⁰ updates the employment needs of the district in line with the outputs of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment for Oxfordshire⁷¹ and the Economic Forecasting report that informed it⁷². The Review and Addendum demonstrate there is sufficient vacant and/or developable employment land across the district to accommodate the predicted jobs growth for the plan period⁷³. The Review and Addendum provide detail on the vacant and/or developable employment

⁶² **DLP02** Local Plan Part 1: Appendices, Appendix A, Pages 55 – 56

⁶³ **ECO01** Employment Land Review Update

⁶⁴ **ECO01.2** Employment Land Review Addendum

⁶⁵ **DLP04** Submission Sustainability Appraisal, March 15

⁶⁶ **TOP05** Topic Paper 5: Supporting Economic Prosperity

⁶⁷ **ECO01** Employment Land Review Update 2013, Chapter 5

⁶⁸ **ECO01** Employment Land Review, Update 2013

⁶⁹ **ECO01.2** Employment Land Review Addendum

⁷⁰ **ECO01.2** Employment Land Review Addendum

⁷¹ **HOU01** Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment

⁷² **ECO02** Economic Forecasting to inform the Oxfordshire SEP and SHMA

⁷³ **ECO01** Employment Land Review Update 2013, page.77

land within the Western Vale Sub-Area⁷⁴ with a summary provided below.

Faringdon Park Road Industrial Estate: Land adjacent to the A420 (A4&20 site) (4.2 hectares)

- 5.4 This is a large site in Faringdon, alongside the A420 and has had recent planning applications submitted on it. It remains suitable for B1, B2 and B8 employment, with good transport access routes and is a large open site that has no evident site constraints. The safeguarding and allocation of B1, B2 and B8 employment land here is intended to help maintain a diverse local economy in Faringdon and draws on the existing light industry located in the town. Consultee views and observations have led to the conclusion that the site is appropriate for continued employment development. It will provide a range of employment opportunities for the local community.

Faringdon Park Road Industrial Estate: Land North of Park Road (HCA site), Faringdon (0.2 hectares (rounded up from 0.18))

- 5.5 This site has been identified by HCA as an enterprise centre and planning permission has been granted for 17 incubator units on the site. It is a site that is suitable for B1 employment due to a combination of surrounding compatible land-uses and a restricted access road off the A417 that is not suitable for larger commercial vehicles. It is also important for employment to be spread across the district's main centres and this site in Faringdon offers potential for new job creation in the Western Vale whilst offering important sustainability advantages.

South of Park Road (3 hectares as part of Strategic Site Allocation)

- 5.6 South of Park Road, Faringdon is a proposed strategic site allocation which will include approximately 350 dwellings and 3 hectares of employment land. The results of the consultation with stakeholders, the demand forecasting exercise and the site survey undertaken as part of the Employment Land Review suggest that this site would be appropriate to provide around 3 to 4 hectares of B2 and B8 employment land to serve the Faringdon market.

Alternative Sites

- 5.7 In terms of other, alternative employment sites, the Council considers that no clear or persuasive evidence has been submitted to the Council to demonstrate or indeed promote any alternative sites specifically for strategic employment use in this Sub-Area. The Employment Land Review⁷⁵ did however consider four other sites for employment use. These are explained below.

⁷⁴ ECO01 Employment Land Review Update 2013

⁷⁵ ECO01 Employment Land Review Update 2013

- 5.8 Wicklesham Quarry at Faringdon was considered, but it has not been safeguarded as it is outside of the settlement boundary, its current use is as a quarry which is an employment use (albeit providing a low number of jobs) and because of the fact that it is likely to have high remediation costs.
- 5.9 There are three other sites within Faringdon that are currently vacant with developable land, but they do not meet the criteria to satisfy the forecast demand up to 2031. They are as follows⁷⁶:
- Faringdon, north of Pioneer Road; this site has poor road access (from the south) and the proximity to the industrial estate;
 - Faringdon, strip of land alongside Park Road; this site has physical constraints, most notably a slope. This would require significant and costly landscaping and groundworks to improve the site for development potential; and
 - Faringdon, land south of the playground; this site has physical constraints, most notably a slope. This would require significant and costly landscaping and groundworks to improve the site for development potential.
- 5.10 For information, Faringdon Town Council has developed and re-submitted the Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan⁷⁷, which is currently being consulted upon until the 11 January 2016. The vision for the Neighbourhood Plan echoes the vision for the Western Vale within the Local Plan and proposes to allocate additional employment sites to those within the Local Plan.
- 5.11 The Sustainability Appraisal⁷⁸ has considered and assessed the location of employment land in the District ensuring that the most justified and appropriate sites are taken forward. The Sustainability Appraisal assessed two options, considering whether sites should or should not be allocated at Faringdon as well as Wantage and Grove respectively. The Sustainability Appraisal concluded that allocating sites at Faringdon, Wantage and Grove would be the most sustainable option as this will provide local employment opportunities, particularly in the Western Vale which is furthest from the Science Vale area, and offers the opportunity to help improve the self-containment of the settlements.

⁷⁶ **ECO01** Employment Land Review Update 2013, Table 8-3

⁷⁷ Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan, available at: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/neighbourhood-plans/faringdon-neighbourhood-plan>

⁷⁸ **DLP04** Submission Sustainability Appraisal, March 15

6. Summary of how the Policies and Proposals in the Sub-Area meet the ‘tests of soundness’

6.1 *Positively Prepared*

In accordance with the NPPF and PPG, the Western Vale Sub-Area is based on a strategy that seeks to help meet the full objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements consistent with achieving sustainable development⁷⁹. The evidence base studies (as listed in paragraph 1.6) and the Sustainability Appraisal process have ensured the policy is positively prepared through ensuring the most sustainable strategy and allocations are included within the Plan with enhancement and mitigation measures being incorporated where required.

6.2 *Justified*

In accordance with the NPPF⁸⁰ and PPG, a comprehensive site selection process has been undertaken, informed by comprehensive evidence (as listed in paragraph 1.6) and the Sustainability Appraisal which has resulted in robust testing of reasonable alternatives. This has ensured the most appropriate, sustainable and justified strategy is proposed in the Local Plan.

6.3 *Effective*

In accordance with the NPPF⁸¹ and the PPG, the Western Vale Sub-Area strategy is considered deliverable over the plan period, which is demonstrated within the SHLAA and associated viability assessment, the Meeting the Objectively Assessed Need for Housing Study, and Matter 11 Statement Appendices. The Council is committed to joint working with key stakeholders and site promoters to enable the positive delivery of the strategy. The Site Development Templates identify key objectives for each site and set out the key delivery requirements for each site allocated in this part of the Local Plan.

6.4 *Consistent with National Policy*

The Western Vale Sub-Area strategy accords with the NPPF⁸² and the PPG and is considered to be soundly based.

⁷⁹ CLG (2012) National Planning Policy Framework; Paragraph 182

⁸⁰ CLG (2012) National Planning Policy Framework; Paragraph 182

⁸¹ CLG (2012) National Planning Policy Framework; Paragraph 182

⁸² CLG (2012) National Planning Policy Framework; Paragraph 182

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 The Council considers that in respect of this matter, the Local Plan meets the tests of soundness set out in the NPPF subject to the proposed minor modification set out in Appendix 3 to this Statement and within the Schedule of Proposed Minor Changes⁸³.

⁸³ **DLP11** Schedule of Proposed Minor Changes

Appendix 1:

Brief Summary of the Assessment of Alternative Sites

Site No	Site Name	Stage Removed from Assessment	Reasoning
TPS 032	Haynes Waste Yard East Challow	Stage 1&2 (2014)	Does not meet size threshold. Site is approx. 3.8 ha and could only accommodate 88 homes.
TPS 033	Land adj/north east of A417 between Park Road and proposed development at the Council yard near Challow Park	Stage 1&2 (2014)	Does not meet size threshold. Site is approx. 7.65 ha and could accommodate 191 homes.
TPS 034	Land behind the Nalder Fields development to the north/east of East Challow	Stage 1&2 (2014)	Excluded from the following stages of assessment as would result in loss of important open space between Wantage and East Challow
TPS 035 SA: 23	Land north west of East Challow	Stage 4&5 (2014)	Reasonable Alternative. Explanation included in Statement.
TPS 042	Highworth Road, Faringdon	Stage 1&2 (2014)	Does not meet size threshold.
TPS 045	West Faringdon	Stage 3 (2013)	Excluded at Stage 3 as the site contains a County Wildlife Site and remaining area would be separated and thus would not provide a coherent site. This site has subsequently been designated as a Town Green.
TPS 068	Land off Kings Lane, Longcot	Stage 1&2 (2014)	Does not meet size threshold.
TPS 082 SA:	South West of Shrivenham	Stage 4&5 (2014)	Reasonable Alternative. Explanation included in Statement.

Site No	Site Name	Stage Removed from Assessment	Reasoning
53			
TPS 083	Land east of A420/Land North of Townsend Road	Stage 3 (2014)	Unknown availability and achievability.
TPS 084	Land to the South of Highworth Road	Stage 1&2 (2014)	Does not meet size threshold.
TPS 086 SA: 30	South of Shrivenham	Stage 4&5 (2014)	Reasonable Alternative. Explanation included in Statement.
TPS 087	Townsend Road, Shrivenham	Stage 1&2 (2014)	Does not meet size threshold.
TPS 088	West of Station Road, Shrivenham	Stage 1&2 (2014)	Does not meet size threshold.
TPS 090 SA: 32	North of Stanford in the Vale	Stage 4&5 (2013)	Reasonable Alternative. Explanation included in Statement.
TPS 091	Recreation/football Ground, Stanford in the Vale	Stage 1&2 (2014)	Does not meet size threshold.
TPS 092	Stanford in the Vale Village	Stage 1&2 (2014)	Does not meet size threshold.
TPS 093	Twiddy-Old Mill Nursery, Stanford in the Vale	Stage 1&2 (2014)	Does not meet size threshold.
TPS 105	South Uffington	Stage 3 (2013)	Excluded as the site is at Uffington which is not well related to the strategic road network and public transport is poor.
TPS 113	South Watchfield (Golf Course)	Stage 3 (2013)	Considered both within 2013 and 2014 and excluded for the same reasoning. Development would result in loss of the open gap between Shrivenham and Watchfield.

Appendix 2:

The Council's Response to detailed representations made in respect of this Matter, during preparation of the Local Plan.

The Table below provides a summary of the key issues raised through consultation on the Local Plan. Regulation 22 Statement⁸⁴ and Appendix 3⁸⁵ and the Supplement to the Regulations 22 Statement⁸⁶ provide further detail on the outcome of consultation and the Council's response.

Issue Raised	Council Response
English Heritage welcomes the reference to the historic character and landscape setting on page 84, although they would prefer "conserved and enhanced".	The Council agree the proposed modification would provide a positive and clearer strategy for the conservation, enjoyment and enhancement of the historic environment. Minor modification proposed.
Core Policy 20 refers to Great Coxwell Parish as being a larger village. This is incorrect, as identified in the settlement hierarchy.	The Council acknowledges Great Coxwell Parish is not a larger village and this should be amended in the Plan. Minor modification proposed.
Site 18 does not list the site as being in the Parish of Great Coxwell	The Council agree there is an omission in the title of the Site Development Template for the site East of Coxwell Road. Minor modification proposed.
South West of Faringdon and landscape impacts concerns.	As explained in Section 3 above, landscape impacts have been fully considered and appropriately mitigated within the Site Development Template.
Land east of Coxwell Road and South Faringdon and concern raised of coalescence with Great Coxwell.	Representations have raised concern that the site is eroding the gap between Faringdon and Great Coxwell and will lead to coalescence however satisfactory mitigation can be provided to ensure a gap remains. Both of

⁸⁴ Regulation 22 Statement (DLP09)

⁸⁵ Regulation 22 Statement Appendix 3 (DLP09.2)

⁸⁶ Supplement to the Regulation 22 Statement – Council Response to Summarised Representations (PSD01)

Issue Raised	Council Response
	these requirements are included in the Site Development Template.
A number of settlements have incorrectly been identified as Local Service Centres rather than Larger Villages.	The Council agrees these settlements are Larger Villages and reference to them as Local Service Centres is an error and will be corrected.
Natural England comments on North Shrivenham, and in terms of hydrological impact and recreational effects they are confident that recreational effects can be managed by way of mitigation, but advise that to be sound this needs to be covered in the development requirement template.	The Council agree a modification would provide provision for appropriate mitigation for the recreational impact.
Oxfordshire County Council have raised concerns over primary school capacity at Shrivenham and Stanford in the Vale. Both settlements will require an increase in primary school capacity with potentially acquisition of additional site area for the school.	The Council will continue to work with the County and respective site promoters on these matters, in particular the options for addressing primary school capacity. Phase 1 at North Shrivenham includes land for a primary school.

Appendix 3:

The Council's Suggested Minor Modifications in relation to Issues raised to Matter 5.

Ref.	Issue Raised	Modification Suggested
	Improved wording within the Western Vale Vision as raised by English Heritage.	Add the following (page 84): Conserved and enhanced
	Core Policy 20 refers to Great Coxwell Parish as being a larger village. This is incorrect, as identified in the settlement hierarchy.	Amend error
	Site 18 does not list the site as being in the Parish of Great Coxwell	Add (<u>Parish of Great Coxwell</u>) in the title of the Site Development Template for the site East of Coxwell Road.
	Reference to settlements as a Local Service Centre is incorrect and should be identified as Larger Villages.	Change reference from Local Service Centre to Larger Villages.
	Natural England regarding recreational impact on the SSSI	Add the following development requirement to the template <u>"Contribute towards redressing the identified Green Infrastructure deficit in the area surrounding Shrivenham, and ensure there is no recreational impact on Tuckmill Meadows SSSI"</u>