

# **Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 2**

## **Examination Hearings**

**Written Statement by Vale of White Horse District  
Council in relation to**

**Matter 7: Harwell Campus**

**June 2018**

**7.1 Is the proposal in the LPP2 to allocate a site for 1,000 dwellings for an Innovation Village at Harwell Campus consistent with the strategy of the LPP1 for the district as a whole and the South East Vale Sub Area?**

- 7.1.1 The proposal to allocate 1,000 dwellings at Harwell Campus for an Innovation Village is consistent with the Local Plan 2031 strategy, as set out in the Adopted Part 1 plan, for the district as a whole and for the South-East Vale Sub-Area.
- 7.1.2 The district's spatial strategy 'Building on our Strengths' includes a key strand to strengthen the role of the Science Vale area as a first-choice place for business and research through promoting the area as a world class location, especially the Enterprise Zone sites at Milton Park and Harwell Campus. To deliver this, strategic housing is to be allocated at key locations, with Harwell Campus being identified as a key location. Further detail on this is provided in the Council's Matter 3 statement.
- 7.1.3 The strategy for the South-East Vale Sub-Area is consistent with this key strand of the district's spatial strategy and states in 2031 "*the area will continue to be a vital economic area for Oxfordshire, including of international importance, where new jobs have been provided alongside housing and community facilities*"<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, the key focus for this sub-area is to ensure that employment growth centred on the Enterprise Zone and Science Vale sits alongside the strategic housing and infrastructure to support sustainable growth and improve self-containment of the sub-area.
- 7.1.4 The allocation of 1,000 homes at Harwell Campus as an Innovation Village is consistent with these strategies. Harwell Campus is a key employment location and makes a significant contribution to ensuring that Vale and Oxfordshire meets its economic growth ambitions. The policy to allocate housing at the Campus in the form of an Innovation Village will ensure that the specific housing needs of the Campus's existing and future employees are provided for, adjacent to the jobs, unlocking the potential of the Campus in becoming world class and minimising the need to travel thus improving the self-containment of the area.

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<sup>1</sup> ALP02 Local Plan 2031 Part 1: Strategic Sites and Policies (in particular Page 78)

**7.2 Given the exceptional circumstances and national interest tests in the NPPF for major development in the AONB, is the proposal for an Innovation Village justified by proportionate evidence in principle?**

7.2.1 The Council considers that exceptional circumstances and the national interest test have been demonstrated to justify the Innovation Village in the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) based on proportionate evidence, as set out in the Exceptional Circumstances Report produced by SQW in partnership with Harwell Campus Partnership (**NAT04**)<sup>2</sup>.

7.2.2 The Exceptional Circumstances Report (**NAT04**)<sup>3</sup> takes the tests in turn to demonstrate how they have been met supported by a number of surveys and research ensuring the evidence is robust. In addition, a Statement of Common Ground<sup>4</sup> between the Council, Harwell Campus Partnership and Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership endorses the Innovation Village and the evidence

*The development is in the public interest*

7.2.3 The Government identified in 2017 that space is to be one of the eight 'great technologies' that will drive UK economic growth in the future. Harwell Campus is central to achieving this as it is the Country's most important space cluster with the Campus having been designated the UK's Space Gateway. It is one of the largest and most important sites for scientific research, development and innovation in Europe; it is a national and international asset. There are over 225 organisations and businesses on the Campus<sup>5</sup>, including the European Centre for Space Applications and Telecommunications, the Diamond Synchrotron, and the Satellite Applications Catapult. Its facilities are a national resource and amenity with space activities having a significant effect on many different spheres including regenerative medicine.

7.2.4 The Government and the taxpayer have invested over £2 billion into large scientific facilities over the past 60 years at the Campus and it is in the public interest that the full potential of the Campus is fully realised. Significant investment is ongoing at the Campus, with the Government confirming in 2017 funding of £99 million from the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund to create a National Satellite Testing Facility on the Campus. This facility will be open in early 2020 and will facilitate the construction of bigger and more technology advanced satellites and remove the need for UK companies to use test facilities abroad.

7.2.5 This demonstrates that significant investment has and is being invested into the Campus, recognising it is a national and international asset providing leading edge scientific facilities. It is imperative that steps are taken to ensure a significant return on past and future investment is achieved. The development of an Innovation Village is important to achieving this as it will help realise the full potential of the Campus, the Innovation Village will secure and maintain the required skilled labour force to undertake the scientific activities at the Campus that has been so heavily invested in at a national and international scale. It is in the public interest to ensure the

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<sup>2</sup> **NAT04** Harwell Campus "Exceptional Circumstances" Report

<sup>3</sup> **NAT04** Harwell Campus "Exceptional Circumstances" Report

<sup>4</sup> **SCG01** Statement of Common Ground with Harwell Campus Science and Innovation Campus Limited Partnership at Harwell Campus

<sup>5</sup> **NAT04** Harwell Campus "Exceptional Circumstances" Report (in particular Table 3-1 demonstrates the number of key scientific research and innovation organisations based at the Campus)

investment and international important science research and innovation can effectivity take place<sup>6</sup>.

*The need for development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy*

- 7.2.6 As explained above, Harwell Campus is a national and international scientific asset and significant funding is being invested into the Campus, however to ensure the scientific and innovative research can take place, a key requirement is a sufficient supply of suitably qualified and skilled employees who are willing and able to commit to working at the Campus.
- 7.2.7 The Exceptional Circumstances Report<sup>7</sup> demonstrates that ‘innovation districts’ are being developed as effective ways of attracting educated employees. There is a change in belief from the traditional style science park, which Harwell Campus currently is, to a preference for mixed-use developments that co-locate and cluster uses to facilitate learning, collaboration and cross pollination of ideas through accidental meetings and idea exchanges. A number of science parks in the UK are developing their own ‘innovation district’, such as Oxford Northern Gateway, West Cambridge, Cambridge Biomedical Campus and North-East Cambridge<sup>8</sup>.
- 7.2.8 The proposed Innovation Village at the Campus is based on this approach to maximise the Campus’s ability to attract the required skilled employees through providing a high-quality mixed-use environment. The approach is taking a long-term view to ensure the Campus can achieve effective returns on the investment made through developing a bespoke solution that works for the Campus in attracting and competing for the needed skilled employees.
- 7.2.9 Furthermore, the Exceptional Circumstances Report (**NAT04**)<sup>9</sup> has demonstrated that the housing needs of employees at the Campus are very different from the regional and local market which is supported by the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan (OxSEP; **ECO01**)<sup>10</sup>, for the following reasons:
- There is a large proportion of transient employees at the Campus in the form of PhD students, international research and overseas employees that are only at the Campus for short time frames. This could be for a few weeks to up to a few months at any one time. A significant amount of rental and smaller properties are needed to meet this need. A significant proportion of the new build dwellings delivered in the local area are typically executive homes rather than smaller dwellings. There was only a 2.5% growth in privately rented properties in the surrounding area between 2001 and 2011.
  - House and rental prices in the district are high compared with average salaries in the district. At the Campus there are a number of researchers and staff who are on wages below the median average and thus the existing housing stock is unaffordable to many employees.
  - A significant proportion of the Campus’s workforce are older with a median age of 46 and many of these employees were able to get on the housing ladder many years ago. However, given the age of the workforce, a number of

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<sup>6</sup> **NAT04** Harwell Campus “Exceptional Circumstances” Report (in particular Section 3)

<sup>7</sup> **NAT04** Harwell Campus “Exceptional Circumstances” Report (in particular Section 4)

<sup>8</sup> **NAT04** Harwell Campus “Exceptional Circumstances” Report (in particular Box 3 on page 13)

<sup>9</sup> **NAT04** Harwell Campus “Exceptional Circumstances” Report

<sup>10</sup> **ECO01** Creating the Environment for Growth – Strategic Economic Plan for Oxfordshire 2016 (in particular pages 40-44)

employees will be retiring with a need to replace these employees with suitably qualified employees who will face the same concerns as highlighted above.

- The type of employees required at the Campus are generally internationally mobile due to the scientific nature of the organisations. Therefore, to attract the required skilled employees to the Campus, the Campus is having to operate and compete at a global scale for the required labour.

7.2.10 The Exceptional Circumstances Report (**NAT04**)<sup>11</sup> demonstrates that there is insufficient housing of the right type and affordability to meet and attract the highly skilled employees needed, in accordance with the explanation above, to elevate the Campus to world class standard. The bespoke product of the Innovation Village will ensure that this can be achieved and that there is no adverse impact on the Campus’s ability to undertake the scientific and innovative research required nationally and internationally. To meet the specific needs of the Campus, the Exceptional Circumstances Report includes an indicative mix of housing reflecting the needs explained above<sup>12</sup>. Table 7.1 provides this mix.

**Table 7.1: Indicative Housing Mix**

Type	Category	Percentage
Private – 65%	Rental	30-40%
	Market Sale	25-35%
Affordable – 35%	Intermediate rent	15-20%
	Intermediate Sale	5-10%
	Starter Homes	5-10%

*The cost of, and scope of, developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way*

7.2.11 The Innovation Village cannot be developed away from the Campus. As explained in paragraph 7.2.7 above, there is a shift from providing traditional science parks to mixed use developments known as ‘innovation districts’. Innovation districts co-locate academic, commercial, retail and residential uses to encourage innovation through increasing the role of collaboration, ideas exchange and thus help knowledge intensive science and technology firms flourish.

7.2.12 The proposed Innovation Village would enable the Campus to co-locate residential, employment uses, retail, leisure and other uses at the Campus. This would provide the type of development needed to attract skilled employees and a sustainable community where employees, work, live and play in the same area minimising the need to travel within the district, in particular by car. Providing an Innovation Village that is physically separate from the Campus would not achieve this principle.

7.2.13 The Council has undertaken a robust site selection process in accordance with national policy and guidance, as summarised in the Exceptional Circumstances Report (**NAT04**)<sup>13</sup> and demonstrated in Topic Paper 2: Site Selection (**TOP02.1**)<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> **NAT04** Harwell Campus “Exceptional Circumstances” Report (in particular Section 4)

<sup>12</sup> **NAT04** Harwell Campus “Exceptional Circumstances” Report (in particular Section 4 and Table 4-1 on page 18)

<sup>13</sup> **NAT04** Harwell Campus “Exceptional Circumstances” Report

<sup>14</sup> **TOP02.1** Topic Paper 2: Site Selection (Publication Version)

and Sustainability Appraisal (**CSD09**)<sup>15</sup>. Further explanation on the site selection process is provided in the Council's response to Question 7.4 below.

7.2.14 The site selection process has demonstrated that there are no other reasonable alternatives on the Campus that would be suitable for the Innovation Village. All parcels adjacent to the Campus were assessed, with all other parcels assessed to likely have a detrimental impact on the AONB<sup>16</sup>.

7.2.15 Although the principle of the Innovation Village cannot be provided away from the Campus, sites outside of the AONB have been assessed to ensure all alternatives have been comprehensively assessed. The alternative sites away from the Campus and outside of the AONB, as demonstrated within the Exceptional Circumstances Report (**NAT04**)<sup>17</sup>, Topic Paper 2: Site Selection (**TOP02.1**)<sup>18</sup> and Sustainability Appraisal (**CSD09**)<sup>19</sup>, are:

- South of Milton Heights
- North of East Hendred
- Rowstock
- West of Harwell Village

7.2.16 These sites are not considered appropriate as three of the four sites would have a detrimental impact on the landscape<sup>20</sup>, with the majority of these sites also having a significant impact on highways network or safe access cannot be achieved. Further explanation is provided at paragraph 7.4.6 below and within Topic Paper 2: Site Selection Appendix B (**TOP02.3**)<sup>21</sup>.

*Any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated*

7.2.17 The Council has demonstrated that the Innovation Village will not have a detrimental effect on the environment, landscape and recreational opportunities as demonstrated by the Landscape and Visual Appraisal (**NAT05**)<sup>22</sup>, which has been summarised in the Exceptional Circumstances Report (**NAT04**)<sup>23</sup>.

7.2.18 The Landscape and Visual Appraisal demonstrates that the Innovation Village will not have a significant adverse effect on the character and appearance of the wider AONB landscape with only a few potential short term adverse impacts which can be sufficiently mitigated. There would no long-term adverse effects on the wider AONB landscape and the proposal would deliver a number of benefits to the AONB landscape. The potential of short term adverse impacts would be limited to the

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<sup>15</sup> **CSD09** Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Vale of White Horse District Local Plan 2031 Part 2 (Publication Version)

<sup>16</sup> **TOP02.2** Topic Paper 2: Site Selection, Appendix A (Publication Version) (in particular pages 63-64)

<sup>17</sup> **NAT04** Harwell Campus "Exceptional Circumstances" Report

<sup>18</sup> **TOP02.1** Topic Paper 2: Site Selection (Publication Version)

<sup>19</sup> **CSD09** Sustainability Appraisal of the Vale of White Horse District Local Plan 2031 Part 2 (Publication Version)

<sup>20</sup> **NAT07 and NAT07.2** Vale of White Horse District Local Plan 2: Landscape Capacity Study and Addendum

<sup>21</sup> **TOP02.3** Topic Paper 2: Site Selection, Appendix B (Publication Version) (in particular pages 57-58, 31-32, 63-64, and 39-40)

<sup>22</sup> **NAT05** Harwell Campus; Landscape and Visual Appraisal

<sup>23</sup> **NAT04** Harwell Campus "Exceptional Circumstances" Report (in particular Section 5)

character of the land within the allocation, its immediate surroundings and on the recreational experiences of Icknield Way, Hungerford Road and Winaway. In the longer term, the proposed mitigation strategy would have matured and thus the landscape character will revert back to the baseline with some improvement to local character due to screening and increased opportunities for recreational experiences through improved connectivity.

7.2.19 The land proposed for an Innovation Village is mainly previously developed land, with the exception of the north-west field, with the site previously being used for housing when the site was an RAF base. The Landscape and Visual Appraisal (**NAT05**)<sup>24</sup> demonstrates that the Innovation Village, particularly within the north-western field, would be more sympathetic to the AONB than the employment use currently allocated. The Campus's proposals for the Innovation Village include lower densities and sensitive design which would respond to the sites setting in the AONB. The current allocated use of employment is likely to include larger and more prominent buildings with mitigation measures likely to take substantially longer to screen the development from the surrounding AONB than the Innovation Village<sup>25</sup>. The Landscape and Visual Appraisal has shown that the Innovation Village would be more consistent with the character of the wider AONB.

7.2.20 It should also be noted that in the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan<sup>26</sup> there is support for promoting local enterprise as this is a key part of conserving and enhancing the character and special qualities of the area. The Management Plan also recognises that Harwell Campus is a large previously developed area, partly designated as Enterprise Zone, with opportunities for redevelopment and intensification of the site.

*Difference between the Part 1 and Part 2 plan sites*

7.2.21 In the Part 1 plan, the Council proposed to allocate two sites at Harwell Campus (Sites 12 and 13). The Inspector recommended the removal of these sites from the plan prior to Adoption. He considered the need for the development had not been demonstrated by the evidence presented to him at that time and that the sites would be likely to cause some harm to the landscape of the AONB<sup>27</sup>. However, the Inspector did recognise that an alternative proposal on the Campus would be significantly less harmful to the landscape, and would have the benefit of recycling previously developed land.

7.2.22 The Innovation Village site proposed in the Part 2 plan is different to the sites removed from the Part 1 plan. The Topic Paper 2: Site Selection (**TOP02.1**)<sup>28</sup> highlights the differences, which are as follows:

- They are different sites; the Innovation Village is entirely within the existing employment designation whereas Sites 12 and 13 were not.

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<sup>24</sup> **NAT05** Harwell Campus; Landscape and Visual Appraisal

<sup>25</sup> **NAT05** Harwell Campus; Landscape and Visual Appraisal (in particular 5.2.4)

<sup>26</sup> North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan (in particular page 59), available at: [http://www.northwessexdowns.org.uk/uploads/File\\_Management/NWD\\_Docs/About\\_Us/Management\\_Plan/NWD\\_AONB\\_Management\\_Plan\\_2014-19.pdf](http://www.northwessexdowns.org.uk/uploads/File_Management/NWD_Docs/About_Us/Management_Plan/NWD_AONB_Management_Plan_2014-19.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> **ALP03** Inspector's Report on the Examination into Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1 (in particular paragraph 121)

<sup>28</sup> **TOP02.1** Topic Paper 2: Site Selection (Publication Version) (in particular paragraph 3.36)

- The Innovation Village is supported by the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and Harwell Campus Partnership as demonstrated in the Statement of Common Ground<sup>29</sup>, and
- Robust and proportionate evidence has been provided in support of the Innovation Village demonstrating the exceptional circumstances have been met.

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<sup>29</sup> **SCG05** Statement of Common Ground with Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and Harwell Campus Science and Innovation Campus Limited Partnership on Harwell Campus

### **7.3 Is the use of employment land for the proposed Innovation Village compatible with the long term employment objectives for Harwell Campus and the Enterprise Zone?**

- 7.3.1. The proposed Innovation Village is on land currently allocated for employment use and is compatible with the long-term objectives for Harwell Campus and the Enterprise Zone, which is to accommodate significant economic growth both within and beyond the plan period.
- 7.3.2. The Local Plan 2031 identifies that Harwell Campus will accommodate at least 9,000 jobs (5,400 net additional jobs) up to 2031 and the designated Science Vale Enterprise Zone identifies that Harwell Campus Enterprise Zone will accommodate 5,800 jobs (3,500 net additional jobs) up until 2037. Although the Innovation Village is being built on land allocated for employment use and designated Enterprise Zone land, the Exceptional Circumstances Report<sup>30</sup> demonstrates that this will not be detrimental to the long-term delivery of further growth post 2031 and 2037. The Report<sup>31</sup> demonstrates that there is sufficient land within the Enterprise Zone to accommodate over 10,000 jobs, which more than exceeds the 5,800 jobs proposed. This calculation does not include the substantial amount of land that sits outside of the Enterprise Zone at the Campus, which is approximately around 35 hectares of developable land.
- 7.3.3. The Statement of Common Ground<sup>32</sup> with Harwell Campus Partnership and Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership also demonstrates and confirms that the Innovation Village proposal supports the long-term objectives of the Campus and also Oxfordshire wide.

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<sup>30</sup> **NAT04** Harwell Campus “Exceptional Circumstances” Report (in particular Section 7)

<sup>31</sup> **NAT04** Harwell Campus “Exceptional Circumstances” Report (in particular Table 7-1 on page 25)

<sup>32</sup> **SCG05** Statement of Common Ground with Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and Harwell Science and Innovation Campus Limited Partnership (in particular paragraph 3.4)

**7.4 Is the proposal for an Innovation Village appropriate when considered against reasonable alternatives (if any) in the light of site constraints, infrastructure requirements and potential impacts? Have these been adequately assessed?**

- 7.4.1 The Innovation Village is appropriate when considered against reasonable alternatives and all site constraints, infrastructure requirements and impacts have been adequately assessed. As explained in paragraphs 7.2.11 to 7.2.14 above, the Exceptional Circumstances Report (**NAT04**)<sup>33</sup> details the evidence the Council has produced to demonstrate there are no other alternative locations due to the specific nature of the development in meeting the Campus's specific housing requirements.
- 7.4.2 The Council has followed a comprehensive and iterative approach to site selection informed by technical evidence, informal and formal consultation with key stakeholders, including statutory bodies and infrastructure providers and been subject to Sustainability Appraisal (SA). The Council's approach to site selection is set out in Topic Paper 2: Site Selection (**TOP02.1**)<sup>34</sup>. The approach is consistent with the approach to identify the strategic site allocations in the Part 1 plan. The Inspector concluded in his Report (**ALP03**)<sup>35</sup> that "*the strategic sites were identified through a robust, five stage selection process, which will contribute towards delivering this provision*".
- 7.4.3 Following the initial stages of the site selection process (Stages 1 to 3), over 30 sites were taken forward for detailed evidence testing based on a number of technical evidence studies, informal and formal consultation and subject to Sustainability Appraisal. The Council has worked with external consultants, AECOM, throughout the site selection process to ensure reasonable site options were tested through Sustainability Appraisal (**CSD09**)<sup>36</sup>.
- 7.4.4 The Innovation Village at the Campus represents an opportunity to develop a work-live-play community, recycle previously developed land and provide a sustainable development that minimises the need to travel. The Innovation Village will not have an adverse impact on the AONB, and is likely to have less of an impact than the existing employment allocation, as demonstrated through the Landscape and Visual Appraisal (**NAT05**)<sup>37</sup>. The Campus has services and facilities equivalent to a larger village with opportunities for enhancements to these services and facilities and provision of additional facilities and services. The site benefits from significant transport infrastructure improvements to the transport network in improving capacity in the Science Vale area. Schemes that have been completed are; improvements to Chilton Interchange on the A34, improvements to Milton Interchange on the A34, construction of a new Harwell Link Road, cycle route improvements and upgrade to the Didcot to Harwell bus service<sup>38</sup>. This demonstrates the site has excellent connectivity in particular public transport connectivity. There are few biodiversity constraints and as demonstrated in the Sustainability Appraisal (**CSD09**)<sup>39</sup> it is unlikely there will be in combination effects.

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<sup>33</sup> **NAT04** Harwell Campus "Exceptional Circumstances" Report (in particular Section 5)

<sup>34</sup> **TOP02.1** Topic Paper 2: Site Selection (Publication Version)

<sup>35</sup> **ALP03** Inspector's Report on the Examination into Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1 (in particular paragraph 75)

<sup>36</sup> **CSD09** Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Vale of White Horse District Local Plan 2031 Part 2 (Publication Version)

<sup>37</sup> **NAT05** Harwell Campus; Landscape and Visual Appraisal

<sup>38</sup> **OCD02** Authority Monitoring Report 2016-17 (in particular Section 8 on page 30)

<sup>39</sup> **CSD09** Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Vale of White Horse District Local Plan 2031 Part 2 (Publication Version)

7.4.5 As explained in paragraphs 7.2.11 to 7.2.16 above, the Council consider there are no other alternatives at the Campus as assessed through the site selection process. All parcels adjacent to the Campus were assessed with all other parcels assessed to likely have a detrimental impact on the AONB<sup>40</sup>.

7.4.6 Although the principle of the Innovation Village cannot be provided away from the Campus, sites outside of the AONB have been assessed to ensure all alternatives have been comprehensively assessed. The alternative sites away from the Campus and outside of the AONB, as demonstrated within the Exceptional Circumstances Report (**NAT04**)<sup>41</sup>, Topic Paper 2: Site Selection (**TOP02.1**)<sup>42</sup> and Sustainability Appraisal (**CSD09**)<sup>43</sup> all have site constraints and / or infrastructure constraints as follows:

- The Milton Heights site has landscape sensitivities with the southern part of the site being the most sensitive which would restrict the level of development. This site would likely result in a significant adverse impact on the local and strategic highway with both Highways England and the Highways Authority having objected to any further development unless significant mitigation can be provided.
- The North of East Hendred site has significant landscape sensitivities and development would have a significant adverse impact on the immediate and wider landscape and result in a fundamental change to the character. There are also other site constraints such as historic evidence of flooding and protected species on site.
- The Rowstock site also has high landscape sensitivities in terms of contributing to the setting of the AONB, is part of the wider, open rural landscape and there potentially could be an issue with coalescence with Harwell village. Rowstock is also a smaller village, with limited existing services and facilities. Development would therefore need to be of a sufficient scale to deliver new facilities and services however the high landscape sensitivity significantly restricts the potential for this.
- The West of Harwell Village site would be able to accommodate a small level of development, but there are safety concerns relating to site access and the current alignment of the road which, at present, have not been addressed. The Highways Authority has objected to this site.

7.4.7 In conclusion, the Council has demonstrated there are no other reasonable alternatives to the Innovation Village, which the Council has assessed robustly and proportionately. The Innovation Village is relatively unconstrained compared to other sites, and will provide a sustainable development that minimises the need to travel. Significant infrastructure has already been delivered in the vicinity and it is clear the Innovation Village will meet the Science Vale objectives in a way that other sites cannot<sup>44</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> **TOP02.2** Topic Paper 2: Site Selection, Appendix A (Publication Version) (in particular pages 63-64)

<sup>41</sup> **NAT04** Harwell Campus "Exceptional Circumstances" Report

<sup>42</sup> **TOP02.1** Topic Paper 2: Site Selection (Publication Version)

<sup>43</sup> **CSD09** Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Vale of White Horse District Local Plan 2031 Part 2 (Publication Version)

<sup>44</sup> **CSD09** Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Vale of White Horse District Local Plan 2031 Part 2 (Publication Version)

### **How would the Innovation Village be delivered and managed in the long term to ensure it meets its objectives?**

- 7.4.8 The Harwell Science and Innovation Campus Limited Partnership own the land of the proposed Innovation Village and it is the Council's understanding that the Partnership will be seeking to retain ownership of the private rental properties<sup>45</sup>. This will ensure these properties will meet the objective of the development in providing specific housing for Campus's employees both in the short and long term. The Partnership will be seeking to directly deliver the housing with a development partner.
- 7.4.9 In addition, the Council is drafting a Harwell Campus Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and it is the Council's intention that the SPD will broadly identify the mechanism of ensuring the properties meet the needs of the Campus.

### **Are the detailed requirements in Core Policy 15b and the site development template requirements – both general and site specific – justified and would they provide an appropriate basis for the preparation of a Supplementary Planning Document for the site?**

- 7.4.10 The Council consider the general and site-specific requirements set out in Core Policy 15b (**CSD01**)<sup>46</sup> and the Site Development Template (**CSD01.1**)<sup>47</sup> are appropriate and justified and provide an appropriate basis for the preparation of a Harwell Campus Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The general and site-specific requirements set out in the Site Development Template follow a consistent approach to that adopted in the Part 1 plan. The Part 1 plan Inspector concluded that the site development templates were based on evidence from relevant providers and considered it unnecessary for additional infrastructure/services to be referenced in the Plan<sup>48</sup>. Core Policy 15b and the Site Development Template have been developed consistent with this approach through engagement with key stakeholders and infrastructure providers.
- 7.4.11 The Site Development Template establishes how the site should be planned to ensure that the site-specific constraints are adequately addressed and sets out clear requirements relating to matters such as infrastructure provision, urban design, green infrastructure, biodiversity and flood risk and drainage.
- 7.4.12 Core Policy 15b sets out the criteria to ensure housing and employment development is brought forward in accordance with a comprehensive development framework. As evidenced in the Sustainability Appraisal (**CSD09**)<sup>49</sup>, this approach will ensure new development supports the overall vision for the Campus, the creation of a work-live-play community through the provision of an Innovation Village, and will ensure development is fully integrated and reflects its location in the AONB.

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<sup>45</sup> **SCG01** Statement of Common Ground with Harwell Campus Science and Innovation Limited Partnership (in particular paragraph 2.2)

<sup>46</sup> **CSD01** Local Plan 2031 Part 2: Detailed Policies and Additional Sites (Publication Version)

<sup>47</sup> **CSD01.1** Local Plan 2031 Part 2: Detailed Policies and Additional Sites Appendices (Publication Version)

<sup>48</sup> **ALP03** Inspector's Report on the Examination into Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1

<sup>49</sup> **CSD09** Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Vale of White Horse District Local Plan 2031 Part 2 (Publication Version) (in particular paragraph 10.10.3)

**7.5 Are the detailed boundaries of the site justified and supported by proportionate evidence? Is the estimate of site capacity justified? Is the expected timescale for development realistic?**

- 7.5.1 The boundaries of the Innovation Village are justified and supported by evidence. The Local Plan 2011 Saved Policy E7 and Core Policy 6 identify the boundary for employment development on the site. Both of these designations set a principle of development at the Campus for employment use. The boundary of the Innovation Village is entirely within these boundaries set by the Saved Policy E7 and Core Policy 6 (**CSD01.1**)<sup>50</sup>. The boundaries of the existing employment area have been used to inform the boundaries of the Innovation Village as well as the site selection process which assessed various parcels on the site<sup>51</sup>.
- 7.5.2 The Council considers that the site capacity of 1,000 dwellings is justified. The Topic Paper 2: Site Selection (**TOP02.1**)<sup>52</sup> provides evidence of how site capacities have been derived, e.g. standard 25 dwellings per hectare (dph) has been applied with higher and lower densities applied to specific local circumstances where considered relevant. As the majority of this site is previously developed, the Council has sought to maximise the use of the site in accordance with national policy and thus has considered a slightly higher density of 25dph is appropriate. This also reflects the nature of the specific housing being provided which includes a high proportion of rental properties, e.g. flats which will be of a higher density. In addition, Harwell Campus Partnership support the capacity of 1,000 dwellings at the site. Nevertheless, there is flexibility in the Site Development Template which refers to the site capacity of around 1,000 dwellings subject to masterplanning.
- 7.5.3 The Council consider the expected timescale of development is realistic. The Council's Housing Trajectory (**HOU04**)<sup>53</sup> and Statement of Common Ground (**SCG01**)<sup>54</sup> with Harwell Campus Partnership demonstrate a delivery rate for the site beginning in 2020/21. The Campus Partnership are keen to progress the site in a timely manner to ensure that the housing is meeting their specific housing needs as soon as possible. The Council's Matter 8 statement provides further detail.

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<sup>50</sup> **CSD01.1** Local Plan 2031 Part 2: Detailed Policies and Additional Sites Appendices (Publication Version) (in particular Appendix C)

<sup>51</sup> **TOP02.2** Topic Paper: Site Selection, Appendix A (in particular pages 63-64)

<sup>52</sup> **TOP02.1** Topic Paper: Site Selection (in particular paragraph 3.11 and footnote 24)

<sup>53</sup> **HOU04** Housing Trajectory Update

<sup>54</sup> **SCG01** Statement of Common Ground with Harwell Campus Science and Innovation Limited Partnership on Harwell Campus

**7.6 How would the proposal for the Innovation Village relate to the village of Harwell and other nearby settlements? What new services, facilities and infrastructure links would be provided and is this realistic? Is the proposal viable? Would it comprise sustainable development?**

- 7.6.1 Harwell Campus is designated as a larger village as it has the equivalent services and facilities with opportunities for these to be enhanced as identified by the Site Development Template (**CSD01.1**)<sup>55</sup>, including the provision of a primary school, the improvement of the services and facilities on the wider campus, improvements to rights of ways and the integration into the wider Campus of walking and cycling routes. In addition, there are already a number of services on the wider Campus which will maximise the opportunities for collaboration and ideas exchange which the Campus are seeking to achieve. The viability of these services and facilities will be maximised through having both employees and resident on site and thus it is wholly realistic there is sufficient demand for them to be delivered and viable. The Council's Viability Study (**INF02**)<sup>56</sup> demonstrates the site is viable for residential development.
- 7.6.2 Although the main purpose of the provision of services and facilities will be for employees and residents at the Campus, the services and facilities will be available and will benefit the residents of nearby villages such as Harwell. The campus has excellent public transport connections, including cycle and footpath connections for nearby communities to sustainably access the facilities and services to the wider Science Vale area. It is the intention of the Oxford Bus Company to improve the current bus service from Harwell to Didcot with an aspiration of a 15-minute service. As detailed in paragraph 7.4.4 above, significant highways improvements to the wider highways network have already taken place.
- 7.6.3 The Innovation Village would result in sustainable development through providing a mixed used development, with housing meeting the specific needs of the Campus, providing a range of facilities and services, minimising the need for travel and access to the open countryside and recreational opportunities.

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<sup>55</sup> **CSD01.1** Local Plan 2031 Part 2: Detailed Policies and Additional Sites Appendices (Publication Version)

<sup>56</sup> **INF02** Viability Update