

Vale of White Horse Local Plan (Part 2) 2011-2031

Examination Hearings

**Statement by Oxfordshire County Council**

Matter 2

Unmet housing needs from Oxford

(This matter does not include detailed discussion at site specific level)

Tuesday afternoon 3 July 2018 and Wednesday 4 July 2018

## **Questions:**

- 2.1 How has the 2,200 working assumption for unmet housing needs from Oxford within the Vale been arrived at and is it supported by proportionate evidence?
- 2.2 What are the arrangements for reviewing or updating this working assumption?
- 2.3 Is the spatial strategy for meeting these unmet housing needs in the Abingdon on Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub Area the most appropriate when considered against reasonable alternatives and supported by proportionate evidence?
- 2.4 Is the stated strategy for meeting these unmet housing needs in the Abingdon on Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub Area followed through in the LPP2?
- 2.5 Given the NPPF requirement for exceptional circumstances to be demonstrated for any alterations to the Green Belt and the availability of potential sites, is the balance of the strategy between Green Belt releases (one site – Dalton Barracks) and sites outside the Green Belt the most appropriate?
- 2.6 To what extent is the strategy for meeting these unmet needs deliverable in the necessary timescale?
- 2.7 To what extent is the strategy for meeting these unmet needs sufficiently flexible if the working assumption figure is revised in future?
- 2.8 What are the arrangements for securing affordable housing to meet the needs of Oxford within this figure. Would they be effective and deliverable?
- 2.9 How would the strategy for meeting Oxford's housing needs within the Vale be monitored to ensure its delivery? Is a housing supply ring fence for Abingdon and the Oxford Fringe sub area required?

## **Response**

1. Questions 2.1 and 2.2: Oxfordshire County Council is a member of the Oxfordshire Growth Board and took part in the post-SHMA work programme which addressed the working assumption of Oxford's unmet need and apportionment thereof. The amount of Oxford's unmet need will be tested through the Oxford Local Plan review. At the time of writing this Statement, a Statement of Common Ground with the Vale of White Horse District Council is being prepared which sets out our understanding of this.
2. Question 2.3: The County Council supports meeting Oxford's unmet needs in the closest and most accessible locations and in the case of the Vale of White Horse, this means sites in the Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub Area. The selection of

sites has been important, as many parts of the sub-area are not particularly accessible to Oxford by public transport or cycling. The County Council in its Regulation 19 response noted that text in paragraph 2.14 of the Plan should be amended as it should not give the impression that improvements to accessibility will not be necessary to better link development in the area with Oxford. VOWHDC has indicated that it agrees to the principle of a modification and has proposed amended text to paragraph 2.14 in its proposal AM2 contained in the Schedule of Proposed Additional Modifications (held in the Library as one of the Core Submission Documents). The County Council considers that its own proposed amended text contained within our response is the better of the two as it emphasises the need for improvement. For completeness, the two versions, both of which are noted in a Statement of Common Ground on Housing being prepared between the two parties, are as follows:

County Council proposed modification (para 2.14):

The Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area is closest to and has the GREATEST POTENTIAL FOR FREQUENT AND RELIABLE PUBLIC TRANSPORT, CYCLING AND WALKING LINKAGES ~~most frequent and reliable public transport linkages~~ to Oxford.

VOWHDC proposed modification AM 2 (para 2.14):

The Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area is closest to and has the most frequent and reliable public transport linkages to Oxford AND THE GREATEST POTENTIAL FOR FUTURE ENHANCEMENTS.

3. Question 2.6: Good progress has been made on the four allocations within Local Plan Part 1. These are: North Abingdon - P17/V0050/O – outline consent issued 30/10/17; North West Abingdon - P17/V1336/O – outline consent issued 13/2/18; North-West Radley P17/V1894/O – planning committee resolution for approval subject to S106 30/5/18; South of Kennington P17/V2961/FUL – application pending. A ‘Grampian’ condition on the North Abingdon development recognises progress on the proposed Lodge Hill slips and no such conditions have been required on the other sites given that funding for the slips has been confirmed. Progress is also being made in respect of Dalton Barracks, for which the District’s housing trajectory suggests early houses will be built in 2024.
4. Oxfordshire County Council is seeking to attend the hearing should the Inspector have any queries to direct to the County Council in respect of the Matter 2 questions.