

**Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 2**  
**Statement of Common Ground**  
**between**  
**Vale of White Horse District Council**  
**and**  
**Harwell Science and Innovation Campus Limited Partnership**  
**In relation to the Harwell Campus residential site allocation**  
**February 2018**

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1. This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared by Vale of White Horse District Council (“the Council”) and Harwell Science and Innovation Campus Limited Partnership (“the Campus Partnership”) hereafter referred to as “the parties”. Carter Jonas are the agents acting on behalf of the Campus Partnership. This SoCG documents those matters agreed with regard to the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031: Part 2 and supporting documents to assist the Inspector during the Examination of the Local Plan.
- 1.2. This SOCG relates in particular to the allocation of land at Harwell Campus under Core Policy 15a for the development of around 1000 homes. The agreed matters have been structured to help inform the Inspector through the examination.
- 1.3. The Council proposes the site for allocation for strategic housing development in the Local Plan having considered reasonable alternatives, including assessing the relevant evidence, and following consultation with stakeholders and the public.

**2. Background / Context**

- 2.1. The site is located within Harwell Campus. Harwell Campus is a 287 hectare science, innovation, technology and business campus. It is a world renowned major UK Science and Technology Campus that benefits from over £1bn of science infrastructure, including the UK’s national synchrotron facility, the Diamond Light Source, and ISIS Neutron facility, plus approximately 5,000 research and support staff spread across more than 200 organisations.
- 2.2. The residential allocation is located at the north end of the Campus and measures approx. 37 hectares. Except for the north-westernmost field (located north of the former Aldfield pre-fabricated housing site) the allocated site comprises brownfield land. It is important to note that while the north-

westernmost field is in agricultural use, it is allocated for employment use in the current Development Plan. The brownfield land comprises the former Aldfield pre-fabricated housing site, land and buildings in employment use, a local centre, land and buildings in residential use and the site's former liquid effluent treatment works, which are currently being remediated by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority and Magnox Limited. The proposed allocation is bounded to the north and west by fields; to the east by the A4185; and to the south by the remainder of the Campus.

- 2.3. The site is located within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The site is designated as being within Flood Zone 1 on the Environment Agency's flood risk maps, and as such is not located in a flood risk area.
- 2.1. The site is proposed for allocation in the Local Plan 2031 Part 2 for around 1,000 homes, subject to masterplanning. The site is expected to deliver a high quality and a self-sufficient sustainable community that follows a comprehensive development framework approach; provides a tailored mix and tenure of housing to meet the identified needs of the Campus; and ensures that development is sensitively planned to reflect the site's location within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The site will need to be delivered in accordance with Core Policy 15b and the general and site specific requirements as set out in the Local Plan 2031 Part 2 Appendices.
- 2.2. At present, the intention of the Campus Partnership is to retain ownership of the majority of the new homes and to maintain control over the site as a whole. The new homes will be made available under a variety of tenure types including a significant element of private rented sector (PRS) housing.

At the time of preparing this statement, the Campus Partnership is progressing an outline planning application for up to 1,000 dwellings, including provision of a new one form entry primary school (including nursery provision) on the site, a local/neighbourhood centre and an access on to the A4185.

The Council, the Campus Partnership and Oxfordshire County Council have and will continue to engage regarding the proposed allocation and the outline planning application.

- 2.3. The Council, the Campus and Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) have already agreed to a Statement of Common Ground in relation to supporting the aspirations of OxLEP and the Strategic Economic Plan particularly the need for housing at the Campus. The Statement also details the agreement that has been reached in relation to the outcomes of the Exceptional Circumstances Report that supports the Local Plan 2031 Part 2. The matters set out in that Statement of Common Ground have not been repeated within this Statement.

### **3. Agreed Matters**

#### Strategic Matters on which the parties agree

- 3.1. The parties agree that the Council is supporting a key objective of the Local Plan in allocating additional sites to support economic growth in the Science Vale area. Further detail in this regard is set out in the Statement of Common Ground between the Council, the Campus Partnership and OxLEP.
- 3.2. The parties agree that there is a clear need for deliverable sites in the short and long term to meet identified housing needs in a timely manner and to sustain a five year housing land supply.
- 3.3. This site is in accordance with the Spatial Strategy of the Local Plan. Both parties agree that the site selection process, as set out in the Site Selection Topic Paper, is robust, soundly based and supported by the Council's evidence base. The parties are working positively together to ensure that the Council is adequately planning for infrastructure for this site, and that appropriate infrastructure will be delivered, as set out in the Submission Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
- 3.4. The parties agree that Core Policy 15b identifies an appropriate approach to ensuring development at the campus is delivered comprehensively. The Council has appointed consultants to undertake the preparation of the Harwell Campus Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), work on which began at the start of 2018. The Council and the Campus are working positively to progress the SPD.

#### Site Specific Matters on which the parties agree

- 3.5. The site is sustainable, suitable, available and deliverable. The site is not subject to any insurmountable environmental, legal, ownership or technical constraints that would otherwise impede development.
- 3.6. The parties agree that this Site can be delivered in accordance with the policies contained in the adopted Local Plan 2031 Part 1 and the emerging policies of the Part 2 plan.
- 3.7. The parties agree that Core Policy 15b, the General Requirements and Site Development Template for this site, as set out in the Appendices to the Local Plan 2031 Part 2, identifies the key requirements for this site, which include:
  - A contribution to improvements to Icknield Way

- sensitive masterplanning of the site ensuring that there are no significant adverse impacts within the North Wessex Downs AONB and its setting
  - undertaking contaminated land investigations to ensure that the land is safe and suitable for the intended use
- 3.8. The parties agree that the Council's evidence base studies, which have informed the site selection process, have demonstrated that this site is sustainable.
- 3.9. The parties agree the site will deliver a housing mix that meets the needs of the Campus and which is in accordance with the Exceptional Circumstances Report. The parties are working together to refine the preferred housing mix and, as detailed in the Site Development Template in the Local Plan 2031 Part 2 Appendices, this will be set out in the Harwell Campus SPD.
- 3.10. The submission of a planning application by the Campus for this site will be supported by technical information, including a landscape and visual impact assessment transport statement, flood risk and drainage strategy, contamination assessment and ecological appraisal.
- 3.11. The site is capable of delivery within the Plan period in broad accordance with the Council's Submission Housing Trajectory

#### **4. Conclusion**

- 4.1. The Campus support the allocation of land at Harwell Campus within Core Policy 15a, and the parties agree that the site is suitable, available and deliverable for sustainable housing development.
- 4.2. The parties are working jointly to enable delivery of the planned residential development at the earliest opportunity and the comprehensive development of the Campus in its entirety and will continue to work cooperatively on all matters of mutual interest.

**Signatures**

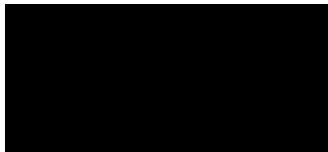
Signed on behalf of Vale of White Horse District Council



Adrian Duffield  
Head of Planning

23/02/2018

Signed on behalf of the Campus



Steven Sensecall  
Partners, Carter Jonas

23/02/2018