Vale of White Horse District Council

Meeting the 'Objectively Assessed Need' for housing

October 2014

Planning & Development

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Background

1. In 2013, the Oxfordshire Councils commissioned a new Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)[1] to establish the need for housing in Oxfordshire. The key headline from the SHMA is an identified need for the provision of between 4,678 – 5,328 homes a year over the 2011-2031 period. The figures for the six individual local authorities are set out below:

Oxfordshire Objectively Assessed Need for Housing		
Housing Needed per Year (2011-31)	Housing Need Per Year	Midpoint of Range
Cherwell	1,090-1,190	1,140
Oxford	1,200 – 1,600	1,400
South Oxfordshire	725-825	775
Vale of White Horse	1,028	1,028
West Oxfordshire	635-685	660
Oxfordshire	**4,678 – 5,328**	**5,003**

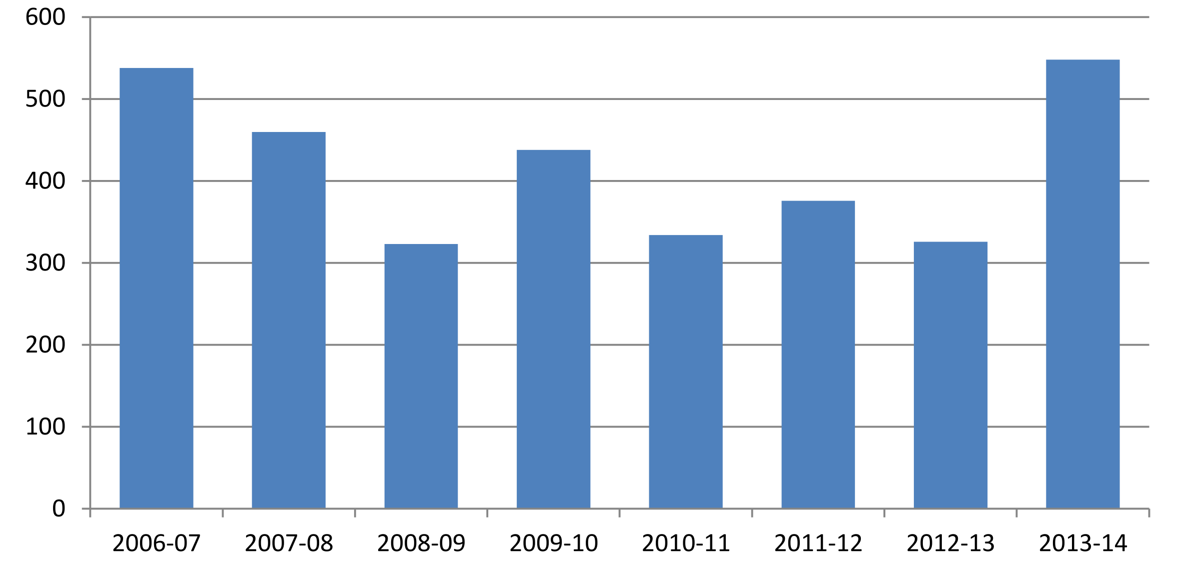
Source: Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment, GL Hearn April 2014

2. These figures identify the overall housing needed to support population change and economic growth over the period, as well as contributing towards the need for affordable housing and reducing affordability pressures across the County. It is important to note that these figures are simply the need for housing over the whole period that is then divided by the number of years that are derived from trend based demographic projections and without regard to the practicalities of delivery, such as land availability, viability etc.

3. Vale of White Horse District Council (VoWHDC) is working towards submitting the Local Plan 2031, Part 1 Strategic Sites and Policies for independent examination. As a result of the higher than anticipated need for housing identified in the SHMA, the Council is seeking to identify further land to meet the full requirement for housing over the plan-period. However, they have some concerns over the actual rate at which housing will come forward as 1,028 houses per year is more than twice the current average rate of delivery of a little over 400 or so units per year over the last 8 years.

[1] GL Hearn Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment: April 2014

VoWHDC Housing Completions per Year



Source: VoWHDC

Scope

4. HDH Planning and Development Ltd (HDH) have been engaged by the Council to advise in relation to the Council's ability to meet the Objectively Assessed Need for housing. Whilst the Council is committed to a development Plan that will fully meet the need they have some practical concerns based on their current rates of delivery.

5. HDH is a specialist firm of planning and development surveyors providing support to developers and planning and housing authorities. The firm is led by Simon Drummond-Hay who is a Chartered Surveyor and associate of the Chartered Institute of Housing. He has specialised in the development of affordable housing and, in particular, the building of financial models for the delivery of unsubsidised affordable housing to meet actual local need. His CV includes working in consultancy and in direct development where he is well respected for his work on rural affordable housing. Previously he has been development director of both a mixed use and a housing developers.

6. Previously he and his team worked for Fordham Research. HDH is retained (with URS Infrastructure & Environment UK Limited) by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) to deliver viability workshops and support in the context of plan wide viability testing (NPPF and CIL).

Current Delivery

7. The Council recognises that, at least in part, that historically there has been a restricted land supply which has constrained delivery rates. However the market has been through a period of downturn and the rates of delivery have also been restricted by developers' and households' ability to raise finance, and general uncertainty about the direction of the market.

8. There is a correlation between the total number of house sales and the number of new build sales, which is shown in the Land Registry data for the District. It can be seen that, as overall sales go up, the number of newbuild sales goes up as well, with newbuild sales following the wider market.

9. Over the last 10 years newbuild units have comprised between 6% and 12% of all sales in the District, averaging 9%.

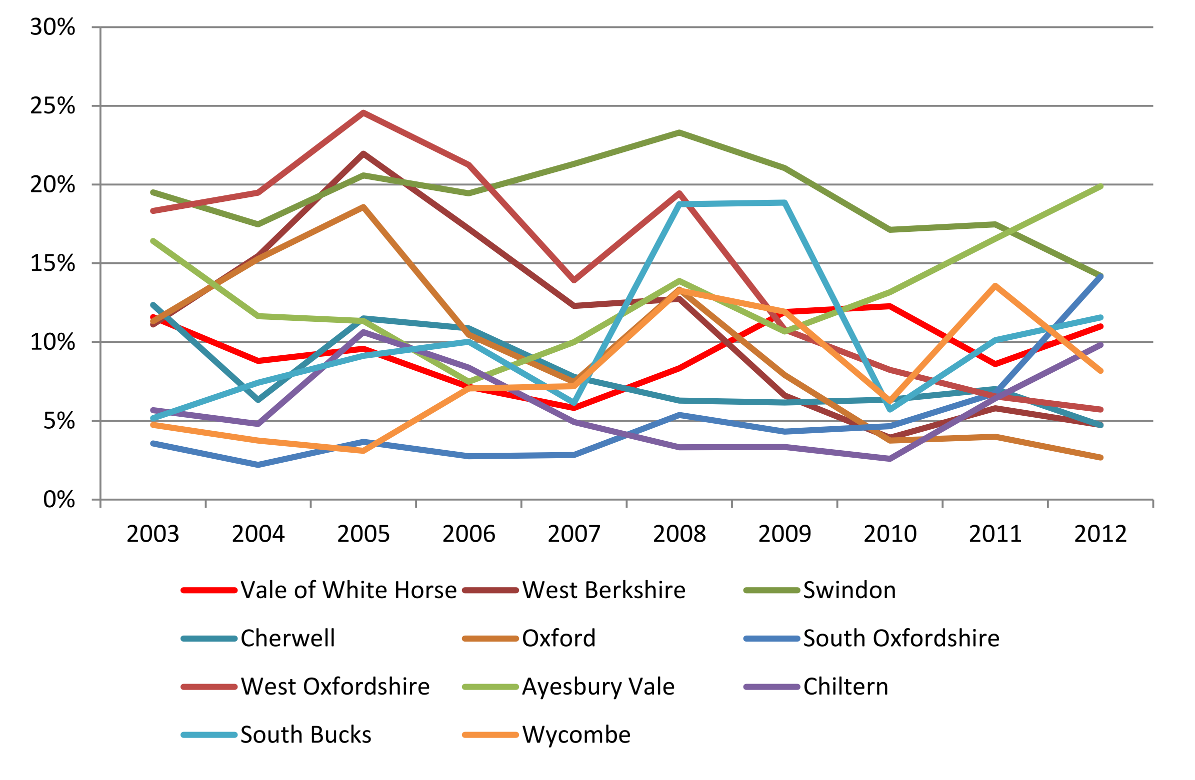
VOWHDC. Sales of Existing and Newbuild Dwellings

Source Land Registry

10. The proportion of sales that are newbuild varies from area to area and, as shown below, whilst the rate varies from place to place, within each area the rate of new build, relative to total market activity, remains quite constant. This would indicate that there is a close link between the activity in the second hand / existing property market and the newbuild market.

11. There is no doubt that increasing the rate of housing delivery will be challenging as, in large part, it is linked to the wider economy. Increasing delivery from the exiting 400 or so per year will require a substantial increase in activity in the wider market and this may arise from improved economic activity. The Council's strategy to create further high quality jobs (for example through the Science Vale initiative) will contribute to this.

New-build sales per year as a proportion of all sales



Source: Land Registry

Factors affecting delivery

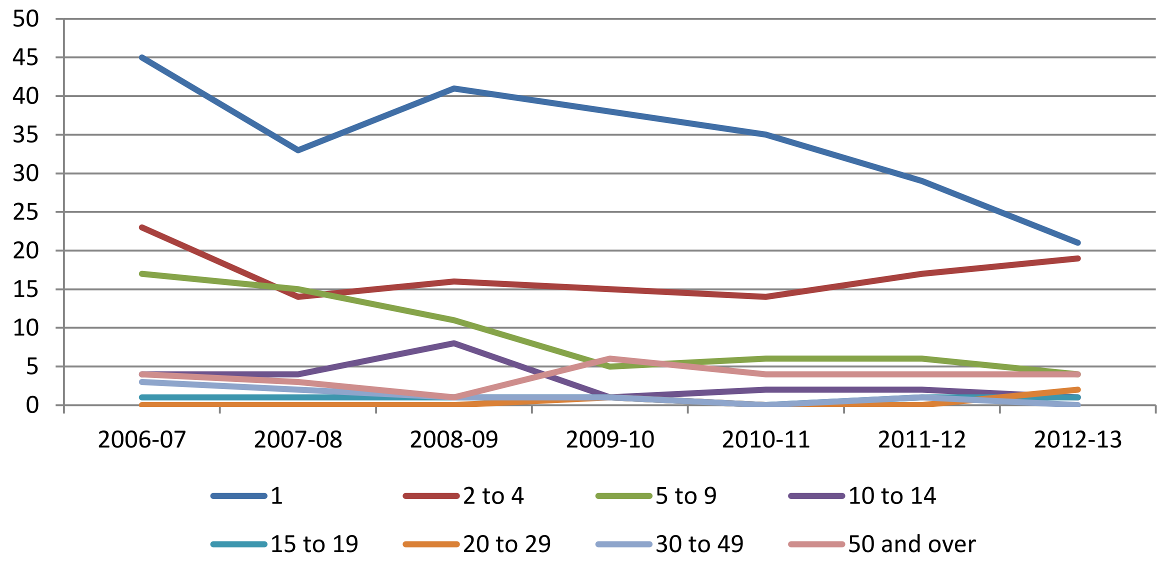
12. The rate of housing delivery is not something that the Council can control. Whether there is an adequate land supply is within the Council's sphere of influence, however there are many other factors. These include:

The availability of development finance

13. In the early part of the 21st Century, development finance was plentiful and many developers, particularly smaller developers, had access to 'easy' money. This supply of development finance has contracted significantly with financial institutions taking a much more cautious approach than before. The impact of this can be seen in the pattern of development coming forward.

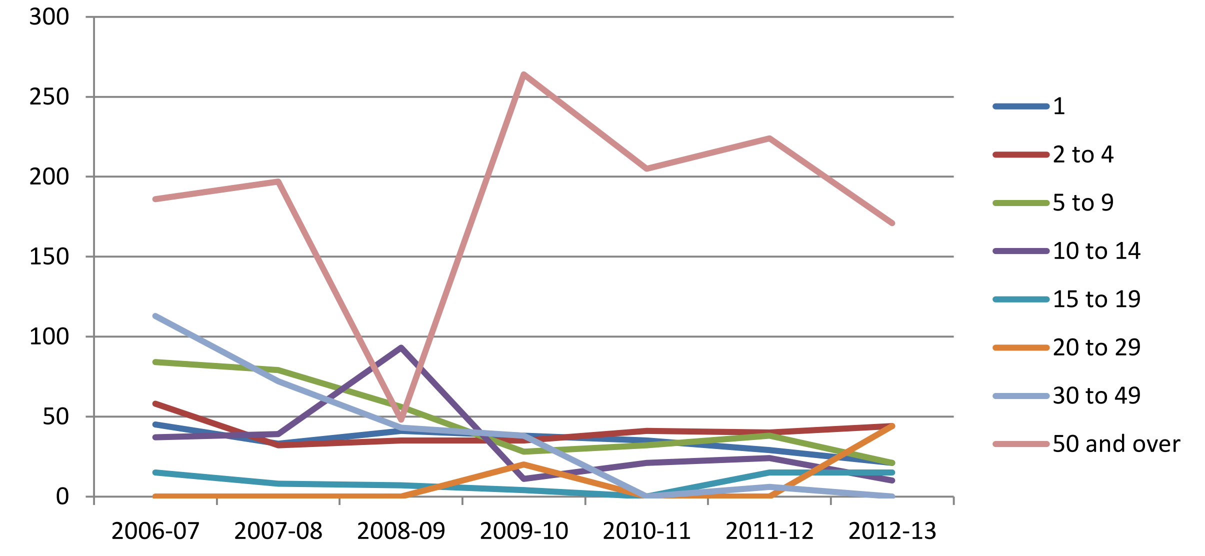
14. It is notable that over the last 10 years there has been a significant decline in the number of smaller sites coming forward and the number of units being delivered from smaller sites.

VoWH Number of Development Sites Delivering Housing							
Site size (units)	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
1	45	33	41	38	35	29	21
2 to 4	23	14	16	15	14	17	19
5 to 9	17	15	11	5	6	6	4
10 to 14	4	4	8	1	2	2	1
15 to 19	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
20 to 29	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
30 to 49	3	2	1	1	0	1	0
50 and over	4	3	1	6	4	4	4
	97	72	79	68	61	60	52



Source: VOWHDC

VoWH Number of units delivered by site size							
Site size (units)	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
1	45	33	41	38	35	29	21
2 to 4	58	32	35	35	41	40	44
5 to 9	84	79	56	28	32	38	21
10 to 14	37	39	93	11	21	24	10
15 to 19	15	8	7	4	0	15	15
20 to 29	0	0	0	20	0	0	44
30 to 49	113	72	43	38	0	6	0
50 and over	186	197	48	264	205	224	171
	538	460	323	438	334	376	326



Source: VOWHDC

i. The number of units from single sites has halved since 2006 but the percentage of units from single sites as a proportion of overall delivery has only declined a little.

ii. The number of units from sites of 2 to 4 has declined marginally, but as a proportion of overall development has remained quite constant.

iii. The numbers of units from smaller sites (less than 30 units) has declined 35%, although the proportion of development from these sites has remained at about 25%.

iv. Generally delivery from sites of 30 to 50 has been erratic.

v. The proportion of development from larger sites has increased from about 35% to over 50% - very much in line with the national picture. But it should be noted that the number of units delivered has not increased notably.

15. Before the 'credit crunch', in England, about 45% of housing was from small sites, this has now reduced to 10%. In part this is due to funding constraints for small developers.

Numbers of active developers and housebuilders

16. Generally, the number of housebuilders has decreased over the last 20 or so years. It is difficult to source reliable data in this regard. In 1988 there were about 12,000 builders building up to 100 houses per year, 250 regional housebuilders and 13 national housebuilders. By 2010, this had reduced to about 2,800 builders building up to 100 per year, 85 regional housebuilders and 9 national housebuilders.

17. This decline in developers will impact on the ability of the market to deliver. This is largely beyond the Council's influence – although they could consider direct development.

The speed of planning and mobilisation

18. The English planning system is not swift. Whilst the Government has put in measures to speed up the process, it still can be protracted, particularly on larger sites. Even on sites where the principle of development is not contentious, the system can be slow with numerous hurdles. These are not of the Council's making and may include matters such as highways, environmental (bats, newts, owls etc), flooding etc.

19. Some matters are within the Council's control such as the overall policy 'burden' on developers, and the cumulative impact of the policies, particularly in terms of development viability. The Council is setting its policies well within the range of viability to ensure that the protracted planning process is not extended in this regard.

20. Even when planning consent is granted, development cannot normally start immediately. There is a period of mobilisation whilst planning details are discharged, Building Regulation approvals sought and the detail of infrastructure provision agreed. Arrangements have to be made for service connections and then effected. Contractors and subcontractors need to be sought, often through a competitive tendering exercise.

21. It would not be unusual, where there is an up to date development plan in place and the principles are not contentious, for a large planning application to take 9 months to progress (including the period of pre-application discussions and post approval legal process). It is likely then to take a further 9 months to start on site and then 9 months to a year before the first new homes have been completed and are ready for occupation. This period of 2 to 2½ years sets the Council a real challenge in the short term as it is clear that any increase in delivery will take time.

22. In February 2014, Hourigan Connolly published *A report into the delivery of urban extensions*, commissioned on behalf of Gladman Developments (a development company that specialises in promoting land through the planning system). This is relevant as it looked at the time it takes to promote land through the planning system, based on 100 greenfield sites across the UK of greater than 500 units. The study found that on average that the time period in England from initial concept (i.e. from the site originally being proposed) to grant of planning permission

is 6.67 years. And in relation to the time period from commencement of preparation of an outline planning permission:

> *Based upon the foregoing analysis of the results received from Local Authorities, it is reasonable to suggest that the delivery of houses from urban extensions takes approximately 9 years. Whilst there are instances of speedier delivery, these are in the minority whereas there are many more examples of sites that take far longer to deliver houses, with many yet to deliver any houses at all.*[2]

23. Whilst this illustrates the overall length of time it is important to note that VOWHDC expect to have a Plan in place shortly.

The land supply

24. Ensuring that there is adequate land supply is within the Council’s control (assuming landowners are willing to make their land available), however simply allocating land for housing will not mean housing will come forward quickly. The appetite for new homes is limited and, within geographical areas, competition between sites will be a real factor. In the current market developers are unlikely to be willing to go ‘head to head’ and compete directly.

25. When considering the site allocations and the release of sites, in order to maximise delivery it will be necessary to ensure that there are a range of sites that will be suitable for a range of housing products, so as to meet the widest possible market. This is more than just house / unit size, it is about the full range of factors including, size, price, style, location and situation. In addition, it is necessary that there is the widest possible range of products in terms of tenure including (but not limited to) affordable to rent, affordable to buy, market housing, older people’s (sheltered / retirement) housing, student housing etc. Within the market sectors a range of priced products is also required.

26. An important aspect of this is the number of outlets that there may be on any one site. It is not unusual for more than one developer to be active on one site. In terms of site size the following rules of thumb are widely used:

Up to 100 = 1 developer

Up to 500 = 2 developers (some say up to 300)

Over 500 = 3 developers.

27. There is little (if any) reliable research into how schemes relate, when they complement each other, and when they compete with each other to such an extent that they adversely impact on developers’ margins. What is clear is that the layout of a site, (can different outlets be accessed from different ends, roads, public transport) and a range of products, can be tailored to maximise output.

[2] p.63

28. In the February 2008 report by DCLG & University of Glasgow, *Factors Affecting Housing Build Out Rates*, based on research undertaken before the downturn in the economy, the results of a literature review and survey work amongst 18 national housebuilders were presented, it was concluded:

Government policy and industry practice have thus combined to encourage developer caution about the ability of local housing markets to 'absorb' new-build supply. This finds expression in unambitious build-out rates.

Even if substantially more land were to be released by the planning system, it is likely that housing developers will take a considerable length of time before responding by bidding at lower land acquisition prices and building out more quickly.[3]

29. The study also considered the distance between development sites and what was considered by developers to be competitive. This varies considerably according to the type of location involved, as follows:

Perceived Competition Limits for Individual Developments		
Development Type	***Miles***	
	Mean	*SD*
Apartments in inner London	2.40	2.79
Apartments in outer London	3.88	3.48
Apartments in major provincial city centres	2.73	2.48
Apartments within major provincial cities but beyond the city centre	3.37	2.54
Houses on greenfield sites on the edge of major provincial cities	6.00	3.96
Houses on greenfield sites on the edge of small and medium-sized towns	5.62	2.78
Houses on greenfield sites in mainly rural areas	7.97	4.09

Source: Table 9. *Factors Affecting Housing Build Out Rates*, DCLG & University of Glasgow. February 2008

30. Generally the planned development on VoWH would fall within the last three groups in the table above. This suggests that the distance between sites which would be considered to be competitive as about 6 miles. The distance across the District from Swindon to Oxford is just under 30 miles. This suggests that it is appropriate to be cautious about the assumptions over delivery from sites that could be perceived to be competing for buyers.

Availability of Mortgage Finance

31. In April 2013, 37% of new homes sales benefitted from direct Government subsidy through help to buy. The mortgage market remains constrained. To maximise output, a full range of other tenures should be encouraged. These will include affordable housing, rented housing, older people's housing, student housing and the like.

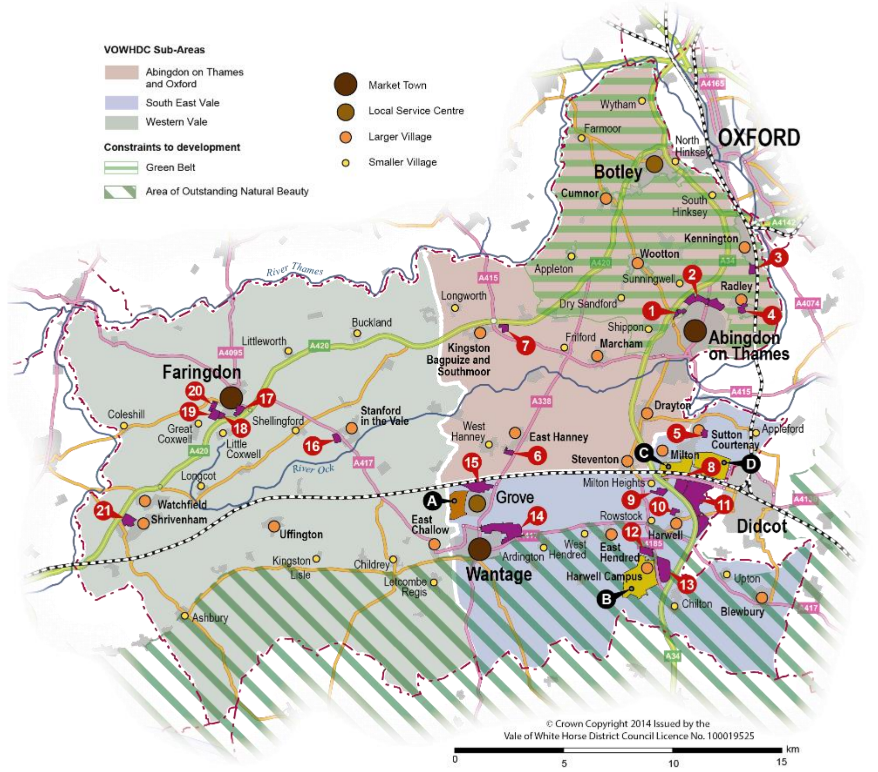
[3] Executive Summary, page 2

Delivery in VOWH

32. In the previous section, some of the various factors that influence delivery rates are set out. The Council is going to allocate sufficient land to fully meet the Objectively Assessed Need over the plan-period. In the following section we have considered the rate of delivery that may be possible. We have followed the Council's three sub-areas as shown on the map below.

33. These three areas are not formal housing markets, but are useful from a practical point of view. The Western Vale is generally west facing and associated with Swindon for services. The Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford area is very much focused on Abingdon and Oxford, whilst the Southeast Vale incorporates the Science Vale area. The Southeast Vale can be divided east/west with the housing market and service offer in Didcot being different from that in Wantage.

The Vale of White Horse Sub Areas



Strategic Site Allocations		No. of Dwellings
1	North West Abingdon on Thames	200
2	North Abingdon on Thames	800
3	South Kennington	270
4	North West Radley	240
5	East Sutton Courtenay	220
6	South of East Hanney	200
7	Kingston Bagpuize East	280
8	North West Valley Park	800
9	Milton Heights	400
10	West of Harwell	200
11	Valley Park	2550
12	North of Harwell Campus	550
13	East of Harwell Campus	850
14	Crab Hill Wantage	1500
15	Monks Farm, Grove	750
16	Stanford in the Vale	200
17	Land South of Park Road, Faringdon	350
18	East of Coxwell Road, Faringdon	200
19	South Faringdon, (Parish of Great Coxwell)	200
20	South West Farringdon	200
21	North Shrivenham	500

Local Plan 2011 saved Allocations

A.	Grove Airfield	2500

Planned Economic Growth Areas

B. Harwell Campus
C. Milton Park
D. Didcot Power Station

Source: VoWHDC

34. It is important to note that it is not possible to precisely calculate delivery rates – there must be a degree of common sense and professional judgement.

35. In considering the ability to deliver, we have reviewed the number of sites in the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). The SHLAA is a high level assessment of the potential and suitability of housing land. It is a wide ranging document that looks at all options rather than being an allocations document. Of the SHLAA sites that have been assessed to be suitable and available we have considered the number of different size

sites, capacity and the distribution of those sites. It is important to note that not all the sites identified through the SHLAA that are found to be suitable for housing will be allocated for development.

Suitable and Available SHLAA Site Sizes				
Number of Units	Number of sites in SHLAA	% of SHLAA Sites	Number of units in the SHLAA	% of SHLAA Units
5 to	1	0.7%	5	>0.1%
10 to 24	12	8.9%	224	0.8%
25 to 49	24	17.8%	900	3.3%
50 to 74	21	15.6%	1,246	4.5%
75 to 99	12	8.9%	1,000	3.6%
100 to 149	23	17%	2,774	10.1%
150 to 199	8	5.9%	1,392	5.1%
200 to 499	22	16.3%	6,366	23.2%
500 plus	12	8.9%	1,352	49.3%
	135	**100.0%**	**27,441**	**100.0%**

Source: VoWHDC February 2014

36. The Council undertook a 'call for sites'. This process had a minimum site size threshold of 10 units. A number of smaller sites were submitted and assessed and are included in the table above. It is recognised that the 5 to 9 band in the table above this understates the number of sites of this size. The Council assesses future potential from this element of supply under the category of 'windfalls'.

37. The Council is in the process of updating the February 2014 version of the SHLAA to include 81 further sites submitted to the Housing Supply Update consultation.

Distribution of Suitable and Available SHLAA Sites - Numbers of Units				
SETTLEMENT	0-5 years (available)	6-15 years (suitable)	TOTAL	% of Total
Abingdon	466	2,715	3,181	11.5%
Blewbury	0	191	191	0.7%
Botley	1,366	0	1,366	4.9%
Cumnor	0	195	195	0.7%
Didcot (VOWH district land)	843	4,664	5,507	19.9%
Drayton	786	839	1,625	5.9%
East Challow	0	574	574	2.1%
East Hanney	0	258	258	0.9%
East Hendred	0	222	222	0.8%
Faringdon	698	54	947	3.4%
Grove	0	1,000	1,000	3.6%
Harwell	83	568	752	2.7%
Harwell Oxford Campus	0	2,319	2,319	8.4%
Kennington	0	181	181	0.7%
Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor	63	626	689	2.5%
Marcham	49	347	396	1.4%
Milton	99	114	213	0.8%
Radley	60	1,643	1,703	6.1%
Shrivenham	1,286	398	1,684	6.1%
Stanford in the Vale	0	590	590	2.1%
Steventon	79	324	403	1.5%
Sutton Courtenay	150	631	781	2.8%
Uffington	61	568	629	2.3%
Wantage	206	591	797	2.9%
Wootton	0	1,534	1,534	5.5%
Total	6,295	21,146	27,737	100.0%

Source: VoWHDC February 2014

38. We have considered the Council's general preference for new housing to be allocated nearer the employment centres.

39. The following new sites are under consideration for allocation. These, when combined with the sites that have planning consent, are sufficient to meet the Council's full Objectively Assessed Need:

Strategic Sites		
Abingdon and Oxford Fringe		
Abingdon-on-Thames	North of Abingdon-on-Thames	800
	North-West of Abingdon-on-Thames	200
East Hanney	South of East Hanney	200
Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor	East of Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor	280
Radley	North-West of Radley	240
	South of Kennington	270
South East Vale (Science Vale West)		
Grove	Monks Farm	750
Wantage	Crab Hill	1,500
South East Vale (Science Vale East)		
Harwell and Milton Parishes east of the A34 adjoining Didcot Town	Valley Park	At least 2,550
	North-West of Valley Park	800
Harwell Campus	East of Harwell Campus	850
	North-West of Harwell Campus	550
Sutton Courtenay	East of Sutton Courtenay	220
Harwell	West of Harwell	200
Milton Parish west of the A34	Milton Heights	400
Western Vale		
Faringdon	East of Coxwell Road Faringdon	200
	Land South of Park Road	350
	South-West of Faringdon	200
Great Coxwell Parish	South of Faringdon	200
Shrivenham	North of Shrivenham	500
Stanford-in-the-Vale	West of Stanford-in-the-Vale	200

Source: VoWHDC (August 2014)

40. Having considered the above in the context of the Council's housing trajectory and we have applied the information gathered to the VOWH area. Working from the following assumptions:

a) Large sites (300 units plus):

i. Each delivery area is serving a sufficiently separate market for development in each area to be considered, so as not to compete with other development within the other sub areas.

ii. The development in the east (Didcot) and west (Wantage) parts of Southeast Vale can be considered separately. The Harwell Campus sites that fall between these two are likely to be more closely associated with Didcot – although the A34 forms a clear physical divide.

iii. On sites without planning consent, it is unlikely that the first units will be completed within the first 2 years – and are most likely to start coming forward towards the end of 2½ years from the start of the planning process / 18 months from the grant of consent.

iv. Each housing outlet on each large site is likely to yield 35 so market units per year. Affordable housing, specialist older people's housing or dedicated private rented housing is likely to be in addition to this.

 In the 2008 CLG/University of Glasgow research cited above it was found that sales rates varied between 40-80 units on each outlet, according to the size of developer.

v. The number of outlets on large sites will be influenced by the size of the site, the stage of development and the geographical layout. In the early stages of a scheme, a single highways access is unlikely to serve more than two concurrent schemes – although where additional separate accesses to the highway (for example to the north and south of a site) further outlets will be possible.

We have considered the large sites and for each the number of outlets that each could support at any one time.

Outlets per Larger Strategic Site (300 units plus) based on 35 market units per year

		Units	Year														
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Abingdon and Oxford Fringe																	
Abingdon-on-Thames	North of Abingdon-on-Thames	800	0	0	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2					
Science Vale West																	
Grove	Monks Farm	750	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2						
	Airfield	2500	0	1	2	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	1
Wantage	Crab Hill	1500	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	
South East Vale																	
Harwell and Milton Parishes east of the A34 adjoining Didcot Town	Valley Park	2550	2	2	3	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	1			
	North-West of Valley Park	800	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Harwell Campus	East of Harwell Campus	850	0	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2					
	North-West of Harwell Campus	550	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
Milton Parish west of the A34	Milton Heights	400	0	0	1	1	2	2	1	1							
Western Vale																	
Faringdon	Land South of Park Road	350	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1							
Shrivenham	North of Shrivenham	500	0	0	1	1	2	2	2	2							

Source: HDH

Working from the above we have made an estimate of the number of units per year these strategic sites may yield. We have assessed this at 35, 54 and 60 units per outlet per year. 54 units per year is approximately equal to 35 market units per year plus 35% affordable housing representing the expected output. 60 Units per year may be achievable if there was a significant increase in market activity (over and above current levels). 35 units per year is included for context only and represents the number of market units that may be delivered:

Large Site Output			
Units per year	**35**	**54**	**60**
Year			
1	70	108	120
2	175	216	240
3	490	648	720
4	595	810	900
5	805	1,080	1,200
6	805	1,080	1,200
7	840	1,080	1,200
8	840	1,026	1,140
9	875	1,134	1,170
10	840	1,026	930
11	805	810	690
12	735	594	540
13	700	486	420
14	630	432	240
15	560	162	0
	9,765	10,692	10,710

Source: HDH

From this, over the first five years of the Plan, the delivery from the strategic sites is likely to be fewer than 2,900 units. This will be an important contribution towards the Council's overall housing requirement but will not, on its own, meet the need for housing

Equally important, it is clear that the delivery from large sites can play a very important contribution. The Council may also consider seeking further large sites to deliver towards over the later parts of the plan-period.

b) Small sized sites (up to 20 units).

The yield of new homes from these sites has slowed over recent years. This is for a combination of reasons including the availability of development finance for smaller builders, and the decline in numbers of developers active in this sector.

We would not expect the rates of delivery within this sector to decline further, however there is nothing to indicate that this sector may recover to such an extent that it will deliver more houses than currently.

We therefore consider that the Council's assumption that this sector will deliver 166 units per year from 2020 reasonable. This is made up from the Large Village sites expected to be in the Local Plan Part 2 yielding 91 units per year, and a windfall allowance of 75 units per year.

c) The medium sized sites – between 20 and 300 units.

The principle of the development of these sites is very much as for the larger sites in terms of competing sites, the period of time to progress through the planning system and the mobilisation phases before units can actually be built and occupied.

There is however a different aspect, being that of infrastructure provision. The large sites generate very significant infrastructure requirements that are, to a large extent site specific, so can be delivered directly by the developer or through close co-operation between the developer and the infrastructure providers (the County or utility companies). On the smaller sites there is also a need for infrastructure, however the infrastructure will serve a number of different sites. There is no doubt that co-ordinating the infrastructure will be challenging for the Council, the providers and for the development industry and delays could have an adverse impact on overall rates of delivery. The Council recognises this and is pursing CIL as an additional source of funding in this regard.

In this high level study we have considered how many sites may come forward in each delivery area. It is important to note that these will take time to get up and running and start delivering. We considered the range of sites identified through the SHLAA process by delivery sub-area.

i. Abingdon & Oxford Fringe Sub Area

This area only has the potential North of Abingdon (800 units) large allocation site, but has the Botley Local Service Centre and the larger villages of Cumnor, Kingston Bagpuize, Wooton, Kennington, Radley, Marcham, and Drayton.

Within this area the Council has identified 5 further suitable sites as follows:

North West Abingdon on Thames,

South of East Hanney,

East of Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor,	South Kennington.
North West Radley,	

Due to geographical relationship we would not expect more than 4 sites to come forward at any one time in this area – and a pragmatic assumption would be to assume that 3 may come forward in addition to the large North Abingdon site.

ii. South East Vale Sub Area

This area is the location of the Science Vale sites, including the very large sites at Grove, Wantage, and adjacent to Didcot. In addition to these, the Council has identified five sites: east and north of Harwell Campus, west of Harwell Village, Milton Heights and land to the east of Sutton Courtenay. In terms of character of these are quite different to the large sites so we believe two or three of these sites can come forward concurrently to the large sites.

iii. Western Vale Sub Area

This is a large area that is based on Faringdon and incorporates Stanford in the Vale and Watchfield and Shrivenham. The Council have identified the following 5 potential sites as being suitable for development:

South of Park Road, Faringdon	East of Coxwell Road, Faringdon
South of Faringdon	North Shrivenham
South West of Faringdon	West Stanford in the Vale

Sites are coming forward in both Faringdon and Shrivenham already. Faringdon is a significant settlement and we believe has capacity for more than one large site but we don't believe Shrivenham does. On this basis, in addition to the large sites at North Shrivenham and South of Park Road we would expect 2 further sites to come forward concurrently.

Based on the above it is unlikely that more than 8 sites will come forward over the whole area together. None of these have planning consent at present (although some do have a resolution to grant permission subject to completion of an appropriate legal agreement). If it is assumed that each site is started straight away (which is most unlikely) then the rate of delivery over the 8 sites may be zero in years 1 and 2 and then 180 units in year three, and then 360 units per year over the remaining plan-period.

Conclusions

41. Bringing the above information together, an assessment of the Council's ability to deliver housing may be made although the above only looks at development under the new Plan. We have reviewed the Council's Housing Trajectory and taken from that the expected rates of

delivery from consented development (i.e. development that is already approved, or subject to a resolution to grant). Whilst the most of the consented sites are small sites which would only be developed as a single phase, there are also several larger sites. We have checked the Council's assumptions with regard to delivery rates and they are largely consistent with the assumptions in this report.

42. The expected rate of delivery is summarised as follows, year 1 being the expected year of plan adoption 2015/16, year 16 being 2030/31:

VOWH Potential Housing Delivery					
Year	Large Strategic Sites (300+)	Small sites (<20)	Medium Sites (20 – 300)	Consented Development	**Total**
1	108			738	846
2	216			920	1,136
3	648		180	822	1,650
4	810		360	424	1,594
5	1,080		360	116	1,556
6	1,080	166	360	92	1,698
7	1,080	166	360	83	1,689
8	1,026	166	360	79	1,631
9	1,134	166	360	69	1,729
10	1,026	166	360		1,552
11	810	166	360		1,336
12	594	166	360		1,120
13	486	166	360		1,012
14	432	166	360		958
15	162	166	360		688
16		166	360		526
	10,692	**1,826**	**4,860**	**3,343**	**20,721**

Source: HDH

43. It can be concluded that the Council does have a reasonable prospect of delivering the housing required over the plan-period. It is clear that, due to the current relatively modest rates of delivery (400 or so per year), and experience elsewhere, increasing delivery and 'breaking' the link with the wider market is challenging. By pursuing an allocation strategy, bringing forward a wide range of sites in a range of locations, the Council will be maximising the likelihood of delivery. Output will be further supported in the short to medium term by the quantum and range of small to medium sites in the planning pipeline. However it will still take some time for the increased delivery rate to build up. On this basis we would suggest that delivery in the first five years of the Plan would be between 6,700 and 6,900 units, assuming market conditions remain broadly favourable and developers are not unduly cautious. This

would equate to about 1,350 units per year. Over the whole 15 year period the rate would be just under 1,400 units per year.

44. These estimates must be treated with caution. Whilst the logic behind this analysis is clear, there are numerous variables that could influence the rate of development and slow the rates of delivery. In the short term the Council can have a degree of confidence over the consented sites coming forward, but even for that development to be built out will require a doubling of current construction rates. To increase further will certainly be challenging and if the capacity within the construction sector does not increase it would not be possible to deliver all the planned housing.

45. It is particularly notable that the Council is seeking to allocate sites that will compete when considered against the CLG/University of Glasgow research. It will be necessary to ensure that a wide range of products is encouraged if the aspirations to deliver new housing are to be met.

46. It is important to note that in these assumptions we have assumed that the infrastructure required to support development will be forthcoming in a timely manner. The Council will be reliant, in part, on Oxford County Council, the statutory undertakers (particularly Thames Water), and others bringing forward infrastructure promptly. This aspect of development is largely out of the Council's control so it will be necessary to ensure that consents are co-ordinated with the delivery of infrastructure.

HDH Planning and Development Ltd is a specialist planning consultancy providing evidence to support planning authorities, land owners and developers.

The firm is led by Simon Drummond-Hay who is a Chartered Surveyor, Associate of Chartered Institute of Housing and senior development professional with a wide experience of both development and professional practice. The firm is regulated by the RICS.

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- District wide and site specific Viability Analysis
- Local and Strategic Housing Market Assessments and Housing Needs Assessments
- Future Housing Numbers Analysis (post RSS target setting)

HDH Planning and Development have clients throughout England and Wales.

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