

**VALE OF WHITE HORSE LOCAL PLAN 2031  
PART 1  
STRATEGIC SITES AND POLICIES  
PUBLICATION VERSION  
NOVEMBER 2014**

**SUBMISSIONS ON BEHALF  
OF  
THE HARWELL CAMPUS PARTNERSHIP  
DECEMBER 2014**



## INTRODUCTION

1. This submission is made in response to the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Publication Version (November 2014) ("the draft Local Plan") and is made on behalf of the Harwell Campus Partnership ("the Partnership"). This submission also includes comments on the supporting documents where appropriate.
2. Harwell Oxford 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 approximately 200 organisations. These include Science & Technology Facilities Council, Medical Research Council, European Space Agency, Diamond Light Source, Public Health England, Element Six, Bluebird, Thales Group, Airbus, RAL Space, the Satellite Applications Catapult, and others in related fields.
3. The Harwell Campus is located in Science Vale, which is internationally significant as a location for innovation and science based research and business. The draft Local Plan identifies as the first of three main strands the focussing of sustainable growth within the Science Vale Area.
4. The Harwell Campus extends to 292 hectares and has a diverse, international and collaborative character, plus an exceptional history of scientific discovery and excellence in multiple fields over many decades. Today, on site research spans an enormous breadth and depth of science, including: aerospace and space, telecommunications, medical and life sciences, physical sciences, mechanical engineering, lasers, plasma physics, nano technology, cryogenics, super-computing and advanced data storage.
5. The Campus covers an area broadly similar to Wantage. It is categorised in the Council's *Town and Village Facilities Study* as equivalent to a large village.<sup>1</sup> It is a brownfield site, allocated for development, where there is land available now for employment-generating development, housing and ancillary services and facilities. Part of the site is also an Enterprise Zone. Applications are being prepared to bring forward new employment related development.
6. The Partnership is responsible for bringing forward new development at the Harwell Campus consistent with its status as a centre for excellence for research and development. Work is underway on a new site-wide Framework Master Plan, the primary purpose of which is to provide a clear, simple and responsive framework for the delivery of new science and technology focused employment-generating development and new facilities to support Harwell as a world class science and technology centre. As part of this new homes are planned, which would serve the campus and add to its vitality and sustainability. The Partnership is determined to ensure that Harwell Oxford remains at the core of Oxfordshire's science and technology cluster and continues to support science related economic growth across the United Kingdom.

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<sup>1</sup> Town and Village Facilities Study, page 6, Table 1

7. The Partnership values the support it has received from the Council and is committed to bringing forward new development in collaboration with the Council in response to both the requirement for further economic development at the heart of the Science Vale and the need for new housing to serve the growth of the campus. This commitment is evidenced by the draft Statement of Cooperation that the Partnership is looking to enter into with the Council and Oxfordshire County Council.

### **The Partnership's Vision for the Campus**

8. There are already a number of established vision statements for Harwell Oxford and for the wider Science Vale. These will be distilled for the purposes of the Framework Master Plan but the principles and shared intentions for the Campus are clear.
9. Science Vale benefits from a Vision Statement published by the Science Vale UK Partnership (which includes the parties to this Statement) and which establishes that:

“Science Vale UK should be a global hotspot for enterprise and innovation in science, high technology and the application of knowledge.”

10. The Vision Statement states that Science Vale will be:-
  - World renowned for business excellence, based on science and innovation attracting high quality inward investment and helping resident businesses to prosper and grow;
  - Have a world class environment, housing and physical infrastructure, especially in transport but also ICT and utilities, attracting the extra investment required to achieve this;
  - An attractive and sustainable place in which to live and work, which does not rely on long distance commuting and has a strong sense of community and pride.
11. This shared Vision for the five constituent locations of Science Vale is developed in more detail for each within the Strategic Economic Plan published by the Oxfordshire LEP in March 2014. The SEP explains that the public/private sector for Harwell Campus is responsible for:-

“developing the campus into a vibrant community of scientists and technologists which is the biggest specialist community of its kind anywhere in the UK”.
12. The Partnership is in the process of updating the Vision but the general nature of the ambition for the Campus is not intended to change and is shared by all stakeholders.

13. In addition, a specific Vision Statement for the Campus was prepared with, and endorsed by, Government at the time that the Harwell Science and Innovation Campus joint venture was established. That vision is embedded in the documented structure and purpose of the Partnership and its provisions are set out in full below:

#### **The Vision for the HSIC**

**The Harwell [and Daresbury] Science and Innovation Campuses will be developed to support the objectives of the Government's Science and Innovation Investment Framework.**

**The Harwell Science and Innovation Campus is home to some of the world's most prestigious research facilities, providing fundamental research opportunities used by, and delivering benefit to, most scientific sectors.**

**The Campus will fulfil its unique potential by building an ever stronger interactive community of leading scientists and innovators.**

#### **The Campus will be:**

- **A place where new collaborative approaches to research, innovation and learning are developed**
- **A natural location for new science, engineering and technology initiatives in the UK and a focus for science-linked projects and innovation activities**
- **A prime location for the international R&D sector**
- **An environment in which, through the establishment of appropriate scientific and social infrastructures, scientists from a wide range of disciplines can work in a mutually supportive and cohesive manner**
- **A scientific and high technology commercial cluster in its own right, significant in regional, national and international economic development and markets. Public sector organisations will work alongside businesses exploiting research to develop and profit from innovative products and services**
- **A place where small, medium and large public and private organisations can co-locate to their mutual benefit. Specialist high quality property solutions will support the needs of knowledge-based businesses and a supportive infrastructure will be provided, the costs of which will be shared equitably**

- **A cluster of diverse organisations and local stakeholders working together for their mutual benefit and for the benefit of the UK and global economy**
- **A common identity that enhances the identities of the individual participants**
- **A contributor to the development of the UK's internationally renowned scientific and high-technology skills base**
- **A high quality sustainable environment for working, living and visiting, employing best practice in imaginative and environmentally sensitive design."**

### **A BALANCED APPROACH**

14. The draft Local Plan is looking to position Science Vale and in particular the Harwell Campus as a location that will continue to be a significant economic driver and which will expand and compete in an international market. It follows therefore that the Plan needs to promote policies and allocations that recognise the international nature of the market that Harwell competes in and the importance of equipping Harwell to compete for footloose science investment opportunities.
15. The Partnership **supports** the Council's Spatial Vision as set out in section 3 of the Plan and welcomes the Council's continuing commitment to Science Vale as the "first choice location for high value added business and research."<sup>2</sup> It also notes and **supports** the Council's Strategic Objective SO 6, which states that the Council will "Support the continued development of Science Vale as an internationally significant centre for innovation and science based research and business"<sup>3</sup>
16. The Partnership **supports** Core Policy 7: Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services and Core Policy 17: Delivery of Strategic Highway Improvements within the South-East Vale Sub-Area, which seek to secure the appropriate levels of infrastructure to mitigate the impacts of planned growth and enable the future economic viability of the area.
17. The Partnership understands the importance of the timely delivery of infrastructure, particularly transport, to ensure the expansion of Harwell Campus is viable and a success. The Partnership would draw the Council's attention to the fact that much of the planned infrastructure is to be funded by the EZ.
18. This being the case, it follows that there needs to be a coordinated and joined-up approach to the delivery of employment land and homes to ensure that the necessary infrastructure is delivered in a timely manner.

<sup>2</sup> Local Plan 2031 (November 2014), section 3, page 29

<sup>3</sup> Local Plan 2031 (November 2014), section 3, page 30

19. The Partnership also **supports** the Council's decision to meet in full its objectively assessed need for new housing in the Vale as set out in the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (April 2014) i.e. 1,028 homes per annum (2011 – 2013) or a total of 20,560 during the plan period, although more homes will be necessary as part of a short term review of the plan – not least to address the chronic under-provision of housing in the sub-region and particularly, Oxford's unmet need.
20. Overall, the SHMA concludes that up to 93,560 – 106,560 additional homes are needed across Oxfordshire in the period 2011 – 2031 (between 4,678 – 5,328 homes per annum).<sup>4</sup> Under the heading "*Balancing Jobs and Homes*" the SHMA summary refers to the City Deal signed with Government in January 2014 "to deliver innovation-led economic growth, building on the area's world class economic assets which include the universities and research and development activities."<sup>5</sup> Key among the latter is Harwell Campus.
21. The City Deal Policy Paper identifies the Harwell Campus as a "prioritised development area", recommending the consideration of Local Development Orders.<sup>6</sup> Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council and central Government have all committed to substantial investment in the Harwell Investment Hub, emphasising the strength and growth potential of Harwell Campus.<sup>7</sup>
22. In relation to the Vale, the SHMA identifies that this level of housing growth is required to provide the labour force to support a 'Committed Employment Growth' scenario resulting in 23,000 jobs in the District between 2011-2031.<sup>8</sup> This growth scenario is above 'baseline' trend scenarios, reflecting policy initiatives and investment in the local economy, including at the Harwell Campus. This is confirmed in paragraph 3.35 where it states that Science Vale will be one of the locations where major projects will create new jobs.
23. The recognition of the economic potential of the Harwell Campus and the need to support economic growth through an increase in housing delivery is welcomed and supported by the Partnership. However, planning for housing growth should also be driven by a recognition of the Campus's role in relation to nationally important objectives for science investment. It is clear, for instance, that there is a close relationship between scale and location of planned housing provision and the concentration of employment and employment growth potential exemplified by Harwell Campus.
24. Housing growth is necessary to supply sufficient labour for Science Vale to achieve its important potential. Moreover, locating housing growth alongside the employment centre will bring clear sustainable benefits as well as adding to the character and attractiveness of the Campus as a place to work. The type of housing is also important if it is to optimise its contribution to the labour requirements of Science Vale and this will need to be planned

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<sup>4</sup> Oxfordshire SHMA Summary (March 2014) page 5, paragraph 1.3

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, page 17, paragraph 3.34

<sup>6</sup> City Deal Policy Paper, page 6

<sup>7</sup> City Deal Policy Paper, page 11

<sup>8</sup> Oxfordshire SHMA Summary (March 2014) page 19, Figure 11

carefully. Further work is being carried out by the Partnership to establish the types of housing that will best support the science investment.

25. The established nature of the Harwell Campus also means that it can deliver new employment-generating development and housing in advance of the adoption of the Local Plan – evidence the existing commitment to provide 120 homes on land at South Drive. This potential for early delivery can greatly assist the Council in terms of meeting its requirement to achieve and maintain a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, as well as providing early benefits to the campus.

## SPATIAL STRATEGY

26. Consistent with the arguments set out above, the Partnership welcomes and supports the Council's commitment to "focussing sustainable growth within the Science Vale area" by *inter alia*:

- Promoting Science Vale as a world-class location for science and technology-based enterprise and innovation, especially the Enterprise Zone sites at Milton park and Harwell Campus; and
- Allocating appropriate land for strategic housing growth to help improve the self-containment of the area.<sup>9</sup>

27. The Harwell Campus is central to the future growth and success of Science Vale. The Campus is identified as a focus for employment (Core Policy 6) and housing growth (Core Policy 4). However, to be **justified** and **effective** and to meet in full the Government's three dimensions to sustainable development<sup>10</sup>, the Local Plan must maximise the potential for integration between job growth and housing but in a way that minimises the impact on the environment.

28. Against this background:

- The Partnership **supports** the proposal to 'ring-fence' housing supply in the Science Vale area;
- The Partnership **supports** the allocation of land north-west of Harwell Campus as a site for 550 homes;
- The Partnership suggests that there should be a policy that acknowledges the need to respond quickly and efficiently to emerging trends and demands in science and research related development;
- The Partnership believes that there should be a zone of influence around Harwell Oxford within which one of the tests for development is whether it would prejudice the future growth or success of Harwell Oxford; and
- **Objects** to the allocation of land East of Harwell Campus as a site for 850 homes.

<sup>9</sup> Local Plan 2031 (November 2014), section 4, page 34, Figure 4.1

<sup>10</sup> NPPF, page 2, paragraph 7

The land East of Harwell Campus should be **deleted** from the Plan and **replaced** by an additional allocation on the Harwell Campus itself (see below).

29. In the context of the development plan, fully integrated employment and housing allocations at the Harwell Campus are the only way of meeting in full the Council's objectives of ensuring that:
- Sufficient homes are provided to help meet the future labour supply requirements of the local economy;
  - Making full use of brownfield land; and
  - The necessary growth is delivered as sustainably as possible, ensuring there are enough jobs and new facilities provided alongside new homes whilst also minimising any harmful impacts.
30. It is evident from the East of Harwell Campus Development Template<sup>11</sup> that that proposed allocation is predicated on:
- The international and national importance of the Harwell Campus - without the Campus and the growth potential of the existing science and research development this proposed allocation would not be being promoted;<sup>12</sup>
  - The continued and future success of Harwell Oxford as a focus for employment growth;
  - Full integration with the Science Vale Oxford infrastructure package;
  - The provision of a sustainable and integrated exemplar mixed use community providing new housing and new jobs; and
  - The provision of additional high quality community facilities to complement those already available on the Campus.
31. The most effective way to ensure that these objectives are met, however, is to fully integrate the employment and housing components on the Harwell Oxford. Indeed, without proper integration there is limited justification for development in the AONB (see below). If the housing development can be provided on surplus brownfield land within or associated with the campus itself (see below), there would be no justification for the development of greenfield land in a more conspicuous location within the AONB
32. Moreover, housing development planned on the doorstep of the Harwell Campus but over which the Partnership has no effective control could damage Harwell Oxford and achieve the opposite of the intended effects. The land to the east also occupies a strategic location as the obvious long-term candidate for the expansion of the campus and, particularly, as the expansion land for nationally important 'big science'. Such important potential

<sup>11</sup> Local Plan 2031, November 2014, Appendix A, page 35 - 37

<sup>12</sup> SA Report page 60, paragraphs 13.3.4 – 13.3.7

- should not be prejudiced by more footloose residential development – particularly when the land is available actually within the campus. The land to the north and north-west of the Campus has been recognised as suitable for housing development in the emerging Local Plan but, due to its topography and tree cover it is not well suited to large scale employment uses.
33. Effective delivery of the 850 homes earmarked for the land to the east of the Harwell Campus would be best achieved by recasting the policy and concentrating development on the Harwell Campus. This will ensure that the housing development will come forward as part of a fully integrated, mixed-use, Framework Masterplan led scheme for the whole campus.
  34. Based on the master planning work done to date, the Partnership has identified 46.74 hectares of the Campus (out of a total 292 hectares for the campus as a whole) that is suitable and available for residential development, just over 60% of which is previously developed and all of which, save for the green field element of the North of Harwell allocation, is already earmarked for development in the adopted Vale Local Plan 2011.<sup>13</sup> This land comprises 6 distinct parcels of land A – F. These parcels are identified on **Plan KK1** and described in Figure 1 below. They fall within the EZ at Harwell, the area highlighted under saved policy E7 in the adopted Local Plan 2011 relating to development at Harwell Campus and the ring-fenced area for Harwell proposed under Core Policy 5 in the new plan.
  35. The back land nature of the majority of this land makes it less attractive for prestigious R&D employment-generating development – the focus of that development is likely to be the higher profile eastern side of the Campus closest to the A4185. The topography and landscape characteristics of the land to the north and north-west of the campus are such that it is better suited to housing than it is to employment uses.

**Figure 1. Areas Suitable for Residential Development**

	Land	Brownfield/Greenfield	Hectares
<b>A</b>	The North of Harwell allocation	Part greenfield; part brownfield	18.93 ha
<b>B</b>	Farm land between the former prefabricated housing site and the western-most part of the North of Harwell Campus allocation	Greenfield	7.5 ha
<b>C</b>	The former Aldfield prefabricated housing site	Brownfield	10.2 ha

<sup>13</sup> See Vale Local Plan 2011, Policy E7

<b>D</b>	Existing commitment south of Icknield Way/north of Curie Avenue	Brownfield	6.04 ha
<b>E</b>	An area of existing development to the west of the committed site	Brownfield	4.56 ha

36. Adopting the Council's preferred density of 30 dwellings per hectare<sup>14</sup>, parcels A – F can accommodate **up to around 1,400 homes**. After netting off the current proposed north-west Harwell allocation of 550 homes, this means that there is capacity for a further 850 homes, which would be a direct replacement for the East of Harwell allocation. **Plan KK2** shows illustratively how this quantum of development can be accommodated within land parcels A – E. It also shows a principal means of access via the existing Curie Avenue entrance; a significant area of structural open space centred on the existing lagoon and woodland; areas where by virtue of the existing mature tree cover lower density development is perhaps more appropriate; the scope for integrating housing and employment via the existing north-south link along Eighth Street and by locating the 'mixed use core' along that route; and, in the heart of the development, a site for a primary school.

37. Further housing on the Campus would:

- Add to the vitality of the Campus;
- Sustain existing and newly planned services and facilities;
- Contribute directly to the provision of additional social and physical infrastructure;
- Be phased to suit employment growth rates;
- Provide the opportunity for the type and tenure of housing to be managed to maximise the benefit to the Campus (including PRS and discounted rents); and
- Make best use of brownfield land in the area.

38. This is in stark contrast to the proposed East of Harwell allocation, which would:

- Detract from the vitality of the Campus by competing for and potentially duplicating services and facilities;
- Be phased solely on the basis of market demand;
- Likely be limited to standard market and affordable housing;

<sup>14</sup> Core Policy 23 & Topic Paper 4: Housing, page 48, paragraph 5.48

- Prejudice the long term growth of major science development; and
- Be wholly on green field land.

### **North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)**

39. The *Vale Landscape Capacity Study (February 2014) – Part 2*, which was published as part of the evidence base for the February 2014 *Housing Delivery Update* concluded that the East of Harwell Campus site:
  - Had medium/high landscape sensitivity and medium/high landscape value;
  - Overall, its landscape capacity was “low”;
  - Housing on this site would have an adverse impact on the AONB; and
  - No part of this site should be considered further as a contingency site on landscape and visual grounds.<sup>15</sup>
40. That assessment notwithstanding, the *Housing Delivery Update* proposed to allocate the land East of Harwell Campus as a site for some 1,400 homes on the basis that there were “unique and exceptional circumstances” (i.e. the sustainability of the Harwell Campus and its international reputation for innovation in science and technology) that supported further development within the AONB.<sup>16</sup>
41. In addition, the *Housing Delivery Update* stated that if the 1,400 homes were not integrated with the Harwell Campus, physically, functionally and in design terms and were not properly planned they would not be acceptable.
42. The *Vale Landscape Capacity Study (February 2014) – Part 2*, however concluded that the land north-west of Harwell Campus:
  - Had medium landscape sensitivity and medium/high landscape value;
  - Overall its landscape capacity was medium/low;
  - Limited housing on this site would have little impact on the AONB; and
  - Part of the site could be considered further as a contingency site on landscape and visual grounds.<sup>17</sup>
43. In the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) (October 2014) it states at paragraph 13.1.3 that on page 58 that:
 

“Following the Housing Update Delivery Consultation (February 2014), major concerns were raised by Natural England, and the AONB

<sup>15</sup> Vale Landscape Capacity Study (February 2014) – Part 2, pages 164 -169

<sup>16</sup> Local Plan 2013, Part 1, February 2014, page 10, paragraph 1.20

<sup>17</sup> Vale Landscape Capacity Study (February 2014) – Part 2, pages 170 -176

Management Board with regard to the landscape sensitivities of the AONB at the proposed strategic sites at North West Harwell Campus and East Harwell Campus on the ability to mitigate visual impacts satisfactorily.”

44. It goes on to state at paragraph 13.1.4 in the SA that:

“In recognition of the landscape sensitivities of these sites a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been prepared to inform the scale and form of the development of land surrounding Harwell Campus to accommodate future residential development.”

45. The Council appointed Hankinson Duckett Associates to undertake this work (the original landscape assessment work having been carried out by Kirkham Landscape Planning/Terra Firma). Hankinson Duckett Associates identified seven land parcels. Two of these parcels were considered worthy of further work, and were sub-divided into eight sub-areas. Those areas are identified at figure 13.1 in the SA Report and comprise the entirety of the East of Harwell Campus allocation (divided into six sub-parcels) and the western (green field) element of the North of Harwell allocation.
46. The Hankinson Duckett Associates LVIA came to a different conclusion to that reached in the February 2014 *Landscape Capacity Study*. The results of the analysis of the East of Harwell allocation still confirmed that it had medium/high landscape sensitivity, medium/high landscape value and that its resulting landscape capacity was “low”. However, at page 9 in the main report it then states that:

**“Potential impacts of housing development within this parcel -** Developing the whole [of the East of Harwell Campus] parcel would harm the character and appearance of the AONB. New housing would be out of context with the existing settlement plan and highly visible from the surrounding rural landscape. Developing part of the parcel may have less significant impact.”

47. Hankinson Duckett also analysed the green field element of the North of Harwell allocation. That analysis concluded that its landscape sensitivity was “medium”; that its landscape value was “medium/high” and that its resulting landscape capacity was “medium/low”. This is consistent with the findings of the *Landscape Capacity Study of Contingency Sites*, which formed part of the evidence base for the *Housing Delivery Update* and which has been updated as part of the evidence base for the current draft Plan. That study, which was carried out by Kirkham/Terra Firma concluded that the land “north west of Harwell Campus” i.e. the entirety of the proposed allocation comprising greenfield and brown field land is “visually contained” and has “potential for housing...subject to more detailed study”.<sup>18</sup>
48. It goes on to state that:

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<sup>18</sup> Landscape Capacity Study of Contingency Housing Sites Additional to Sites Assessed in *Landscape Capacity Study: Contingency Sites ((Feb 2014) Kirkham Landscape Planning/Terra Firma*

**“Potential for landscape mitigation and contribution to green infrastructure** – landscape mitigation is more feasible in some parts of the parcel. The immature shelter belt could be strengthened and replicated without significant change or erosion of landscape character. The existing hedgerow along Icknield Way could be strengthened and extended. The planting along the A34 could be strengthened, which would improve the character of the parcel.”

49. It is self-evident that that there is an inconsistency between the conclusions in respect of the East of Harwell allocation in the original *Vale Landscape Capacity Study (February 2014)* and the recommendations from Hankinson Duckett Associates. This is in contrast to the position in respect of the North of Harwell allocation where both sets of consultants have concluded that the site has potential for housing. Even taken at face value, whilst parts of the land to the East “may have less significant impact”, the studies are consistent in recognising the potential for development to the north and north-west of the Campus.
50. Returning to the SA Report, under the heading *Further Justification* paragraphs 13.3.4 – 13.3.6 read as follows:
 

“13.3.4 Two of the proposed sites (East and North of Harwell Campus) are located within the North Wessex Downs AONB. Paragraph 116 of the NPPF states that planning permission for major developments in the AONB should be refused except in “*exceptional circumstances*” and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest.

13.3.5 Harwell Campus is an existing and well established development within the North Wessex Downs AONB. The Campus is of international importance and national economic significance as a world-class centre for science, technology and innovation, and is home to the European Space Agency. It is estimated that at least 5,400 net additional jobs will be created at the Campus.

13.3.6 The Council believes that the international significance of the site provides uniquely exceptional circumstances to justify supporting further development in this AONB location. Any development will need to be sensitively planned to minimise impact on the AONB whilst delivering a high quality and sustainable village community. The original proposals have been refined and reduced based on more detailed landscape advice, restricting development to areas where, with planting screening, it would not cause significant visual harm.”
51. That justification, of course, would be all the more relevant to a proposal for housing on largely brownfield land actually within and integrated directly with the Campus.
52. The findings and recommendations that flow from this assessment are recorded in Part 3 of the SA. The findings in respect of the East of Harwell Campus site are summarised in the table at pages 110-112 in the SA report. In that table the commentary records “major negatives” in respect of cultural heritage, townscape and landscape and the requirement to reduce air, noise

and light pollution. The “major negative” in respect of the first issue stems from the site’s location in the AONB and its “low landscape capacity”.

53. The findings and recommendations in respect of the North of Harwell Campus site are recorded at pages 112 and 113 in the SA report. That site records only one “major negative” in respect of the requirement to reduce air, noise and light pollution. It is recorded as having a “minor negative effect” in terms of cultural heritage.
54. There is still a requirement on Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) when they consider allocating land in the AONB for development, and on landowners and developers when making planning applications, to consider brownfield land ahead of greenfield sites (NPPF, para 111) and to assess the detrimental effect on the landscape and to show how this could be moderated (NPPF, para 116). More particularly, paragraph 116 of the NPPF requires major development within an AONB to meet the so called “major development test”, a key component of which is whether the need for the development could be met with less impact elsewhere.
55. This suggests that the land identified above at the northern end of the Harwell Campus should be considered ahead of the land to the east. In this regard, it is self-evident that further development on brownfield land (and land already committed to development) within the existing campus, where there is capacity for additional housing without compromising the campus’s primary focus on employment-generating development, will cause less harm to the AONB than development on adjacent green field land.

### **Meeting Business and Employment Needs**

56. The Partnership’s proposed enlarged housing allocation includes 28.3 hectares of EZ land (areas B – E on Plan KK1). The Harwell Campus EZ extends in all to 94 hectares. There is also a further 28 hectares of EZ land at Milton Park. In addition, there is an additional 35 hectares of non-EZ land at Harwell Campus, which formed part of the allocation in the adopted Vale Local Plan 2011, and which is ‘saved’ in the emerging Local Plan. The EZ land at Harwell and Milton Park totalling 122 hectares and the additional 35 hectares are identified in Core Policy 6 as strategic sites for future employment development and form part of a total allocation of 219 hectares. It states at paragraph 4.24 in the emerging Local Plan that this land will deliver approximately 23,000 jobs, which is sufficient to meet the Council’s assessed need.
57. The Local Plan evidence base includes an *Employment Land Review Addendum 2014* produced by URS. The purpose of the Addendum is to update the Council’s Employment Land Review to reflect the projected 23,000 jobs figure identified in the 2014 Cambridge Econometrics report: *Economic Forecasting to inform the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan and Strategic Housing Market Assessment*. It is apparent that the evidence base identifies a significant surplus of employment land compared with that required to meet the job forecasts of the Local Plan.
58. For example, the February 2013 draft of the Local Plan assumed that there was only 143 hectares of employment land available (draft Core Policy 4),

compared with the 219 hectares now identified in the equivalent policy. Even that level of employment land was considered to be more than was required (URS Employment Land Review 2013 page 77). The 143 hectares was assumed to support 14,300 jobs (URS page 50) but the later Cambridge Econometrics Economic forecasting report of February 2014 has confirmed that it is only necessary to achieve 13,800 jobs from employment land (page 40), because the remainder of the forecast requirement of 23,000 jobs will come forward on other land (e.g. hospitals, town centres etc.). Again, the CE report concluded that there is a surplus of employment land (*“plenty of capacity”*) (page 41). The submitted Core Policy 6 identifies 219 hectares of employment land – but this is simply a record of what is now known to exist, rather than a statement of what is required.

59. Some further explanation of this is provided in the most recent Addendum, which states at paragraph 3.1 on page 10 that:

“3.1 The council has identified that an increased amount of available employment land exists in Science Vale than previously understood. This updated understanding of the employment land supply has been informed through consultation with key stakeholders; through the Cambridge Econometrics Report and also as an update to the existing Employment Land Review where previous assumptions have now changed. This does not affect the spatial distribution of employment in the district, nor have any of the employment land boundaries been amended. The changes are identified as follows:

- Harwell Campus Enterprise Zone (EZ) land – The Employment Land Review previously identified the total amount of enterprise zone land at Harwell Campus as being 64ha. This was the total amount of land that was originally applied for by the Local Enterprise Board in 2011. During the application process, a revised boundary was submitted but the revised land area was not updated accordingly. This has now been corrected and the total amount of enterprise zone land at Harwell Campus is 94ha. The cumulative total of enterprise zone land in Science Vale (with Milton Park) is now 122ha. The total number of jobs to be provided specifically on this land, however, remains unchanged at 5,400.
- Other land at Harwell Campus outside of the Enterprise Zone boundary – The Cambridge Econometrics Report identifies that over the plan period, there will be job growth in sectors such as space science, satellite technologies and environmental technologies. The report identifies that this growth would be expected to take place within or adjacent to the Enterprise Zone land at Harwell Campus. This growth is in addition to the 5,400 jobs identified above. Table K.4 of the CE report states that additional land “should be available for development in the short term over and above the EZ area, and more long term”. As a result of this, the council have identified 35ha of non EZ land at Harwell Campus to satisfy the provision of these jobs.”

(our emphasis)

60. In addition, further long-term employment land will become available at the Campus as land within the 'licensed site' is progressively decommissioned.

### **Benefits of Housing Development on Land to the North and North West of Harwell**

61. The proposed enlarged housing allocation is a highly sustainable location for housing. The new residential development would be fully integrated with existing and future employment development and local services and facilities making access safe and easy. The site at East Harwell on the other hand is physically separated from the main Harwell Campus by the A4185 (Newbury Road) making access to services and facilities potentially problematic.
62. Land to the North and North West of Harwell is suitable for housing development as it is mainly a brownfield site within the existing campus, where there is capacity for the additional housing without compromising the Campus' primary focus on employment-generating development. It will also cause less harm to the AONB than development on adjacent green field land to the east of the A4185. The Partnership can also confirm that the site is available immediately for housing development and that it is unaware of any fundamental barriers to achieving/delivering housing on-site, as proposed. It is understood that the Hendred Estate will confirm the same in a separate submission.

### **Safeguarding the East Harwell land**

63. The Campus' expected long-term success implies a need to expand in future decades, beyond its current boundary. Moreover, expansion needs could be accelerated by virtue of new internationally significant science related development (e.g. a substantial Free Electron Laser). Not all of the EZ land is well suited to large-scale projects, given the disposition and extent of existing buildings, services and infrastructure, the non-availability of the long-term licensed site (i.e. the land to the south and west which is under the control of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority), the existing and proposed housing to the north and the nature of the land to the south, which is already earmarked for 'big science'.
64. The logical expansion land is the farmland to the east of the Campus i.e. the East of Harwell land. Future development of that land would logically be triggered by major research facility needs, but could in due course have some mixed-use components. However, it would constrain the Campus now and for the future if that land was brought forward now for a predominantly or almost exclusively residential focussed development.
65. The Partnership is content that it can make significant contribution to the immediate and medium term residential needs of current and future Campus personnel by sustainably developing homes on Campus and on contiguous land that the Council has now proposed to be allocated (in the ownership of the Hendred Estate). The Partnership does not seek any designation of the land to the east, save for its continued protection as part of the AONB.

## CONSEQUENTIAL CHANGES TO THE LOCAL PLAN

66. Set out below in red are the changes that need to be made to the Draft Plan as a consequence of the submissions set out above. Changes will also be required to the explanatory text and to a number of other figures.

### Core Policy 4: Meeting Our Housing Needs

67. Change the “South East Vale Sub-Area” table as follows:

Settlement/Parish	Settlement Type	Site Name	Number of Dwellings
Harwell Campus	Larger Village	East of Harwell Campus	850
		North-West of Harwell Campus	550 1,400
Harwell		West of Harwell	200

68. **Amend** the North of Harwell Development Template (Appendix A) as follows:

**Use:** Around ~~550~~ 1,400 homes, subject to masterplanning

#### Key Objectives:

- The development of this site shall take into account the design and layout of the existing commitment to the south (permission for 120 homes) and be master planned to collaborate with the East of Harwell Campus to deliver a self-sufficient and sustainable community.
- To contribute to balanced employment and housing growth in the Science Vale area.
- To contribute towards infrastructure in the Science Vale Area Strategy as set out in the Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan.
- To ensure that development is sensitively planned to reflect the site's location within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

#### Urban design principles:

- Masterplanning should take into account the strategy for growth in this area and ensure that development positively contributes to the wider objectives of Science Vale; a vital area for UK economic growth.
- Proposals should have regard to the recommendations set out in the Harwell Campus Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA). Higher density development should be concentrated in the southern ~~previously developed~~ part of the site.

- The design of development should reflect the **existing character of the Harwell Campus** ~~character of the adjacent Harwell Campus~~, creating a cohesive identify for the **development Campus** as a whole.
- Adopt a permeable, perimeter block layout to optimise connectivity within and beyond the site to employment, housing and facilities.
- Carefully consider street frontages in order to create an appropriate building line and incorporate active frontages.
- Public open space should form a well connected network of green areas suitable for formal and informal recreation
- Buildings should be predominantly two storeys.

#### **Utilities:**

- Upgrade the sewer network.

#### **Access and highways:**

- Investigate access arrangements.
- Site access would be taken from A4185 Newbury Road at the location of the existing residential access.
- Contribute towards any necessary mitigation measures identified through the site Transport Assessment.
- Provide improved pedestrian and cycle links to Chilton Primary School.
- Site layout should ensure public transport can be accessed through the site or that the site is within walking distance of improved bus services within the campus.
- Construct Curie Avenue and internal roads within the new development to Oxfordshire County Council adopted road standards.

#### **Social and community:**

- A new 'two form entry' primary school (on 2.22 ha of land) will be required to accommodate growth at ~~East of Harwell Campus and North West of Harwell Campus~~. This is likely to be located **on green field land within the allocation thereby minimising the impact on the AONB.** ~~to the east of the East of Harwell Campus site and contributions will be required towards it.~~
- Contribute towards the expansion of the appropriate secondary school in the area.
- Contribute towards improving the existing services and facilities on the **adjacent wider** campus.

- Allow appropriate access to existing public open space and recreational facilities ~~opposite the site and/or~~ within the campus.

#### **Environmental health:**

- Decommission the sewage treatment works.
- Undertake contaminated land investigations to ensure that the land is safe and suitable for the intended use.

#### **Landscape considerations:**

- The site lies within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). A comprehensive landscape scheme will be required to minimise impact on the AONB.
- The mass and scale of the built form will need to be designed to avoid being visually obtrusive when viewed from the surrounding countryside within the AONB.
- Landscaping and design features should be used to minimise any noise and light pollution impacts on the AONB.
- Plant a new woodland edge along the northern and western boundary.
- Retain existing trees and hedgerows where possible.

#### **Biodiversity and green infrastructure:**

- A campus-wide mitigation strategy will be required and a suitable receptor site/ nature reserve identified.
- Contribute towards redressing the identified Green Infrastructure deficit in the area surrounding Harwell.

#### **Flood risk and drainage:**

- Incorporate Green Infrastructure within SUDs to improve biodiversity and water quality.
- Mitigation measures may be required to prevent any detrimental impact on groundwater quality.
- A porous pavement system rather than soakaways should be used due to the underlying chalk geology.

**Delete** the East of Harwell Development Template at Appendix A.

#### **Core Policy 6: Meeting Business and Employment Needs**

69. **Amend** the table in Core Policy 6 to reflect the reduction in employment land at the Harwell Campus.

70. **Amend** the table in Core Policy 15 to reflect the increase in housing numbers at the Harwell Campus and the consequential reduction in the allocated employment area and to reflect the deletion of the East of Harwell housing allocation.
71. **Add in** proposed policy wording that notes that:
- because investment opportunities will arise at Harwell there will be a need for flexibility and speed of response; and
  - development that is not masterplanned within the vicinity of the Harwell Campus will always be tested to ensure that it does not prejudice the long term growth and success of the facility.