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Hearing Statement

Matter 3 – Spatial strategy

3.1(a) & (b)

27. Many of the issues relating to the location of new development have been addressed under Matter 1.

28. The existing congestion on the routes between Abingdon and Didcot needs to be relieved through radical measures limiting the use (and ownership) of the private car. Meanwhile, Didcot is a relatively sustainable location for new housing. The progress of development in this area has been disappointing and the Vale of White Horse should be co-operating with South Oxfordshire Council to concentrate on providing those measures that would make Didcot an attractive place for residents and more rapid development.

Soundness - Summary

The failure to adequately plan for sustainable development should result in the Plan being found unsound for the following reasons:

- The plan has not been positively prepared as sustainable development is more likely to occur in spite of the Plan rather than due to its policies.
- The Plan does not include a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed requirements of the Climate Change Act and the related carbon reduction budgets.
- The plan is not justified because it is not based on the logical implications of the Climate Change Act for the development of land and buildings over the next 15 years.
- The Plan is not based on robust and credible evidence that relates to the necessary reduction in carbon emissions from existing land and buildings as well as all new development.
- The document will not be effective due to the failure to understand the repercussions of the statutory and advisory carbon reduction targets.
- The development supported by the Plan will not be deliverable in accordance with the criteria in the Plan. Development would need to accord with other criteria in order to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.
- The Plan is not flexible in the sense that it would need substantial change to be contributing to the achievement of sustainable development.¹
- It would not be possible to monitor the contribution it is making to the achievement of sustainable development as it lacks the necessary criteria (eg energy assessments, carbon reduction targets and rates) to carry out that fundamental exercise.
- The Plan is not consistent with national policy in respect of carbon reductions nor the Climate Change Act (see NPPF paras 14 and 94).

¹ S.39(2) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004