



Hearing Statement
Respondent Reference: 831779

**EXAMINATION INTO THE VALE OF WHITE
HORSE LOCAL PLAN 2031 PART 1:
STRATEGIC SITES AND POLICIES**

August 2015

Introduction

1. This statement is submitted to the Examination into the Vale of White Horse District Local Plan 2011-2031: Part 1 on behalf of the below listed landowners.
2. This statement responds to each of the issues raised by the Inspector in his Matters and Issues in turn.
3. Represented landowners
 - Robert Graham Boyles
 - Geoffrey John Boyles
 - Jean Ellen Frances Boyles
 - Elizabeth Ann Boyles
 - Robert Gee
 - John-Michael Gee
 - Richard Venables
 - Tracie Palfreyman
 - Julie Van Onselen
 - Lisa Venables
 - John Rand
 - Denise Fletcher
 - Lucy Hick

Word count: 2,799 (excluding Appendix and Inspector's questions).

30. Matter 4 – Unmet Housing Needs

“4.1 Is the approach to meeting within the District any housing needs which cannot be met elsewhere in Oxfordshire, as set out in policy CP2, soundly based and does it accord with national policy?”

31. The Council's proposed strategy does not seek to meet the unmet needs of Oxford City in this plan but seeks to delay such provision in accordance with a timetable set by the Oxfordshire Growth Board (paragraphs 1.17 to 1.22 of the draft plan). It is clear that the scale of housing need in Oxford City is not able to be accommodated within its district area. Consequently there is a need for the requirements of paragraph 182 of the NPPF to be met by surrounding districts.
32. In lieu of meeting the objectively assessed housing needs of the housing market area in full, the Council is seeking to defer such provision to another day. It notes at paragraph 1.21 that this would be “at least” 12-18 months for completion of the work. The plan includes a diagram for action leading only to the Growth Board making a decision on a way forward. The most recent timetable from the Oxfordshire Growth Board in relation to this work is included in the minutes of their meeting on 20 November 2014. It is relevant to note that work is already behind schedule. The timetable identifies that refinement of the scale of Oxford's unmet need should have occurred in March 2015, it is however yet to be achieved.
33. Work required to allocate homes to meet Oxford's need would include a strategic review of the Oxford Green Belt, which goes beyond the limited reviews proposed in the plan. Such a process would be inconsistent with the advice relating to green belt reviews included in paragraphs 83 to 85 of the NPPF. In particular, it would mean that the limited green belt reviews currently proposed would not endure for a long timescale in accordance with the advice in the NPPF and the timescales for such a review, which is supported, may be tangled up with the wider review, cause confusion and lead to delay.
34. The Plan must include a formal timetable for those unmet needs and a strategic review of the green belt to be undertaken. The Examination Inspector for the West Oxfordshire Local Plan has requested an up-to-date timetable in relation to cross-boundary work (Inspector's Preliminary Questions

and Comments, July 2015). We suggest that clarification of the timeframe is required for this examination and that a commitment to meet an appropriate timetable should be enshrined in policy.

35. The Inspector in relation to the recently adopted Cherwell Local Plan commented that a review of the Oxford Green Belt is “overdue” and required a review of their Local Plan with regard to Oxford’s unmet need within two years of adoption (July 2015). The Local Plan now submitted for examination should reinforce this timeframe.

“4.2 What is the likely timescale for agreement being reached between the relevant authorities on (i) the scale of unmet needs in Oxford City (and any other district), (ii) the most appropriate way of any unmet needs being provided for?”

36. The plan identifies at paragraph 1.21 that it will take “at least” 12-18 months to agree the extent of Oxford City’s unmet housing need and a strategy for its accommodation among the other Oxfordshire authorities to be established.
37. The Council has undertaken to explore areas where Oxford City’s unmet housing need could be accommodated (VOWH Cabinet Report, 7th August 2015). This work assumes a figure of 3,000 homes as the district’s proportion of Oxford’s unmet need. This however has not been subject of formal agreement with other Oxfordshire authorities and needs to be tested and agreed at a housing market area level before it can be considered sound.
38. The Examination Inspector for the West Oxfordshire Local Plan has requested an up-to-date timetable in relation to cross-boundary work (Inspector’s Preliminary Questions and Comments, July 2015). We suggest that clarification of the timeframe is required for this examination and that a commitment to meet an appropriate timetable should be enshrined in policy. The Inspector in relation to the recently adopted Cherwell Local Plan required a review of the plan with regard to Oxford’s unmet need within two years of adoption (July 2015); the Local Plan subject of this examination should reinforce this timeframe.

“4.3 Is it likely that the spatial strategy, policies and allocations proposed by the plan to meet the district’s own housing needs would need to be

significantly altered if unmet needs from elsewhere in Oxfordshire are to be accommodated in the Vale of White Horse district?”

39. The plan makes provision for “at least 20,560 new dwellings”; this is sufficient to meet the objectively assessed need for the district. In view of the requirement to contribute to meeting unmet need in Oxford City it is imperative that this is not seen as a ceiling figure for homes in the plan period.
40. Housing policies in the plan also make provision for a housing supply ring fence (policy CP5) that dedicates a significant proportion of planned housing to the Science Vale area. The ring fence to Science Vale is on the basis that this is the location that most jobs are intended to be provided in the district. This policy is formulated at a district level and should not influence allocation of additional homes that are required to meet housing need arising beyond the district bounds. It is important that those homes allocated to meet Oxford’s unmet need are closely related to the city.
41. The housing supply position in Oxford City is stark and it is important that homes are delivered swiftly to alleviate the situation. The present arbitrary definition of ‘strategic sites’ within the plan limits allocations to sites of more than 200 dwellings.
42. The restriction of site allocations to an arbitrary site size inhibits opportunities for early delivery of new homes. The Vale of White Horse district does not presently benefit from a five year supply of housing land and it is sites with an average capacity of less than 200 dwellings which have been able to be brought forward and to make up for the lack of land being delivered for housing in the district. This is supported by information attached as **Appendix 1**.
43. The smaller sites have ensured a continuous supply of housing which has not been delivered by the larger sites. The plan should look to allocate smaller sites to meet Oxford’s unmet need if the housing situation is to be addressed in a timely manner.

“4.4 If you contend that the approach set out in policy CP2 is not soundly based should the Local Plan be delayed pending agreement on 5.2[sic] (i) and (ii) above or could modifications to the plan be made to make it sound?”

44. The plan follows the approach found to be sound in the case of the Cherwell Local Plan where the Inspector accepted a commitment to work with its fellow authorities in the Housing Market Area to establish the level of unmet need in Oxford City and to work pro-actively to accommodate its portion. The Cherwell Local Plan was however only found sound on the basis of a commitment to undertake a review of the Local Plan within two years (i.e. before July 2017). A requirement for the plan subject of this examination would be a logical addition to ensure the market's housing needs are addressed in a timely fashion.
45. In view of the findings in relation to the Cherwell Local Plan and the similarity of approach we accept that the plan could be found sound, we do however consider it necessary for the future accommodation of housing need to be subject to a strict timeframe.
46. In view of the stark housing situation we feel it would also be highly beneficial for housing allocations to be made on smaller sites (i.e sites below the arbitrary 200 unit) to encourage early delivery of homes. This has particular potential in the Oxford Fringe sub-area where homes would most logically be located to serve the city.

APPENDIX 1

Dwellings permitted on sites more than 9 units in Vale of White Horse District as recorded in Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1, Topic Paper 4 Housing.

Sites more than 200 units shaded in pink, those less than 200 units shown green.

Type	Site	Homes	Ringfence Area	Parish area
Completed	St Marys School, Newbury St	56	SV	Wantage
	Former bus depot site, Grove St & Limborough Rd	30	SV	Wantage
	Champion House, 12 Wootton Rd	24	RoD	Abingdon
	Amey Plc, Appleford Rd	15	RoD	Sutton Courtenay
	Land opp Shepherds Hey & Southbourne, Bessels Way	14	RoD	Blewbury
	98-100 West Way, Botley	12	RoD	North Hinksey
	Ambulance Station, Ormond Rd	11	SV	Wantage
	Abbey House, Stirlings Rd	10	SV	Wantage
	St Johns Court, Oxford Ln	10	SV	Grove
	Land adj to police HQ, Colwell Drive	9	RoD	Abingdon
	Manor Farm, Fernham	4	RoD	Fernham

Under construction	Land at Didcot Road, Great Western Park	794	SV	Harwell
	Land to the South of Chilton Field	275	SV	Chilton
	Former Tree Nursery & Cricket Club & Jespers Hill, Park Rd	253	RoD	Great Faringdon
	Timbmet Ltd, Cumnor Hill	192	RoD	Cumnor
	Land off Lime Rd, Botley	136	RoD	North Hinksey
	Land south of Majors Rd, opp Shrivenham Hundred Business Park	120	RoD	Watchfield
	Land east of Chainhill Rd	85	SV	Wantage
	Nalder Estate & The Old Canal Building, Main St	71	RoD	East Challow
	The Old Gaol Leisure Centre	61	RoD	Abingdon
	Land South of Faringdon Rd, Southmoor	50	RoD	Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor
	Land adj Coxwell House & Winslow House, Coxwell Rd	35	RoD	Great Faringdon
	Land between Station Rd & Townsend Rd	31	RoD	Shrivenham
	Land adj to Folly Park, Park Rd	28	RoD	Great Faringdon
	46 Newbury Street	23	SV	Wantage
	Land adj 31 & 34 Simpsons Way	16	RoD	Kennington

Full permission	Land at Stockham Farm, Denchworth Rd	200	SV	Grove
	Land East of Drayton Road	160	RoD	Abingdon
	Land adj NE & NW of Tilbury Ln, Botley	150	RoD	Cumnor; North Hinksey
	Cowan's Camp Depot, High St	100	RoD	Watchfield
	Land off Draycott Road	98	RoD	Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor
	Land West of the A417	73	RoD	Stanford in the Vale
	Milton Road, Sutton Courtenay	65	RoD	Sutton Courtenay
	East of Highworth Rd	36	RoD	Shrivenham
	Land at Causeway Farm, The Causeway	31	RoD	Steventon
	Land East of A338, Crown Meadow, East Hanney	25	RoD	East Hanney

	Land West of Portway Villas, Reading Rd	21	RoD	East Hendred
	Broadwater, Manor Rd	18	SV	Wantage
	Land North of Priory Lane	18	RoD	Marcham
	Land off Walnut Trees Hill	18	RoD	Ashbury
	Land South of Alfreds Place	15	RoD	East Hanney
	Berkeley House, 20 Marcham Rd, Abingdon	14	RoD	Abingdon
	Challow Country Club, Woodhill Ln	14	RoD	East Challow
	Land off Rectory Farm Cl	13	RoD	West Hanney
	17 to 20 Millbrook Sq	11	SV	Grove
	66 Cumnor Hill, Oxford	11	RoD	Cumnor
	Faringdon Tennis Club, Southampton St	11	RoD	Great Faringdon
	33 West, St Helen	0	RoD	Abingdon

Resolution to grant full permission	Land South of Downsview Rd (Stockham Farm Phase 2)	90	SV	Grove; East Challow
	Land at Highworth Rd, Shrivenham	35	RoD	Shrivenham
	Land to rear of Station Rd, Uffington	31	RoD	Uffington
	Land to the rear of Saxon Gate, East Hanney	16	RoD	East Hanney

Outline permission	Land South of Park Rd	350	RoD	Great Faringdon
	Major Amey's Site	140	RoD	Sutton Courtenay
	Monks Farm, Phase 1, Land West of Old Station Rd	133	SV	Grove
	Land West of Witney Road and South of A420	108	RoD	Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor
	Harwell Oxford Campus, Phase 1	107	SV	Harwell
	Land off Colton Rd, Shrivenham	68	RoD	Shrivenham
	Alder View, Land South of Grove Road, Harwell	65	SV	Harwell
	Land off Barnett Rd	50	RoD	Steventon
	King's Field, Sheepstead Rd, Marcham	43	RoD	Marcham
	Chailey House, Bessels Way, Blewbury	30	RoD	Blewbury

Resolution to grant outline permission	Land at Grove Air Field, Denchworth Rd	2500	SV	Grove
	Crab Hill, North East Wantage	1500	SV	Grove; Wantage; Lockinge
	Fernham Fields, Land East of Coxwell Rd	200	RoD	Great Coxwell
	Willow Farm, Packhorse Lane, Marcham	54	RoD	Marcham
	Land North of 92-112 Milton Rd	34	RoD	Sutton Courtenay
	Land West of Faringdon Rd, Cumnor	22	RoD	Cumnor
	Bow Farm Rd, Stanford in the Vale	20	RoD	Stanford in the Vale
	Land adj Drayton Rd, Milton	18	SV	Milton

	Sites over 200	Sites under 200	Total
Homes constructed	0	195	195
Homes under construction	1322	848	2170
Homes permitted	550	1646	2196
Homes resolved to permit	4200	320	4520
Total	6072	3009	