

Stage 2 Matters and Questions**Matter 7 – Supporting Infrastructure and Services (7.1)**

Core Policy 7 of the emerging Local Plan considers the delivery of strategic highway improvements within the South-East Vale Sub-Area including the West Wantage Relief Road. The route of the West Wantage Relief Road is then safeguarded as shown in Appendix E on pg. 76. The entirety of the safeguarded route crosses land over which Dandara Ltd is the retained promoter.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) advises that a Local Plan is an opportunity for a Local Planning Authority to set out a positive vision for the area, but one that is realistic about what can be achieved and when (including in relation to infrastructure). The NPPG advises that for at least the first five years of the Plan, but equally as applicable over the entire Plan period in order to ensure deliverability, Council's should identify what infrastructure is required, who is going to fund and provide it, and how it relates to the anticipated rate and phasing of development (para. 018, ref ID: 12-018-20140306).

It is notable that the vast majority of other strategic infrastructure improvements, including the Wantage Eastern Link Road, are associated with wider strategic housing allocations. This relationship provides a direct link between the piece of individual strategic infrastructure to be delivered, the land required to accommodate it and development which assists with funding and viability.

There is no evidence provided by the Council in respect of how or when the West Wantage Relief Road will be delivered. As Dandara Ltd are the retained promoter over the entirety of the safeguarded route, we would raise the following concerns regarding the deliverability and achievability of the West Wantage Relief Road:

- All land over which the road is to route is in private ownership with no discussions undertaken to date between the Council and landowners or Dandara Ltd as the retained promoter;
- The safeguarded land is not currently associated with any strategic development allocation to assist with funding or delivery;
- No timescales are provided regarding the delivery of the route;
- No evidence is provided to demonstrate general funding nor delivery mechanisms.

Dandara Ltd are the retained promoter for land at Stockham Farm, west of Wantage over which the route of the proposed West Wantage Relief Road runs. The land is available, suitable, achievable and viable for a mixed-use development which would include 700-800 homes, employment floorspace, social and community facilities and the funding and delivery of the new road. Dandara Ltd has commissioned Phil Jones Associates to cost the road which has confirmed its delivery associated with 700-800 new homes is viable and realistic – the report is available to the Inspector on request.

It is therefore considered that at present the Local Plan is unsound as insufficient evidence has been provided regarding the delivery, funding and timing of the Western Wantage Relief Road which is a critical piece of infrastructure to complete the northern by-pass of Wantage town centre, connecting with the Wantage Eastern Link Road. Dandara Ltd would welcome the opportunity to work with the Council to ensure the delivery of the road as part of a mixed-use allocation which would ensure the

funding and delivery of this critical piece of infrastructure – ensuring the Plan is realistic and achievable.