

VALE OF WHITE HORSE LOCAL PLAN PART 1: EXAMINATION

SUBMISSION BY RADLEY PARISH COUNCIL (RPC)

MATTER 8 – STRATEGY FOR ABINGDON-ON-THAMES AND OXFORD FRINGE SUB-AREA

1 JANUARY 2016

8.1 Other than in connection with Green Belt issues (dealt with in Matter 5), are the Strategic Housing Allocations listed in policy CP8 soundly-based and deliverable?

Strategic allocation sites North West Radley (site 4), South of Kennington (site 3) and part of North Abingdon (site 2) all lie within Radley Parish and within the Green Belt. RPC takes the view that none are soundly-based for reasons set out in detail in our submission on Matter 5, and briefly summarized below.

In addition, RPC takes the view that the Plan makes inadequate financial provision for supporting infrastructure as set out in our comments on Matter 7, and is unsoundly based for that reason also.

8.1 (a) North of Abingdon on Thames

RPC's concern is with the 17.6 hectare section of this site which lies to the east of the A 4183 Oxford Road, and within the Radley parish boundary. The allocation of this site for housing is unsound in that:

- i. There has been no opportunity for substantive consultation on its merits as a strategic housing site, it having been introduced to the Plan only in the Publication version published in November 2014;
- ii. Exceptional circumstances have not been shown to justify the removal of Green Belt status from the site. It continues to play an important role in maintaining separation between Abingdon and Radley and providing valued open countryside.

8.1 (c) North West Radley

The allocation of this site for housing is unsound in that exceptional circumstances have not been shown to justify the removal of its Green Belt status. Its development will erode the already limited area of undeveloped land which lies between Abingdon and Radley and eat into the open countryside which extends to the west of the village. This will be particularly marked if development north of Abingdon to the east of the A 4183 is also allowed to go ahead.

8.1 (d) South of Kennington

The allocation of this site for housing is unsound in that exceptional circumstances have not been shown to justify the removal of its Green Belt status. There is already perilously close to continuous ribbon development connecting Oxford to Abingdon through Kennington and Radley. The development of this site will reduce the gap between the Radley and Kennington settlements to about 700m, and eat into open countryside which currently extends from the Kennington Road through to the river Thames.

8.2 Are there other sites which would more appropriately meet the identified need for housing

RPC is not qualified to comment on whether there are sites outside Radley parish boundaries which might be suitable as strategic housing allocations. However, we are very clear that **there are no further sites within our boundaries** which would be appropriate. In particular:

- i. The South Radley site being promoted by Arnold White Estates would not be appropriate as an alternative strategic site. As with other sites within the parish, it continues to serve important Green Belt purposes. If it were to be developed in addition to the existing Radley sites, the effect would be to increase the number of households comprising the main Radley village by around 70%, which would overwhelm the existing village and undermine its character and social cohesion.
- ii. The North Radley site proposed as a strategic housing site in the Housing Delivery Update in February 2014 would also be highly inappropriate. The proposal to develop housing here was dropped in the Publication version of the Plan following considerable local opposition. The expert studies (Kirkham Review and LUC Review) have concluded that this site is not suitable for release from the Green Belt. If it were to be developed in addition to the existing Radley sites, it would, like the South Radley site, overwhelm the existing village and ruin its character and social cohesion.

Matters 8.3 and 8.4

RPC has no comments.