

Stage 2 Matters and Questions
Dandara Ltd Hearing Statement
Introduction

As the Inspector will be aware from our Stage 1 Hearing Statement, Dandara Ltd are the retained promotor in respect of land at Stockham Farm to the west of Wantage. This land is edged red on the accompanying site location plan.

Dandara Ltd recently received planning permission for the construction of 380 new homes on adjacent land at Stockham Farm. Following this success, which has assisted the Vale of White Horse (VoWH) with addressing their five year housing land supply shortfall, Dandara Ltd has been retained to promote the adjacent land to the west of Wantage. It is the intention to promote this additional land for mixed-use development, including between 700-800 new homes alongside the West Wantage Link Road (WWLR), as well as employment floorspace and social and community uses, to assist the VoWH with meeting full objectively assessed need for market and affordable housing within their new Local Plan.

Additional detail regarding Dandara Ltd's interest in land at Stockham Farm to the west of Wantage is included in the introductory Statement to our Stage 1 Matters and Questions rather than being repeated here.

Stage 2 Matters and Questions**Matters 8.1, 9.1 and 10.1 – Site Specific Allocations**

Dandara Ltd has the following comments to make regarding the soundness and deliverability of strategic housing allocations set out in Policy CP15 of the emerging Local Plan:

- (1) Green Belt** – We have previously demonstrated under Matter 5 that the Council has not provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate that insufficient land is available outside the Green Belt to accommodate the number of new homes required to meet the VoWH's objectively assessed housing need given the great weight provided in the NPPF to retain the openness, function and integrity of the Green Belt (strategic housing allocation sites 1, 2, 3 and 4);
- (2) AONB** – Likewise, we have previously demonstrated under Matter 6 that the Council has not provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the 'exceptional circumstances and public interest' NPPF tests have been satisfied to justify significant housing development in the AONB which is afforded the highest level of national protection due to its landscape and scenic beauty qualities which will be inherently harmed (strategic housing allocation sites 12 and 13);
- (3) Grove Airfield** – Grove Airfield was originally allocated as a strategic housing site following the adoption of the current VoWH Local Plan in 2006. Despite benefitting from an allocation in the Local Plan, the site did not receive a resolution to grant outline planning permission until December 2013. Negotiations regarding the Section 106 legal agreement remain ongoing and the planning permission is still awaited despite the Council resolving to grant consent over two years ago. The delay in signing the Section 106 legal agreement is indicative of a site which has consistently failed to deliver the number of new homes projected in the adopted Local Plan and has contributed in no small part to the five year housing land supply shortfall experienced over the past three years in VoWH. We understand that the continued delays are a result of the significant financial burdens placed upon the development due to infrastructure requirements and the Section 106 package which cumulatively exceed £100 million. We also understand that there are a significant number of beneficiaries under the land ownership agreement with a growing discord between the realisable land value and the monies to be paid to infrastructure and the Section 106 legal agreement. We would strongly recommend that the Inspector satisfies himself that the infrastructure and Section 106 financial obligations placed upon the Grove Airfield development are realistic and do not render the scheme unviable (strategic housing allocation site H8) and that the site is realistically deliverable in the timeframes set out in the Plan;
- (4) Sustainability** – There are a number of strategic housing allocation sites which are not located in sustainable locations and will increase reliance upon the use of the private car to access core services such as schools, shops and employment opportunities. In particular, the strategic housing allocation at Milton Heights (site 9) is poorly related to an existing settlement and would effectively represent an isolated form of development adjacent to a junction of the A34 and does not achieve the core NPPF principles of place making and delivering sustainable communities.

Stage 2 Matters and Questions**Matter 9 – Strategy for the South East Vale Sub-Area (9.2)**

As previously mentioned and expanded upon in greater detail in our Stage 1 Hearing Statement, Dandara Ltd are the retained promotor in respect of land at Stockham Farm to the west of Wantage. The land is edged red on the accompanying site location plan. The site is available, suitable, achievable and viable and is considered to represent a site which more appropriately meets the identified need for housing in the VoWH and within the South East Vale Sub-Area more generally. The site provides the following benefits to assist with the emerging VoWH Local Plan meeting its full, objectively assessed housing need and being found sound:

- The site has the ability to deliver 700-800 new homes to assist the Council with meeting its full, objectively assessed housing need and any future Duty to Cooperate obligation arising from Oxford City;
- The site has the ability to accommodate a range of non-residential uses including employment floorspace which would integrate with Grove Technology Park as well as social and community facilities including those, such as a new primary school, which should have been delivered by the Grove Airfield development which is significantly delayed;
- Dandara Ltd has a proven track record of bringing forward new homes in the District at a time when the VoWH was experiencing a significant housing land supply shortfall with 380 units being consented on adjacent land at Stockham Farm and currently under construction. As the retained promoter, the site can be considered available, suitable, achievable and viable;
- The site is adjacent to the existing settlement boundary of Wantage as one of the VoWH's principal market towns and a sequentially preferable location for development given the wide range of services available in the town;
- The site is adjacent to the Grove Airfield strategic housing allocation and would integrate successfully as part of the western growth of Wantage as one of the most sustainable settlements in the District;
- The site would benefit from excellent existing and planned road and public transport links to major sources of employment including Oxford City, Abingdon and the Harwell Campus;
- The site is located outside the Green Belt and AONB and other than a small swath of flood zone, is unconstrained and of low environmental value;
- The land comprises the entirety of the route of the West Wantage Link Road and, as with Crab Hill and the Wantage Eastern Link Road, is able to assist with the delivery of this critical piece of infrastructure from a land dedication, funding and timing perspective.

