

EIP Stage 2- comments from Save Chilton AONB

Key: *EiP/Vale text in red*

Matter 9 – Strategy for South East Vale Sub-Area (CP15 and CP16)

9.1 Other than in connection with AONB issues (considered in Matter 6) are the Strategic Housing Allocations listed in policy CP15 soundly based and deliverable?

(e) North-west of Valley Park (site 8)

(f) East of Harwell Campus (site 13)

(g) North-West of Harwell Campus (site 12)

As part of their justification for proposing substantial numbers of homes in the NWD AONB, the VWHDC assumed that a significant number of people residing in these homes would also work on the Harwell Campus.

Data from the petition submitted against building 1400 houses on predominantly greenfield sites in the NWD AONB by Chilton residents during the 2014 VWHDC consultation period indicated that only ~13% of adult residents actually worked on the Harwell Campus.

A more recent survey carried out solely on Chilton Field by Chilton Parish Council (December 2015) showed that only ~10% of householders surveyed worked on the Harwell Campus.

9.2 Are there other sites which would more appropriately meet the identified need for new housing?

Yes.

More than 400 homes could be accommodated at Didcot Power Station (Economic Growth Area D), closer to the planned new employment opportunities. This site, within Growth Area D, is better situated to maximise use of the public transport links such as the railway station and is closer to Didcot town centre and amenities.

Alternatively, the uplift in numbers at Valley Park from 2,500 to 4,500 could be used to negate the need to build on greenfield sites outside the perimeter of the Harwell Oxford Campus.

There is not yet enough joint appraisal of housing need and development location by the Vale and SODC, even though they share the Science Vale cachet and both now include/adjoin Didcot with its new Garden Town status.

For example, there is a new development planned for the regeneration of the site opposite Didcot railway station. The plans include 300 new city-style apartments; it is not clear whether these housing numbers have been included in either the VWHDC or SODC Local Plans (Source: "Expression of interest in a Greater Didcot Garden Town", SODC, VWHDC, OCC and OLEP).

9.4 Is the policy relating to Didcot A Power Station (CP16) soundly based?:

No, a more substantial housing development element is required for this Economic Growth Area D, so that workers will not only be located close to employment opportunities but also with easy, sustainable transport cycle/bus/walk access to the facilities offered by Didcot town and its rail links.