



**VALE OF WHITE HORSE LOCAL PLAN PART 1: STRATEGIC  
SITES AND POLICIES**

**STAGE 2 EXAMINATION – MATTERS AND QUESTIONS**

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF CLOWES DEVELOPMENTS AND  
GRAFTONGATE DEVELOPMENTS**

**MATTER 12: DISTRICT WIDE POLICIES (CP1, CP22 – CP32  
AND CP37 – CP46)**

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PPG Ref: EMS.2500

Date: December 2015

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**MATTER 12 – DISTRICT WIDE POLICIES (CP1, CP22 – CP32 AND CP37 – CP 46) Are the policies relating to the presumption in favour of sustainable development and building health and sustainable communities soundly based? (d) Affordable Housing.**

- 12.1 Pegasus Group act on behalf of Clowes Developments and Graftongate Developments in relation to their land interests at Didcot A Power Station. The site lies within the administrative areas of two local planning authorities; with the vast majority lying within Vale of White Horse (36.9ha), and the lesser amount within South Oxfordshire District Council (9.5ha).
- 12.2 Core Policy 16 (CP16) of the submitted Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 1 proposes the allocation of the land at Didcot A Power Station lying within Vale of White Horse to provide a high quality mixed-use development. An outline planning application was submitted by Pegasus Group on behalf of Clowes Developments to both local planning authorities in May 2015 (planning application reference numbers: P15/V1304/O, P15/S1880/O). This application proposes a mixed use development comprising up to 400 (Class C3) dwellings, 110,000m<sup>2</sup> of Class B2/B8 units, 25,000m<sup>2</sup> of Class B1 units, 13,000m<sup>2</sup> Class A1 units (includes 1,500m<sup>2</sup> convenience food store), a 150 bed Class C1 hotel, and 500m<sup>2</sup> of Class A3/A4 pub/restaurant.
- 12.3 In December 2015 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) published a consultation on proposed changes to national planning policy, ending 22 February 2016. This consultation seeks views on supporting the delivery of starter homes, amongst other proposed changes, and specifically proposals to amend the definition of affordable housing in national planning policy to include a wider range of low cost homes, including starter homes. To be considered sound, the Local Plan will need to be consistent with national policy as set out at paragraph 182 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).
- 12.4 In parallel, on 13 October 2015 the Housing and Planning Bill was published, setting out the proposed duty on local planning authorities to promote a supply of starter homes. The level at which this requirement should be set will be consulted on in due course. The Bill defines starter homes as new dwellings for first time buyers under 40, sold at a discount of at least 20% of market value, and at less than the price cap of £250,000 (or £450,000 in London). The Bill is anticipated to achieve Royal Assent in summer 2016.

12.5 Core Policy 24 (CP24): Affordable Housing sets out that the Council will seek to secure 35% affordable housing on all sites capable of a net gain of three or more dwellings (sites of at least 0.1ha). The policy continues that there should be a 75:25 split for rented (either social or affordable) and intermediate housing respectively. The proposed 75:25 split of affordable housing is considered too prescriptive; this will need to be consistent with the new affordable housing definition within the Framework, which is set to include low cost homes.

12.6 Should it be demonstrated that this level of affordable housing would be unviable, alternative tenure mixes and levels of affordable housing provision will be considered; to be supported by a viability assessment. This approach is supported.

#### **Proposed amendments to Policy CP24**

12.7 To ensure that the Local Plan will be sound upon adoption, in accordance with paragraph 182, Core Policy 16 will need to be consistent with the updated Framework. It is highly likely that the amended definition of affordable housing will include low cost homes, and that the updated Framework will be in place prior to the adoption of the Local Plan.

12.8 Having regard to the above, paragraph 6.9 should be amended to define affordable housing as that which is defined in the Glossary to the Framework.

12.9 The specific requirement in the policy for a 75:25 split for rented and intermediate housing is overly prescriptive having regard to the imminent change to the definition of affordable housing. It is thus proposed to reword the policy as follows:

The Council will seek **up to** 35% affordable housing on all sites capable of a net gain of three or more dwellings (sites of at least 0.1 hectare). ~~There should be a 75:25 split for rented (either social or affordable) and intermediate housing respectively. In circumstances where it can be demonstrated that the level of affordable housing being sought would be unviable, alternative~~ The tenure mixes and levels of affordable housing provision, ~~may be considered. Any difference in tenure mix or percentage of affordable housing to be delivered~~ will need to be **agreed**, supported by a viability assessment **where 35% cannot be achieved\***.

12.10 This will ensure that the plan is sound in light of the proposed changes to national planning policy.