

Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Examination in Public

Statement of Common Ground

between

**Vale of White Horse District Council
The Harwell Campus Partnership
and**

**The Hendred Estate
in relation to
The Inspector's Questions Under Matter 6**

January 2016



1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared by the Vale of White Horse District Council (“the Council”), the Harwell Campus Partnership (“the Partnership”) (represented by Kemp & Kemp LLP) and the Hendred Estate (represented by JPPC). It relates to the Inspector’s questions under Matter 6.
- 1.2 This Statement should be read alongside the Statement of Common Ground agreed between the Council, the Partnership and the Hendred Estate in respect of the Inspector’s Stage 1 Matters 2 and 3.
- 1.3 The land comprising the North-West Harwell housing allocation (Policy CP4) comprises land owned by the Partnership and land owned by the Hendred Estate. The Partnership and the Hendred Estate are working together to ensure that the allocated land can be developed in a comprehensive manner.
- 1.4 The Partnership has made representations in respect of the Submission Draft Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 (“the Local Plan”). Pursuant to those representations, the Partnership has been invited to attend those Stage 2 hearing sessions dealing with the Inspector’s Matters 6 and 9.
- 1.5 Submission Draft Local Plan Core Policy 6 identifies the Harwell Campus as a strategic site for employment and business development. The policy states also that the Council will support “employment and business development as part of mixed-use development... where this meets the requirements set out within the Strategic Development Templates shown by **Appendix A** [of the Plan]”.
- 1.6 Consistent with the Campus’s status as a centre for excellence for research and development, the Partnership is bringing forward new development. To this end, the Council and the Partnership are working together to develop a new site-wide Framework Master Plan, the primary purpose of which is to provide a clear, simple and responsive framework for the delivery of new science and technology focused employment-generating development and new facilities to support Harwell as a world class science and technology centre.
- 1.7 As part of this Framework Master Plan, new homes are needed to serve the Campus, add to its vitality and sustainability and assist in promoting the growth of the area. This is consistent with Local Plan Core Policy 4 (North-West Harwell Campus). The North-West Harwell allocation includes land under the control of the Partnership and the Hendred Estate.

2.0 INSPECTOR'S MATTERS AND QUESTIONS

2.1 The Inspector's Questions under Matter 6.1 are as follows:

6.1 Having regard to the exceptional circumstances and public interest tests set out in para 116 of the NPPF, are the Strategic Housing Allocations (sites 12 and 13) proposed in the AONB soundly based? In particular:

- a) What is the need for the housing development, including in terms of national considerations?**
- b) What is the likely impact of permitting, or refusing, the housing development on the local economy?**
- c) Is there scope for providing for the housing development outside of the AONB?**
- d) What is the likely effect of the development on the environment, landscape and recreational opportunities having regard to the potential for moderation?**

Matters Agreed

2.2 The Council, the Partnership and the Hendred Estate agree that 'Science Vale' is exceptional. It is an internationally significant location for economic growth. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne MP, has said:

"The Science Vale Enterprise Zone will harness the region's unparalleled research and development base to create a wealth of innovative and high growth business. The region is home to some of the newest and fastest growing businesses in high performance engineering, biotechnology and medical instruments, and the Science Vale Enterprise Zone provides the opportunity to unlock the region's full potential".

2.3 The Council and the Partnership agree that the Harwell Campus is demonstrably exceptional: it is a world renowned major UK Science and Technology Campus that benefits from over £1bn of science infrastructure, including the UK's national synchrotron facility the Diamond Light Source and ISIS Neutron facility, plus approximately 5,000 research and support staff spread across approximately 200 organisations. These include Science & Technology Facilities Council, Medical Research Council, European Space Agency, Diamond Light Source, Public Health England, Element Six, Thales Group, Airbus, RAL Space, the Satellite Applications Catapult, and others in related fields.

2.4 The Harwell Campus extends to 292 hectares and has a diverse, international and collaborative character, plus an exceptional history of scientific discovery and excellence in multiple fields over many decades. Today, on site research spans an enormous breadth and depth of science, including: aerospace and space, telecommunications, medical and life sciences, physical sciences, mechanical engineering, lasers, plasma physics, nano technology, cryogenics, super-computing and advanced data storage.

2.5 The Campus covers an area broadly similar to Wantage. It is categorised in the Council's Town and Village Facilities Study as equivalent to a large village. It is a

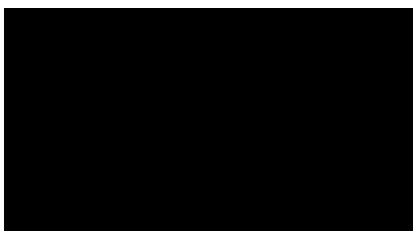
brownfield site, allocated for development, where there is land available now for employment-generating development, housing (in accordance with Core Policy 4) and ancillary services and facilities. Part of the site is also an Enterprise Zone. The Partnership is determined to ensure that the Harwell Campus remains at the core of Oxfordshire's science and technology cluster and continues to support science related economic growth across the United Kingdom. Consistent with that commitment and pursuant to the emerging site-wide Framework Master Plan, the Partnership has submitted a number of planning applications for new development at the Campus.

- 2.6 The Partnership has recently secured planning permission for a new Class B1 "high-tech terrace" extending to some 2,686 square metres, a detailed planning applications for a new internal link road and a 4,662 square metre Innovation Centre comprising laboratories, office and commercial use and leisure and restaurant development. The Partnership has also submitted an outline application for new buildings extending to 19,345 square metres and comprising space for research and development, laboratories, office and commercial uses, leisure and restaurant uses, a gym, accommodation for staff and visitors and ancillary retail.
- 2.7 On the basis of the foregoing, the Council, the Partnership and the Hendred Estate agree that there are very clear 'exceptional circumstances' to justify new employment and housing development at the Harwell Campus within the North Wessex Downs AONB and that the proposals in the Plan are soundly based.
- 2.8 The Council, the Partnership and the Hendred Estate agree also that if it is to continue its success, the Harwell Campus needs to compete on an international stage and provide a world class environment to attract inward investment, commercial enterprise and highly skilled staff. To achieve this, the Campus needs to evolve from a science and innovation park to a world class Campus environment offering a work-live-play community. Essential to this is the delivery of housing integrated with the Campus supported by local services and facilities.
- 2.9 This co-location of scientific excellence, housing and community facilities, thereby creating a thriving and sustainable campus community, is vital to enable networking and interaction and to stimulate innovation on-site.
- 2.10 Against this background, the Council, the Partnership and the Hendred Estate endorse and agree with the submissions that each party has made in response to the Inspector's questions 6.1 a) – b) and c).

Matters Not Agreed

- 3.12 Where the parties do not agree is in respect of their respective responses to the Inspector's question 6.1 d) and question 6.2.

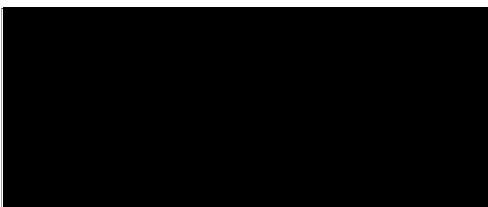
Signed on behalf of Vale of White Horse District Council



26/01/16

Date

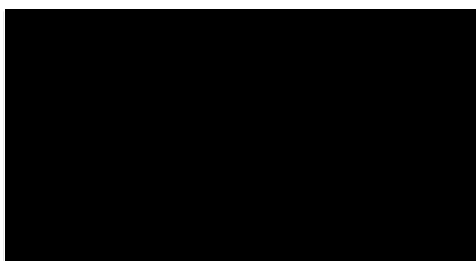
Signed on behalf of The Harwell Campus Partnership



26/01/16

Date

Signed on behalf of The Hendred Estate



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