

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Joint Local Plan 2041

Statement of Common Ground

Between

South Oxfordshire District Council,

Vale of White Horse District Council and

Carter Jonas on behalf of CEG Land Promotions II Ltd

March 2026

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Statement of Common Ground (SOCG) has been prepared by South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils (“the councils”) and Carter Jonas on behalf of CEG Land Promotions II Ltd (CEG LP II), hereafter referred to as “the parties”. This SOCG documents those matters agreed with regard to the South and Vale Joint Local Plan 2041 and supporting documents, to assist the Inspectors during the examination of the local plan.
- 1.2. This SOCG particularly relates to the proposed allocation of land adjacent to Culham Campus within Policy AS2, for the development of approximately 3,500 homes, 60 units of housing with care for older people, between 6 and 10 pitches for gypsies and travellers, supporting services and facilities and to optimise the use of existing employment land at the No.1 site. The agreed matters have been structured to assist the Inspectors through the examination process.
- 1.3. The councils propose the site for allocation in the Joint Local Plan having considered reasonable alternatives, including assessing the relevant evidence and following consultation with stakeholders and the public.
- 1.4. A previous SOCG was prepared for this site as part of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 process, which is available to view on the councils’ website¹.

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https://data.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/dynamic_serve.jsp?ID=1670533476&CODE=372B0286AF C6428196D7EC26A7047E73

1.5. This SoCG sets out the background/context of the site and information regarding planning applications. Section 3 then sets out the agreed matters in relation to the following key topics:

- Spatial Strategy and Evidence Base
- Site Specific Matters on which the Parties Agree
- Policy AS2 and LS1
- Infrastructure
- Range of Land Uses
- Housing Trajectory

1.6. Section 4 identifies outstanding matters between the parties.

2. Background / Context

2.1. The site allocation is located to the north of Appleford-on-Thames, north east of Culham, south east of Abingdon-on-Thames, south of Radley and north west of Clifton Hampden and Culham Campus. The site measures approximately 217 hectares. The site consists of agricultural and brownfield land, including an existing employment area located next to Culham Campus, known as the 'Culham No. 1 Site'.

2.2. The allocation is bound to the north by the River Thames; to the west by agricultural land, woodland and the Europa School, Culham; to the south by the A415 road; and to the east by Culham Campus. The allocation is split into two, where the Didcot to Oxford railway line runs between each section - to the east of the proposed residential area and to the west of the Culham No 1 Site. Nuneham House's Grade I Registered Park and Garden (Nuneham Courtenay) also lies to the east of the railway line.

2.3. There are no statutory landscape or wildlife designations on this site, although the Culham Brake SSSI is located to the north-west of the site.

2.4. There are Listed Buildings within and directly adjacent to the site: the Grade II* Culham Station ticket office and waiting room; the Grade II Listed Thame Lane Bridge and Culham Station Overbridge; the chapel at the Europa School; and Nuneham House (Nuneham Courtenay) Grade I Registered Park and Garden also lies to the east of the railway line.

Local Plans

South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 (adopted 2020)

2.5. South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 allocated the site (and released it from the Green Belt) via Policy STRAT 9 (Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre), to

deliver approximately 3,500 new homes, a net increase of at least 7.3 hectares of employment land in combination with the adjacent Science Centre, 3 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers and supporting services and facilities. The policy also confirmed the existing 10 hectares of the No.1 site were retained but redistributed across the two strategic allocations. (Culham Science Centre is now known as Culham Campus).

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Joint Local Plan 2041 (submitted December 2024)

- 2.6. Joint Local Plan 2041 Policy AS2 allocates the site to deliver approximately 3,500 new homes, 60 units of housing with care for older people, between 6 and 10 pitches for gypsies and travellers, supporting services and facilities and to optimise the use of existing employment land at the No.1 site.
- 2.7. The development will be comprehensively planned - the policy explains that proposals for the development must demonstrate that the applicants have prepared a comprehensive masterplan, submitted, and approved, as part of the first application for development on this site and that the council will determine future applications on this site in accordance with the masterplan, or any approved updates to it.
- 2.8. There is considerable infrastructure investment planned for the Culham area, as outlined in Policy IN3 – Transport Infrastructure and Safeguarding. For example, on 11 December 2024, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government issued a decision granting planning permission for the Housing Infrastructure Fund (“HIF1”) infrastructure scheme. This is a significant infrastructure project that will unlock planned growth across Science Vale – notably around Culham and Didcot. Some infrastructure improvements related to this scheme will be situated within and alongside this site.
- 2.9. The existing employment area within AS2, located next to Culham Campus, on land east of the railway, known as the ‘Culham No. 1 site’, contains 10 hectares of employment land to be retained for employment uses. The No. 1 site is a significant site for redevelopment in itself. The ‘Planning Application’ section of this Statement of Common Ground explores this further.
- 2.10. Policy AS11 (Culham Campus), an allocation adjacent to AS2, highlights that approximately 2.3 hectares of employment land will be provided at Culham Campus and that the council will support proposals for additional employment provision at Culham Campus.
- 2.11. Culham Campus is owned and managed by the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA). The Campus is the leading UK centre for fusion research and technology and is of international importance, hosting the Culham Centre for Fusion Energy and a number of related businesses. Culham Campus forms a key part of Science Vale and is one of the largest employment centres in

Oxfordshire, currently supporting over 3000 jobs. The councils and national government recognise the key role of the Campus as an internationally important centre of science and research, and support and encourage its future. Accordingly, the site is proposed for continued allocation in the Joint Local Plan in Policy AS11 for delivery of employment land.

- 2.12. In January 2025 the UK Government announced that it will deliver the first AI Growth Zone at Culham, subject to the agreement of a public-private partnership that delivers benefits to the local area, the UKAEA's fusion energy mission and the UK's wider national AI infrastructure. The government and UKAEA will seek a private-sector partner who would develop one of the UK's largest AI data centres, beginning with 100MW of capacity and with plans to scale up to 500MW. Further updates regarding the details of the AI Growth Zone at Culham Campus are anticipated in due course.
- 2.13. The allocations at Policy AS2 and AS11 therefore provide an opportunity to deliver housing adjacent to one of the major employers in southern Oxfordshire and enable Culham Campus to realise its full potential as a science campus where publicly funded science research and commercial technology growth can flourish. Development in this location is at the heart of Science Vale and supports the delivery of much needed significant infrastructure.
- 2.14. For the land adjacent to Culham Campus, CEG LPII has promotion agreements in place with all landowners across the site.
- 2.15. CEG LPII controls the land and will deliver services across the site. CEG LPII will create partnerships to develop the site within the timescales proposed.

Planning Application (No.1 Site)

- 2.16. CEG LPII submitted an outline planning application in 2024 (reference [P24/S1759/O](#)) for an employment-led mixed-use development at the No.1 Site (the eastern parcel of the site allocation), with all matters reserved, for the:
 - 'demolition of buildings and outline planning application (with all matters reserved) -
 - for up to 115,000sq.m (GIA) of employment floorspace [Use Class E(g), B2 and B8];
 - up to 2,500sq.m (GIA) of hotel floorspace (equating to approximately 100 hotel bedrooms) [Use Class C1];
 - up to 600sq.m (GIA) of retail floorspace [Use Class E(a) and (b)];
 - up to 500sq.m (GIA) of health club / gym floorspace [Use Class E(d)];
 - up to 500sq.m (GIA) of creche / children's nursery floorspace [Use Class E(f)];
 - up to 800sq.m (GIA) of restaurant / public house floorspace (Sui Generis);
 - and landscape and associated infrastructure'.
- 2.17. This application is currently under consideration by the Local Planning Authority.

2.18. The parties and Oxfordshire County Council have engaged in extensive discussions in relation to masterplanning and technical highways issues. Those discussions are ongoing.

2.19. CEG LPII also submitted a request for a Scoping Opinion in 2022:

[P22/S0877/SCO](#) - Request for scoping opinion in accordance with Regulation 15 of the Town & Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 in support of an outline planning application for 115,000m² Class E Research and Development with associated facilities (*Scoping Opinion issued by South Oxfordshire District Council on 29 April 2022*).

3. Agreed Matters

- 3.1. The site is sustainable, suitable, available and developable.
- 3.2. The site is not subject to any insurmountable environmental, legal, ownership or technical constraints that would otherwise impede development.
- 3.3. The parties agree that development on this site can be delivered in general accordance with the policies contained in the Joint Local Plan 2041.
- 3.4. The parties agree that the site will deliver a high-quality, sustainable development.
- 3.5. The parties are committed to partnership working, including regular meetings, to ensure the optimum outcome for the site allocation that delivers new residential development in a sustainable location.

Spatial Strategy and Evidence Base

- 3.6. The parties agree that the site allocation accords with the Spatial Strategy of the Joint Local Plan, as set out in Policy SP1 – Spatial Strategy.
- 3.7. The parties agree that the site selection process, as set out in the Site Selection Topic Paper ([examination library reference TOP07.1](#)), is robust and soundly based, supported by the councils' evidence base and demonstrates that this site is sustainable.
- 3.8. The parties agree that there is a clear need for deliverable sites in the short and long term to meet identified housing needs in a timely manner and to sustain a five-year housing land supply.

Site Specific Matters on which the Parties Agree

Policy AS2 and LS1

- 3.9. The parties agree that Policy AS2: Land adjacent to Culham Campus identifies an appropriate approach to ensuring development is delivered

comprehensively. An agreed comprehensive masterplan will be produced, taking into consideration the indicative concept plan as set out in Policy AS2 and the councils' Joint Design Guide.

- 3.10. The parties agree that the allocation of AS2 is robust and soundly based and is supported by the Council's evidence base.
- 3.11. The parties agree the general large scale major development requirements identified in Policy LS1 and the site-specific requirements set out in Policy AS2 identify the key requirements for this site to deliver.
- 3.12. The parties agree that Green Belt appropriate compensatory measures can be accommodated by the landowner².
- 3.13. It is agreed that the integrated network of green infrastructure and meeting biodiversity net gain requirements (including maximising the delivery of on-site biodiversity proposed within the site allocation) can help provide appropriate compensatory measures, in terms of both environmental quality and accessibility.
- 3.14. The parties agree that the site development can provide a layout and appropriate mitigation measures that protect the Culham Brake Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the priority habitats and species within and surrounding the site.
- 3.15. Where any development is proposed within the site allocation on land that falls within Flood Zones 2 or 3, or where there are significant surface water flow paths, the parties agree that detailed modelling would be required at the planning application stage, with a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) provided. The councils' Flood Risk Engineers would also provide further advice. The parties agree with the flood risk requirements set out in Policy CE6 (Flood Risk).

Infrastructure

- 3.16. The parties are working positively together to ensure the council is adequately planning for infrastructure for this site, and that appropriate infrastructure will be delivered as set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
- 3.17. Both parties agree that it is appropriate for the site to demonstrate new junctions onto the A415, to make contributions towards the Didcot Garden Town HIF1 Scheme and to demonstrate necessary transport infrastructure based on up-to-date evidence on the impact of the development, referencing the latest Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

² In accordance with NPPF 2023.

3.18. The parties are working positively with Oxfordshire County Council to ensure that infrastructure is planned and brought forward in a timely manner for this site consistent with the site's development trajectory.

Range of Land Uses

3.19. The parties agree with the principle that the site should be allocated for a mix of uses, including housing, housing with care for older people, supporting services and facilities and to optimise the use of existing employment land at the No. 1 site.

3.20. The parties agree that the site can deliver these land uses through a high-quality sustainable development.

Housing Trajectory

3.21. The parties agree that the site is capable of delivering at least 1,280 dwellings in the plan period and has capacity for 3,500 homes. The councils consider that the first dwellings will be delivered from 2032/33. The parties will continue to explore opportunities for maximising the delivery of housing on the site within the plan period. The councils' estimated development trajectory is as follows:

Total 2021 to 2041	2021 /22	2022 /23	2023 /24	2024 /25	2025 /26	2026 /27	2027 /28	2028 /29	2029 /30	2030 /31
1280	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2031 /32	2032 /33	2033 /34	2034 /35	2035 /36	2036 /37	2037 /38	2038 /39	2039 /40	2040 /41
	0	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150

3.22. Carter Jonas on behalf of CEG Land Promotions II Limited contend that the site can come forward sooner. CEG Land Promotions II Limited's estimated development trajectory is as follows³:

Total 2021 to 2041	2021 /22	2022 /23	2023 /24	2024 /25	2025 /26	2026 /27	2027 /28	2028 /29	2029 /30	2030 /31
1280	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	150
	2031 /32	2032 /33	2033 /34	2034 /35	2035 /36	2036 /37	2037 /38	2038 /39	2039 /40	2040 /41
	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150

³ This SOCG contains a housing trajectory based on South Oxfordshire District Council's 2025-based housing land supply position which is updated annually.

4. Outstanding Matters

4.1. CEG LP11's Regulation 19 response details their outstanding concerns with the requirements of Policy AS2, including:

- Gypsy and traveller pitches justification – CEG LP11 contends that the inclusion of between 6 and 10 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers on the site is not justified and should be removed from the policy.
- Concept plan – CEG LP11 contends that land shown as peach on the concept plan is not required for railway safeguarding and should be removed. CEG LP11 has agreement from Network Rail (see the planning application consultation response to the No.1 application, reference [P24/S1759/O](#)) that land beyond Network Rail's ownership is not needed to deliver rail improvements.
- CEG LP11 would like the word 'maximise' to replace 'optimise' in criterion 1 and 2.
- CEG LP11 would like to amend text at criterion 2 (j) (iv), referring to 'significant contributions', to remove the word 'significant'.

4.2. The parties agree that the concerns raised by CEG LP11 are matters for the Joint Local Plan 2041 examination.

5. Conclusion

5.1. CEG LP11 support the allocation of land adjacent to Culham Campus within Policy AS2, and the parties agree that the site is suitable, available and developable for sustainable housing development.

5.2. The parties are working jointly to enable delivery of the planned residential development. The parties will continue to work cooperatively on all matters of mutual interest.

Signatures

Signed on behalf of South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council

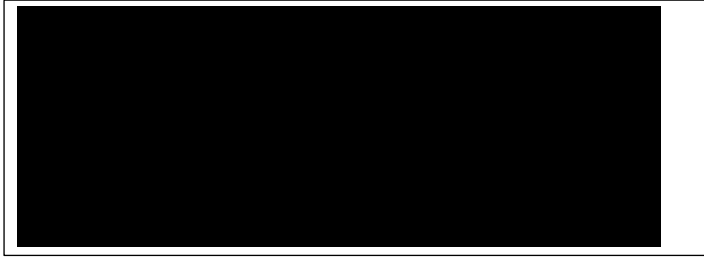


Name: Tim Oruye

Job Title: Head of Policy and Programmes

Date: 26 March 2026

Signed by Peter Canavan (Partner, Carter Jonas) on behalf of CEG Land Promotions II Ltd



Name: Peter Canavan
Job Title: Partner (Carter Jonas)

Date: 26 March 2026