

## 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**

**WSP on behalf of the Defence Infrastructure Organisation**

**September 2025**

#### **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 WSP on behalf of the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO), 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 at Vauxhall Barracks within Policy AS16 for the development of approximately 300 homes.
- 1.3. The councils propose the site for allocation for housing development in the Joint Local Plan, having considered reasonable alternatives, including assessing the relevant evidence, and following consultation with stakeholders and the public.
- 1.4. This SOCG sets out the background/context of the site. 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 AS16 and LS1
  - Infrastructure
  - Didcot Garden Town

- Housing Trajectory

## **2. Background / Context**

- 2.1. The site is located within Didcot Garden Town, towards the north-west of the main town centre. The Policy AS16 site (consisting of two parcels of land) measures 9.87 hectares. It is currently used for military purposes, containing offices and other ancillary buildings, tennis courts, training areas and playing fields. The larger parcel is bordered by the B4493, Foxhall Road, Hitchcock Way and existing Service Families Accommodation (SFA<sup>1</sup>). The larger parcel is also situated to the north-west of the Didcot Old Conservation Area, with parts of the parcel directly across from the conservation area at Foxhall Road. The smaller parcel (currently a military training area/playing field) is bordered by housing.
- 2.2. There are no statutory landscape or wildlife designations on this site. There are no Listed Buildings on or adjacent to the site.

### *Local Plans*

#### *South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 (adopted 2020)*

- 2.3. This plan allocated the site via Policy H2d: New Housing in Didcot (saved from the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy 2012), to deliver an indicative dwelling capacity of 300 new homes.

#### *South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Joint Local Plan 2041*

- 2.4. Joint Local Plan 2041 Policy AS16 – Vauxhall Barracks allocates the site to deliver approximately 300 new homes.

## **3. Agreed Matters**

- 3.1. The Vauxhall Barracks AS16 site is sustainable, suitable, available and developable.
- 3.2. The site is not subject to any insurmountable environmental, legal, ownership, access or technical constraints that would otherwise impede development.
- 3.3. The site is in single landownership. There are no tenancies or land ownership issues relating to the site that prevent its development within the plan period.

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Defence (MoD) (2024), available at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-buys-back-36347-military-homes-to-improve-housing-for-forces-families-and-save-taxpayers-billions>

- 3.4. The parties agree that the site can be delivered in accordance with the policies contained in the Joint Local Plan 2041. 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 that delivers residential development in a sustainable location.
- 3.6. A Better Defence Estate<sup>2</sup> was published by the Government in November 2016. This report identified 91 sites operated by the Ministry of Defence (MOD) to be released for development to deliver 55,000 homes as part of the Government's wider housing policy. Vauxhall Barracks was one of the sites identified for disposal in this paper, reconfirmed in 2024 for vacating by 2034.

#### *Spatial Strategy and Evidence Base*

- 3.7. The allocation of the site accords with the spatial strategy of the Joint Local Plan, as set out in Policy SP1. Both 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, and supported by the councils' evidence base.
- 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.
- 3.9. The site is sustainably located and suitable for redevelopment. The site is not subject to any insurmountable environmental, legal, ownership or technical constraints that would otherwise impede development in accordance with the proposed site allocation policy.

#### *Site Specific Matters on which the Parties Agree*

##### *Policy AS16 and LS1*

- 3.10. The parties agree that Policy AS16: Vauxhall Barracks identifies an appropriate approach to ensuring development is delivered comprehensively. The site will be delivered in accordance with the requirements set out in the policy, including adhering to the Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan.
- 3.11. The parties agree that the allocation of AS16 is robust and soundly based and is supported by the Council's evidence base.
- 3.12. The parties agree that approximately 300 dwellings can be delivered within the AS16 site allocation boundary.

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<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Defence (MoD) (2016) A Better Defence Estate, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/better-defence-estate-strategy>

- 3.13. The parties agree the general large scale major development requirements identified in Policy LS1 and the site-specific requirements set out in Policy AS16 identify the key requirements for this site to deliver.

#### *Infrastructure*

- 3.14. The parties will work positively together to ensure appropriate infrastructure for the site is delivered, with reference to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
- 3.15. The parties will work positively with Oxfordshire County Council to ensure that infrastructure is planned to come forward in a timely manner.
- 3.16. There is considerable infrastructure investment planned for the Didcot 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 Didcot and Culham. Some infrastructure improvements related to this scheme will be situated directly alongside this site.

#### *Didcot Garden Town*

- 3.17. The parties agree that a development can be delivered on site in accordance with Policy SP3 – The Strategy for Didcot Garden Town. Policy SP3 establishes the principles that any proposals for development within the Didcot Garden Town area should reflect.
- 3.18. The site provides an opportunity to deliver high-quality new development in accordance with Policy SP3. The parties support the inclusion of the Didcot Garden Town principles and requirements for development within the Didcot Garden Town Masterplan area in the Joint Local Plan.
- 3.19. The site allocation appropriately reflects the settlement hierarchy, with Didcot as a Tier 1 settlement, being able to support the most sustainable patterns of living through delivering new mixed-use development in a sustainable location with good accessibility and proximity to a full range of services and facilities and providing excellent access to public transport links. The parties support the presumption in favour of sustainable development within the built-up area of Tier 1 settlements.
- 3.20. The parties agree that the site is appropriate for delivering residential development to support the allocation and local area, particularly benefitting the wider Garden Town.
- 3.21. The parties acknowledge that any future planning applications for the site determined after the adoption of the Joint Local Plan should, so far as they are relevant to the site and proposed development, demonstrate consistency with

Policy AS16 including being informed by the adopted and emerging strategies for Didcot Garden Town.

*Housing Trajectory*

3.22. The parties agree that the site is capable of delivering at least 189 homes within the plan period up to 2041, with the first dwellings expected to be delivered from 2037. The parties will continue to explore opportunities for maximising the delivery of housing on the site within the plan period. The 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
189	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	0	0	0	0	0	27	54	54	54

**4. Conclusion**

- 4.1. The DIO support the allocation of land at Vauxhall Barracks within Policy AS16, and the parties agree that the site is suitable, available and developable for sustainable housing development.
- 4.2. The parties are working jointly to enable delivery of the planned residential development of 189 of the allocated 300 homes within the plan period. 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 04/09/2025

Signed on behalf of the Defence Infrastructure Organisation



Name Stephen J Harness

Job Title Senior Town Planner

Date 03/09/2025