

South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2013: Issues and Scope, June 2014

Comments from the Keep Harwell Rural Campaign July 2014

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[Text to go on Response Form]

1. The *Keep Harwell Rural Campaign (KHR)* has commented in detail in our response to the VWH Draft Local Plan on the increased housing numbers in the SHMA. It is clear since then that these have widely been called into question. We therefore consider that it is premature for SODC to commit to any specific increased housing figures, although we accept that it should search for options.

2. Whatever options SODC consider should exclude completely any further development at Didcot or within Science Vale, where existing and proposed developments by VWH and SODC will already strain local resources and infrastructure, would create housing market saturation and would drastically affect our local environment. This eliminates Options A, B, C and E.

3. Any increase in SODC housing numbers should focus on an extension to Oxford City east of Grenoble Road (a specific case within Option F). This was mistakenly rejected ca. 2005 as an area for increased housing in Oxfordshire and has, at it did then, the enormous advantage of placing development where it is most needed adjacent to the City of Oxford and where there is already good public transport and other infrastructure. We accept that this development would penetrate the formal Green Belt, but the area is no more attractive in terms of the natural environment than other areas in VWH and SODC threatened by increased development, especially those around Didcot and its neighbouring villages. We have no particular comment on Option D (all additional housing in a single new settlement, outside the Green Belt or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, such as towards Thame) except that it seems vastly inferior to Grenoble Road. It lacks the benefits of putting housing where there is a pressing need and of attachment to existing infrastructure.

4. As an addition to Grenoble Road, there might be some scope for Options G and H if they were acceptable to communities in SODC, but it is hard to see that these two options could be realistic other than as minor contributors.