



**NEWS RELEASE**  
**18th May 2015**

## **Chilton under Siege**

The village of Chilton in the Vale of the White Horse District, which lies just a few miles to the north of the ancient Ridgeway and within the boundary of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), is today under siege from inappropriate development.

The Vale of White Horse District Council, in its draft Local Plan [1], has identified two strategic development sites on greenfield next to the village of Chilton, for a total of 1,400 houses. The Vale proposes to build 850 houses to the east of the Harwell campus and another 550 to the north, both of which will have a significant impact on the AONB.

These large developments have been proposed despite the AONB being a nationally protected landscape, which should only be built on as a last resort and in exceptional circumstances. The strategic allocation of 1,400 houses in the AONB in the Vale, should it remain in the Local Plan, is the largest greenfield housing allocation nationally within any protected landscape (AONB or National Park).

CPRE believes the overall housing numbers in the Vale Local Plan are too high; the constraint of the AONB has not been taken into account and therefore the figures should be reduced accordingly. Moreover, we consider that the strategic allocation is completely inappropriate in the AONB. We are therefore urging the Vale to re-think their strategic allocation.[2]

In a letter to Mathew Barber, Leader of the Vale District Council, Andrew Lord, former Planning Adviser to the North Wessex Downs AONB, noted the Unit's "grave concerns" at the proposed housing allocation in the AONB. He said it is "very surprising that the Council has chosen to set aside all the international and national designations and legal protections in respect of this AONB and attempted to justify the proposed development in its draft Local Plan."

He went on: "The AONB Unit maintain that there are no exceptional circumstances to support this proposal and given the level of public objection to this development it is also clearly not in the public interest. However, it is in the long term public interest to secure the conservation and enhancement of our nationally protected landscapes." The Unit requested that the proposed site be deleted from the Local Plan.[3]

In the last few weeks, there have been four additional planning applications on greenfield sites around the edge of the village of Chilton, for a total of 167 houses. [4] These additional homes will put Chilton's already poor infrastructure under greater pressure.

Chris Broad, Chairman of Chilton Parish Council said: “The infrastructure in our village is already at capacity. Some of our children have not been able to get a place in the village school for the September 2015 intake.

“Chilton accepts the need for more housing, and we have recently had 275 houses built on a brownfield site on Harwell Campus, which has increased the population of the village by 80%. It is now important to protect the AONB as accessible countryside close to the expanding town of Didcot.”

Helen Marshall, Director of CPRE Oxfordshire said: “We are concerned that the proposed strategic allocation by the Vale District Council is being seen as a green light for development in the North Wessex Downs AONB. If the Council approves these speculative applications it will damage this nationally protected landscape.”

The Vale of White Horse is currently considering the planning applications in Chilton. CPRE urges all concerned residents to object to these speculative applications and defend the AONB from this relentless attack.

**-END-**

#### **NOTES TO EDITORS:**

1. See VOWHDC Local Plan 2013, Part 1, Chapter Five, Figure 5.4: South East Vale Sub-Area, page 67:  
[http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2014-10-27%2004%20VOWHDC%20Local%20Plan%202031%20Chapter%205\\_1.pdf](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2014-10-27%2004%20VOWHDC%20Local%20Plan%202031%20Chapter%205_1.pdf)

2. See CPRE Oxfordshire’s consultation response to the VOWHDC Local Plan 2013, Part 1:  
<http://bit.ly/1K5PWhA>

3. See ‘Harwell Housing Threat: Building 1400 homes at Harwell will cause long lasting harm to the North Wessex Downs AONB’, December 19, 2014:  
<http://www.northwessexdowns.org.uk/index.php?mact=News,cntnt01,detail,0&cntnt01articleid=73&cntnt01returnid=95>

4. There are four windfall outline applications in to VWHDC, for a total of 167 houses:

- Application for 50 new dwellings on land to the north and east of Lower Road, Chilton (Reference: P15/V0969/O):  
<http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/Main.jsp?MODULE=ApplicationDetails&REF=P15/V0969/O>  
See Map:  
[http://maps.southoxon.gov.uk/website/showmap/main.asp?Lyr=V\\_PA&Ref=P15/V0969/O](http://maps.southoxon.gov.uk/website/showmap/main.asp?Lyr=V_PA&Ref=P15/V0969/O)
- Application for 20 new dwelling on land adjacent to Manor Close, Chilton (Reference: P15/V0961/O):

<http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/Main.jsp?MODULE=ApplicationDetails&REF=P15/V0961/O>

See Map:

[http://maps.southoxon.gov.uk/website/showmap/main.asp?Lyr=V\\_PA&Ref=P15/V0961/O](http://maps.southoxon.gov.uk/website/showmap/main.asp?Lyr=V_PA&Ref=P15/V0961/O)

- Application for 40 dwelling on land off Hagbourne Hill, Chilton (Reference: P15/V0325/O):  
<http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/Main.jsp?MODULE=ApplicationDetails&REF=P15/V0325/O>

See Map:

[http://maps.southoxon.gov.uk/website/showmap/main.asp?Lyr=V\\_PA&Ref=P15/V0325/O](http://maps.southoxon.gov.uk/website/showmap/main.asp?Lyr=V_PA&Ref=P15/V0325/O)

- Application for 57 dwellings on land off Upper Farm Road, Chilton (Reference: P14/V2462/O):  
<http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/Main.jsp?MODULE=ApplicationDetails&REF=P14/V2462/O>

See map:

[http://maps.southoxon.gov.uk/website/showmap/main.asp?Lyr=V\\_PA&Ref=P14/V2462/O](http://maps.southoxon.gov.uk/website/showmap/main.asp?Lyr=V_PA&Ref=P14/V2462/O)

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The Campaign to Protect Rural England fights for the Oxfordshire countryside: to protect it from the threats it faces, and to positively shape its future – join us today and stand up for your countryside!

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