

Inspector's question 80

"I would welcome the Council's observations on representation 700 Suzanne Lindsey of Whaddon Parish Council suggesting that policy H2 is unsound."

AVDC's Response to Inspector's question 80

Suzanne Lindsey of Whaddon Parish Council has submitted representations to the effect that policy H2 Rural exception sites would render VALP unsound. It is argued that criterion b. of the policy needs to be re-worded. The words 'within or' before 'adjoining the existing developed footprint of the village' should be deleted, as land promoted within the developed footprint of the village is unlikely to promote anything other than full market value housing. By deleting these words it is clarified that only land adjoining the developed footprint of a village will be considered an 'exception site'.

The Council acknowledges the representations from Suzanne Lindsey. Paragraph 54 of the NPPF states that "In rural areas, exercising the duty to cooperate with neighbouring authorities, local planning authorities should be responsive to local circumstances and plan housing development to reflect local needs, particularly for affordable housing, including through rural exception sites where appropriate. Local planning authorities should in particular consider whether allowing some market housing would facilitate the provision of significant additional affordable housing to meet local needs.". This is reflected in VALP paragraph 5.18 which states that 'some' market housing cannot mean more than 50% of the houses provided, i.e. if two affordable houses are provided then up to two market houses can be provided as long as the market housing is essential for the delivery of the affordable housing, as per the criteria under sub-heading 'Cross-subsidy' in policy H2. Therefore, the policy in its current state guarantees at least 50% affordable housing on exception sites.

Further Policies D3 and D4 regulate market housing developments within smaller villages and other settlements. It will be possible for there to be exception sites that match policy H2 that do not accord with these policies. So it will be possible for non-market housing to be provided within villages. Therefore Policy H2 should not be amended to completely exclude market housing from exception sites. This would not be consistent with the NPPF as set out above which would in turn render the VALP unsound. As such, no amendments are proposed to this policy.