

Response by Haddenham Parish Council

1. Haddenham PC has accepted Haddenham's responsibility for contributing to housing need as a "strategic settlement" taking 50% growth as expressed in summer 2016's draft VALP for some 1,000 homes on sites identified in the May 2016 HELAA; this site was not allocated.
2. The final pre-inquiry draft VALP is about to be published. Allocations will presumably be based on the updated January 2017 HELAA in which this site was again not allocated, and indeed was explicitly not supported for development.
3. The presence or absence of a 5 year housing land supply (HLS) has been the critical determining factor nationally in appeals in over recent months. Since October 2016 AVDC has had an interim 5.8 year HLS. This was tested at appeal in January 2017 in relation to a site for some 300 homes at Leighton Linlade. The inspector dismissed the appeal on the grounds that the local planning authority had demonstrated a 5 year HLS. AVDC should take comfort in that appeal and refuse this hostile application similarly.
4. AVDC can take further comfort in refusing this application from the landmark decision in May 2017 by the Supreme Court which clarified the meaning of NPPF paragraph 49 in reviewing a Court of Appeal judgement in relation to sites in Cheshire East and Suffolk Coastal. The Supreme Court ruled that the absence of a 5 year supply of deliverable sites should render out-of-date only those policies dealing with the numbers and distribution of housing, and not those which seek to restrict housing, thereby allowing issues relating to the merits of the site itself to be taken into account.
5. The current situation in Haddenham is that some 800 homes have been approved in outline or in full, all during the last two years; only one of the HELAA-supported sites has yet to submit (HAD007 also at Churchway), and here too an application is imminent. Therefore the 50% "strategic settlement" growth will happen not in a gradual phased manner over the plan period until 2033, but all in the next 3-5 years. This is after a 30 year period (1981-2011) during which the population has remained static, standing currently at about 4500 people in some 2000 homes. The key concept in Planning is sustainability. This community is being expected to absorb over 1000 additional households in an extremely short period of time during which there has been no planning for appropriate new infrastructure (except perhaps sports provision). This is going to be an exceptional challenge for the sustainability of this community which critically lacks basic amenities including shops (with no traditional high street or market square) or secondary school, resulting in a very large number of daily trips out of the village, and poor sustainability. Enough is enough. AVDC should refuse this hostile and unwanted application.