

## **Science Vale Enterprise Zone Business Rates Discount Scheme**

The aim of the Science Vale Enterprise Zone is to stimulate business growth in the designated area by providing financial incentives to businesses and simplified planning arrangements to accelerate development. The Enterprise Zone is intended to create jobs and drive local and national growth.

The Science Vale Enterprise Zone covers 92 hectares of designated business land in the Harwell Oxford and Milton Park business parks. A map is attached showing the Enterprise Zone areas. The Science Vale area has an employment growth target of 16,000 jobs over the next 15 years, of which 8400 are to be delivered in the Enterprise Zone.

The government has stated that business rate discounts can be applied as part of the package of incentives for Enterprise Zones. The Vale of White Horse District Council, as the administrative authority for business rates, has discretion to grant a 100% business rates discount for a five year period to businesses within the Enterprise Zone. Discounts will be to a maximum of £55,000 per year, up to £275,000 in total (within state aid regulations) for businesses locating within the Zone before 31 March 2015. The discount is fully funded by Government.

The details of the scheme are set out on the next page.

**A. Businesses not already located in the Enterprise Zone prior to 1 April 2012 that take up property in the Enterprise Zone, will be eligible for a discount of 100% of business rates payable, up to the value of £55,000 per annum and a maximum of £275,000 over a five-year period (within state aid regulations), providing:**

- the business locates within the defined boundary of the Enterprise Zone;

**and**

- the business is registered to pay national non-domestic rate before 31 March 2015;

**and**

- the business is not currently occupying business premises within the Enterprise Zone boundary or the local area\*

**B. Businesses already located in the Enterprise Zone prior to 1 April 2012, or businesses elsewhere on Milton Park or Harwell Oxford, or within the local area\*, that locate within the Enterprise Zone after 1 April 2012, may be eligible for a discount of 100% of business rates payable up to the value of £55,000 per annum and a maximum of £275,000 over a five-year period (within state aid regulations), providing:**

- the applicant is relocating to larger premises or is materially increasing the total amount of floorspace it occupies within the Enterprise Zone;

**or**

- the applicant can demonstrate that is considerably increasing the permanent workforce, supported by evidence;

**or**

- the applicant can demonstrate a substantial increase in the turnover of the business, supported by evidence;

**or**

- the applicant is relocating to the Enterprise Zone to support or benefit from another organisation or cluster also located in the Enterprise Zone and a clear benefit to the Enterprise Zone or the business concerned can be demonstrated

**\*Local area**

**Local area is considered to mean anywhere within an eight mile radius of the Enterprise Zone and encompasses Wantage, Grove, Abingdon, Didcot and Wallingford**

## **Appeals**

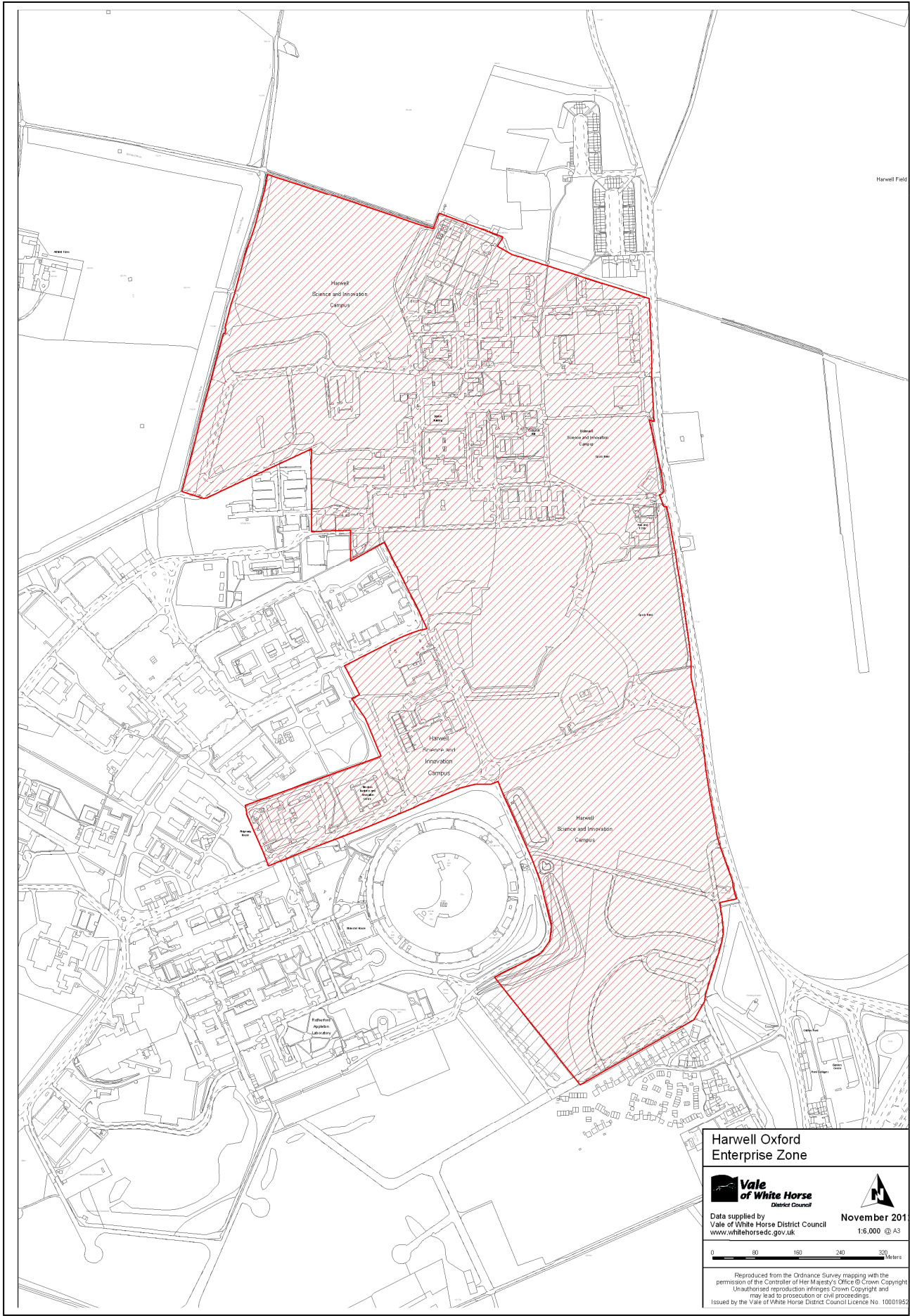
The decision-making body for the purpose of awarding business rate discounts is the Vale of White Horse District Council. Should a business that has applied for a discount disagree with the decision of the council then two nominated Science Vale UK board members\* will consider the case and either endorse the decision or ask the council to reconsider, with reasons.

*(\* excluding the directors of Harwell Oxford and Milton Park and the leader of Vale council)*

## **State Aid De Minimis Regulations**

When awarding the business rate discounts within the Enterprise Zone, the Council must administer this within the State Aid De Minimis Regulations. Discounts such as business rates relief are classed as state aid but, providing the benefit does not exceed €200,000 over a 3 year period, the European Commission considers it complies with the de minimis regulations and has a negligible impact on trade and competition

The Vale council is responsible for ensuring the state aid limits are not breached and so will have to ask detailed questions of any business that applies for a discount about other financial support that it may have received.

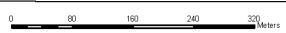


**Harwell Oxford  
Enterprise Zone**

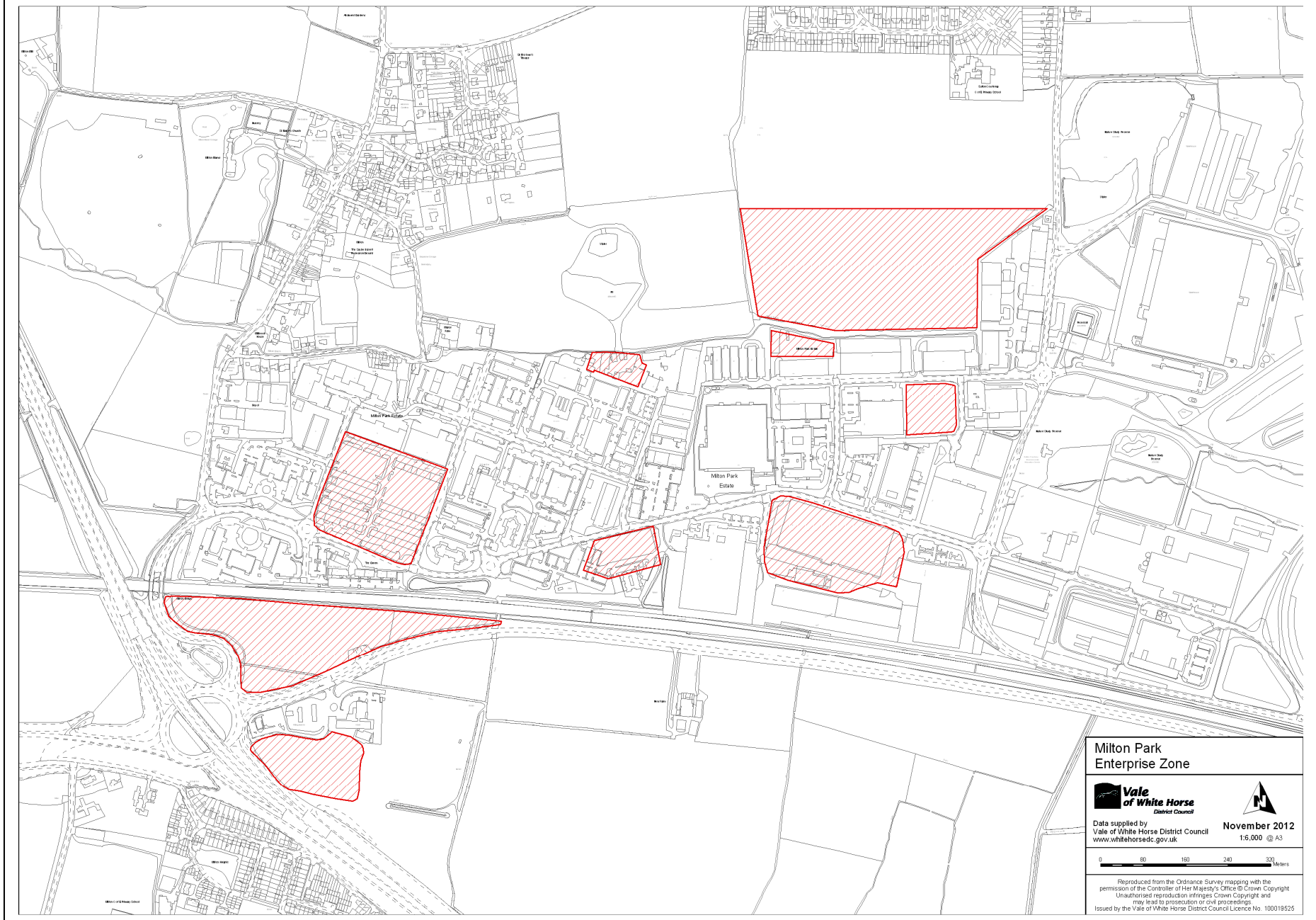


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**November 2011**  
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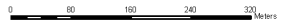


**Milton Park  
Enterprise Zone**



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