

Comment

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Event Name	Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part One - Publication
Comment by	Dr Garry Staunton
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Consultation Point	Core Policy 8: Spatial Strategy for Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area (View)
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Q1 Do you consider the Local Plan is Legally Compliant? Yes

Q2 Do you consider the Local Plan is Sound (positively prepared, effective and Justified) No

If your comment(s) relate to a specific site within a core policy please select this from the drop down list. North of Abingdon-on-Thames

If you think your comment relates to the DtC, this is about how we have worked with the Duty to Cooperate bodies (such as neighbouring planning authorities)

Q3 Do you consider the Local Plan complies with the Duty to Co-operate? No

Q4 Please give details of why you consider the Local Plan is not legally compliant or is unsound or fails to comply with the duty to co-operate. Please be as precise as possible. If you wish to support the legal compliance or soundness of the Local Plan or its compliance with the duty to co-operate, please also use this box to set out your comments.

The uncritical acceptance of the strategic housing market assessment targets has led the VoWHDC seeking space for an impractically high number of new homes. Their response has been poorly thought

through and as a result proposes removing large areas around the fringes of Abingdon (and elsewhere) from the Green Belt. The net result of this will be to encourage the spread of Abingdon town, begin the process of merging Abingdon with Radley and eventually Oxford, removes high (visual and agricultural) quality land and in so doing will damage the character of a historic town.

The large scale development on the North and North West sides of Abingdon will generate significant additional traffic. This traffic will discharge on to roads designed to take through traffic away from the town centre in order to reduce congestion and improve local air quality. The new developments will have the effect of effectively converting these peripheral roads into local estate roads. These roads are already busy, traffic stops flowing at peak times and there are regular accidents as cars struggle to leave estate roads - and the addition of 1500 homes and associated vehicles will make this much worse. The SHMA is based on a substantial increase in jobs in Culham and the south of the Vale, and hence traffic from North Abingdon will either have to travel through the town centre or use what will no longer be peripheral/through roads. Expanding the Lodge Hill junction with the A34 is touted as a 'cure' for this, but no firm plans exist for this to happen and the impact of considerable extra local traffic on the already highly congested trunk road is unlikely to be positive. Hence the overall impact is likely to be an significant increase in congestion and a worsening in air quality.

At a public consultation councillors and officials were unquestioning of the SHMA figures but said that sufficient land is available in South of the Vale (closer to the jobs) but that infrastructure is currently inadequate. Their response appears to be that rather than plan to improve infrastructure near the employment hot-spots they are seeking to compromise the green belt to the North of Abingdon in the hope that local, already stretched, infrastructure will cope. This is unlikely.

Q5 Please set out what modification(s) you consider necessary to make the Local Plan legally compliant or sound, having regard to the test you have identified above where this relates to soundness. (NB Please note that any non-compliance with the duty to co-operate is incapable of modification at examination). You will need to say why this modification will make the Local Plan legally compliant or sound. It will be helpful if you are able to put forward your suggested revised wording of any policy or text. Please be as precise as possible.

The VoWHDC should re-examine the SHMA figures and challenge the assumption that employment growth (in an area of already high employment) will be much higher than at any time in the past. Once a more rational housing need figure has been arrived at the VoWHDC should then set about developing a long term response to this that does not involve the loss of green belt land.

***Please note** your representation should cover succinctly all the information, evidence and supporting information necessary to support/justify the representation and the suggested modification, as there will not normally be a subsequent opportunity to make further representations based on the original representation at publication stage.*

After this stage, further submissions will be only at the request of the Inspector, based on the matters and issues he/she identifies for examination.

Q6 If your representation is seeking a modification, do you consider it necessary to participate at the oral part of the examination? No - I do not wish to participate at the oral examination