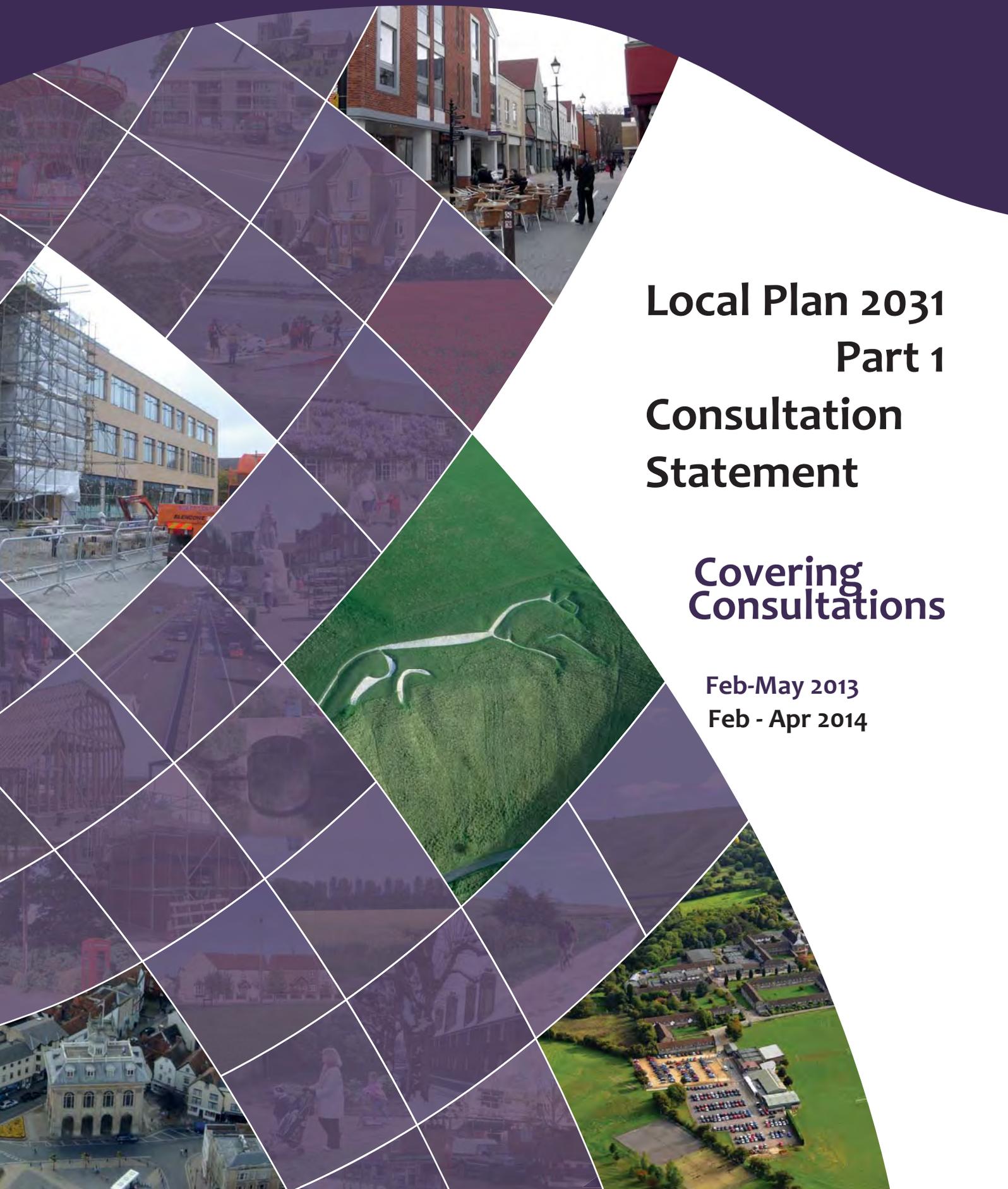




**Vale  
of White Horse**  
District Council

Publication Version  
November 2014



# Local Plan 2031 Part 1 Consultation Statement

## Covering Consultations

Feb-May 2013  
Feb - Apr 2014

# **Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031: Part 1**



## **Consultation Statement**

**A report on the following consultations undertaken by the council in preparation of the Local Plan 2031 Part 1:**

**Draft Local Plan Consultation (February – May 2013)**

**Housing Delivery Update (February – April 2014)**

OCTOBER 2014

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## **SUMMARY**

**This document provides a summary of the consultation responses received by the Vale of White Horse District Council relating to the following Local Plan 2031 consultations in 2013 and 2014:**

- **Draft Local Plan 2029<sup>1</sup> Part 1: Strategic Sites and Policies (February – May 2013).**
- **Housing Delivery Update (February – April 2014).**

**The consultations sought the views of organisations, local communities and individuals on draft planning policies and proposals intended to deliver sustainable growth for the district.**

**Residents could comment online using our ‘Objective’ consultation system or in writing. During the consultations we also ran a series of exhibitions in key settlements across the district, along with conducting public workshops. These were attended by stakeholders, interest groups, statutory bodies and members of the public.**

**A total of 2,340 representations were made to the council by 511 different participants to the Draft Local Plan Consultation (Feb - May 2013).**

**A range of issues and concerns were identified from the 2013 consultation responses. The most prevalent included:**

- **concern about the amount of development proposed;**
- **concern about the stress new development would place on existing roads and infrastructure;**
- **concern about the impact new development would place on other infrastructure, such as schools, healthcare etc;**
- **support for the protection of the green belt;**
- **concern that housing proposed at Wantage and Grove is disproportionate to employment growth in the vicinity**
- **concern that new development might result in an increased risk of flooding to new and existing properties**
- **objection to the proposed strategic site allocations due to the perceived impact development could have on the character of existing settlements.**

**The Housing Delivery Update Consultation, conducted in February 2014, generated 2,717 responses from 1,093 participants.**

**The main response themes were similar to the previous consultation, however selected key points of detail were:**

- **calls for the provision of infrastructure before development and concerns about the lack of infrastructure to support new development in**

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<sup>1</sup> The plan period has since been extended to 2031 and is referred to as the Local Plan 2031 throughout this report.

- terms of schools, health care facilities and sewage and water treatment works upgrades
- traffic and congestion from new development, and cumulative impact on the existing road network
  - loss of Green Belt land in the Abingdon-on-Thames / Oxford Fringe Sub-Area,
  - opposition to development in AONB at Harwell campus, including from statutory consultee, Natural England, and by the AONB Management Board
  - concerns about harm to the identity and character of existing settlements including coalescence
  - Oxfordshire County Council expressed concerns about the number of homes proposed on the Milton Heights site on highways capacity and safety grounds
  - Oxford City Council objected that the local plan has not addressed Oxford City's un-met housing need identified in the up-to-date Oxfordshire SHMA
  - English Heritage raised various concerns about heritage and conservation matters including protection for the setting of designated heritage assets

Officers have reviewed all representations made on the Local Plan 2031 from both consultations. The issues and concerns raised have been considered and incorporated into the final draft version of the plan, where appropriate.

This consultation statement accompanies the Final Draft (Publication Version) Local Plan 2031 Part 1: Strategic Sites and Policies for publication, and thereafter, submission to the Secretary of State for independent examination.

## INTRODUCTION

1. The Draft Local Plan Consultation, conducted in February 2013, was published on 28 February 2013. It proposed strategic planning policies for the district, including the number of new homes and jobs that should be provided in the area up to 2029 (the plan period has since been extended to 2031). The infrastructure needed to support this growth was identified in an accompanying Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP). The document also set out the proposed locations for strategic development across the district.
2. The consultation did not follow our usual six week consultation period and instead ran for a total length of 10 weeks. The first four week period provided an opportunity for people to familiarise themselves with the policies and consultation document. In the final six week period some technical studies and supporting topic papers were also released. This time period still provided the public and other stakeholders a minimum of six weeks with a complete suite of documentation to respond to.
3. Key objectives of the Draft Local Plan (February 2013) included focusing housing, employment and infrastructure delivery within the Science Vale area, reinforcing the service centre roles of the main settlements across the district and seeking to protect the Vale's thriving village and rural communities.
4. The Housing Delivery Update February 2014 consultation ran for a six week period from 21 February to 4 April 2014. The consultation provided an update to our housing target and proposed 21 new development sites. It also sought the views on new or amended policies relating to the Duty to Cooperate, Oxford Green Belt, Didcot A Power Station, Design and Local Distinctiveness, and Design Briefs for Strategic and Major Sites.
5. Copies of the Draft Local Plan (February 2013) and Housing Delivery Update (February 2014) consultation documents can be viewed on the council's website: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/localplanpartone>

## THE CONSULTATION

6. The Vale of White Horse District Council is committed to working collaboratively with organisations, local communities and individuals to ensure that its planning policies reflect a collective vision and a set of agreed priorities for the area. Our Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) provides further information on our commitment<sup>2</sup>.
7. The council consulted the public to gather feedback on and help us improve draft policies and proposals outlined in the Draft Local Plan consultation 2013 and Housing Delivery Update (2014). We approached a wide range of stakeholders, including both statutory and non-statutory consultees. A full list of the people and organisations that we consulted is shown in **Appendix 1 – Consultees**.

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<sup>2</sup> Statement of Community Involvement, Vale of White Horse District Council, December 2009

8. To raise awareness of the consultations and increase the opportunities to comment, we used a range of publicity methods which are detailed in **Appendix 2 and Appendix 4 - *Publicity methods used to attract interest in the 2013/2014 consultations.***

9. Interested persons were asked to make formal representations via the council's dedicated consultation portal (known as 'objective'), available at:

Draft Local Plan Consultation (February 2013):

<https://consult.southandvale.gov.uk/portal/vale/planning/pol/lpp1/lpp1>.

Housing Delivery Update Consultation (February 2014):

<https://consult.southandvale.gov.uk/portal/vale/planning/pol/lpp1/lpp1-additional/adcon>

10. The website allowed participants to download copies of the consultation document and respond to questions relating to the document. The system also provided the flexibility of respondents being able to post comments on any areas of the document. This included paragraphs, policies, figures etc.

11. People could also send us written representations using standard response forms, which could also be sent as e-mail attachments. These were processed alongside the online responses.

## **CONSULTATION STATEMENT**

12. This consultation statement provides a report on the different engagement activities that were undertaken as part of the February 2013 and February 2014 consultations.

13. The report provides a high level summary of the main comments that were raised from the consultation process under the main policy areas and identifies the changes that have been made to the plan as a result of the consultation responses.

## CONSULTATION RESPONSES

### General comments

14. In total, 5,057 formal representations were made on the plan in February 2013 and February 2014. Table 1 below provides a breakdown of the number of responses and participants by stage.

**Table 1: Summary of responses received at 2013 and 2014 consultations**

Consultation stage	Date	Responses	Participants
Draft Local Plan Consultation	February 2013	2,340	511
Housing Delivery Update Consultation	February 2014	2,717	1,093
<b>Total</b>		<b>5,057</b>	<b>1,604</b>

15. A summary of the main issues raised are outlined below. These have been categorized by theme and follow the different areas of the plan, along with any settlement specific issues. The representations are available to view in full via the council's consultation portal at:

Draft Local Plan February 2013 consultation:

<https://consult.southandvale.gov.uk/portal/vale/planning/pol/lpp1/lpp1>.

Housing Delivery Update February 2014:

<https://consult.southandvale.gov.uk/portal/vale/planning/pol/lpp1/lpp1-additional/adcon>

### SPATIAL STRATEGY

#### DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2013

16. The spatial strategy for the Vale is called 'building on our strengths' and set out our strategy for the future shape of development across the Vale. It shows where new homes will be built, where opportunities to provide new jobs will be created and where new infrastructure and services (such as new roads, schools, shops and leisure facilities will be required).

17. The spatial strategy has three key strands, which are:

1. focusing sustainable growth within the Science Vale area
2. reinforcing the service centre roles of the main settlements across the district, and
3. promoting thriving villages and rural communities whilst safeguarding the countryside and village character.

18. The Draft Local Plan made provision for growth of around 14,300 new jobs and at least 13,294 new homes.
19. The majority of comments received were in favour of the proposed spatial strategy; particularly the settlement hierarchy. However, some respondents questioned the housing need and/ or allocations.
20. Specific comments included:
  - the need for an up-to-date Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) to inform the draft plan was identified
  - concerns were raised about the perceived lack of infrastructure to support development in some settlements
  - a request was made to place greater emphasis on the historic environment, biodiversity and heritage assets of the Vale
  - fears were expressed over the accuracy of the Village Facilities Study that was suggested should be updated, and
  - a number of comments were received concerning the categorisation of Charney Bassett. It was suggested that the Village Facilities Study is out-of-date and some facilities in this village have closed.

#### **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

21. The Draft Local Plan Consultation (February 2013) was published to give stakeholders and members of the community maximum opportunity to inform the preparation of the plan. It was understood that an up-to-date SHMA was needed, but that consulting on the plan policies and existing proposals in 2013, would still be valuable.
22. The Council has worked with the other authorities in Oxfordshire to prepare an up-to-date SHMA and this informed the Housing Delivery Update Consultation February 2014.
23. An update was also prepared of the Village Facilities Study, which was published alongside the February 2014 consultation. The updated study benefitted from the responses to the February 2013 consultation, including for example, re-classifying Charney Bassett as open countryside.
24. General support was received to the overarching spatial strategy to the February 2013 consultation and no changes were made directly relating to the consultation.

#### **HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2014**

25. The spatial strategy did not form a specific part of the February 2014 consultation, which was focused on the new housing target, informed by the up-to-date SHMA, and the new proposed strategic development sites. The spatial strategy was however updated to reflect the new proposed strategic development sites introduced by this consultation.

26. There were no comments received to the consultation specifically focused on the spatial strategy that mainly concerned the housing target or specific site proposals.
27. Overall, it is felt that the spatial strategy remains highly consistent across both the February 2013 and February 2014 consultations and that no further amendments are necessary relating to consultation responses.

## **DUTY TO COOPERATE**

### **DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2013**

28. Government legislation<sup>3</sup> requires us to cooperate with relevant public bodies when developing the local plan. The Duty-to-Cooperate Topic Paper<sup>4</sup> sets out how we are working with neighbouring planning authorities and other partners to address cross-cutting strategic issues such as county-wide housing needs and growth around the Science Vale area.
29. Several comments noted the lack of a dedicated section within the plan explaining how the council had complied with the 'duty-to-cooperate'. This matter was however covered within Chapter 2 and the supporting paper (see above).
30. Specific comments included:
- concern about the impact on the Vale of development outside the district (such as the development proposed to the East of Swindon, within the Borough of Swindon)
  - fears about the stress development outside of Oxfordshire will place on county-wide infrastructure, and
  - a request was made for clear and demonstrable cooperation to take place between relevant authorities regarding the expansion of Oxford Brookes University.

### **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

#### **HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2014**

31. The fundamental basis of the Housing Delivery Update Consultation emerged as a result of an important 'duty-to-cooperate' process with Vale of White Horse working with all of the other Oxfordshire authorities in preparing a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for the county. It identified an objectively assessed need for the county as a whole and for each district. For the Vale of White Horse, the objectively assessed housing need for the district is 20,560 new homes for the plan period up to 2031. This resulted in the additional consultation proposing a range of new strategic housing development sites in order to meet this increased need.

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<sup>3</sup> Section 110 Localism Act 2011

<sup>4</sup> Topic paper available from: [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence)

32. This consultation document also included a 'duty-to-cooperate' policy (Core Policy 3a of the February 2014 consultation document; since updated to become Core Policy 2) relating to the Oxfordshire unmet housing need. It states that the council will work cooperatively with the other Oxfordshire local authorities to seek to jointly meet, in full, the objectively assessed need for housing across the Oxfordshire housing market area. It continues by stating that the council will first seek to accommodate its own housing need in full. In addition to this, the council will actively participate in any necessary joint work to identify and assess all options in accordance with national policy and SEA regulations so as to establish how and where any unmet need can best be accommodated within the housing market area. After this, should Vale of White Horse be identified as a district for accommodating any unmet housing need, then this would be achieved through either a review of the Local Plan, or appropriate land allocations would be made through a subsequent development plan document. The most appropriate approach would depend on the scale of the provision required.

33. Specific comments received through this consultation with respect to 'duty-to-cooperate' include:

- concerns that Vale would need to address some or all of the un-met need expected to arise from Oxford City and potentially from other neighbouring authorities in the housing market area
- some comments raised the point that Vale's Local Plan was proceeding prematurely as a result of this and questioned its soundness as a result. Oxford City Council objected to this consultation for similar reasons
- some commented on the need for a strategic review of the entire Oxford Green Belt rather than a local review (this is looked at in a separate section on the Green Belt, rather than through this duty to cooperate section)
- further concerns raised by the public with respect to the proposed "Eastern Villages" developments within the administrative boundary of Swindon Borough Council close to the Vale's western boundary. Concerns of the impact that this would have on the rural setting of villages in the Western Vale Sub-Area and also the impact it would have on the local and wider transport network, such as the A420. In addition, concerns were raised as to the impact of the proposed strategic sites at Faringdon and Shrivenham on the same road network
- some general comments in support of "Core Policy 3a: Duty to Cooperate – Oxfordshire Un-Met Housing Need"
- some comments identifying a lack of evidence of cooperation with neighbouring authorities
- comments received that some of Vale's housing target should be accommodated outside of their administrative area due to the constrained nature of the district due to flooding, Green Belt and AONB
- comment from Oxfordshire County Council stating that they will continue the partnership working with the Vale of White Horse District Council to try and overcome the issues raised to enable timely progression of the Local Plan, and
- support from Thames Water stating the importance of working with neighbouring authorities to ensure that sufficient capacity is available for all development.

## **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

34. There have been a number of important steps which have arisen since the Feb 2013 consultation. Evidence of how the council is fulfilling its 'duty-to-cooperate' through ongoing meetings and communication with neighbouring authorities is set out in our Duty-to-Cooperate Topic Paper available on the council website.

35. There have been a number of important additions and agreements made as a result of the 'duty-to-cooperate' process, which have been informed by existing, new and updated guidance, as well as through the consultation process. These include:

### Oxfordshire Un-Met Housing Need

36. As identified above, the Feb 2014 consultation included a new draft policy relating to cross boundary cooperation to address any unmet need arising from the housing market area. This policy has been updated for the final draft (Publication Version) Local Plan, and is now entitled "Core Policy 2: Cooperation on unmet Housing Need for Oxfordshire". This revised version provides a more up-to-date picture of the situation, including more detail on the processes which need to be followed to address any unmet need appropriately.

37. It clearly states that the process to robustly identify the level of unmet need It states that continuing to cooperate with other Oxfordshire authorities while the Vale's Local Plan 2031 is progressed ensures "that the needs of both the district and the housing market area as a whole are met as quickly as possible".

38. The Vale of White Horse District Council continue to work cooperatively with Oxford City Council, South Oxfordshire, Cherwell and West Oxfordshire District Council's and Oxfordshire County Council in progressing work on identifying an unmet housing need for the housing market area.

### Proposed developments to the east of Swindon and the A420

39. A number of cross boundary meetings have taken place since the February 2013 consultation involving Vale of White Horse District Council, Swindon Borough Council and Oxfordshire County Council. These meetings originated as a result of the consultation responses received highlighting the potential impact of development at the "Eastern Villages" in Swindon would have on residents in the Western Vale Sub-Area. Through cross boundary cooperation, two Statements of Common Ground were agreed between these parties which formed part of the examination process of Swindon Borough's Local Plan 2026.

40. The first Statement of Common Ground was agreed on 31 March 2014. It confirmed that the housing need of each authority could be most sustainably met within each districts own administrative area.

41. In April 2014, the second statement of common ground was agreed between Vale of White Horse, Swindon Borough Council, Western Vale Villages and Oxfordshire County Council. This requires Oxfordshire County Council to prepare a route strategy for the A420 as part of its development of its new Local Transport Plan. This strategy will also review surrounding and parallel roads to quantify the likelihood of rat running being caused by proposed and allocated development traffic and identify effective measures to combat this.

#### Science Vale Area Action Plan

42. The council is working closely with South Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council to prepare an Area Action Plan (AAP) for the Science Vale area. This will set out more delivery and implementation detail identified in the Vale's Local Plan 2031 and the emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan. It will ensure Science Vale is planned for comprehensively across district boundaries and help to ensure appropriate infrastructure is properly planned for its timely delivery.

### **SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL**

#### DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2013

43. The council is required to conduct a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the plan's proposals. This considers the social, economic and environmental impacts of proposed policies. The plan stated that development proposals had been assessed against eleven sustainability objectives (the SA Framework) throughout the preparation of the plan. It referred to a separate report published on 28 March 2013 which showed how the requirements of the SA process had been met.

44. A number of comments expressed support for the SA undertaken. Other comments challenged the definition of sustainable development as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and used by council.

45. Specific comments included:

- concern that the SA for the proposed development should be informed by an up-to-date Strategic Market Housing Assessment (SHMA)
- an objection was raised to the council's assessment that land for surplus employment at Didcot Site A is a sustainable development option
- doubt that proposed development at Wantage and Grove meets the sustainability objectives that seeks to place homes near to sites of employment
- a request was made that the council explicitly recognises that in certain cases the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' does not apply, for example within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and
- a request that sustainability objectives relating to air, noise and light pollution and education are referenced in the main plan document.

## **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

### SHMA

46. The up-to-date Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for Oxfordshire identified a new 'objectively assessed need' for housing in the district of 20,560 homes. This led the council to propose a series of new strategic sites to meet this need and it was important these sites were tested through the SA. The new sites were published in the Housing Delivery Update (see below) and an accompanying update to the SA Report.

### Didcot A

47. The following two alternative approaches to growth at Didcot A were considered during the preparation of the Local Plan 2013:

- Option A - Policy for the Didcot A site which is broadly supportive of B-class uses on the whole of the site, subject to market demand.
- Option B - Policy for the Didcot A site which is broadly supportive of B-class uses on half of the site. Further employment uses to be supported on the remainder of the site subject to market demand. Complementary alternative uses (such as institutional or community uses) also to be supported on the remainder of the site, subject to a masterplanning process, and subject to these uses being compatible with the neighbouring Didcot B power station. Precise uses to be determined through LPP2 unless determined beforehand through a masterplanning process.

48. The SA assessed these two options for development at the Didcot A site, and concluded that the most sustainable option would be to support B-class uses on half of the site, with further employment uses to be supported on the remainder of the site subject to market demand, and with complementary alternative uses also to be supported on the remainder of the site. On-going discussions have taken place through-out the development of the Local Plan; these are discussed further in the section below.

### Sustainability Objectives

49. The Sustainability Objectives (SA Framework) set out in the SA Report are used to appraise the likely significant effects of the Local Plan. The issues relating to air, noise and light pollution and education are referenced in the main plan document, though policy as a result of the appraisal findings and other evidence throughout the preparation of the Local Plan.

### HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2014

50. The Housing Delivery Update was a focussed consultation on a new housing target and additional proposed strategic sites. An Interim SA Report was produced and published alongside the Housing Delivery Consultation setting out how the new housing target and sites had been assessed by the SA.

51. Specific comments included:

Historic Environment:

- concern that the SA did not adequately assess the setting of heritage assets
- detailed comments regarding the historic environment for particular sites
- objection that heritage and landscape SA Objectives should not be conflated
- concerns about the cumulative effects of the plan and site allocations on heritage and historic assets, and
- recommendations for additional historic baseline data to be included in the SA Report.

AONB/Alternatives

- concern over reasoned justification for selecting the preferred approach and for not testing alternative approaches including scale of development within the AONB
- concern over the ability to mitigate the impacts of development on the AONB at East Harwell Campus, and
- concerns about the cumulative landscape impact of the plan and site allocations on the AONB.

Sites

- comments on particular site allocations
- queries about particular appraisal statements, requesting further justification, and
- specific comments on South Cumnor Site Appraisal and the need to contribute towards the achievement of the objectives of the Oxford Heights West Conservation Target Area.

Alternatives

- query whether testing meeting housing need outside of the district has taken place

Mitigation

- highlighting the need for appropriate mitigation to be identified for specific sites, and
- comments on the water and wastewater capacity of infrastructure needed to support the site proposals and likely requirements for additional infrastructure to meet demand.

**How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

52. Explained by theme below:

Historic Environment:

- an Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) was carried out for each of the sites proposed
- all site appraisals were reviewed and updated to reflect the HLC

- the SA Objective 8 encompasses heritage and landscape, however the appraisals were updated to reflect the HLC and heritage and landscape issues were dealt with under this objective, and
- an Historic data map has been inserted within the SA Report to include:
  - Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Historic Parks and Gardens and Scheduled Ancient Monuments

#### AONB/Alternatives

- in recognition of the landscape sensitivities of these sites a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been prepared to inform the scale and form of the development of land surrounding Harwell Campus to accommodate future residential development
- the Council commissioned a bespoke Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) for all land parcels around the campus in order to inform the option testing, with a view to identifying the optimum level of growth at the site that could be achieved without leading to significant negative effects on the AONB. The LVIA involved assessing the likely effectiveness of mitigation measures, proposing a mitigation strategy and identifying the residual landscape and visual impacts once these measures had been applied
- the SA assessed the more detailed options for development around Harwell Campus and was informed by the LVIA, and
- the scale of development proposed in the AONB has been significantly reduced.

#### Sites

- all site appraisals have been reviewed following the consultation comments

#### Alternatives

- the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 will meet, in full, the objectively assessed need for 20,560 homes 2011-2031. This is a first and important step towards meeting the full needs of the housing market area within the full housing market area without unreasonable delay, and
- the Oxfordshire Statement of Cooperation sets out how the outcomes of the SHMA would be managed, should any of the Local Planning Authorities in Oxfordshire not be able to meet their full objectively assessed housing need

#### Mitigation

- all site appraisals have been reviewed and updated to reflect the comments received, including water and wastewater capacity of sites, and
- part 3 of the SA Report highlights the mitigation required for the proposed sites.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2013

53. The Draft Local Plan outlined a number of policies intended to support a strong and sustainable economy within the district. This included the prioritisation of Science Vale as an area of job growth and directing new shops and facilities towards the main settlements.

54. Over 290 comments were made relating to economic development. Many respondents provided feedback on the strategic employment allocations. Other comments related to specific policies and proposals.

55. Specific comments included:

- concern that barriers to bringing forward the existing allocated employment sites have not been adequately addressed
- support for the redevelopment of the old power station site at Didcot A
- concern that there is an imbalance between land allocated for housing in Wantage and Grove and for employment
- concerns that not enough employment land has been allocated in the Western Vale, which is not under as much influence from Science Vale and Oxford City
- concern about plans to redevelop Elms Parade in Botley. Many respondents value the existing shops and services this amenity provides
- concern that the value of agricultural land is overlooked, and
- requests that the plan should place greater emphasis on the promotion of tourism.

#### **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

56. A number of changes have occurred to the policies relating to economic development across the district. These changes are outlined below:

##### Meeting Business and Employment Needs:

- See section below relating to the February 2014 consultation.

##### Harcourt Hill Campus:

- Some minor comments received on draft policy. Some of these have already been implemented through planning permissions immediately adjacent to the site and therefore do not need to be considered as part of this policy. A comment was received seeking to remove the site from the Green Belt, however this has not been supported by our Green Belt review and also includes land that forms part of protected views of Oxford City. Policy continues to support the preparation of a masterplan, but identifies a wider set of criteria for what is required before this can be agreed. The policy has been informed through meetings with Oxford Brookes University, Oxfordshire County Council, and other stakeholders.

##### Abbey Shopping Centre and the Charter, Abingdon-on-Thames:

- The addendum to the Retail and Town Centre Study has encouraged the updating of this policy so that it maximises the provision of retail uses (A1) due to its strategically important town centre location. Due to the constrained nature of the existing town centre site, it is important that this site comes forward ahead of any alternative locations on the edge of town centre/edge of town.

#### Botley Central Area:

- See section below relating to the Housing Delivery Update Consultation (February 2014).

#### Didcot A Power Station:

- See section below relating to the February 2014 consultation.

#### New Employment Development on Unallocated Sites:

- A small number of comments were received, which generally supported this policy. Some comments asked for more detail on the wording of “unacceptable harm” and “rural areas”. It has been considered that “unacceptable harm” is something that should be determined on a case-by-case basis, or through pre-application advice. The policy has been updated to provide one set of criteria for unallocated sites in more sustainable locations (such as town centres and larger villages), while a wider set of criteria is required for more rural areas. This enhances the role and function of the policy to better inform such proposals coming forward, while not restricting development of the rural and local economy where justified.

#### Change of Use of Existing Employment Land and Premises:

- A number of comments were received with respect to providing a more flexible approach to this policy. Since the Feb 2013 consultation the Government has introduced new permitted development rights that allow for greater flexibility for change of use. Some of these rights impact on B-class uses and further flexibilities may be introduced in the future. There is also the potential that some of these flexibilities may also be removed and it is important that there is a policy in place should this occur. The supporting text has been updated to take note of this position and recognises that the policy will apply to all proposals for change of use of existing employment land and premises that are not covered by the new permitted development rights.

#### Further and Higher Education:

- A small number of comments were received. Some were of support, others objected to the provision of a learning park at the strategic site of Valley Park. Another sought to provide a better distinction between “further education” and “higher education”. Some comments raised the point that the Local Plan made little or no mention of the higher education facilities which form part of the Defence Academy at Wathcfield. No changes to the policy were deemed necessary. The supported text was however expanded to recognise the higher education facilities at Cranfield University at Watchfield and support development and expansion of these facilities where appropriate.

#### Development to Support the Visitor Economy:

- Internal comments from the Economic Development team of the Vale of White Horse District Council recommended that the term “Tourism” should be replaced with the “Visitor Economy” to better reflect this sector as the term “Tourism” is too closely defined. As a result, this section has been updated accordingly incorporating this terminology. Some comments were received seeking to promote equine development in the district and this has been the only addition to the core policy wording. The supporting text now makes

reference to the Joint Hotel Needs Assessment which will act as a guide for new hotel development in the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire districts, provided it is consistent with this and other policies contained in the Development Plan.

Retail and main town centre uses:

- A number of comments were received stating that the policy was difficult to interpret and understand. The supporting text provides clarity on what is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework as “Main town centre uses”. The core policy text has been updated to make it more legible. The policy follows the sequential approach in addressing its retail need which has increased through an addendum to the Retail and Town Centre Study. This is predominantly due to the constrained nature of the market towns and local service centres in the district and the lack of available sites in the short term to meet the retail need up to 2031. Two sites have been highlighted for redevelopment, those of the Charter area in Abingdon-on-Thames and the Botley Central Area.
- Other retail provision will be provided on some of the larger proposed strategic sites, for example at Crab Hill and Valley Park, some sites are identified in the Retail and Town Centre Study to meet medium and long-term needs and further provision may come forward through neighbourhood plans.

57. Furthermore, the council has updated its evidence base documents relating to this topic to inform the Local Plan 2031. These include:

- an addendum to our Employment Land Review, which clarifies that there is sufficient employment land in the district to accommodate the growth envisaged up to 2031
- an addendum to our Retail and Town Centre Study which identifies an increased retail floorspace need in the district and suggests a range of methods for addressing this need up to 2031, and
- a Joint Hotel Needs Assessment for the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire Districts has identified a growing need for hotel accommodation space with a particularly strong need in Science Vale. It will provide a useful tool for guiding future hotel development across Vale of White Horse.

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58. This consultation did not expand in any detail on policies relating to economic development. The only exception to this was a revised wording on the core policy for Didcot A Power Station. A small number of comments were received relating to elements and policies contained in the Draft Local Plan Consultation (February 2013).

59. Specific comments included:

- a number of key comments relating to the Didcot A Power Station from landowners, operators of the adjacent Milton Park and Didcot Town Council opposing certain elements of the revised core policy. Objections were for the predominance of B1 uses on the site, while the town council objected to

residential being provided. There was, in general, support for the policy. The landowners also noted that the total area which will be available for development has been reduced from a predicted 58 ha to 47 ha.

- some general comments received asked why no additional employment land had been allocated in parallel with the strategic sites proposed in this consultation, and
- a number of objections were again received relating to the redevelopment of the Central Botley area. This included a varied number of issues such as the preservation of Elms Parade; questioning the inclusion of more residential areas at the south west of the site; traffic and air quality management; scale of development proposed through the current planning application; and the impact on neighbouring residential areas.

### **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

60. The following amendments have been made to the final draft (Publication Version) Local Plan as a result of the above feedback:

#### Didcot A Power Station:

- This policy has been updated and enhanced for the to the final draft (Publication Version) Local Plan. The addendum to the Employment Land Review identified that the site could support the provision of approximately 2,000 direct jobs on this site over the plan period. As a result of this, amendments to the policy include:
  - prioritising B1, particularly along active frontages, but allowing for a range of other uses to be considered and agreed through a masterplanning process involving a number of key stakeholders and public bodies
  - uses will need to reflect demand, suitability of the site and transport implications as well as the sites location relative to Didcot B, which remains in active use
  - active frontages to be provided along key transport/movement corridors connecting the site with Didcot Town Centre, Milton Park and Valley Park
  - safeguarding of the route for the Science Bridge to ensure it continues to remain an infrastructure priority, and
  - setting out that detailed masterplanning of the site will need be included in the Science Vale Area Action Plan.

#### Meeting Business and Employment Needs:

- Updated evidence including an addendum to the Employment Land Review has identified additional employment land at Harwell Campus and the inclusion of Milton Hill Business and Technology Centre within the list of vacant/developable sites. This has increased the amount of land available for future employment uses in the district. The figure has increased to 219 ha. The additional land is in the heart of Science Vale in close proximity to a wide range of strategic housing site allocations.

### Central Botley Area:

- Responses on this policy included opposition to development proposals consulted upon by the developer, during 2014. This matter is separate to the local plan and is not commented on further.
  - Botley is the third largest retail centre in the district but underperforms in serving its own catchment with significant expenditure leakage identified by the retail needs assessment. The study also identifies a need to accommodate retail growth in the north east of the district. Botley provides a logical town centre location with land available next to the existing retail core to accommodate some of the needed growth. Further development here would also enhance the retail and service offer to this part of the district and also to the south east of Oxford city adjoining. The alternative is less sustainable out-of-town retail development. The Sustainability Appraisal identifies that a more comprehensive redevelopment of the site would yield more positive results. It states that refurbishment of the existing centre for retail uses would be unnecessarily restrictive, and would not fully realise the opportunity to improve and enhance Botley's central area.
  - The site area reflects land stated to be available for development or redevelopment, and the full area is included to ensure a comprehensive design and access solution is achieved, whether or not existing buildings remain on some parts of the site. The policy requires well designed active replacement frontage if Elms Parade is demolished, but neither promotes nor could prevent the demolition of Elms Parade which is not a statutory listed building or in a conservation area. Matters such as traffic and design are also addressed by other policies in the plan which has to be read as a whole, and would be resolved at the planning application stage.

## **HOUSING**

61. The Draft Local Plan set out a target for at least 13,294 homes to be built across the district between 2006 and 2029. The target was based on housing numbers specified in the South East Plan, since abolished but at that point in time representing the best evidence available.
62. To meet this target required the identification of sources of supply for an additional 5,150 homes, allowing for commitments. Strategic housing allocations were proposed at Harwell Parish (adjoining Didcot), Faringdon, Harwell Campus, Wantage and Grove. The plan also stated that there would be 'a presumption in favour of sustainable development' for development within the built areas of existing market towns, local service centres and larger villages. Only limited development would be permitted in smaller villages where it meets local need for housing and respects the existing character of settlements.
63. The consultation also sought views on the following housing policies:
  - housing mix
  - density
  - affordable housing
  - rural exceptions

- housing needs for ageing population, and
- housing for Gypsy and Traveller communities

64. Over 400 comments were made on the issue of housing provision for the district. Concerns were raised about the scale of the housing proposed, including the relationship with the South East Plan figures, and the allocation of sites for development.

65. Specific comments included:

Housing requirement

- criticism raised that contrary to the NPPF, an up-to-date SHMA was not undertaken to identify the objectively assessed housing needs to inform the plan
- doubts whether expected employment growth would take place to justify or support the planned housing
- some housing supply contingency should be included in case proposed sites do not come forward
- questions about potential need arising elsewhere that may also need to be addressed under the 'duty-to-cooperate' (e.g. from Oxford)
- concerns that any unmet housing demand for Oxford City identified in the future may need to be accommodated in the Abingdon on Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub Area within the Vale of White Horse
- delays in the delivery of large sites suggests that the sites proposed would not be a reliable source of consistent housing supply

Housing mix

- the housing mix policy is not supported by any up-to date evidence (i.e. SHMA)
- the future housing mix should predominately consist of 1-2 bedroom housing (particularly in rural areas), to make the housing stock affordable and flexible and allow for down-sizing
- it fails to address the under occupation/imbalance of the existing housing stock. Larger dwellings should only be built in exceptional circumstances.
- plan lacks detail about housing mix - targets for the types/size of housing required for the young and elderly households, as well as higher disability standards, should be included
- it needs to acknowledge the circumstances where a different mix may be appropriate, to address a specific local need (e.g. retirement housing).
- contrary to the NPPF, the plan has failed to include any reference to the self building and the role it can play to increase house building and address affordability issues

Housing density

- density should be quoted as maximum, to prevent high density development in inappropriate/unsustainable locations (i.e. due to character, amenities)
- density should be quoted as minimum target, to enable the most appropriate density to be determined, in accordance with location specific factors and encourage an efficient use of land, and

- the policy should be more place specific, in relation to locations where higher densities would be appropriate, vice versa.

#### Affordable housing

- the affordable housing target has been set too high and the threshold too low, which will reduce the overall quantity or encourage the wrong type of housing delivered (e.g. larger dwellings/ quantity of smaller units)
- the affordable housing target has been set too low
- the policy should acknowledge that other market factors and contributions will be taken into consideration, to address any viability issues
- separate affordable housing targets should be set for urban and rural areas.

#### Rural exceptions

- it will adversely impact the character/setting of villages, particularly if it results in new development outside the built up areas
- criticism raised that market housing is allowed, as part of exception schemes
- concern that it may encourage speculative schemes and insufficient mechanisms are in place to prevent this, and
- it should include a new criterion “The development has the support of the local community as represented by the local parish council”

#### Accommodating the current and future needs of the aging population

- requiring all homes for elderly residents to be built to the Lifetime Homes Standards will adversely impact the viability of schemes
- a target should be included for number of homes that are required to address the housing needs of the elderly on strategic sites or other locations (i.e. proactive strategy)
- homes designed for the elderly should not be delivered in accordance with the affordable housing policy as this will adversely impact the marketing and deliverability of retirement homes (e.g. allowing people of similar age group live together)
- the affordable housing policy should not apply to housing schemes for the elderly because they do not fall within a C3 use, which will impact viability/deliverability
- the policy should consider wider issues/challenges faced by the elderly (i.e. public transport, health facilitates), and
- homes designed for the elderly should be located in urban areas or larger settlements, with easy access to local facilities/services

#### Meeting the housing needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling show people

- greater clarity required in relation to the term reasonable distance, and
- support for the need to address housing for Gypsy and Traveller communities

### **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

66. See Housing Delivery Update Consultation (2014) below.

### Housing mix

67. The policy is flexible to ensure decisions are based on the most up-to-date evidence, for example as set out in the Oxfordshire SHMA. The policy includes a clause to allow a more flexible approach on a case-by-case basis if site specific evidence is available, such as relating to viability. The council considers this approach to be consistent with the evidence (SHMA) and national policy (NPPF).

### Density

68. The Sustainability Appraisal supports the Local Plan density policy that seeks to encourage the most appropriate densities, in accordance with site specific circumstances.
69. The policy has been updated and includes reference to the importance of ensuring the density of proposals enhances the character and legibility of an area. In addition, the supporting text has been enhanced by making reference to good design principles such as legibility and urban structure.

### Affordable housing

70. The SHMA (2014) identified the number of affordable housing units required and their type, tenure, to address the future needs of the district. It indicated that a total of 273 affordable housing units would need to be delivered each year (or 4,914 between 2013-31).
71. As the identified 'objectively assessed need' for housing is much greater (1,028 dwellings per year) than in the draft Local Plan the affordable housing need forms a smaller proportion of the overall housing need than it did previously.
72. A Viability Assessment (2014) examined the potential impact of the affordable housing target, tenure and threshold. It took into account how other infrastructure contributions and local standards may impact the viability of sites and the deliverability of the plan. It indicated that reducing the affordable housing target to 35% would have the benefit of significantly increasing the viability of development and thus the ability of sites to contribute to infrastructure provision. Therefore, the target has been reduced to 35 per cent in the final draft (Publication Version) Local Plan.

### Rural exceptions

73. The council believes that the 'rural exceptions' policy for affordable housing is very important. Previous local plan policies of this type have resulted in much needed housing being delivered in many rural communities across the Vale with much support from those communities. However, the policy has been strengthened to ensure that it offers protection against inappropriate development, is supported by the parish council and provides flexibility where viability is demonstrated to be a factor.

### Accommodating the current and future needs of the aging population

74. This policy has been updated, particularly to provide clarity that it applies to 'all homes designed for older people', rather than 'all homes', to be built to Lifetime Home Standards (including flats above ground floor). This approach is consistent with our Viability Study and Sustainability Appraisal.

75. The policy also highlights the importance of ensuring that residential dwellings designed for older people are located in the most sustainable locations. The affordable housing policy only applies to residential schemes (i.e. C3 use) and clearly recognises that viability is a key consideration, during negotiations.

Meeting the housing needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling show people

76. The policy is consistent with our most up-to-date evidence and ensures existing sites are protected and the need for this type of accommodation is adequately provided for.

**New evidence**

77. The Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) was prepared in 2013<sup>5</sup>. This identified:

- an up-to-date and objectively assessed housing need for the Vale of 20,560 homes in the period 2011-2031, incorporating past backlog and other adjustments recommended in practice guidance, and fully addressing the requirements of economic growth in the accompanying forecasting work (1,028 additional homes per annum, higher than the previous target of 578 per annum)
- a need for 4,914 affordable (subsidised) homes per annum, expressed as 273 affordable homes per annum in the period 2013-2031
- updated data on housing type, size and mix including special needs, and
- a level of housing need for Oxford City that it is unlikely to be able to fully meet. The residual requirement, to be identified, would need to be addressed and met by cooperative working across the remainder of the housing market area.

HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2014

78. The council held a focused consultation February-April 2014 to address the findings of the SHMA, in particular on using SHMA objectively assessed need as a housing target. The consultation identified sources of supply for a further 7,430 homes to meet Vale needs (over and above sites identified in 2013). An additional 21 strategic site allocations were proposed to meet this requirement. The site package reflected that around 4,000 of these homes would need to be delivered in the first five years of the plan period to maintain a five-year housing land supply.

79. The consultation also set out

- a commitment to joint working under the 'duty-to-cooperate' to address any unmet housing needs in the housing market area
- revisions to the Green Belt boundary and some other policy refinements, addressed in the Green Belt section of the paper (para 113).

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<sup>5</sup> Economic Forecasting to inform the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan and Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SQW and Cambridge Econometrics, 2014) which forecast the provision of 23,000 additional jobs in the Vale 2011-2031.

80. There were 2,717 responses to the consultation, the overwhelming majority opposed to an increased housing requirement and the additional sites put forward.
81. Responses that address the detail of sites rather than the principle of allocating more are addressed in the Site Specific Comments of this consultation statement (page 34).
82. Comments on the level of objectively assessed need are set out below:

Housing requirement

- that the SHMA figure of a 40% increase in homes by 2031 and should be moderated to reflect sustainability, deliverability and infrastructure limitations
- that the SHMA figure for objectively assessed need is over-inflated based on adjustments made to the base demographic projections
- that the SHMA figure for objectively assessed need is over-inflated based on adjustments to address unrealistic or aspirational employment forecasts
- welcome recognition of the economic potential of Harwell Campus and the need to support economic growth through increased housing delivery, and
- the plan should set out contingency arrangements in the event that the proposed allocations fail to deliver in their timescales.

Housing distribution

- objections to housing development in AONB adjacent to Harwell Campus, including from the AONB Management Board and Natural England
- objections to housing allocations in the Oxford Green Belt, both in general and to all of the proposed sites
- Western Vale should accommodate more than 10% of the housing requirement
- increase other sites and remove proposed housing in AONB, and
- new housing should be concentrated on brown field sites, close to transport links and employment centres

Five year housing land supply

- the plan should include smaller sites than the 200 strategic threshold to assist deliverability and five year supply, and
- reduce the frontloading of housing numbers in the first 5 years because it is not sustainable and gives rise to a focus on smaller, more easily deliverable greenfield sites including in Green Belt and AONB.

Housing mix

- consider the role that flats could play to provide affordable housing, address the needs of the elderly and increase the availability of larger housing
- need to consider the number of empty or under-used buildings, totally more than 1,200 units
- levels of under-occupancy and affordability issues require a very large proportion of all new housing to be of one or two bedrooms, and

- large dwellings should be adaptable with the potential for subdivision or creating self contained annexes or bed-sits.  
Affordable housing
- support received for the affordable housing target of 40%, and
- criticism raised that the affordable housing policy may result in a larger number of smaller units being delivered that may fail to reflect local needs/character because a lower requirement will only be accepted after amending the housing type/tenure

### **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

#### Housing requirement and housing distribution

83. The following key changes have been made to the final draft (Publication Version) Local Plan (also see comments on the spatial strategy and sites – page 3 and page 34):

- Policy CP4 Meeting our Housing Needs was updated to reflect the up-to-date objectively assessed needs identified in the 2014 Oxfordshire SHMA (and updated sub area spatial strategy policies CP8, CP15 and CP20 accordingly).
- A range of additional sites was consulted on in the Housing Delivery Update and used the consultation feedback to refine and improve our site proposals. The Site Development Templates together with the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (pursuant to Core Policy 7: Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services) demonstrate how and where we can sustainably accommodate growth in accordance with our spatial strategy
- for the Housing Delivery Update a new Duty-to-Cooperate policy was added relating to Oxfordshire unmet housing need. This sets out our commitment to the agreed Oxfordshire-wide process to first establish the level of unmet need for Oxford City and then determine where it should best be met. No other unmet need has been identified. We have refined this policy in the Publication Version of the plan to stress the importance of making timely progress to address unmet need, and
- the final draft (Publication Version) Local Plan therefore takes forward a housing target to meet the full identified OAN for the Vale. This work is supported by an extensive evidence base and SA. The local plan also commits to an early review or other appropriate process to address unmet need from Oxford City as soon as a sub-regional solution is identified

#### Five year housing land supply

84. The plan is accompanied by an up-to-date five year housing land supply statement that demonstrates that once adopted, the proposed site allocations set out in the final draft (Publication Version) Local Plan will ensure a five year housing land supply can be achieved and maintained.

#### Duty to Cooperate

85. This matter is covered by the ‘duty-to-cooperate’ section of this paper (page 5).

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

### DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2013

86. The consultation recognised that development should be accompanied by new infrastructure such as roads, schools, services and facilities. It stated that infrastructure would be provided by developers using Section 106 (planning obligations) legal agreements. Where major developments are planned, an independent viability assessment would take place to ensure that developers are able to make the infrastructure contributions needed. The report also stated that the council was considering introducing a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), which would partly replace Section 106 contributions and assist the delivery of infrastructure alongside new development.
87. The comments made to the council noted a range of district-wide and settlement specific infrastructure needs that are likely to be exacerbated by new development.
88. Specific comments included:
- requests that new infrastructure be provided before significant housing and employment related development takes place
  - suggestions were made that significant upgrades to the existing road network would be required to accommodate the scale of development proposed
  - concerns that schools will become oversubscribed
  - requests were made that local communities should be consulted to help determine local infrastructure needs
  - requests that broadband provision be upgraded across the district
  - a request that the council should specify a policy for telecommunications provision from the Mobile Operators Association
  - a request that the plan is updated to provide clarity about the role of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)
  - a concern that the Growth and Infrastructure Bill could potentially weaken the reliance on existing statutory mechanisms to secure infrastructure contributions from developers
  - requests that a proportion of revenue raised by the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) should be returned to local communities where development is proposed, and
  - clarification that the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) is a live document that will continue to be updated.

#### **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

89. Many of the comments relating to infrastructure were due to a lack of understanding about the processes involved in infrastructure planning rather than particular issues that needed addressing. On this basis, the key actions to be taken forward were:
- to better explain infrastructure planning and delivery

- to better explain the role of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)
- to better explain the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
- to continue to work closely with stakeholders and utility providers
- the need for a policy on telecommunications provision was considered and it was decided that it would more appropriately be incorporated into Local Plan 2031 Part 2.

#### HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2014

90. This consultation document included a number of new site proposals, as described above. A Development Site Template was included in the plan for each of these sites that set out the identified policy and infrastructure requirements for each site.
91. The document was also accompanied by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), which set out the key pieces of infrastructure that needed to be delivered to ensure plan success and to achieve sustainable development. However, it was made clear that the IDP was at an early stage and that more detailed information would be provided at future plan stages.
92. In general, concerns raised were similar to the previous consultation regarding concerns about the capacity of infrastructure to accommodate the proposed growth. Specific comments included were:
- need to expand the existing hospital, leisure facilities and car parking in Wantage
  - Thames Water suggested amendments to state that water and wastewater infrastructure should be considered alongside housing and jobs
  - concerns over the capacity of the existing sewerage and waste water network. The proposed new development sites existing infrastructure will need upgrading
  - Stagecoach has concerns about the detailed modelling and the mitigation packages required by such a large increase in development, and questioned why the Council had failed to implement the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which was first introduced by government in 2010.

#### **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

93. Following the Housing Delivery Update the council has continued to work with stakeholders and utility providers. In response to the concerns raised about infrastructure, the council produced a document entitled 'Delivering Infrastructure Strategy' to explain what infrastructure in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) will be delivered and how. The IDP itself also contains more general information about how the council has engaged with infrastructure providers and will continue to do so and also about how the infrastructure providers themselves operate. This should address concerns over whether infrastructure has been planned properly.
94. In relation to the specific comments:

- comments from Thames Water were incorporated in to the plan where appropriate
- a policy supporting the reopening of Grove Railway Station has been included in the plan, and
- the Development Site Templates have been updated to outline the policy and infrastructure requirements for each site, and
- the IDP has also been updated, following detailed consultation with infrastructure providers, to inform plan development and accompany the Publication Version of the plan.

## **BUILT AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT**

### DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2013

95. The consultation proposed that new development should sustain and enhance the historic environment and not detract from the significance of heritage assets or their settings. The council also proposed to safeguard a continuous route for restoration of the Wilts & Berks Canal.
96. The comments received were broadly supportive of the proposed policies to sustain and enhance the built and historic environment.
97. Specific comments included:
- support for including reference to the “setting” of heritage assets when considering new development
  - support for the recognition that non designated heritage assets are also an important part of the built and historic environment
  - a request that Charney Bassett Conservation Area should be extended
  - a comment from English Heritage that the spatial strategy could be informed by a more robust evidence base relating to the historic environment
  - a further comment from English Heritage that the policy on the Historic Environment should look to be more positive, with more reference to conservation and enhancement of the historic environment throughout the plan
  - a complaint that there was insufficient consultation prior to proposing the restoration of the Wilts & Berks Canal, and
  - a request from Thames Valley Police to include a policy reference to Crime Prevention through Environment Design.

### **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

98. Following the comments from English Heritage, the policy has been re-written so that it is less focused on Development Management and is a more positive strategy for the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. The policy also sets out how the District Council will build up its evidence base relating to the historic environment by committing to produce Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans and through maintaining a list of Locally Listed Buildings.

99. Following the consultation the council met with landowners affected by the Wilts and Berks Canal and members of the Wilts and Berks Canal Trust. Whilst the council supports the principle of restoring the Wilts and Berks Canal, it is considered that there needs to be further work undertaken to demonstrate the feasibility of the restoration, including closer working with landowners, before it can be supported in a policy. Therefore the adopted Local Plan Policy L14 and L15 will continue to be saved and will provide protection of the historic route and a policy will not be included in Local Plan 2031 Part 1.

#### HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2014

100. The council recognises the importance of the design quality of new developments, not only to help protect the existing quality of Vale settlements, one of its greatest assets, but also to ensure new developments that are sustainable and attractive places to live. The council acknowledges the importance of design and the consultation comments received relating to this matter. As a result, the council has strengthened its policy, as set out in the Housing Delivery Update Consultation and prepared a new Design Guide for the district.

101. The consultation on the new design policy raised the following issues:

- question how the Council will enforce high quality design and design criteria for assessing the quality of new developments
- Thames Valley Police (Design) concerned as to why in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan Housing Delivery update, reference to 'Secured by Design' has been omitted from Core Policy 37. Recommend separate policy on Secured by Design
- suggest that the Council incorporated and recognised the application of minimum standards, minimum space standards and aspiration standards for new developments
- Equality Officer at the Vale of White Horse would like to see reference to Wheelchair Accessible Homes and Lifetime Homes incorporated into Core Policy 37 and Core Policy 23 in the final Local Plan 2031 Part 1.

#### **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

102. Following the Housing Delivery Update consultation minor changes were made to the two design policies. The subjects of Secured by Design, space standards and Wheelchair Accessible and Lifetime Homes were consulted on as part of the Government's Housing Standards Review. As the Government is exploring setting standards for these aspects it would be premature to set standards in the Local Plan. If such standards are not forthcoming then they can be incorporated in to Local Plan 2031 Part 2.

## **CLIMATE CHANGE**

### DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2013

103. The Draft Local Plan proposed to address the causes of climate change by increasing the use of decentralised, low carbon and renewable energy, heat and transport fuels. Proposals were set out to locate housing near to jobs, whilst promoting improved broadband coverage, all aimed at reducing the need to travel by car. The council also proposed to identify ways of building resilience to the effects of climate change such as flooding and an increased incidence of extreme weather.
104. The consultation revealed that many people were concerned about flooding across the district and the measures proposed for dealing with this risk. There were also a number of suggestions made with regards to supporting and promoting the development of more sustainable forms of energy generation.
105. Specific comments included:
- a recommendation from the Environment Agency to undertake a Water Cycle Study (WCS) to inform the preparation of the final plan
  - a suggestion that the council introduce an integrated flood management strategy for the length of the Thames
  - calls for the council to provide information about renewable energy generation in the district and how it will contribute towards meeting government targets by 2020
  - claims that there is no clear strategy for achieving carbon reduction within the district over the plan period
  - a suggestion that development over 10 houses should be subject to an air quality survey conducted on-site, and
  - a claim that the plan does not justify the requirement for all homes to be built to Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.

### **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

106. On the recommendation of the Environment Agency, a Water Cycle Study has been carried out to support the allocations in the Local Plan. In relation to the Code for Sustainable Homes, the Local Plan no longer makes reference to this as the Government has indicated that they will be winding down the Code and incorporating the relevant standards into building regulations.

### HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2014

107. There were no policies relating to Climate Change in the Housing Delivery Update.

## **NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

### DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2013

108. A strategic objective of the plan is to improve and protect the natural environment including biodiversity. A range of measures were proposed to deliver protecting landscape features, improving biodiversity and placing requirements on developers to contribute to the delivery of green infrastructure where appropriate.
109. There was broad support for the proposals to afford continued protection from development to green belt land surrounding Oxford City and to encourage a net gain in Green Infrastructure.
110. Specific comments included:
- an objection to Core Policy 35 as it is not based on objectively defined standards for Green Infrastructure which should be taken into consideration when assessing new development
  - concern that the proposed south Abingdon-on-Thames bypass would cut across the Ock Nature Reserve
  - an objection that insufficient biodiversity policies were included within the plan
  - concern that the protection of high quality agricultural land had been given insufficient attention
  - a view that the riverside at Abingdon-on-Thames should be valued as an important leisure asset and developed accordingly
  - a claim that policies are not justified as there has been no assessment of the landscape character of the district which defines locally valued landscape
  - a suggestion that “locally valued landscapes” is defined in a glossary to the plan
  - Natural England commented that Core Policy 36: Biodiversity needed to be clearer about the criteria that development would be required to meet in terms of biodiversity, particularly in relation to the hierarchy of designations. It was recommended that we review Policy E5 of the Test Valley Borough Council Revised Local Plan as an example biodiversity policy
  - in relation to Green Infrastructure, Natural England stated that they would like to see Green Infrastructure provided in line with Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGst)
  - the Letcombe Brook project emphasized the importance of adopted Policies L2 and L3 and concern over the loss of these policies
  - Natural England advised that the Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) needed to include further analysis to support the conclusions that there are likely to be no significant effects on the Oxford Meadows SAC, and
  - a recommendation that the plan include reference to planning for open spaces and safeguarding community facilities in line with policy 70 of the NPPF.

## **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

111. The following changes have been included in the final draft (Publication Version) Local Plan following this consultation:

- the term 'Locally valued landscapes' was removed from the Landscape policy so that it is a general policy about landscape features
- the Green Infrastructure policy makes reference to the relevant ANGst
- the biodiversity policy was reworded to be more inline with the example policy from the Test Valley Local Plan
- further modelling work has been undertaken to inform the HRA
- the Green Infrastructure Policy makes direct reference to the findings of the HRA, and
- the wording of the policies was agreed with Natural England

### HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2014

112. There were no policies in the Housing Delivery Update on the Natural Environment.

## **GREEN BELT**

### DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2013

113. The policy maintained protection of the Oxford Green Belt. It stated that inappropriate development that is harmful would not be approved except where the scheme provides exceptional community benefits that cannot be reasonably provided elsewhere. It also outlined parameters for development on previously developed sites in the Green Belt.

114. There was broad support for the proposals to afford continued protection from development to Green Belt land surrounding Oxford City. Some specific comments were:

- a request from Oxford City Council for the plan to acknowledge that a review of the Green Belt may be required in the period to 2029 should a more up to date assessment of housing take place
- a request that the council work in partnership with key stakeholders where there are cross cutting boundary issues relating to the protection of the Green Belt
- suggestion that retaining Policy GS3 of the Local Plan 2011 alongside Core Policy 9 meant that Core Policy 9 presented an incomplete picture of when development in the Green Belt might be appropriate
- reference to community benefits is significantly broader than what is permitted in Policy GS3.

## **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

115. It was acknowledged in the 2013 document that further work was being done to determine a new housing target for the district. In order to meet the new

housing target a Green Belt Review was undertaken to assess to degree to which land meets the five purposes of the Green Belt as set out in national policy. This resulted in a change to the Green Belt policy.

116. Other changes made based on the consultation included:

- removing reference to community benefits as a reason for developing in the Green Belt
- including reference to exceptional cases set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, and
- provided list of settlements inset to the Green Belt, to which Green Belt policy does not apply.

#### HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2014

117. The majority of comments relating to the Green Belt were objecting to removing sites from the Green Belt.

#### **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

118. Further changes were made to the wording of the Green Belt policy based on a comment from the February 2013 consultation suggesting that Policy GS3 should not be saved but that there should be one strategic policy for the Oxford Green Belt.

#### **TRANSPORT**

##### **Draft Local Plan Consultation (February 2013)**

119. The plan set out how the council will work with Oxfordshire County Council and others to reduce the need for travel and ensure that new transport infrastructure is delivered in key growth areas such as Science Vale.

120. Over 400 transport related comments were made, demonstrating the high level of importance that respondents attach to this issue. Many comments expressed concern about the stress that new development might place on the existing transport infrastructure.

121. Specific comments included:

- a significant number of objections were made to the proposed development at Wantage and Grove on the basis that the proposed new roads would not be able to cope with the increase volume of traffic
- Network Rail requested that a policy is included within the Local Plan requiring developers to fund improvements to rail infrastructure
- support for the creation of a new railway station serving Wantage and Grove
- concerns about a perceived disconnect between the proposed location of new homes and sites for employment which could lead to more people commuting to work

- many objections to the proposed South Abingdon-on-Thames bypass on the basis that this would have a significant impact on the environmental and heritage assets at Culham
- support for the decision to restrict development at Abingdon-on-Thames due to highways constraints in the town
- concerns about the availability of parking in towns and larger villages and that the standards for provision should be revisited
- requests that footpaths and cycle paths are provided to connect new residential development in Wantage, Grove and Didcot to places of employment such as Harwell Campus and Milton Park
- a request that the South East Vale Sub-Area Strategy should make reference to delivery of bus priority measures as part of the proposed road schemes within the district, for example the impact on the A420 from development proposed to the east of Swindon, and
- criticism that the plan places too much emphasis on travel by car to the detriment of promoting other modes of transport.

### **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plans?**

122. The Local Plan has been informed by an Evaluation of Transport Impacts (ETI) Study. This has been prepared iteratively and so has informed each stage of preparing the local plan. There are clearly impacts on the highway network associated with planning for a significant number of new houses. The ETI helps to ensure the council understand these impacts, and then working with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), as the Highways Authority, and independent consultants, ensure that appropriate mitigation and actions are identified to minimise any harmful impacts.
123. The Council has given consideration to the comments received at consultation and has continued to work with OCC and consultants to refine the package of identified highways and wider mitigation. This is discussed further under the Housing Delivery Update Consultation (see below).
124. In terms of the specific points listed above, these have been addressed in the following ways:

#### Development at Wantage and Grove

- The council is aware of concern over traffic growth associated with development in these locations. The ETI has investigated the impact of growth and the council understand the expected impact on the key corridors including the A417 and A338. There is a package of measures to help to mitigate impacts and these include:
  - Delivery of the Wantage Eastern Link Road (to ease town centre congestion).
  - OCC are developing strategies for the A417 and A338, which will include a range of measures to assist traffic joining these routes from connecting roads and make improvements to specific junctions.
  - OCC are also developing a cycle strategy for the area, which will for example, provide dedicated cycle link along the A417 corridor thus removing cycles from the road and reducing any impact on traffic flow.

- Plans are also in place to increase bus frequency. For example, 2 buses an hour travelling to Didcot via Milton Park and 2 buses an hour travelling to Didcot via Harwell Campus.

#### Railway Services

- The council does not believe that it is necessary to include a specific policy within the Local Plan relating to the general funding of rail infrastructure. However, any specific projects identified as relating to development can be added to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and so would be covered by Core Policy 7 (previously Core Policy 5).
- The council continues to support the re-opening of a railway station at Grove and has added a specific policy to this effect within the final draft (Publication Version) of the local plan (see below).

#### Location of Housing and Employment

- The council believes that the package of strategic sites proposed within the Draft Plan (Feb 2013) is sustainable. However, the package of sites has since been updated and complemented with additional sites in the later stages of plan production (see below). The focus of the additional sites has been those in close proximity to the main employment sites, particularly those located within Science Vale, for example at Milton Park and Harwell Campus. The relationship of new homes to proposed employment has therefore been increased in the final draft (Publication Version) of the plan.

#### Abingdon-on-Thames

- The council believes that it is important to safeguard the route for a southern bypass of Abingdon-on-Thames to ensure the delivery of such a road would be possible in the future, should this be necessary. Development to the south of the town would not be acceptable without the delivery of a new bypass as there is an existing issue of traffic congestion in the town centre. It is however, made clear in the final draft (Publication Version) of the plan that the safeguarded route is indicative, and any final route would need to be informed by a detailed feasibility study.

#### Parking

- Parking standards are set out in OCC policy and references within the Local Plan. Local standards could be considered through Neighbourhood Plans or the Local Plan 2031 Part 2 if considered to be appropriate.

#### Footpaths and Cycle Ways

- OCC are developing a cycling strategy for the Science Vale area and have proposals to improve connections between all the main residential and employment centres in this area.
- The final draft (Publication Version) local plan includes a specific policy to facilitate the delivery of further cycle ways should they be identified as necessary in the future.

### Bus Priority

- Detailed work has been undertaken to examine the feasibility of developing a priority bus scheme between Didcot Town Centre and Didcot Railway Station and Harwell Campus and the proposed strategic housing growth located between these locations, principally at Valley Park and Harwell Campus. The business case for this scheme is positive and proposals are being taken forward as part of the wider Science Transit Initiative.

Science Transit is a wider proposal being championed by the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to make significant enhancements to public transport in the science arc in Oxfordshire between Bicester, Oxford, Didcot and Harwell Campus.

### HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2014

125. The focus of this consultation was to introduce a new housing target and a number of new proposed strategic development sites. Whilst the consultation was not specifically focused on transport, comments were received to the consultation that raised issues on transport, particularly in relation to the new site proposals.
126. The comments followed a similar theme to those to the February 2013 consultation and in particular, raised concerns over the capacity of the network to cope with additional traffic, particularly on the A34, A417, A338, A420 and at locations in Botley, Abingdon-on-Thames and Didcot. Many respondents stated that incidents on the A34 lead to associated impacts on the surrounding local road network.
127. The ongoing ETI work to inform the Local Plan 2031 is described above along with some information about how the plan has changed following consultation. In addition, some specific 'additional' infrastructure has been added to the final draft (Publication Version) Local Plan (please note that this list is additional to a comprehensive package of infrastructure already identified and included within the Local Plan 2031):
- Science Bridge; a new bridge across the railway line at Didcot and re-routing of the A4130 across the former Didcot A Power Station site
  - dualling the A4130 between Milton interchange and Science Bridge
  - new crossing of the Thames south of Culham and linking to the A4130, thus providing an alternative route to the south and east of Oxford without using the A34, and
  - upgrade to the A34 interchange at Lodge Hill (Abingdon-on-Thames) to provide for both north and south access

## **Site specific comments**

### **Abingdon Oxford Sub-Area**

#### **SOUTH CUMNOR**

##### **DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2013**

128. This site did not feature in the February 2013 consultation.

##### **HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2014**

129. The consultation included a proposed strategic allocation for up to 200 dwellings at land South of Cumnor along with contributions to appropriate infrastructure.

130. Around 208 comments were received relating to this site proposal from a range of consultees and stakeholders including Cumnor parish council. The majority of comments received relating to this site were objecting to development for a series of reasons described briefly below.

Specific comments included:

- by far the most common response to the proposal is the impact on the Green Belt of developing the site
- another concern raised by a number of respondents was the disproportionate impact on the village, which was reported to represent an increase in the village size of around 50 %
- concern over impact on wildlife and the rural character of the village, and
- concern over the impact of development on the highway network, particularly the local roads, which were described as already being over capacity.

#### **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

131. The Council is of the view that Cumnor is a sustainable larger village that is suitable for development. It already contains a reasonable range of services and facilities, is close to the City of Oxford, which offers an extensive range of higher order services and facilities and employment and, has good public transport links. There is no evidence to suggest that development would not facilitate the enhancement of local services and facilities including expansion of the local primary school.

132. However, it is noted that the council's Landscape Capacity Study concluded that the site was only suitable for the development of 60 dwellings.

133. Given the number of homes to be identified through strategic allocations has been reduced since the consultation due to an increase in housing from other sources, namely recent planning consents, it was identified that some proposed strategic allocations, including South Cumnor, were no longer required. However, a smaller development site may be appropriate for allocation in the village within the Local Plan 2031 Part 2.

134. The site selection process is described in more detail within the Sites Selection Topic Paper<sup>6</sup>.

## **EAST OF WOOTTON**

### DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2013

135. This site did not feature in the February 2013 consultation.

### HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2014

136. The consultation included a proposed strategic allocation for up to 200 dwellings at land East of Wootton along with contributions to appropriate infrastructure.

137. Around 40 comments were received from a range of individuals and stakeholders, including Wootton parish council, that were mostly objecting to the proposed allocation for reasons discussed in more detail below. A minority of comments acknowledged that Wootton was suitably defined as a larger village and agreed that development was appropriate. Some alternative sites for development were proposed; these are discussed under the heading of 'alternative development site proposals'.

138. Specific comments included:

- the largest number of comments related to the perceived impact on the Oxford Green Belt and landscape setting of the village, particularly the impact on the rural separation between Whitecross and Wootton. It was pointed out that the council's Landscape Capacity Study concluded that the site was only suitable for 50 dwellings rather than the proposed 200
- concern was raised over the general impact development would have on the character of the village, traffic impact on the already busy B4017, poor public transport (2 buses an hour, one to Abingdon and one to Oxford) and general concern over the ability of local infrastructure to serve the proposed development, and
- Thames Water stated that an upgrade to the waste water network would be needed if the development were to proceed.

### **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

139. The village of Wootton is considered to be a sustainable location for development being located between Abingdon-on-Thames and the City of Oxford, which both offer an excellent range of higher order services, facilities and employment. The village itself has good services and development would provide an opportunity to strengthen these facilities, including for example, the potential to improve public transport connectivity.

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<sup>6</sup> Topic paper available from: [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence)

140. Given the number of homes to be identified through strategic allocations has been reduced since the consultation due to an increase in housing from other sources, namely recent planning consents, it was identified that some proposed strategic allocations, were no longer required.
141. It is acknowledged that in particular, the site in Wootton was recommended in the council's Landscape Capacity Study to be suitable for only 50 dwellings, rather than 200. On this basis, it is no longer considered necessary to propose strategic scale development in Wootton. However, a smaller development site may be appropriate for allocation in the village within the Local Plan 2031 Part 2.
142. The site selection process is described in more detail within the Sites Selection Topic Paper<sup>7</sup>.

### **NORTH WEST OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES**

#### DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2013

143. This site did not feature in the February 2013 consultation.

#### HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2014

144. The consultation included a proposed strategic allocation for up to 200 dwellings at land North West of Abingdon-on-Thames along with contributions to appropriate infrastructure.
145. Around 17 comments were received relating to this site proposal from a range of consultees and stakeholders including Abingdon town council. A number of common themes were raised through the consultation, which are discussed briefly below. The comments included some supporting, some confirming the deliverability and availability of the land and some that were objecting.
146. Specific comments included:
- concern over the impact of development on the highway network, which is described as already being at capacity
  - concern raised over the importance of providing supporting infrastructure, particularly schools, health care and for leisure
  - proximity to the A34 raises concern over the need for noise mitigation
  - concern also raised over the risk of surface water flooding
  - support was received for the development from the 'Friends of Abingdon' providing appropriate supporting infrastructure is delivered
  - St Helens Without Parish Council stated that they have no objection to the proposal, also providing appropriate supporting infrastructure is forthcoming
  - the loss of Green Belt land was a common concern, and
  - Thames Water stated that an upgrade to the waste water network would be needed if the development were to proceed.

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<sup>7</sup> Topic paper available from: [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence)

## **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

147. The settlement of Abingdon-on-Thames is a highly sustainable location for development. The site in question is surrounded by built development, including the A34 to the north and west. The Green Belt Review and Landscape Capacity Study both conclude that the site is suitable for development.
148. The Council acknowledges the importance of providing appropriate supporting infrastructure alongside development. The Development Site Template sets out the policy requirements for the site and makes clear where contributions to infrastructure are necessary or where on-site constraints need investigating and mitigating.
149. The site has been investigated in the council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and Sequential Test and does not have evidence to justify precluding the proposed allocation. The site selection process is described in more detail within the Sites Selection Topic Paper<sup>8</sup>.

### **NORTH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES**

#### **DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2013**

150. This site did not feature in the February 2013 consultation.

#### **HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2014**

151. The consultation included a proposed strategic allocation for up to 410 dwellings at land North of Abingdon-on-Thames along with contributions to appropriate infrastructure including an upgrade to the A34 junction at Lodge Hill to have both south and north facing slips and a 1.5 form entry primary school.
152. Around 23 comments were received to the consultation relating to this site from a range of stakeholders including Abingdon town council. The consultation responses relate to a number of common themes and concerns which are discussed briefly below. However, it should be stated that some comments were positive, including a comment from the 'Friends of Abingdon' who 'accept' the arguments for the proposed development providing the proposals are supported by appropriate infrastructure.
153. Specific comments included:
- it was stated that development viability had not been tested
  - a number of comments raised concern over the importance of delivering supporting infrastructure, particularly school places and provision for healthcare
  - one of the most common themes identified concern over the existing traffic levels in and around Abingdon including on Dunmore Road

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<sup>8</sup> Topic paper available from: [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence)

- concern raised over the proximity to the A34 and the need for appropriate noise mitigation
- the loss of Green Belt land was identified as a particular concern with objections being raised to the development of land north of Abingdon to the A34
- concern was raised over the risk of surface water flooding on the site, and
- Thames Water stated that an upgrade to the waste water network would be needed if the development were to proceed.

### **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

154. The Council recognise the emotive nature of recommending development proposals within the Oxford Green Belt. However, a Green Belt Review has been carried out and concludes that development to the north of Abingdon-on-Thames would not lead to a negative impact on the integrity of the Green Belt.
155. Overall, the site to the north of Abingdon-on-Thames is thought to be the most suitable and sustainable location for development within the largest settlement within the Vale, which offers an excellent range of services and facilities, and is in close proximity to the City of Oxford and where there is already excellent public transport connectivity.
156. The council recognises the importance of delivering supporting infrastructure and in particular, highlights the potential for the proposed development to help deliver an upgrade to the A34 at Lodge Hill, which would have wider positive benefits. The council is working closely with Oxfordshire County Council and the Highway Agency to develop plans for the A34 upgrade and is preparing a detailed feasibility study. The Evaluation of Transport Impacts (ETI) Study concludes that development to the north of the town would be acceptable and that the Lodge Hill upgrade would have wider benefits.
157. Since completing the February 2014 consultation, the council has undertaken a more detailed Landscape Capacity Study of land to the north of Abingdon-on-Thames and conclude that further development would not lead to harmful impacts.
158. The Council is therefore proposing to increase the strategic allocation at North of Abingdon-on-Thames to around 800 homes. The site selection process is described in more detail within the Sites Selection Topic Paper<sup>9</sup>.

### **SOUTH OF KENNINGTON (RADLEY PARISH)**

#### DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2013

159. This site did not feature in the February 2013 consultation.

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<sup>9</sup> Topic paper available from: [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence)

## HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2014

160. The consultation included a proposed strategic allocation for up to 270 dwellings at land South of Kennington along with contributions to appropriate infrastructure.
161. Around 91 comments were received relating to this site proposal from a range of consultees and stakeholders including the parish council. The comments received relating to this site are largely common to those received for the site at North of Radley. The majority of the comments were objecting for a series of reasons described briefly below. In particular, it is noted that whilst the site lies to the south of Kennington and adjoins the village of Kennington, it is located within the parish of Radley.
162. Specific comments included:
- of particular concern to a large number of respondents was the cumulative impact on Radley, particularly as three strategic sites were proposed in the parish overall, and the fundamental alteration of the nature and character of the village. It was stated that the total proposed development equated to approximately an 80 % increase in the size of the existing village
  - concern raised on the impact of the Green Belt and landscape setting of the village
  - another common theme was the impact on the local highway network of development proposed in the village and the uncertainty over the proposed upgrading of the A34 at Lodge Hill
  - the Senior Partners at the Kennington Health Centre highlighted the importance of ensuring development is supported by appropriate infrastructure and identified an opportunity for improved facilities to be provided locally
  - the Governors of the local primary school highlighted concern over the schools ability to expand and the importance of sufficient capacity being provided to support any proposed growth, and
  - Thames Water stated that an upgrade to the waste water network would be needed if the development were to proceed.

### **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

163. The council considers that the larger villages of Kennington and Radley are sustainable locations for development, being located close to both Abingdon-on-Thames and the City of Oxford. The village does have excellent public transport connectivity including 4 buses an hour and good services and facilities.
164. However, the council also acknowledges comments raised and particularly concerns over cumulative impact on Radley where three strategic sites were originally proposed. Given the number of homes to be identified through strategic allocations has been reduced since the consultation due to an increase in housing from other sources, it was identified that some proposed strategic allocations, were no longer required. On this basis, it is proposed that the North Radley site is no longer proposed for strategic development so the overall impact on Radley is

significantly reduced. The villages of Kennington and Radley remain as sustainable locations for development, as described above.

165. The site selection process is described in more detail within the Sites Selection Topic Paper<sup>10</sup>.

## **NORTH RADLEY**

### DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2013

166. This site did not feature in the February 2013 consultation.

### HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2014

167. The consultation included a proposed strategic allocation for up to 200 dwellings at land North of Radley along with contributions to appropriate infrastructure.

168. 40 comments were received relating to this site proposal from a range of consultees and stakeholders including the parish council. The majority of the comments were objecting for a series of reasons described briefly below.

169. Specific comments included:

- of particular concern to a large number of respondents was the cumulative impact on Radley, particularly as three strategic sites were proposed in the parish overall, and the fundamental alteration of the nature and character of the village. It was stated that the total proposed development equated to approximately an 80 % increase in the size of the existing village
- concern raised of the impact on the Green Belt and landscape setting of the village. It was pointed out that the council's Green Belt Review and Landscape Capacity Study both concluded that the site should not be recommended for development
- another common theme was the impact on the local highway network of development proposed in the village and the uncertainty over the proposed upgrading of the A34 at Lodge Hill
- the Senior Partners at the Kennington Health Centre highlighted the importance of ensuring development is supported by appropriate infrastructure and identified an opportunity for improved facilities to be provided locally
- the Governors of the local primary school highlighted concern over the schools ability to expand and the importance of sufficient capacity being provided to support any proposed growth
- some support was received for some development on the site, including from Radley College, a significant local stakeholder. Opportunities were also raised for improving car parking and use of the railway station at Radley, and
- Thames Water stated that an upgrade to the waste water network would be needed if the development were to proceed.

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<sup>10</sup> Topic paper available from: [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence)

## **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

170. The council considers that the larger village of Radley is a sustainable location for development, being located close to both Abingdon-on-Thames and the City of Oxford. The village does have excellent public transport connectivity including both 4 buses an hour and a railway station with some dedicated services to and from London.
171. However, the council also acknowledges comments raised and particularly concerns over cumulative impact on Radley where three strategic sites were originally proposed. Given the number of homes to be identified through strategic allocations has been reduced since the consultation due to an increase in housing from other sources, it was identified that some proposed strategic allocations, were no longer required. It is acknowledged that, in particular, the site at North Radley was not recommended in the council's Landscape Capacity Study and Green Belt Review to be suitable for development. On this basis, it is no longer considered necessary to propose strategic scale development at North Radley.
172. The site selection process is described in more detail within the Sites Selection Topic Paper<sup>11</sup>.

### **NORTH WEST OF RADLEY**

#### DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2013

173. This site did not feature in the February 2013 consultation.

#### HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2014

174. The consultation included a proposed strategic allocation for up to 240 dwellings at land North West of Radley along with contributions to appropriate infrastructure.
175. 45 comments were received relating to this site proposal from a range of consultees and stakeholders including Radley parish council. The comments received relating to this site are largely common to those received for the site at North of Radley. The majority of the comments were objecting for a series of reasons described briefly below.
176. Specific comments included:
- of particular concern to a large number of respondents was the cumulative impact on Radley, particularly as three strategic sites were proposed in the parish overall, and the fundamental alteration of the nature and character of the village. It was stated that the total proposed development equated to approximately an 80 % increase in the size of the existing village

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<sup>11</sup> Topic paper available from: [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence)

- concern raised on the impact of the Green Belt and landscape setting of the village
- another common theme was the impact on the local highway network of development proposed in the village and the uncertainty over the proposed upgrading of the A34 at Lodge Hill
- the Senior Partners at the Kennington Health Centre highlighted the importance of ensuring development is supported by appropriate infrastructure and identified an opportunity for improved facilities to be provided locally
- the Governors of the local primary school highlighted concern over the schools ability to expand and the importance of sufficient capacity being provided to support any proposed growth
- concern was raised over the capacity of Sandford Lane and anecdotal evidence was presented about the vulnerability of this road to flooding
- opportunities were also raised for improving car parking and use of the railway station at Radley, and
- Thames Water stated that an upgrade to the waste water network would be needed if the development were to proceed.

#### **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

177. The council considers that the larger village of Radley is a sustainable location for development, being located close to both Abingdon-on-Thames and the City of Oxford. The village does have excellent public transport connectivity including both 4 buses an hour and a railway station with some dedicated services to and from London.
178. However, the council also acknowledges comments raised and particularly concerns over cumulative impact on Radley where three strategic sites were originally proposed. Given the number of homes to be identified through strategic allocations has been reduced since the consultation due to an increase in housing from other sources, it was identified that some proposed strategic allocations, were no longer required. On this basis, the North Radley site is no longer proposed for strategic development, so the overall impact on Radley is significantly reduced. The village remains as a sustainable location for development, as described above.
179. The site selection process is described in more detail within the Sites Selection Topic Paper<sup>12</sup>.

#### **SOUTH MARCHAM**

##### DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2013

180. This site did not feature in the February 2013 consultation.

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<sup>12</sup> Topic paper available from: [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence)

## HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2014

181. The consultation included a proposed strategic allocation for up to 200 dwellings at land South of Marcham along with contributions to appropriate infrastructure.
182. 8 consultation comments were received relating to this site proposal from a range of stakeholders including Marcham parish council.
183. Specific comments included:
- an objection from English Heritage towards the scale of development and the impact on the Grade II\* Listed Building. In particular, the need for the semi-rural setting of Marcham Priory to be retained
  - concern raised from both Oxfordshire County Council and Marcham Parish Council over the ability of the primary school to expand sufficiently to accommodate development in the village of 200 dwellings. It was stated that development of up to 100 dwellings could be accommodated
  - concern was also raised over the impact of additional traffic on the local highway network, and
  - Thames Water stated that an upgrade to the waste water network would be needed if the development were to proceed.

### **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

184. Given the number of homes to be identified through strategic allocations has been reduced since the consultation due to an increase in housing from other sources, it was identified that some proposed strategic allocations, were no longer required. It is acknowledged that an objection has been received from a statutory consultee and, in particular, concern is raised over the quantum of development. The Council recognise the importance of protecting the historic environment and the importance of ensuring that development is supported by appropriate infrastructure. On this basis, it is no longer considered necessary to propose strategic scale development in Marcham, but instead to consider if smaller development sites may be appropriate for allocation in the village within the Local Plan 2031 Part 2.
185. The site selection process is described in more detail within the Sites Selection Topic Paper<sup>13</sup>.

## **SOUTH DRAYTON**

### DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2013

186. This site did not feature in the February 2013 consultation.

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<sup>13</sup> Topic paper available from: [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence)

## HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2014

187. The consultation included a proposed strategic allocation for up to 200 dwellings at land South of Drayton along with contributions to appropriate infrastructure.
188. 26 comments were received relating to this site proposal. The majority of these comments highlighted the ongoing preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan for Drayton. The Neighbourhood Plan is seeking to allocate sites for housing, but the community have a preference to split development across a number of smaller sites, rather than a single allocation. Other comments related to the impact of development on the highway network where the network was described as already being over capacity.

### **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

189. Given the number of homes to be identified through strategic allocations has been reduced since the consultation due to an increase in housing from other sources, it was identified that some proposed strategic allocations, were no longer required. It is acknowledged that a Neighbourhood Development Plan is being prepared for Drayton, where the community has identified a preference to allocate housing on three sites within the village, rather than allocate a single large site. On this basis, it is no longer considered necessary to propose strategic scale development in Drayton, but instead to allow the Neighbourhood Planning process to allocate sites.
190. The site selection process is described in more detail within the Sites Selection Topic Paper<sup>14</sup>.

## **EAST OF SUTTON COURTENAY**

### DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2013

191. This site did not feature in the February 2013 consultation.

## HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2014

192. The consultation outlined a proposal for up to 220 dwellings on land to the east of Sutton Courtenay along with contributions to appropriate infrastructure.
193. 24 comments were received relating to this site from a number of individuals, Sutton Courtenay parish council and some statutory consultees. The majority of comments highlighted concern over site specific and local constraints.
194. Specific comments included:
- concern was raised over the susceptibility of the site to surface water flooding with anecdotal evidence of flooding occurring on the site at regular intervals in the past

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<sup>14</sup> Topic paper available from: [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence)

- some comments, including from Oxfordshire County Council, raised concern over how adequate access would be achieved for the site and recommended that further work was required to investigate this matter
- concern was also raised over the wider impact of development in Sutton Courtenay on the local highway network, which is said to already be over capacity
- other concerns related to the impact of development on the provision of local infrastructure, including the ability of the local primary school to expand to accommodate the growth, the ease of access to health care services and the need for upgrades to the waste water network (raised by Thames Water and others)
- the proximity of the site to a landfill site was raised, particularly the potential for the site to be contaminated and the likely impact of odour, and
- a number of comments also raised concern over the cumulative impact of development, particularly given that several planning applications had already been approved within the village of Sutton Courtenay.

### **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

195. The Council is aware of the potential constraints to developing the site and has noted the comments raised. Specific actions include:

- the Development Template sets out the policy requirements and explains the need for appropriate investigation and identification of mitigation to address the main issues raised and to make appropriate contributions to local infrastructure and services
- the site has been investigated in the council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and Sequential Test and does not have evidence to justify precluding the proposed allocation
- a detailed investigation, undertaken in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council, identifies that the school site is sufficient to accommodate the necessary expansion to support the proposed development
- the Evaluation of Transport Impacts Study identifies that whilst development in Sutton Courtenay is likely to have a negative impact, the small scale of the proposed development ensures that any impact is considered acceptable. The site is in very close proximity to substantial existing and proposed employment and a substantial package of new highway infrastructure, improvements to public transport and the cycle network are also set out in the draft (Publication Version) Local Plan 2031.

### **South East Vale Sub-Area**

#### **VALLEY PARK, DIDCOT**

#### **DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2013**

196. The plan proposed to deliver 2150 homes on this site with provision for 2 new primary schools, a neighbourhood centre, link road between the A4130 and the A417 and learning centre.

197. Some respondents objected to the scale of development proposed. Many felt that it would erode the distinctive rural character of Harwell village by reducing green space separating the village from Didcot.

198. Specific comments included:

- objection to development South of the B4493 to preserve the rural character of Harwell Village
- objection to the proposed development due to encroachment on Harwell
- support for the development as providing a sustainable location for development adjacent to the market town of Didcot
- objection to development due to its proximity to the A34
- concern that the proposed link road is unlikely to be delivered
- a proposal that the site is joined to a regional cycle route connecting Abingdon, Milton Park and Valley Park
- recommendation from a developer that the delivery of housing should not be constrained by the ability to secure the new link road
- recommendation from a developer that the height of new buildings should not be limited to 2.5 stories as higher buildings may be appropriate where these act as a focal point
- objection from Harwell Parish Council as it does not believe there is a need for the proposed allocation
- a request for clarity about the nature of the proposed learning park, and
- notification from Scottish and Southern Energy that the site is crossed by three electricity pylons.

#### **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

199. See paragraph 202 below.

#### HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2014

200. This consultation sought to expand the site boundary to the north west and also to the south so that it connected up with the A417. The site would accommodate up to 2,550 dwellings, and provide for the same level of services as identified in the February 2013 consultation. The extension of the site boundary to the south would help to facilitate the provision of the new Harwell Link Road as far as the A417.

201. Specific comments included:

- further objections relating to the encroachment of the proposed site on Harwell Village, to retain its separateness
- concerns about delivering the level of housing around Didcot within the plan period
- concerns about the impact upon the local transport network and its already congested nature

- support from site promoters with respect to the site, stating that more dwellings (approx. 4,000) can be provided on this site within the plan period.
- concerns from site promoters with respect to the north west extension, asking for this area to be considered separately
- concerns with respect to lack of a joint plan for development around Didcot

### **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

202. This site remains one of the most sustainable locations for new housing in the district up to 2031, with the provision of a range of services to help to meet the local need. Its proximity to the two strategically important employment sites of Milton Park and Harwell Campus makes it ideal in reducing the need to travel, while its proximity to Didcot town centre and railway station further adds to its sustainable location. Specific amendments and additions to the final draft (Publication Version) Local Plan include requirements for:

- splitting the site into two, that of “Valley Park” with an allocation of at least 2,550 homes, and “North West Valley Park” with an allocation of at least 800 homes. Masterplanning the two sites in tandem to ensure that permeability and connectivity between these sites and the surrounding area is of a high quality
- the boundary between the development areas and Harwell village to be carefully treated in order to protect the separate identities of these locations. Land to the south to be sensitively planned so as to avoid any impacts on the AONB
- the extension of the site to the south to allow for the provision of the Harwell Link Road which will alleviate congestion at the Milton Interchange (with the A34) while also allowing for new connections between Didcot and Harwell Oxford.
- Valley Park to allow for the provision of the Science Bridge to the north, creating new linkages with Milton Park and land to the north of the railway line, and
- Valley Park to contribute towards strategic green infrastructure requirements of Didcot.
- The masterplanning of both Valley Park and North West Valley Park to be coordinated alongside the Science Vale Action Plan, a joint project being undertaken by Vale of White Horse District Council, South Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council. This will ensure that Didcot/ Science Vale is developed as one area with joined up thinking towards infrastructure delivery.

### **HARWELL CAMPUS**

#### **(NORTH HARWELL CAMPUS AND EAST OF HARWELL CAMPUS)**

#### DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2013

203. The draft plan proposed to deliver 400 homes to the North of Harwell Campus to create a self-sufficient and sustainable development. The development would include the refurbishment of about 120 existing homes and include 40% affordable housing.

204. The council received a mixture of representations on the development proposed for this site. Some were in favour of the scheme because of its proposal to re-use previously developed land and its proximity to existing employment. Others objected to the development because of its potential impact on the surrounding AONB and the rural character of the area.

205. Specific comments included:

- a desire for new development to make use of renewable energy
- concern that development at this site will not yield developer contributions for amenities within existing neighbouring communities
- concern that the development will cause traffic congestion through Harwell village as residents drive to Didcot
- support from the Harwell Campus Partnership
- objection from North Wessex Downs AONB to the allocation on Harwell Campus, as the site is not a settlement, is within a protected landscape and does not meet requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, and
- advice from the Environment Agency that the development lends itself to drainage using Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems

#### **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

206. See paragraph 71 below.

#### HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2014

207. Land to the north of Harwell Campus was not included in this consultation as the council was advised the site was not available for development.

208. As a part replacement for proposed development to the north of the campus a proposed allocation of 1,400 dwellings (potential for up to 3,400 dwellings in total beyond the plan period) on land east of Harwell Campus was added. 103 responses were received relating to this site.

209. Specific comments included:

- a significant number of objections were made with respect to the impact that the proposed development would have on the AONB and the rural character of the area.
- concerns about the existing wastewater facilities in the area, particularly in Chilton
- concerns that the cumulative impact of development in Harwell parish will result in a loss of identity
- concerns that the future residents of this site would not actually be employed on the campus, thus increasing the problems associated with traffic congestion

- some comments raised the issue as to whether this proposal was considered to be of national importance, to the point that such a development within the AONB could be allowed
- submission of an alternative site to be considered to the south of the campus
- Detailed objection received by the North Wessex Downs AONB management board
- concerns about the increase in traffic in the area and the possibility that north facing slip roads for the Chilton Interchange would not be delivered, and
- comments that the site should be sensitively planned to minimise the impact on the local and wider landscape.

### **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

210. One of the significant responses from the February 2013 consultation was that the council was not locating strategic sites close to centres of employment. Given that the revised housing target figure had been driven by committed economic growth in the district, and the national/international significance of the strategic employment site at Harwell Campus, it was important to consider the potential for Harwell Campus to accommodate some housing growth for the plan period.
211. Since the February 2014 consultation, the north of Harwell Campus site has been confirmed as being available for housing development and has been included as a strategic allocation in the final draft (Publication Version) Local Plan.
212. Additional landscape work (Harwell Campus Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment) was commissioned by the council to determine to what extent the land east of Harwell Campus could accommodate land for housing development, and what would be required to adequately mitigate the impact of this development on the AONB. This work concluded that part of the land to the east of the campus could accommodate some development without harming the scenic quality of the AONB.
- the final draft (Publication Version) Local Plan seeks to allocate a smaller area to the east of the campus for development. The total number of dwellings to be provided on the site is 850
  - the north western site has been expanded from an allocation of 400 to 550 to maximise this part-brownfield land while still remaining sympathetic to the AONB through the use existing mature trees and hedgerows
  - an advance planting strategy is required to ensure that any adverse impacts on the setting of the AONB is mitigated against for the east Harwell Campus site
  - a high quality bus service to Didcot will be provided in addition to a network of footpaths and cycle ways
  - a new primary school is required to be provided to accommodate population growth for both sites, and
  - a detailed water supply strategy will be required for the site, in addition to an upgrade to the sewer network.

## **CRAB HILL, WANTAGE**

### **DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2013**

213. The consultation proposed to deliver up to 1500 new homes in Crab Hill with associated services and facilities including a new primary school. Land was also proposed for the development of a Wantage Eastern Link Road linking the A417 and A338 to reduce congestion in the town centre.
214. Over 80 representations were made on the strategic development planned for Crab Hill. Some objected to the proposed development particularly due to the loss of high quality agricultural land and perceived impact on wildlife and the surrounding landscape. The most common objection however related to concerns about the anticipated increase in traffic with many respondents having doubt that plans to upgrade the road infrastructure would provide sufficient relief. Respondents also felt that the new development would impact on the historic character of the market town of Wantage.
215. Specific comments included:
- a view that the link road should be extended to the west of Wantage
  - rejection of the housing numbers and therefore the need for the housing allocation
  - concerns that the proposed new infrastructure would not be sufficient to meet the needs generated by the new development
  - notification that the proposed sites are crossed by overhead electricity pylons which may prevent development unless moved
  - a comment from the Mobile Operators Association questioning the need for an electronic field survey to be carried out on a telecommunications mast at the site
  - advice from the Environment Agency to create a drainage strategy for the site and ensure that upgrades to the sewage network are planned for
  - caution from Natural England as site is adjacent to the North Wessex Downs AONB and could cause adverse impact on the designated area, and
  - a request from English Heritage for the council to produce a heritage statement considering how the proposed development will mitigate impact on the Wantage Charlton Conservation Area.

### **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

216. The proposed site at Crab Hill has been the preferred location for strategic growth in Wantage since the publication of the Preferred Options Consultation in 2009. It was identified following the consideration of alternatives and is considered to represent the most sustainable location for providing additional housing in the town of Wantage, the second largest and sustainable settlement in the district, along with critical supporting infrastructure.
217. Consultation comments relating to specific constraints have been addressed and have informed the masterplan that has been developed for the site. Since the consultation an outline planning application has been received by the council and was given 'resolution to grant planning permission subject to legal agreement' in

February 2014. It is understood that any minor constraints or technical issues have been addressed and adequately overcome through the planning application process.

218. Until full planning permission is granted, the site remains as a proposed strategic allocation in the final draft (Publication Version) Local Plan for the reasons outlined above. Furthermore, with the publication of the up-to-date Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment in 2014, which identified a need for around 7,500 additional homes across the Vale to the target outlined within the February 2013 consultation, delivery of homes on the Crab Hill site became even more important.

#### HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2014

219. The proposed strategic allocation at Crab Hill did not form a specific part of the February 2014 consultation.

#### **MONKS FARM, GROVE**

#### DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2013

220. Up to 750 homes and 6 hectares of employment land were proposed for Monks Farm, north of Grove. It was intended that the development would be supported by a new primary school and link road from the A338 to the proposed Grove Airfield development.
221. Respondents drew attention to the impact that the proposed development would have on the character of Grove, landscape and wildlife. Particular concerns were raised about the potential risk of flooding which may be exacerbated by the building of new homes if drainage is not improved.
222. Specific comments included:
- objection from Grove Parish Council due to concerns about the ability to integrate the proposed development with the existing settlement
  - a request from Grove Parish Council that developers should be required to undertake a regular assessment of water quality to Letcombe Brook to ensure impact on wildlife is minimised
  - support from the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust on proposals for the restoration of the historic canal route
  - concerns from the public regarding the overdevelopment of Grove, when taking into account the scale of the proposed development as a whole
  - a view that there are particular restrictions to the site which may need to be overcome (noise from railway, odour from the sewage plant and ecological value of Letcombe Brook)
  - notification that the proposed sites are crossed by overhead electricity pylons which may prevent development
  - requirement from the Environment Agency that appropriate flood mitigation would need to be developed for the proposals to go forward
  - requirement from the Environment Agency for upgrades to the sewer network to enable connection to sewage treatment works, and

- advice from English Heritage that there are Grade II listed buildings on the site.

**How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

223. The Council notes the consultation comments and has ensured any site specific constraints or issues are being adequately addressed through the technical evidence and master plan being developed for the site by the site promoters.
224. The Development Template for the site includes policy requirements to ensure flooding, the protection of the Letcombe Brook and other identified issues are adequately addressed.
225. Overall, the site is deemed to be a highly sustainable location, adjacent to one of the Vale's largest settlements, which will deliver critical infrastructure to a community where primary school and road improvements and contributions to expand other local services and facilities are very important.
226. Furthermore, with the publication of the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment in 2014, which identified a need for around 7,500 additional homes across the Vale to the target outlined within the February 2013 consultation, the delivery of the Monks Farm site became even more important.

HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2014

227. The proposed strategic allocation at Monks Farm did not form a specific part of the February 2014 consultation.

**MILTON HEIGHTS**

DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2013

228. This site did not feature in the February 2013 consultation.

HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2014

229. The proposed allocation of 1,400 dwellings on land at Milton Heights led to a total of 20 responses relating to this site.

230. Specific comments included:

- objections from Oxfordshire County Council (and others) on the quantum of the proposed development and the impact it would have on the local and wider transport network, particularly with respect to its proximity to the A34 at Milton Interchange
- concerns raised about the quantum of the development and its impact on the existing settlement
- issues raised with respect to noise and air quality due to the proposed site's proximity to the A34

- concerns over the cumulative impact of development in the area, including Valley Park, Harwell Village and land at Harwell Campus, and
- concerns that there would be a dependence on the use of the private motor car to access nearby towns.

### **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

231. Given the number of homes to be identified through strategic allocations has been reduced since the consultation due to an increase in housing from other sources, it was identified that some proposed strategic allocations, were no longer required. Based on the consultation responses received, including an objection from Oxfordshire County Council on highway grounds, it was deemed appropriate that this strategic site allocation should be reduced in scale to 400, down from 1,400 units.
232. Other specific points raised through the consultation are addressed through the Development Site Templates. This sets out how the site should be planned to ensure site specific constraints are adequately addressed.

### **WEST OF HARWELL**

#### DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2013

233. This site did not feature in the February 2013 consultation.

#### HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2014

234. The consultation outlined a proposal for up to 200 dwellings on land to the west of Harwell along with contributions to appropriate infrastructure.
235. 25 comments were received relating to this site from a number of individuals, Harwell parish council and some statutory consultees. The majority of comments highlighted concern over site specific and local constraints.
236. Specific comments included:
- concerns about the impact that cumulative development in the area, including the proposed site at Harwell village will have on the character of the village and its identity
  - concerns with respect to the impact on the local and wider transport network around Harwell village. Specific comments related to the impact on Grove Road (including flooding issues) and the road network in the village
  - support from landowners with respect to the proposed site, highlighting the sustainable location of Harwell village and the minimal impact that the site will have on the AONB
  - concerns about the impact development will have on local services and utilities such as the primary school in the village
  - comments about level of development within Harwell Parish, with suggestions that development should be more widely distributed in the district
  - a response seeking to distribute employment opportunities more evenly across the district rather than to focus growth at Harwell Campus, and

- concerns raised with respect to the impact on the landscape as a result of this development.

**How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

237. The council considers that Harwell village is a sustainable location, which includes a range of existing services and facilities and is spatially well located between the strategic employment sites of Milton Park and Harwell Campus, both of which have Enterprise Zone status. The site has been included in the final draft (Publication Version) Local Plan with the same allocation of around 200 dwellings.
238. Other specific points raised through the consultation are addressed through the Development Site Templates. This sets out how the site should be planned to ensure site specific constraints are adequately addressed.

**EAST OF EAST HANNEY**

DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2013

239. This site did not feature in the February 2013 consultation.

HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2014

240. The consultation outlined a proposal for up to 200 dwellings on land to the east of East Hanney along with contributions to appropriate infrastructure.
241. 30 comments were received relating to this site from a number of individuals, the parish council and some statutory consultees. The majority of comments highlighted concern over site specific and local constraints.
242. Specific comments included:
- objections from the local community with respect to the development being on the “wrong side” of the A338, and that it would not relate well with the existing settlement of East Hanney
  - concerns about surface water flooding on the site
  - comments received noted the need to improve the drainage system due to the cumulative impact of developments here and in Grove
  - concerns with respect to the potential impact the proposed site may have on the local road network. Some responses raised the issue with respect to the village seeking a bypass in the past
  - concerns that any such development would have an impact upon the rural character of the existing village
  - the amenities/services in the Hanneys should be upgraded to provide more facilities, and
  - comments received stating that there were more suitable sites in East Hanney which would relate better with the existing settlement and offer additional benefits such as the provision of a dedicated footpath/cycle lane to the settlement of Grove to the south.

## **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

243. The council considers that East Hanney is a sustainable larger village with a good range of services and facilities, being reasonably close to the Science Vale employment sites and benefiting from good public transport to Oxford, Abingdon, Didcot and Wantage/Grove. However, it is recognised that the original site proposal was segregated from the facilities offered in the village by the A338 to and accept that the alternative site promoted through the consultation does relate more successfully with the existing village.
244. For the reason outlined above, the council, following investigating and testing the alternative site, is proposing to allocate land to the South of East Hanney for strategic development. It should be made clear that smaller scale development on the site to the East of East Hanney may be considered for allocation in the Local Plan 2031 Part 2.
245. The site selection process is described in more detail within the Sites Selection Topic Paper<sup>15</sup>.

### **NORTH WEST OF EAST CHALLOW**

#### **DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2013**

246. This site did not feature in the February 2013 consultation.

#### **HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2014**

247. The consultation outlined a proposal for up to 200 dwellings on land to the north west of East Challow along with contributions to appropriate infrastructure.
248. 27 comments were received relating to this site from a number of individuals, the parish council and some statutory consultees. The majority of comments highlighted concern over site specific and local constraints.
249. Specific comments included:
- concerns raised with respect to the cumulative impact of development around Grove and Wantage, including other developments under construction in the village, and the impact this could have on the wider area
  - concerns that it would erode the open gap between East and West Challow
  - concerns about the elevation of the land and the ability to screen the development adequately
  - some responses raised the issue of the sites setting relative to nearby listed buildings
  - the lack of additional employment opportunities being provided at Grove and Wantage in line with the predicted growth
  - concerns that development would have an adverse impact upon the Wilts and Berks canal and the possible presence of protected species, and
  - some respondents raised the issue of flooding along the A417 in this area

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<sup>15</sup> Topic paper available from: [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence)

## **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

250. The council considers East Challow to be a sustainable larger village with good access to services and facilities, including for example, the secondary school on the western edge of Wantage.
251. Given the number of homes to be identified through strategic allocations has been reduced since the consultation due to an increase in housing from other sources, it was identified that some proposed strategic allocations, were no longer required. The council is aware of site specific constraints, for example a buffer is needed along the Wilts and Berks Canal corridor to protect Great Crested Newts, the proximity to historic assets and the potential of development to harm the landscape setting. On this basis, it is no longer considered necessary to propose strategic scale development in East Challow, but instead to consider if smaller development sites may be appropriate for allocation in the village within the Local Plan 2031 Part 2.
252. The site selection process is described in more detail within the Sites Selection Topic Paper<sup>16</sup>.

### **Western Vale Sub-Area**

#### **SOUTH OF PARK ROAD, FARINGDON**

##### **DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2013**

253. The consultation proposed around 350 homes and 3 ha of business land to be allocated to a site South of Park Road in Faringdon. The development would be required to provide for a new primary school on site.
254. 15 responses were received in response to this proposed strategic development allocation, mostly from statutory bodies.
255. Specific comments included:
- objection from developers to the allocation of the site on the basis of insufficient evidence was presented to justify its selection as the only strategic development site in the Western Vale Sub-Area
  - support for the selection of the site from the site promoter
  - a view that the site is unlikely to reinforce the service centre role of Faringdon as some residents will be more than a 20 minute walk from the market place
  - a call for a larger allocation of employment land
  - a view that the site may be able to accommodate 10% more homes than the proposed allocation
  - notification from Scottish and Southern Energy that the site is crossed by overhead power lines

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<sup>16</sup> Topic paper available from: [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence)

- concern expressed by the National Trust who believe that development may harm the character and setting of a 13<sup>th</sup> century historic building. The Trust recommends careful siting of the development and extensive landscape to mitigate impact, and
- a recommendation from the Environment Agency that a flood risk and drainage strategy should be developed for the site and that the allocation of the site would need to pass the Sequential Test in relation to flood risk.

### **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

256. The proposed site at Land South of Park Road, Faringdon has been the preferred location for strategic growth since the publication of the Preferred Options Consultation in 2009. It was identified following the consideration of alternatives and is thought to represent a sustainable location for providing additional housing in the town of Faringdon.
257. Consultation comments relating to specific constraints have been addressed and have informed the masterplan that has been developed for the site. Since the consultation an outline planning application has been received by the council and was given 'resolution to grant planning permission subject to legal agreement' in December 2013. It is understood that any minor constraints or technical issues have been addressed and adequately overcome through the planning application process.
258. Until the full planning permission is granted, the site remains as a proposed strategic allocation in the emerging Vale Local Plan 2031 for the reasons outlined above. Furthermore, with the publication of the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment in 2014, which identified a need for around 7,500 additional homes across the Vale to the target outlined within the February 2013 consultation, the delivery of this site became even more important.

### **HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2014**

259. The proposed strategic allocation at South of Park Road, Faringdon did not form a specific part of the February 2014 consultation.

### **WEST OF STANFORD-IN-THE-VALE**

#### **DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2013**

260. This site did not feature in the February 2013 consultation.

#### **HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2014**

261. The consultation outlined a proposal for up to 290 dwellings on land to the west of Stanford-in-the-Vale along with contributions to appropriate infrastructure.
262. 21 comments were received relating to this site. There was general concern raised regarding the number of dwellings to be allocated to Stanford-in-the-Vale and the impact this would have on local infrastructure.

263. Specific comments included:

- the site means that the houses would be outside of the village envelope. The Planning Inspector for an appeal on the adjacent site stated that it did not set a precedent for development on the western side of the road. This proposed allocation contradicts this statement
- Thames Water stated that they had concerns regarding Water Supply and sewage treatment capacity in relation to this site. They requested specific wording relating to this to be included in the plan
- allocation should be reduced to 204 dwellings to permit the development of certain amenities such as a doctors' surgery/pharmacy and a recreation area.
- "identikit" housing estate with no regard to local vernacular should not be allowed
- the strategic site is one of the "least worst" places for development around Stanford in the Vale. Some of the housing should be accommodated on the Recreation/football ground opposite
- the Parish Council request that the number be reduced to 200 dwellings, that the site boundary be reduced accordingly and that the remaining 90 dwellings be accommodated within other sites in the village identified through the Neighbourhood Plan
- the Parish Council request the removal of the proposed site, instead allowing for the Neighbourhood Plan to identify suitable sites to accommodate these dwellings, and
- the landscape capacity study advises that the density is lower than that required for 290 dwellings.

#### **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

264. Given the number of homes to be identified through strategic allocations has been reduced since the consultation due to an increase in housing from other sources, it was identified that some proposed strategic allocations, were no longer required. The council recognises that a Neighbourhood Development Plan is being prepared by the community, who wish to allocate additional land for development elsewhere in the village. On this basis, it is no longer considered necessary to propose strategic scale development for 290 dwellings, but to reduce the scale of development to 200 dwellings.

265. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan includes measures to address these issues relating to waste water treatment and water supply capacity. The specific wording requested has been included in the site templates. More detailed issues regarding density and design will be dealt with at planning application stage.

## **GREAT COXWELL PARISH, SOUTH OF FARINGDON**

### DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2013

266. This site did not feature in the February 2013 consultation.

### HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2014

267. The consultation outlined a proposal for up to 200 dwellings on land to the south of Faringdon, within Great Coxwell Parish, along with contributions to appropriate infrastructure.

268. 6 comments were received relating to this site highlighting concern over site specific and local constraints.

269. Specific comments included:

- Thames Water stated that they had concerns regarding Water Supply and sewage treatment capacity in relation to this site. They requested specific wording relating to this to be included in the plan, and
- development of the site would encroach on the green buffer zone outlined in the Great Coxwell Plan and virtually joins Faringdon and Great Coxwell.

### **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

270. The issues regarding sewage treatment capacity and water supply capability are being explored and resolved through the planning applications that have been submitted for land around the town, including for this site. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan includes measures to address these issues. The specific wording requested has been included in the site templates. The issue regarding the green buffer has been incorporated into the masterplan for the site.

## **SOUTH WEST OF FARINGDON**

### DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2013

271. This site did not feature in the February 2013 consultation.

### HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2014

272. The consultation outlined a proposal for up to 200 dwellings on land to the south west of Faringdon along with contributions to appropriate infrastructure.

273. 9 comments were received relating to this site highlighting concern over site specific and local constraints.

274. Specific comments included:

- comment relating to Planning Application P13/V1653 – issues of privacy for the existing dwellings due to the topography of the site
- support for the allocation of the site

- Thames Water stated that they had concerns regarding Water Supply and sewage treatment capacity in relation to this site. They requested specific wording relating to this to be included in the plan, and
- development of the site would encroach on the green buffer zone outlined in the Great Coxwell Plan and virtually joins Faringdon and Great Coxwell.

### **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

275. The issues regarding sewage treatment capacity and water supply capability are being explored and resolved through the planning applications that have been submitted for land around the town, including for this site. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan includes measures to address these issues. The specific wording requested has been included in the site templates. The more detailed issues regarding the development of the site will be incorporated in to the masterplan for the site.

### **SOUTH SHRIVENHAM**

#### DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2013

276. This site did not feature in the February 2013 consultation.

#### HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2014

277. The consultation outlined a proposal for up to 200 dwellings on land to the south of Shrivenham along with contributions to appropriate infrastructure.

278. 36 comments were received relating to this site. There were general concerns raised about the number of houses to be allocated to Shrivenham, particularly compared to other villages in the district. There was a feeling that the facilities in the village couldn't cope and that it would become a dormitory settlement to Swindon.

279. Specific comments included:

- the western part of the allocation does not appear to have any kind of physical feature to define its southern boundary. It may be difficult in the future to resist further expansion as far as the line of the Wilts & Berks Canal
- allocation is poorly related to the existing built form and represents undesirable urban sprawl to the detriment of the preservation of open countryside
- the proposed development should be consolidated to the north of the village, infilling land between the settlement and the A420
- houses backing onto the fields at the south of the village have great crested newts in their gardens
- development south of the village will block access to vital open space (the Canal Park, neighbouring Coppidthorne Meadow, Shrivenham circular walk). The cemetery is also an area of relative calm and reflection. The rural character of these facilities will be destroyed by the proposed allocation

- remote location means significant burden on the existing transport arrangements as new residents will drive to any new services/schools etc in the northern part of the village, and
- Thames Water stated that they had concerns regarding Water Supply and sewage treatment capacity in relation to this site. They requested specific wording relating to this to be included in the plan.

### **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

280. Given the number of homes to be identified through strategic allocations has been reduced since the consultation due to an increase in housing from other sources, it was identified that some proposed strategic allocations, were no longer required. In response to the high level of concern raised by the residents of Shrivenham, and their preference for development to be focused to the north of the village, the overall housing figure for Shrivenham has been reduced and only one site is proposed for allocation in the north of the village. This site is not proposed for allocation in the plan.

281. The site selection process is described in more detail within the Sites Selection Topic Paper<sup>17</sup>.

### **NORTH SHRIVENHAM**

#### DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2013

282. This site did not feature in the February 2013 consultation.

#### HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2014

283. The consultation outlined a proposal for up to 400 dwellings on land to the north of Shrivenham along with contributions to appropriate infrastructure.

284. 40 comments were received relating to this site. There were general concerns raised about the number of houses to be allocated to Shrivenham, particularly compared to other villages in the district. There was a feeling that the facilities in the village couldn't cope and that it would become a dormitory settlement to Swindon.

285. Specific comments included:

- Thames Water stated that they had concerns regarding Water Supply and sewage treatment capacity in relation to this site. They requested specific wording relating to this to be included in the plan
- it is not logical to develop Shrivenham to the north and the south – suggest that development in the north is more appropriate
- the density of proposed housing will prevent design appropriate to a village situation and conflict with the look of existing housing
- dwellings should blend in with their surroundings. Houses in country villages should not be 3 story and not be built to urban design

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<sup>17</sup> Topic paper available from: [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence)

- the impact on views from the Ridgeway will be a problem, and
- enlarge allocation to 32.6 ha by taking the northern boundary up to the A420. This would ensure the cricket pitch is retained, provide additional public open space and deliver development parcels at lower densities.

### **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

286. In response to the high level of concern raised by the residents of Shrivenham, and their preference for development to be focused to the north of the village, the overall housing figure for Shrivenham has been reduced and only one site is proposed for allocation in the north of the village. The site boundary has been expanded to include the whole land parcel up to the A420 to accommodate around 500 homes. A planning application for the first phase of the site (the area shown in the February 2014 consultation) has been submitted for 200 homes and includes land for a primary school. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan includes measures to address issues relating to waste water treatment and water supply capacity. The specific wording requested has been included in the site templates. More detailed issues regarding density and design will be dealt with at planning application stage.

## **Alternative and New Sites**

### HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2014

287. A total of 81 alternative site options were put forward for housing development in the Vale through the Housing Delivery Update Consultation.
288. Details of the sites put forwards for consideration are set out in the Sites Selection Topic Paper.

### **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

289. Initial assessment of the 81 sites put forward showed that 30 of these sites meet the 200 home strategic site size threshold<sup>18</sup>. A first, high level analysis indicated that 12 of these sites merited further consideration, following which eight warranted detailed assessment as reasonable alternative site options, listed below.

- Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor East (280 homes)
- Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor South (200 homes)
- North West Harwell Campus (550 homes including land to west of the original proposed allocation for 400 units)
- South of Harwell Campus (estimated 1,400 homes to 2031, plus longer term potential)

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<sup>18</sup> Site options unable to accommodate at least 200 homes and therefore classed as non-strategic were not considered further. These options may be considered during the preparation of the Local Plan 2031 Part 2.

- Oxford Garden City (estimated 5,600 homes to 2031, longer term potential 12-15,000 homes)
  - South West Shrivenham (400 homes)
  - South Radley (260 homes)
  - South of East Hanney (200 homes)
290. These eight sites were subject to Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) testing and were assessed by internal and County Council specialists (including transport, landscape, ecology, flooding and heritage) and external stakeholders (including English Heritage, Environment Agency, Natural England, Thames Water).
291. Analysis of feedback from the above stakeholder engagement, combined with the demonstrable availability and developability of preferable alternative sites, resulted in the following five sites being removed from consideration:
- Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor South
  - South of Harwell Campus
  - Oxford Garden City
  - South West Shrivenham
  - South Radley
292. The grounds for doing so included their relative merits in relation to available alternative sites on matters including impacts on character/rural setting (Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor South and South West Shrivenham), transport, access and connectivity issues (South of Harwell Campus and South Radley).
293. In the case of Oxford Garden City the impacts of such a development on nearby settlements such as Wantage and Grove, Didcot, Abingdon, Marcham, Steventon, Drayton and East Hanney would be significant. The draft SA concluded that the quantum of development is not likely to be able to be mitigated satisfactorily due to effects on the setting of Conservation Areas, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings and views from the North Wessex Downs AONB and affecting flood risk at a proposed flood risk storage area in the Ock catchment. On the most optimistic of assumptions the scheme would make at best a very limited contribution to housing delivery in the first five years of the plan period.
294. Comments made by Oxfordshire County Council included that the A34 Trunk Road, on sections both around and to the south of Oxford, is already at or above operational capacity during certain periods and would not be able to carry the expected additional traffic from a Garden City. Questions were raised about whether the scheme could support frequent public transport services, without which the resulting urban form would be low-density and car-dependant. Officers have seen no evidence to date of the ability to deliver a proposed rail link, or that a new A34 junction connection likely to be required can be achieved.
295. From the 81 alternative site options put forward during the consultation, three sites have been included in the final sites package:

- Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor East (280 dwellings)
- North Harwell Campus<sup>19</sup> (550 dwellings)
- South of East Hanney (200 dwellings)

296. Feedback from the stakeholder engagement stage and additional consultation with internal and County Council specialists has been incorporated into the Site Development Templates for these sites.

297. One additional site was added to the final site package. This was the site, East of Coxwell Road, Faringdon. This site had been tested for inclusion in the Housing Delivery Update (February 2014), but excluded, as a planning application was being determined for development. The methodology for selecting sites excluded any sites where a planning application had been submitted. However, as there have been delays to completing the Section 106 agreement, the council considers that it is prudent to include this site as an allocation in the Final Draft (Publication Version) Local Plan 2031. Details of the history of the selection process for this site are set out in the Site Selection Topic Paper<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> Part of this site was included in the emerging Local Plan 2029 but was removed due to a misunderstanding about availability clarified through the Housing Delivery Update consultation. This area was combined with SHLAA site HASC14, land within AONB where development was assessed as not harmful on landscape grounds. See Harwell Campus section – page 47.

<sup>20</sup> Topic Paper available from: [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence)

## 2013 EVENT COMMENTS

298. Responses have been collated from all sources of engagement activity. Formal comments generated at the engagement events were included within our standard response format. Comments were also captured informally through face-to-face discussions and comment boards. A summary of the key issues emerging from each of the specific engagement events is provided below.

### **Abingdon-on-Thames – Abbey Precinct**

299. The event was attended by approximately 100 visitors and was held on the 12.03.13. The main issues raised were:

#### Transport

- Queries were raised about the possibility of a Southern By-Pass to the town and what the proposed safeguarding of land actually means.

#### Housing

- Questions around how the proposed housing target for the Vale had been developed

#### Infrastructure

- Concern was expressed about the capacity of existing infrastructure to cope with the scale of the proposed development, for example pressure on existing primary school places.

### **Wantage – Civic Hall**

300. This event took place on the 13.03.13 and was attended by approximately 130 visitors. The main issues raised were:

#### Infrastructure

- Concern that development would occur without the necessary improvements to infrastructure (road improvements/ schools etc)

#### Current Planning Applications

- Concerns over the scale of current planning applications already being considered.

#### Spatial strategy

- Some positive feedback on the content of the document and what it is trying to achieve

## **Grove – Methodist Hall**

301. The event was attended by approximately 130 attendees and was held on the 19.03.13. Details of the issues raised were:

### Transport

- The North Grove Link Road should be planned to accommodate future traffic
- Concerns about the impact the proposed development at Monks Farm and Grove Airfield will have on road networks, along with the other potential planned development sites. Examples cited included congestion on the A417 towards Harwell, linkages to Grove Airfield and to the west of Wantage/Grove.

### Infrastructure

- There was a strong desire to see infrastructure in place before development is established.

### Housing

- Some opposition to housing, but general concern about the importance of ensuring infrastructure is delivered alongside job creation and house building.

### Strategic sites

- Concerns about how Monks Farm will be coordinated with the development at Grove Airfield
- Concern over the extent of localised flooding and the ineffectiveness of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs) due to the clay soil type in the area.

### Current Planning Applications

- Fears were raised about how the scale of planning applications currently being considered is leading to piecemeal development with poorly planned infrastructure.

### Economy

- The issue that the planned expansion at Harwell Campus and other projected employment growth may be at risk if the government reduces funding for science.
- Concerns identified about the implication of an assumption that residents living in Science Vale would work in the same area and what the implications would be if this did not happen.

### Natural Environment

- Support from Wilts and Berks Canal Trust for the proposed policy to protect the historic route of the canal (Core Policy 39).

### Miscellaneous

- Some positive comments on the plan in general.

### **Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor - Village Hall**

302. Approximately 36 people attended the event that was held on 21.03.13. The details of the issues raised were:

#### Housing

- Requests for the council to include a policy on self-build housing

#### Current Planning Applications

- Concern raised about the extent of planning applications being considered and the importance of getting a new plan in place as soon as possible.

#### Spatial strategy

- Queries raised on the settlement classification with a particular issue identified as Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor was incorrectly listed separately.

### **Wantage - Civic Hall (Saturday event)**

303. The event was attended by approximately 144 people and was held on the 23.03.14. The comments generated were:

#### Transport

- Fears given that the specific transport improvements identified within the plan were inadequate against the level of growth proposed.

#### Housing

- Perceived fear that the increased housing levels would lead to an increase in crime within Wantage.

#### Infrastructure

- Concern that the proposed development would occur without the necessary improvements to infrastructure (road improvements/ schools etc)

#### Economy

- Perceived issue that proposed growth will exacerbate parking problems within Wantage that could have a negative impact on retailing within the town.

### Current planning applications

- Similar comments echoed about the increase in piecemeal development worsening infrastructure problems

### **Didcot, Cornerstone**

304. Approximately 45 people attended this event, held on 26.03.13. The issues raised were:

#### Transport

- Queries about the proposed new roads, identified pinch points and the relationship with the timing of development coming forward.

#### Housing

- Similar comments received wanting to see a local plan in place as soon as possible to help resolve land supply issues.

#### Infrastructure

- Concern about how social infrastructure will work in the context of the proposed new housing developments.

#### Spatial strategy

- Issue with the consistency of the assessment undertaken on village facilities was raised.
- Concern about the potential coalescence of proposed development at Valley Park with Harwell Village.

### **Faringdon, Corn Exchange**

305. The event was attended by approximately 140 people on 28.03.13. The comments raised were as follows:

#### Housing

- Clarification was sought between how the Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan related to the emerging Local Plan.
- Questions about the justification behind the proposed housing target and where the need is being generated spatially.
- Concern that the affordable housing provision in the town was not solely meeting the needs of the Vale, but other areas.

#### Infrastructure

- Fears were raised that the scale of development proposed does not match the scale of improvements required for the town centre in Faringdon.

### Economy

- Requests were made stating that employment land should be developed before or alongside housing development and that not enough employment land was proposed for Faringdon.

### Strategic site

- A request was made that the strategic site proposed in the town is comprehensively planned and to a better standard than for previous housing permissions.

### **Harwell, St Matthew's Church Hall**

306. Approximately 100 people attended the event held on the 04.04.13. The comments generated were:

### Transport

- Concern about rat running through Harwell village and that road improvement at the A34 interchange at Milton will not sufficiently improve traffic flows in the area.
- A request that the proposed Harwell Field Link Road must be included within the proposals without fail
- Requests for more cycle paths and footpaths
- Questions around the provision of facilities such as the Learning Park leading to land requirements within the Vale and exacerbated traffic problems.

### Housing

- Fears were raised about the potential coalescence between Didcot and Harwell as a result of the proposed housing. It was suggested that the Valley Park allocation should be reduced.

### **Faringdon - Corn Exchange (Saturday event)**

307. The event was attended by approximately 50 people on 13.04.13. The comments raised were:

### Housing

- Request for provision of housing for the elderly as well as other age groups
- Questions as to why no strategic development is planned at Abingdon-on-Thames and Botley compared to the other settlements.

### Infrastructure

- Need to look at extending Faringdon Community College to assist with education provision.

### Current Planning Applications

- Concern that development is occurring in a piecemeal fashion and worsening infrastructure provision.

### Strategic sites

- Requests raised that cemetery provision should be looked at.

### **Williams F1 Stakeholder Event, Grove**

308. Approximately 45 people attended the event, which was held on 19.03.13. The session took the format of a presentation outlining the key features of the emerging plan. This was followed by a plenary session, where attendees were able to ask the panel questions on different aspects of the local plan. Attendees were invited stakeholders identified from the planning policy consultation database. The main comments generated were:

### Transport

- Fears that there is too much reliance on buses moving people between Grove/Wantage and Harwell/Milton.
- Questions about what was happening relating to the previously considered proposals for a new railway station at Grove.

### Spatial strategy

- Fears were raised about the robustness of the settlement hierarchy.
- Concern was also expressed that the sub-area classifications could lead to those areas taking further housing if the proposed strategic sites fail to deliver.

### Infrastructure

- Concerns raised that past development has not been supported by infrastructure and that this needs to be properly managed by the emerging plan.

### Economy

- Clarification provided about the amount of employment land provided within the emerging plan and how this relates to the emerging Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan.

### **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

309. The exhibitions really highlighted the concern over the number of houses and the number of sites being proposed, and whether the associated infrastructure could cope with this.

310. The council have continued to work on producing the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and making it more accessible for communities. The council particularly focused on health care providers and Thames Water as these seemed to be the areas of concern that arose the most, aside from transport.
311. The points raised at the events were also raised in the written responses to the consultation, there were no new issues raised. On this basis, more detailed responses on each of the topics can be found under the relevant headings in this document.

## 2014 EVENT COMMENTS

312. Events were held as part of the 2014 Housing Delivery Update consultation. The events were a mixture of public exhibitions and public meetings. As previously formal comments were captured as part of the standard response process. The details of the events and some informal issues identified are as follows:

### **Milton De Vere stakeholder event**

313. The event was attended by approximately 70 people and was held on the 04.03.14. The key comments generated were:

#### Housing

- The credibility of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment Methodology and how this process had generated such a high Objectively Assessed Housing Need for the Vale district.
- Much concern was expressed about the scale of growth that has been identified for development in the district

#### Infrastructure

- There was much disquiet regarding the proposed infrastructure improvements identified with the housing proposals and whether they would be delivered or sufficient for the scale of growth proposed

### **Abingdon pre-exhibition and public meeting – Guildhall**

314. This event was a combination of a public exhibition that took place before a more formal public meeting. The events were held on 11.03.14. The pre-exhibition was attended by approximately 150 with the public meeting attended by 90, with the room over capacity. The main issues raised were:

#### Traffic

- Many views expressed regarding the ability of Abingdon's road infrastructure to cope with increased traffic demands that would be generated with more housing.

#### Housing

- The specific sites proposed for housing in Abingdon would exacerbate transport problems particularly in association with the A34.
- The housing figures proposed are too high for the district as a whole.

### **Didcot public exhibition – Cornerstone**

315. The event was attended by approximately 50 people and was held on 12.03.14. The main comments generated were:

### Infrastructure

- The scale of development in and around Didcot needs to come with proposed infrastructure improvements in advance of the housing development. The infrastructure in Didcot is already in need of improvement.

### Housing

- A general acceptance that Didcot needs to grow, but on the proviso that the infrastructure is in place to support this.

### **Harwell public exhibition – Harwell School (Saturday event)**

316. The event was attended by over 140 people and was held on the weekend of 15.03.14. The general points raised were:

### Housing

- Concern raised about the village growing unnaturally with the large scale of development proposed.
- Uncertainty around the rigidity of the housing figures, which has led to the need to find so many sites for development.

### Infrastructure

- Many questions about how the already under strained infrastructure will cope with such a large increase in population.

### **Milton pre-exhibition and public meeting (Milton St Blaise School and De Vere)**

317. This event was a combination of a public exhibition that took place before a more formal public meeting. The events were held on 17.03.14. The pre-exhibition was attended by approximately 40 people with the public meeting attended by 70 people. The main areas of concern were:

### Housing

- General complaints about why such a large scale allocation was being proposed within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty for the Milton Heights proposal.
- General belief that it is unrealistic to consider that locating the proposed site close to a major employment site will reduce the amount of people in the district travelling to work.

### Infrastructure

- Serious concern that the current levels of infrastructure in the area can cope with proposed growth, even with the infrastructure improvements that have been identified.

### **Abingdon public exhibition – Abbey Precinct (Saturday event)**

318. The event was attended by over 300 people and was held on the weekend of 22.03.14. Comments raised were broadly similar to previous Abingdon events. A new point raised was:

#### Housing

- Concern about the level of growth proposed around Radley and the cumulative impacts for Abingdon.

### **Shrivenham pre-exhibition and public meeting – Memorial Hall**

319. This event was a combination of a public exhibition that took place before a more formal public meeting. The events were held on 24.03.14. The pre-exhibition was attended by approximately 200 people with the public meeting attended by a similar number. The main areas of concern were:

#### Housing

- Complaints about the level of growth proposed for the Shrivenham area and the fact the proposed allocations were not a proportionate level of growth for the village.

#### Infrastructure

- Concern expressed about the ability of the infrastructure within the village to cope with such a high level of proposed growth.

#### Economy

- Rejection of the links to employment opportunities Shrivenham has via the Swindon area.

### **Faringdon public exhibition – Corn Exchange**

320. This was the final event in the sequence of public engagement events for the 2014 consultation. It took place on 25.03.14 and was attended by approximately 100 people. The main issues highlighted were:

#### Neighbourhood Planning

- Confusion expressed over the role of the emerging Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan and the emerging Local Plan 2031 part one. Particularly in relation to the proposal of an additional strategic site for Faringdon within the emerging Local Plan 2031 part one.

#### Transport

- Concern about the public transport links of Faringdon to Oxford and the rest of the district.

#### **How did the consultation comments inform the Local Plan?**

321. The exhibitions really highlighted the concern over the number of houses and the number of sites being proposed, and whether the associated infrastructure could cope with this.
322. The council also continued to work on producing the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and making it more accessible for communities. The council particularly focused on health care providers and Thames Water as these seemed to be the areas of concern that arose the most, aside from transport.

## **APPENDIX 1 – CONSULTEES**

### **Statutory**

Adjacent parish councils, adjoining district, unitary and county authorities  
Oxfordshire County Council  
Town and parish councils  
Thames Valley Police  
Network rail  
Ministry of Defence  
The Coal Authority  
Government Office for the South East<sup>21</sup>  
Environment Agency  
Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership  
Clinical commissioning Groups and NHS England  
Natural England  
Scottish and Southern Energy  
Wales and West Utilities  
Southern Gas Networks  
Highways Agency  
Thames Water  
English Heritage  
Mobile Operators Association  
British Telecommunications  
Homes and Communities Agency  
Ward and parish councillors  
Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership<sup>22</sup>

### **Non Statutory**

Voluntary and community groups  
Sport England  
Health and Safety Executive  
Local action/interest groups  
Local businesses and business representative  
Religious groups/organisations  
Planning agents/landowners  
General public  
Environmental and recreational groups  
Ethnic minority organisations/groups  
Disability groups  
Age concern groups  
Youth organisations  
Local schools

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<sup>21</sup> Abolished 2011

<sup>22</sup> Formed in 2014

## APPENDIX 2 – PUBLICITY METHODS USED TO ATTRACT INTEREST IN THE 2013 CONSULTATION

Publicity method	Date
Press release on council's website providing notice of councils intent to produce the local plan	21 December 2012
Press release on council's website providing advance notice of the consultation	01 February 2013
Article in Local Plan Newsletter 'Vale Community' providing advance notice of the consultation	01 February 2013
Councillor briefing event	21 February 2013
Article in Local Plan Newsletter 'Vale Community' announcing launch of consultation	25 February 2013
Statutory public notice in The Herald and Swindon Advertiser providing notice of the consultation	27 February 2013
Mail merge letter sent to libraries, parish and town councils, infrastructure bodies and other key stakeholders alerting them to the consultation	27 February 2013
Consultation launch	28 February 2013
Documents including Local Plan document, leaflet, consultation poster and response form uploaded to the council's website. <b>Appendix 3</b> provides a sample copy of the consultation leaflet	28 February 2013
Statutory public notice in The Oxford Times providing notice of the consultation	28 February 2013
Consultation leaflet distributed to libraries, town and parish councils, key stakeholders providing summary information about the consultation	28 February 2013
Presentation at South and Vale 'Business Breakfast'	06 March 2013
Article in Local Plan Newsletter 'Vale Community' providing an update on the consultation	08 March 2013
Stakeholder event with town and parish councils providing an opportunity to discuss plan proposals	19 <sup>th</sup> March 2013
Un-staffed exhibitions in Abingdon Guildhall, Grove Methodist Hall, Faringdon Corn Exchange, Shrivenham Memorial Hall providing details of the consultation and how to make representations	12 March 2013 – 9 May 2013
Staffed exhibitions in Abbey Shopping Precinct, Wantage Civic Hall (x2), Grove Methodist Hall, Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor Village Hall, Didcot Cornerstone, Faringdon Corn Exchange (x2), Harwell St Matthews Church Hall. Council staff spoke to passers by, providing details of LPP1 and signposting to formal consultation	12 March 2013 – 13 April 2013
Mail merge letter sent to libraries, parish and town councils, infrastructure bodies and other key stakeholders reminding them of the consultation	28 March 2013

Article in Local Plan Newsletter 'Vale Community' providing a reminder of the closing date for the consultation	24 April 2013
Press release on council's website with message from portfolio holder expressing the need for wider public participation in the consultation	24 April 2013

# APPENDIX 3 – SAMPLE OF CONSULTATION LEAFLET FROM FEBRUARY 2013 CONSULTATION

## The Spatial Strategy

Areas with constraints on development

The Spatial Strategy sets out how and where we will deliver our key objectives including:

- 14,300 new jobs
- 13,294 new homes

We will do this by:

- focusing sustainable growth within the Science Vale LK area
- supporting the service centre role of the main settlements and creating attractive town centres
- promoting thriving rural communities and while safeguarding the countryside and the character of our villages

### Things to consider

**Building healthy and sustainable communities**  
The plan seeks to help us provide the right number of houses of the appropriate size and type, including affordable homes in towns and villages, while providing high quality and accessible services and facilities. Our draft plan housing figures are based on the best information we have now. We are gathering further evidence, so figures in the final plan may differ.

**Supporting economic prosperity**  
We will use the plan to help provide employment opportunities across the whole district, with particular focus on the Enterprise Zone at Milton Park and Harwell. Oxford. The plan also looks at how we can support our rural businesses and town centres.

**Sustainable transport and accessibility**  
The best way we can address transport issues is to locate housing and employment in a way that reduces the need to travel by car. We will also look at ways to improve public transport, cycling and pedestrian areas and commit to working with partners to ensure new development can be accommodated by the road network.

**The environment and climate change**  
Maintaining the rural character of the Vale and its area of outstanding natural beauty is close to everybody's hearts and is a priority. We will use the plan to help us protect the Vale's natural and man-made heritage as well as the Oxford green belt an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

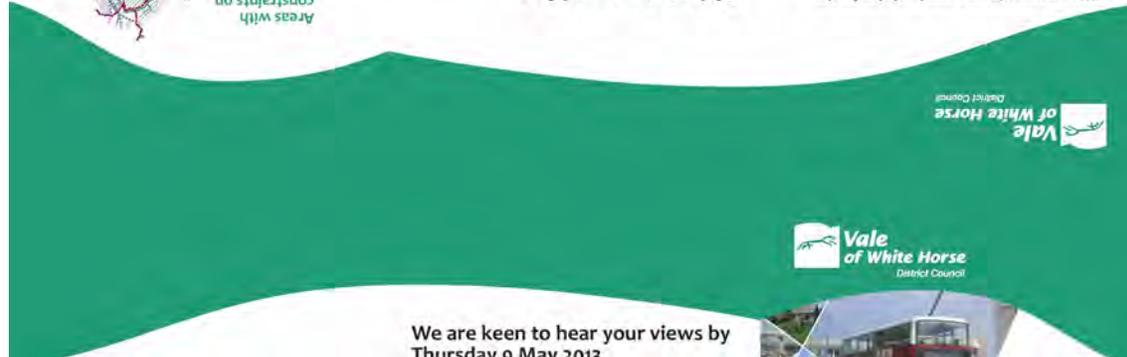
Part one of this document will identify the major sites for new homes, jobs, shops and infrastructure such as roads and schools. We think we have drawn up the best strategy, but taking account of the constraints we face, but there may be other options. We would like you to comment on the plan to ensure we are on the right track.

This leaflet explains some of the key points addressed by the Local Plan and how you can have your say.

**The Vale is your home, your opinions matter**

**What is a local plan?**  
The Local Plan is a document designed to help guide the decisions we will make about developments in the district for the next 15 years. It is important to get a robust plan in place, backed by a good supply of housing land. This will ensure that development pressure can be firmly managed based on locally agreed policy.

The plan takes into account the specific needs of the Vale in determining the nature and location of new housing, business, retail locations and community facilities. This will help us protect the heritage, environment and everything we value about the district. Having our own plan for new development means we can build healthy, sustainable communities for future generations to enjoy. We have used the previous work we put into developing our core strategy to help produce the local plan part one.



## Housing delivery

- Main settlements**  
Because they provide a good range of services and facilities, market towns and local service centres are the most sustainable locations to accommodate growth. Most of the new homes required in the district will be provided through extending these settlements.
- Larger villages**  
Larger villages are a vital part of the character of the district and have a positive role to play in meeting some housing and other needs. The Local Plan supports proposals that will allow them to grow and prosper in an appropriate way.
- Smaller villages**  
In smaller villages limited development which helps sustain village life will be supported. Elsewhere, housing development in small hamlets and the open countryside will be resisted.

**Supporting infrastructure and services**  
The plan sets out what needs to be provided on proposed housing sites and our Infrastructure Delivery Plan explains how this will be delivered. Where new homes or jobs are developed it is essential that they come with new facilities such as schools, parks and link roads to meet the demand created.

**Presumption in favour of sustainable development**  
Government guidance requires councils to produce plans that meet their needs and to treat development proposals in a positive way.

## We are keen to hear your views by Thursday 9 May 2013

The Local Plan will shape the future of the Vale. The plan is at a draft stage, so now's the time to have your say before the plan is finalised. You can:

- look at the plan at our offices or local libraries and on [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/localplanpartone](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/localplanpartone)
- look at the evidence we will be publishing on 28 March
- use our online system to make your comments directly on to the plan document
- you can also fill in our representation form and send it to us via post, **Planning, Vale of White Horse District Council, Abbey House, Abbey Close, Abingdon, OX14 3JE** or e-mail [planning.policy@whitehorsedc.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@whitehorsedc.gov.uk)
- visit our exhibitions
 

Tue 12 March, 12-7pm	Abingdon, Abbey Precinct
Wed 13 March, 12-7pm	Wantage, Civic Hall
Tue 19 March, 12-7pm	Grove, Methodist Hall, Main St
Thur 21 March, 12-7pm	Kingston Bagpulse, Southmoor Village Hall
Sat 23 March, 10am-3pm	Wantage, Civic Hall
Tue 26 March, 12-7pm	Didcot, Cornerstone
Thur 28 March, 12-7pm	Faringdon, Corn Exchange
Thur 4 April, 12-7pm	Harwell, Church Hall
Sat 13 April, 10am-3pm	Faringdon, Corn Exchange

## What happens next?

Your comments will help us finalise the draft Local Plan. There will be further consultation on the final draft of the plan before we send it to the Secretary of State. There will then be an independent public examination of the plan in 2014, after which the Local Plan will be adopted. We will then start on Part Two, which will contain detailed policies and cover specific local sites.

You can keep up-to-date with our progress by visiting our website [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/localplanpartone](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/localplanpartone). You can also join the Vale Community at [localplan@whitehorsedc.gov.uk](mailto:localplan@whitehorsedc.gov.uk). The consultation closes 9 May 2013.

For further information please visit our website or telephone 01235 540 499.



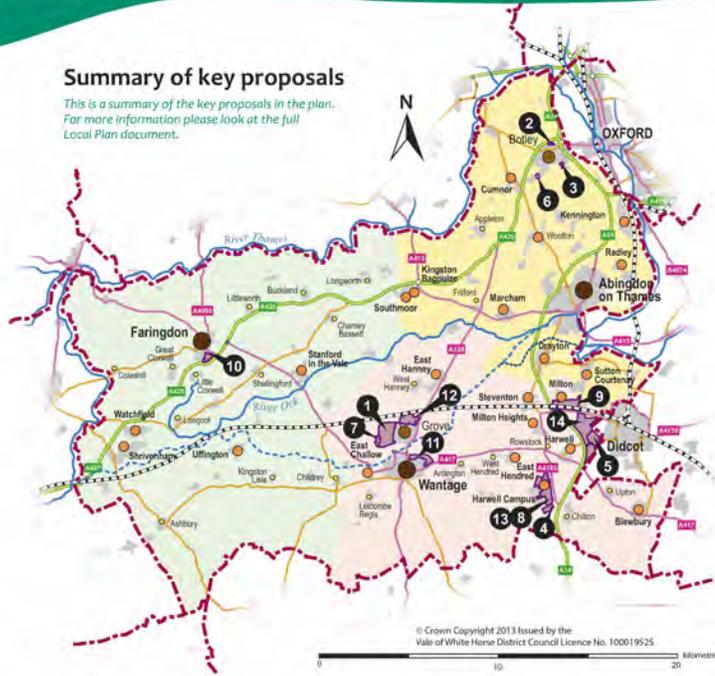
## Your Vale your future

We need you to help shape the future of the Vale of White Horse

*This is your opportunity to have your say, so don't miss out!*

## Summary of key proposals

This is a summary of the key proposals in the plan. For more information please look at the full Local Plan document.



- District boundaries
- Strategic rail routes
- Trunk Roads
- Main Roads
- Other Principal Road
- Rivers
- Wilts and Berks Canal
- Proposed New Route for Wilts and Berks Canal
- Settlements
- Market Town
- Local Service Centre
- Larger Village
- Smaller Village
- Local Plan Sub-Areas
- Abingdon on Thames and Oxford
- South East Vale
- Western Vale
- Strategic employment and housing sites
- Local Plan 2011 Housing Allocations
- 1. Grove Airfield
- 2. Tisbury Lane
- 3. Lime Road
- Significant Housing Permissions
- 4. Chilton Fields
- 5. Great Western Park
- 6. Timbert
- Principal Employment Sites
- 7. Grove Technology Park
- 8. Harwell Oxford Campus
- 9. Milton Park
- Local Plan 2019 - Proposed Strategic Housing Allocations
- 10. South of Park Road
- 11. Crab Hill
- 12. Monks Farm
- 13. Harwell Oxford Campus
- 14. Valley Park

### New employment and housing development

Employment areas	Available development land (hectares)
8. Harwell Oxford Campus	54
9. Milton Park	18
10. South of Park Road (Faringdon)	3
12. Monks Farm (North Grove)	6
Didcot A	29
Other allocations	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>143 hectares</b>

Settlement	Site	Number of dwellings
10. Faringdon	Park Road	350
10. Wantage	Crab Hill	1505
12. Grove	Monks Farm	750
13. Harwell	Harwell Oxford	890
14. West of Didcot	Valley Park	2550
<b>Total</b>		<b>5990</b>

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## APPENDIX 4 – PUBLICITY METHODS USED TO ATTRACT INTEREST IN THE 2014 CONSULTATION

Publicity method	Date
Update on Local Plan progress and forthcoming consultation on the Housing Delivery Update at annual town and parish forum.	13 March 2013
Article in Local Plan Newsletter 'Vale Community' providing advance notice of the consultation and information on the Strategic Housing Market Assessment	31 January 2013
Duty to Cooperate meetings with key stakeholders to look at cross boundary issues.	Through out process (consultation document related activity Sept onwards)
Article in Local Plan Newsletter 'Vale Community' providing advance notice of the consultation and information on the Strategic Housing Market Assessment	17 February 2014
Timetable of documents for our development plan (Local Development Scheme) published on our website.	February 2014
Councillor briefing event	17 February 2014
Mail merge emails/letters sent to libraries, parish and town councils, infrastructure bodies and other key stakeholders alerting them to the consultation.	17-20 February 2013
Consultation launch.	21 February 2014
Statutory public notice in The Herald and Swindon Advertiser providing notice of the consultation.	14-20 February 2014
Proposals published on the council's website and via the council's interactive consultation portal.	21 February 2014
Press release on council website and distribute to local media outlets promoting the forthcoming consultation.	17 February 2014
Consultation leaflets distributed to libraries, town and parish councils, key stakeholders providing summary information about the consultation. <b>Appendix 5</b> shows a sample of the leaflet and other promotional materials used.	14-20 February 2014 additional leaflets dispatched throughout consultation period
Briefing to raise key consultation issues with local Members of Parliament.	21 February 2014
Stakeholder event with town and parish councils providing an opportunity to discuss plan proposals.	4 March 2014
Staffed exhibitions in Abingdon (x2), Milton Heights, Shrivenham, Didcot, Harwell and Faringdon. Providing members of the public an opportunity to discuss proposals with officers.	Throughout March 2014

Public meetings providing officers an opportunity to present key findings to the public and gather feedback.	11 March 2014, 17 March 2014 and 24 March 2014.
Follow up press release and Vale Community release to provide reminder to potential consultees and members of the general public.	17 March 2014

# APPENDIX 5 – SAMPLES OF CONSULTATION MATERIAL FROM FEBRUARY 2014 CONSULTATION

## Our updated proposals

### Housing: The timing of delivery

The Vale of White Horse District Council is preparing a new Local Plan to identify the number of new homes to build up to 2031 and our proposals for where they should be built. We published a draft plan for consultation in February 2013 based on the South East Plan housing target. At that time, this target represented the best evidence available. New evidence now shows our draft local plan needs to be significantly updated.

The new consultation provides an update to our housing target and proposes new development sites. We have substantially updated our housing evidence to be fully consistent with the latest government requirements. Working with other Oxfordshire authorities we have prepared a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) to assess the amount and type of housing needed in our district and across Oxfordshire.

The SHMA identifies a need for up to 20,626 new homes in the Vale between 2011 and 2031. We therefore need to find draft local plan sites for about 7,430 more homes than were proposed in the draft local plan we published in 2013.

The new housing requirement represents a very significant challenge in both the short and longer terms. Our past practice evidence has been reviewed by government policy to ensure it remains relevant to current planning applications for housing. To regain control over planning for housing in our district, we must allocate enough housing land to deliver what the target tells us is needed, both in the short term taking account of past under-delivery, and over the first period as a whole.

The responses we receive to this consultation will help us to prepare the final draft of our local plan for publication in mid-2014. We cannot avoid the challenge before us but we welcome views on any alternative approaches for how we could meet the identified housing need.

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## Our other key proposals

Our overall priority is to deliver the necessary growth as sustainably as possible while ensuring there are enough jobs and facilities provided alongside new homes. While also maintaining any forward impacts. New facilities, such as new schools, new services, road improvements and as part of the development we need a plan for strategic housing and jobs. (See Infrastructure Improvements map).

The Science Vale Action Plan (AAP) identifies a number of key areas for research and development. The Science Vale Action Plan (AAP) identifies a number of key areas for research and development. The Science Vale Action Plan (AAP) identifies a number of key areas for research and development.

## We are keen to hear your views by Friday 4 April 2014

The Local Plan will shape the future of the Vale. Our updated proposals are at draft stage so now's the time to have your say before the plan is finalised. Tell us what you think by:

- Viewing the draft Local Plan online [www.valeofwhitehorse.gov.uk/localplanpartone](http://www.valeofwhitehorse.gov.uk/localplanpartone), or at our offices and local libraries
- Responding to our online consultation
- Completing a representation form available from our offices
- Attending one of our exhibitions or public meetings (Please get in contact with us if you would like to attend one of the public meetings).

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Sat 15 March:	Harwell Exhibition - 10-3pm Harwell Community Primary School
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**What happens next?**  
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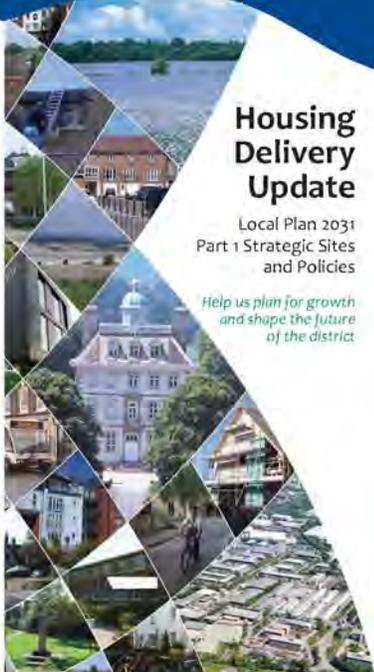
For further information please visit our website or telephone 01235 540 499.




## Housing Delivery Update

Local Plan 2031  
Part 1 Strategic Sites and Policies

Help us plan for growth and shape the future of the district



## New housing development sites selection process

We have carried out a comprehensive assessment of potential housing development sites around the main settlements, large villages and strategic employment locations. We have systematically tested potential strategic site options to identify the most sustainable and deliverable options, to strike the right balance between meeting our growth obligations and protecting and enhancing quality of life and the environment.

We have taken into account matters such as development viability; deliverability; infrastructure requirements; planning constraints including Green Belt and AONB, flood risk and ecology; sustainability and heritage and landscape considerations. We have also considered existing housing allocations and consents and likely build rates.

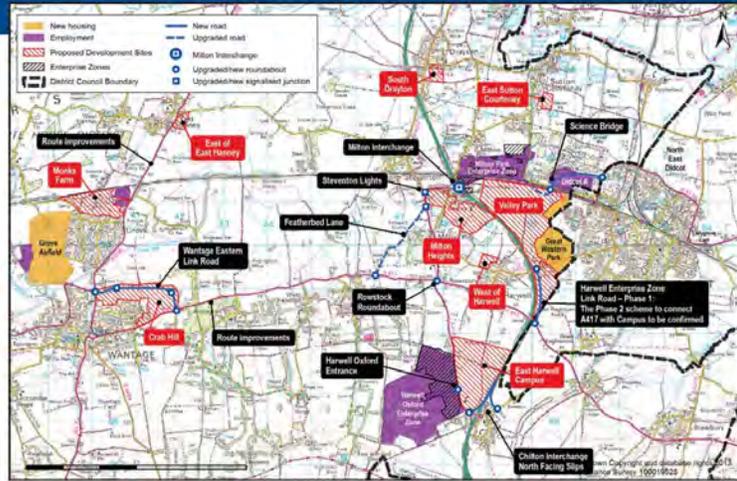
Our plan is to focus housing development within the Science Vale Oxford area. This is because the area is home to the largest of our significant employment sites and is where the largest number of new jobs will be created.

Distribution of our proposed strategic allocations

South East Vale	70%
Abingdon/ Oxford Fringe	20%
Western Vale	10%

We believe that the development of housing at these locations will deliver the target identified.

The map below shows where we are proposing new development.



Proposed Science Vale Oxford Infrastructure Improvements (within the Vale of White Horse District)

### Oxford Green Belt

We recognise the importance of protecting the Oxford Green Belt, but also need to plan for housing in the most appropriate and sustainable locations across the Vale.

We are recommending that some areas are removed from the Green Belt and allocated for housing development. We have considered the impact of these sites very carefully and this work has been informed by a Green Belt Review.

This is available to view on our council website: [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/localplanpartone](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/localplanpartone)

We have concluded that developing these sites would not have a significantly negative impact on the Green Belt.

### North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

We have identified one development site within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

This is adjacent to Harwell Oxford Campus, which is itself a highly sustainable location for development, not least because of its international significant status for innovation and technology.

This site provides unique and exceptional circumstances to support further development within the AONB. This is to improve the sustainability of the site, increasing opportunities for people to live and work closely together, and to provide a better range of services, facilities and public transport options.

### VOVHDC Sub-Areas

Abingdon on Thames and Oxford

South East Vale

Western Vale

Constraints to development

Green Belt

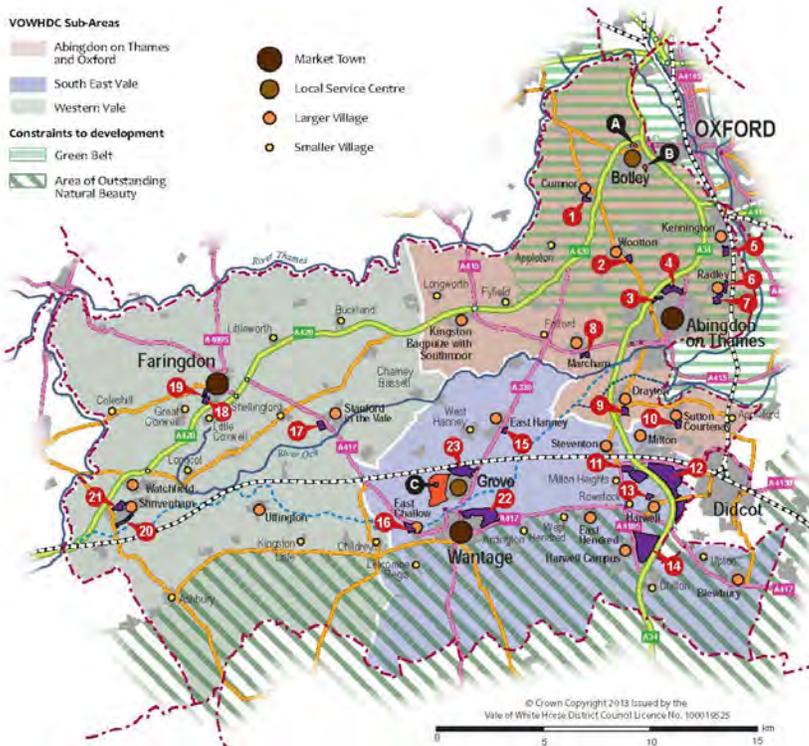
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Market Town

Local Service Centre

Larger Village

Smaller Village



### New Proposed Development Sites

Site Number	Site Name	Allocation
1.	South Curmior	200
2.	East Wootton	200
3.	North West Abingdon-on-Thames	200
4.	North Abingdon-on-Thames	410
5.	South Kennington	270
6.	North Radley	200
7.	North West Radley	240
8.	South Marcham	200
9.	South Drayton	200
10.	East Sutton Courtenay	220
11.	Milton Heights	1400
12.	Valley Park	2550
13.	West of Harwell	200
14.	East Harwell Campus	1400
15.	East of East Hanney	200
16.	North West of East Challow	200
17.	West Stanford in the Vale	290
18.	Great Coxwell Parish, South of Faringdon	200
19.	South West of Faringdon	200
20.	South Shriverham	200
21.	North Shriverham	400

### Existing Proposed Development Sites

22.	Crab Hill	1500
23.	Monks Farm	750

### Local Plan 2011 Allocations

- A. Tilbury Lane
- B. Lime Road
- C. Grove Airfield

**1**

**What is happening?**

*Help us plan for growth and shape the future of the district*

We published a draft of the Local Plan last year for people to comment. The housing target we used was based on an old regional document called the South East Plan because it was the best evidence available at the time. Updated guidance from the government means we have to make changes.

We have been working with the other councils in Oxfordshire on a new Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for the county area. This provides us with local evidence about the amount and type of housing needed in our district. It has told us that we need to provide more housing than we had planned for in the draft Local Plan we published last year.

We are now consulting on an additional Housing Delivery Update document. This builds on the draft Local Plan we consulted on in 2013.

It introduces a higher housing target and 21 new potential housing sites to ensure we can meet it. We would welcome your views on our proposals.

**Your comments will help us prepare a final draft of the Local Plan for the Vale**




**2**

**The process so far...**

A summary of progress to date on preparing the Vale Local Plan 2031 Part 1.



**November 2007** Consultation on Issues and Options

**January 2009** Consultation on Preferred Options and Sustainability Appraisal Report

**January 2010** Consultation on Additional Options and Sustainability Appraisal Statement

**Summer 2014** Publication of Proposed Submission Draft Local Plan Part 1 and Sustainability Appraisal Report

**February 2014** Consultation on revised housing target and additional strategic sites and Sustainability Appraisal Report

**February 2015** Consultation on Draft Local Plan Part 1 and Sustainability Appraisal Report

**Autumn 2014** Submission of the Draft Local Plan Part 1 and Final Sustainability Appraisal Report

**Winter 2014** Independent Examination of the Local Plan Part 1

**Summer 2015** Adoption of the Local Plan Part 1

**What is a Local Plan?**

The Local Plan will set out the development strategy for the Vale until 2031 including where new development should take place.

It will include a variety of policies on topics including housing, employment, transport, infrastructure, services, design etc.

Following the adoption of the Local Plan by the middle of 2015, it will be used to determine planning applications for all development in the Vale.



**3**

**Why is additional housing being proposed?**

**Five year housing land supply**

The government requires us to identify enough deliverable sites to provide five years' worth of housing according to our housing targets.

Without a five year housing land supply, we would have to consider planning applications according to ministerial policies rather than more appropriate local ones. This consultation therefore proposes a number of smaller sites to deliver sites to help us achieve our five year housing land supply figure.

The table below indicates that we need to deliver 4,025 of the 7,430 additional houses during the first five years in order to achieve our five year housing land supply figure.

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The table below shows that our total housing need is 20,560 homes over the period 2011 to 2031. Some of these homes have already been built, or have planning permission.

Category	Housing target
Housing requirement 2011 to 2031 (at 1,028 homes per annum)	20,560
Housing already provided for Completions (Apr 2011 to Mar 2013) House commitments at Dec 2013	702 / 7,097
Housing to be identified Local Plan Part 1 (existing site proposals)	4,490
Crab Hill 1,050	
Moors Farm 750	
Valley Park 2,150	
Local Plan Part 2	931
Remainder to be identified over the plan period	7,430

Further homes will be provided on sites identified in our February 2013 Local Plan consultation document, or at smaller sites to be identified through the Local Plan Part 2. This leaves a requirement for 7,430 homes.

Category	Housing target
Remainder to be identified over the plan period	7,430
Housing to be delivered in the first 5 years (2017 completion target) to ensure the council maintains a five year housing land supply	4,025
Remainder to be delivered during the rest of the plan period	3,405

**4**

**What is the SHMA?**

- It is a Government policy requirement that local plans are based on an up-to-date SHMA.
- A technical study intended to help the Oxfordshire local planning authorities like ourselves understand how many homes need to be provided between 2011 and 2031
- It also affects the decisions made on future infrastructure, such as roads and schools
- It was prepared by professional, independent consultants with a good track record of preparing similar studies elsewhere.

**Assessment of our need**



**Starting points: Population and household projections**

**Considering case for adjustments**

- To address past under-provision or improve affordability
- To deliver affordable homes needed
- To support expected growth in jobs

**Conclusion: Overall need for housing**

**What does the SHMA look at?**

- It has been prepared for the whole of Oxfordshire because the county has been defined as a housing market area
- It identifies the extent of the Oxfordshire housing market area
- It considers how the housing market area operates, including the current number, type and age of homes, as well as house prices and levels of home ownership
- It considers demographic forecasts like population and household projections and how these affect the number of homes needed
- It also looks at economic forecasts, meaning the number of new jobs likely to be created
- It considers market issues like land prices, house prices and rents, affordability and previous rates of development
- It considers the needs of specific groups like older people, people with disabilities and minority groups
- It identifies how many affordable homes are needed compared with homes whose prices are dictated by the market.





Vale of White Horse District Council

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## Sub area strategy: South Eastern Vale

70% of district housing total

**Why here?**

**Development proposed in this sub area:**  
This sub area will be the focus for most of our proposed development, because:

- It is home to the largest of our significant employment sites and is where the largest number of new jobs will be created.

**The Oxford and Oxfordshire City Deal**  
This will provide further support to enhance the area and will include:

- Introduction of a high frequency bus and rail service using 'smart' ticketing.

**North Wessex Downs AONB**  
We have identified a site next to Harwell Oxford Campus, which is within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). This site is considered a sustainable location for development because:

- Harwell Oxford Campus is a strategic employment site of internationally significant status for innovation and technology
- It will increase opportunities for people to live and work closely together
- It will help the provision of a better range of services, facilities and public transport options.

Overall, this site provides unique and exceptional circumstances to support development within the AONB.

Vale of White Horse District Council

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## Sub area strategy: Western Vale

10% of district housing total

**Why here?**

**Development proposed in this sub area:**  
A modest level of growth is proposed in this sub-area because:

- It is a more rural area with smaller centres of population
- It generally contains a lower level of services and facilities within it
- However, some housing is proposed to support services and facilities in the most sustainable settlements.

**Faringdon**  
Faringdon has an excellent range of services and facilities and further development will help to deliver improvements to the town. Two sites are considered suitable for development to the south and south west of Faringdon.

**Larger Villages**  
Four sites are considered suitable for development at the larger villages in this sub-area because:

- The villages have comparatively good levels of services and facilities, and development will help strengthen them
- Shrivenham has excellent employment opportunities, and is close to the significant employment town of Swindon.

Vale of White Horse District Council

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## Science Vale Area Action Plan

The Science Vale Oxford area is an internationally significant location for research and innovation and is creating new jobs for local residents

- This area is home to significant centres of employment including Milton Park and Harwell Oxford Campus, both designated as an Enterprise Zone in 2011
- The Science Vale Area Action Plan will set out in more detail how our proposals in this area will be delivered and implemented
- The Action Plan will be a joint plan prepared in partnership with South Oxfordshire Districts Council as it is important we plan effectively across both council areas
- The plan will include proposals for Dicoi, such as extending the Orchard Centre and the railway station. But it will also help to deliver the proposed infrastructure across the whole Science Vale area.

**Design and local distinctiveness**

- The high quality and rich heritage of the Vale's villages and towns contributes significantly to its attractiveness as a place to live and invest in
- Good design is vital; it is important to create places people will want to live in
- We have strengthened our design policy and prepared a new policy specifically relating to strategic and major sites. This is to help ensure the new development we are proposing delivers high quality design
- We are also preparing a new design guide to help maintain the quality of new development across our district.