

Mr Noel Newson



Planning Policy Team
Vale of White Horse District Council
135 Eastern Avenue
Milton Park
Milton OX14 4SB

25 February 2019

Dear Sir or Madam

**Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 2 - Public Consultation on Schedule of
Proposed Draft Main Modifications - February 2019**

Core Policy 8b - Dalton Barracks Strategic Allocation

I welcome some of the changes made and in particular deletion of reference to provision of a cycle and bus link between Dalton Barracks and Lodge Hill. The agreed policy refers to provision of a highly sustainable development and *“ensuring excellent public transport, cycle way and footpath connections to Oxford and Abingdon-on-Thames”*. This potential is listed as one of the justifications for removing the land from the Green Belt and allowing the development.

I have however read the “Additional Transport Evidence” dated 30th November 2018, which is posted on the same page of your website. This is a Transport Delivery Report prepared specifically for this site. Sadly, there is no indication in this of any excellent public transport, cycle way or footpath connections, in fact quite the contrary.

The focus of this report is on mitigating the impact of additional motor vehicle movements from the 1200 new houses. There is little evidence that any thought has been given to how the pattern of movements of occupants of the existing dwellings at Dalton Barracks will change when the base closes down. Proposed cycle links to Abingdon consist primarily of 1.5 metre wide advisory cycle lanes on some of the existing roads, exactly where parked cars, gullies and potholes are usually concentrated. On the route along Long Tow and the Wootton Road to the schools, college and other facilities in north Abingdon, only a length of shared footway/cycleway along Long Tow is proposed. Without improved segregation from other traffic you will not increase the proportion of trips by cycle.

Revised paragraph 2.61 (formerly 2.60) of the Local Plan refers to improving bus service levels to “turn up and go” frequencies. Paragraph 7.14 of the Transport Delivery Report for Dalton Barracks however suggests *“it is not unreasonable to rely on existing services, their routes and frequencies.”* Even though some new dwellings would be 1 km away from the existing 4 bus route, this is considered

satisfactory! At the minimum, the housing layout should be designed so that buses can divert off their current route and do a short loop into part of it, to ensure residents are no more than about 400 metres from a stop. Frequencies clearly need to be enhanced from the current hourly service.

There is a suggestion that a shuttle bus linking the site to Abingdon via Dunmore Road and Oxford Road could be considered “subject to commercial viability and funding”. This could however adversely impact on the viability of other bus services on these roads, some of which are already likely to be dependent on limited contributions from other housing development in North Abingdon.

The main purpose of this report appears to be to minimise transport related expenditure for the developers of the site. I suggest that this report is binned before the Masterplanning for Dalton Barracks gets underway and a transport package is developed which is consistent with Paragraph 2.58 (formerly 2.59) of the Plan’s aspiration for ***“walking, cycling and public transport designed to be the most attractive forms of local transport”***

Yours faithfully

Noel Newson

Cc County Councillor, Bob Johnston
District Councillor, Emily Smith