

Matter 4: Abingdon and Oxford Fringe Sub Area

General Point – In our response to Matter 2, we have raised concerns regarding the alteration to the spatial strategy for the Abingdon sub-area.

The LPP1 identified a role for the sub-area in meeting the Vale's own housing needs. To meet this role, the LPP1 identified a number of housing allocations. As outlined in Table 4.1 of the Council's Topic Paper 2 (October 2017), four allocations within the LPP1, which were intended to meet the Vale's own housing needs are to now be used to meet Oxford City's unmet housing needs.

This both extends beyond the scope of the LPP2 as defined by the LPP1 (para. 1.1 refers) and results in a differing spatial strategy and distribution of development than intended by the Adopted LPP1. In terms of meeting the Vale's own housing needs, the Abingdon sub-area has a reduced role in favour of the South East sub-area. Together however, the Abingdon sub-area now has a significantly increased role in meeting the revised LPP2 housing requirement, which includes both the Vale's housing needs and its apportionment of Oxford City's unmet housing needs.

This new strategy cannot be, as, or more appropriate than the LPP1's strategy, which was found to be sound at Examination. This is a fundamental issue with the LPP2. To remedy these issues, the following needs to occur:

1. The allocations made within the LPP1 remain as intended – to meet the Vale's own housing needs; and
2. Any unmet housing needs from Oxford City are met in a manner that is consistent with the LPP1 spatial strategy and distribution of development. This will inevitably mean a more proportionate distribution of development across all three sub-areas, including the Western Vale.

4.1 Other than Dalton Barracks (Matter 5), are the housing allocations listed in Policy 8a the most appropriate when considered against reasonable alternatives in the light of site constraints, infrastructure requirements and potential impacts? Are the estimates of site capacity justified? Are the expected timescales for development realistic? Are the site development template requirements – both general and site specific – justified, consistent with national policy and would they be effective?

(a) North of East Hanney and (b) North East of East Hanney

We have concerns that the emerging LPP2 places too great a quantum of development at East Hanney than is reasonable. The level of development cannot be considered as being sustainable for the Village.

The LPP2 proposes the allocation of two sites to provide 130 dwellings at the Village. Given that there are only 326 households in East Hanney, it would represent an increase in size of **nearly 40%**. There are very few services and facilities within the Village (a public house, a village shop with a post office and a primary school). The Sustainability Appraisal raises concerns that the existing primary school, even with its ability to expand, might not have the capacity to accommodate the children from the proposed development.

Moreover, the Sustainability Appraisal states that East Hanney is remote from both Oxford and the Science Vale (para. 10.4.6 refers). Given the lack of services, facilities and its distance to employment opportunities and concerns over the capacity of infrastructure to accommodate growth, we question whether this is a sustainable location for development.

(b) East of Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor (in Fyfield and Tubney Parish)

The LPP1 proposes the allocation of 600 dwellings at Kingston Bagpuize. Presently, there are only 935 existing households within the Village, which means that allocation would increase the size of Kingston Bagpuize by **nearly 65%**.

The Sustainability Appraisal notes that Kingston Bagpuize is “*is relatively distant from a higher order centre*” (para. 10.3.3 refers). It also indicates that contributions for health care provision from the proposed allocation will be spent in Faringdon (para. 10.3.3), demonstrating Faringdon’s important role and function for Kingston Bagpuize. Para. 10.9.4 of the Sustainability Appraisal also raises historic environment concerns relating to the proposed allocation.

Summary

We consider that the emerging LPP2 provides a highly disproportionate amount of development at both East Hanney and Kingston Bagpuize. In the case of East Hanney, the evidence base supporting the Plan’s indicates that it is distant from higher order settlements, whilst Kingston Bagpuize is dependent on Faringdon for its services and facilities.

These allocations should be read against the LPP2 proposals within the Western Vale and at Faringdon, wherein no additional allocations are to be made, despite the market town having a higher status in the settlement hierarchy, a significantly larger number of services, facilities and employment opportunities.

In this regard, it is important that growth of small settlements is commensurate with their existing scale, role and function. At present the quantum of development focused at these settlements is not consistent with Policy CP3 of the Part 1 Local Plan. Consideration should be given to redistributing the provision identified at these Villages to higher order settlements, including Faringdon.