**Vale of White Horse Local Plan Examination in Public Stage 1 Hearing Statement from North Abingdon Local Plan Group (NALPG)**

One of the 'Topic reports' submitted by the group was under the heading 'Is the Strategic Housing Market Assessment Right?' The main points that made are:

- The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) figures are based on just one view of the future;
- So the predicted need for 1,028 extra houses per year until 2031 could be too high;
- The forecast looks too far into the future to be reliable;
- The assumptions about changes in the numbers of jobs may be incorrect;
- Builders may not be able to build as many houses as quickly as planned;
- The housing market may not function properly; and
- We are concerned that the SHMA target might be arbitrarily raised to meet Oxford City's needs; so
- Given the uncertainty, it would be better to have rolling forecast and plan.

This note links our 'Topic report' (TR) to the particular questions for Stage 1 of the EIP. The questions follow in italics, followed by our comments:

**Matter 3 – Spatial Strategy and Housing Supply Ring Fence**

*3.1 Is the proposed distribution of new housing and employment land (policies CP4 and CP6) soundly based? In particular:*

*(a) Does the proposed distribution of housing set out in policy CP4 appropriately reflect the settlement hierarchy (policy CP3) and the core planning principle of the NPPF (para 17) to actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable?*

> We consider that the approach has led to some sites being sacrificed to meet the over optimistic SHMA figures – notably the North Abingdon green belt sites. 70% of the estimated new jobs will be in the Science Vale (Culham, Milton Park, Harwell) - it is too far from North Abingdon for sustainable commuting (walking, cycling) and public transport to these sites is virtually non-existent.

*(b) Does the distribution appropriately reflect the role of Oxford in providing for employment and services for the residents of Vale of White Horse?*

No comment

*3.3 Is it feasible that a significantly different distribution of housing development from that proposed could be delivered?*

We consider that excessive development is planned and this will lead to sites being proposed for development that will exacerbate existing traffic and pollution issues as well as sacrificing green belt sites that play a key role in defining the existing settlement structure and the distinctions between different places – notably the green rural gap between Abingdon and Oxford.

*3.4 Is the "housing supply ring fence" approach of policy CP5 to the delivery of housing in the Science Vale area (a) adequately explained in terms of its practical operation, (b) justified, (c) likely to be effective and (d) in accordance with national policy?*

There will be a clear benefit if the plan makes sure that many houses are built near to the likely sources of employment. This would be much more sustainable and avoid longer distance commuting and extra traffic on the A34. Maybe more houses could be built in this area? (Ref Chapter 4 of the plan, page 41).