Comment

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Event Name	Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part One - Publication
Comment by	Mr Jeremy Flawn
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Q1 Do you consider the Local Plan is Legally Compliant?　Yes

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

If your comment(s) relate to a specific site within a core policy please select this from the drop down list.　N/A

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

Q3 Do you consider the Local Plan complies with the Duty to Co-operate?　Yes

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

As currently drafted, Core Policy 4 fails to recognise the important role that development at the smaller villages and at the lowest order settlements (those ranked below the current four tiers of the settlement hierarchy) have played in the past in maintaining the supply of housing in the Vale.

Furthermore the Core Policy 4 approach to resisting development in the lowest order settlement locations, and restricting development at the smaller villages to limited infilling, is inconsistent with the conclusions reached by the Vale in relation to the saved policies of the current adopted Local Plan (policies H12 and H13) where the Vale accepted (see eg 5 Year Housing Land Supply Statement July 2012 pages 12-13) that the approach they are now advocating was at least partially inconsistent with the NPPF and in particular paras 47 and 49. To restrict development to limited infilling in the smaller villages, and to exclude the lowest order settlements and rural communities from the settlement hierarchy, is also inconsistent with paragraphs 54-55 of the NPPF and demonstrates that the Plan has not been positively prepared in that it fails to plan for the objectively assessed needs of the area (NPPF paras 14 & 157).

Consequently the Plan is not justified and is inconsistent with national policy and it is thus unsound.

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

By making the following changes, the Plan will be sound in that it will reflect a more holistic approach to supporting the rural communities in the Vale without excluding certain villages and rural communities from benefiting from anything other than affordablehousing. This will accord with the NPPF and it will demonstrate that the Plan has been positively prepared.

The four tiers of the hierarchy should be expanded to refer to the lowest order rural communities and settlements as a fifth tier where appropriate development (including that necessary to meet local needs and market housing) will be supported where it helps enhance or maintain the vitality of those rural communities and smallest settlements.

Furthermore, the Smaller Villages category should be revised to more closely reflect the objectives in the NPPF which does not restrict development to limited infilling at smaller settlements.

The changes proposed are as follows:

1 Under the Development at Smaller Villages paragraph, revise the text to state:

?At the smaller villages limited ~~infill~~ development ~~may~~ will be appropriate within or adjacent to the existing built areas of these settlements or if it is allocated within an adopted Neighbourhood Development Plan or future parts of the Local Plan 2031. Proposals for development will be supported where they are in keeping with local character and are proportionate in scale and meet District and/or local housing needs, and/ or provide local employment, services and facilities.

2 At the end of the policy add the following text:

?In those villages not included within the categories described above, development will be proportionate in scale, being limited to infilling, reuse of buildings, conversions or other minor development (three dwellings or less).?

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

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

Q6 If your representation is seeking a modification, do you consider it necessary to participate at the oral part of the examination?

Yes - I wish to participate at the oral examination

Please note *the Inspector will determine the most appropriate procedure to adopt to hear those who have indicated that they wish to participate at the oral part of the examination.*

Q7 If you wish to participate at the oral part of the examination, please outline why you consider this to be necessary:

Bluestone Planning wishes to be given the opportunity to appear at the oral part of the examination in public to debate these representations with the Local Planning Authority in front of the Inspector, should the opportunity arise.