

Planning Services

HEAD OF SERVICE: Adrian Duffield



Listening Learning Leading

Mr M Williams
Planning Policy
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Our reference:

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Dear Mr Williams,

South Oxfordshire District Council response to Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Publication Version November 2014

Thank you for consulting this council on Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031. South Oxfordshire District Council compliments the Vale of the White Horse District Council on their Local Plan and in general supports the policies and proposals in the plan. This council also confirms that both councils have a very positive working relationship and that the Vale of White Horse District Council has fully complied with the Duty to Cooperate with this council during the preparation of the plan. We are pleased that the plan demonstrates that the council can fully meet its very challenging objectively assessed housing needs and recognise that this has involved some particularly difficult decisions.

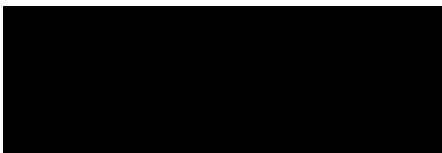
We have the following comments on the plan, we do not believe that these issues will make the plan unsound, rather it is hoped they will make the plan clearer.

reference	Comment on Vale Local Plan 2031
	<p>General</p> <p>We are satisfied that the two councils have worked together fully under the 'Duty to Cooperate'. However, we think that the initial chapters could better reflect this cooperation if they referred to other partners, such as South Oxfordshire, rather than just the Vale. The need to work with others is acknowledged in the sub-area strategy chapters it would be good if this were also acknowledged earlier on. More specific examples are raised below.</p>
P20 P75	<p>Overview</p> <p>Para 4 – This overview implies that Science Vale is only concerned with employment. It would be helpful to refer to the Science Vale area stretching across parts of both Vale and South and its mission to provide employment and housing opportunities, to be an attractive and thriving place, to attract infrastructure and investment</p>

2.12	It would be helpful to mention the proximity of other stations, particularly Oxford, Didcot and Swindon which give direct access to the mainline network.
2.12	Supporting sustainable travel 4 bullet With partners supporting improvements. A number of these improvements will need the close cooperation of SODC and OCC to implement this should be acknowledged.
2.15	Protecting water resources – It may be helpful to acknowledge that this is an area of water stress, if the water cycle study confirms this. Protecting biodiversity - This section should acknowledge the need to work with neighbours, particularly to link key wildlife habitats and in protecting designated sites close to the district boundary.
P40	Housing supply ring fence SODC is pleased to see a ring fence approach is proposed for housing in Science Vale and strongly supports this proposal. It complements the approach taken in South Oxfordshire and will help ensure that the investment required is available for the provision of infrastructure and services for the high levels of growth in Science Vale. The promotion of a step change in the provision of housing, jobs, and infrastructure and services has been a long held ambition of both authorities and needs strong local plan policies to help achieve this.
P63	Green Belt A Green Belt boundary can only be amended through a local plan. (NPPF para 83). We are not suggesting that an incorrect process has been followed, just that this section does not include a clear explanation of the process that has been followed, and could be read to imply that the Green Belt Review document has been adopted and the boundaries already changed, particularly in view of the text in the SA referred to below. As it is possible that the Green Belt may be altered in other areas it is important that all authorities are seen to follow a consistent process. Suggest that CP13 is amended at the beginning to indicate that: The Oxford Green Belt is amended in the following areas:
CP16	This council is concerned to ensure that there are not adverse impacts on the town centre area, we suggest additional text after favourably - Subject to no significant adverse impact on the viability and vitality of Didcot Town Centre.

CP12 CP17/18	One of the schemes listed in CP17 the Harwell Strategic Link Road and Southern Didcot Bypass appears to include land in South Oxfordshire policy CP18 cannot safeguard land in South Oxfordshire. The wording needs to be adapted to reflect this Two road schemes one in CP12 (the South Abingdon Bypass) and one in CP17 (the link between the A415 east of Abingdon and the A4130 north of Didcot) have been recently introduced and South Oxfordshire has not had the opportunity to consult on or formally consider these. This will be done through the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031. Whilst this Council realises that there is often serious congestion in this area and that solutions need to be found we have some concern about the potential impact of these proposals in South Oxfordshire and therefore reserve judgement on these schemes .
	Sustainability appraisal
12.3.14 – 12.3.16	These paragraphs suggest that sites have been released within the Green Belt whereas the Local Plan indicates that there are areas of the GB which no longer meet the purposes of the GB and the boundary has therefore been changed to remove those areas of land. None of the proposed sites are therefore in the GB as amended or proposed to be amended with the exception of the land north of Abingdon. (see comments above)

Yours sincerely



Beryl Guiver
Principal Planning Policy Officer