

Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 2 Examination

Ms Layla Moran MP
Oxford West & Abingdon
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

24 January 2019

Dear Ms Moran

VALE OF WHITE HORSE LOCAL PLAN 2031 PART 2: SHIPPON AND THE GREEN BELT

Thank you for your letter dated 18 January.

I know that the programme officer has provided your caseworker David Morgan with an update regarding the local plan examination, but given your interest in this matter and attendance at the one of the examination hearings I would like to provide a personal reply.

As you are aware, the local plan was the subject of three weeks of hearings last summer, during which a wide range of views were aired, not least regarding the proposals in the plan for significant and long term housing development at Dalton Barracks/Abingdon Airfield together with a new inset to the Green Belt including the village of Shippon.

I set out my concerns about the planning soundness of these proposals (there are various tests of soundness I have to apply) in my letter of 30 October, and this set out alternative options for the Vale of White Horse District Council to consider. Following consideration at Cabinet on 16 November, the Council decided to reduce the extent of the proposals to an allocation of 1,200 dwellings to meet the assessed need for development in the current plan period to 2031 with the longer term proposals deleted from the plan. Subject to further consultation, I am satisfied that this may represent a sound approach.

This would nevertheless comprise a large housing development and with Dalton Barracks becoming surplus to military requirements it is likely that the existing built up part of the barracks site adjacent to Shippon will also be redeveloped in due course. In this context I am satisfied that an inset to the Green Belt is justified and, subject to consultation, that this should include the barracks and the built up area of Shippon. It should not however include the Sports Ground on Cholswell Road as proposed in the submitted plan. I set out this view in my follow up letter to the Council dated 27 November.

I recognise that local residents have consistently advocated that the village should remain in the Green Belt but, in drawing up long term Green Belt boundaries, account must be taken of any changed local circumstances. In planning terms Shippon would be treated in exactly the same way as other Green Belt inset villages such as Wootton, Cumnor and Appleton, with any development within the village subject to protective policies such as CP37, CP39, DP29 and DP36 in the part one and part two local plans. As with these other villages, its rural setting would remain protected by Green Belt designation.

I have referred to further consultation regarding these matters and this is now imminent. The Council will shortly be publishing a series of 'main modifications' to the submitted plan together with a schedule of draft maps and figures which show the housing allocation now proposed and the revised Green Belt inset boundary described above. These will be published for a six week period of public consultation and all representations received during this period will be carefully considered.

The main modifications to the plan will only be finalised after this consultation exercise has been completed when I will reach my final conclusions on the plan and the changes that need to be made to it to meet the tests of planning soundness. The final step is the publication of my report to the Council setting out the reasons for my conclusions, following which the Council can proceed to adopt the plan.

I hope this letter will suffice to explain the current position but should you have any further concerns or questions please do not hesitate to make contact via the programme officer.

Yours sincerely

David Reed

INSPECTOR

cc Vale of White Horse District Council