



**Our Ref: ESFA/Local Plan Part 2/Vale of White Horse 2017**

21/11/17

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Re: Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 2**

**Consultation under Regulation 19 of Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012**

### **Submission of the Education and Skills Funding Agency**

1. The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the development of planning policy at the local level.
2. The ESFA launched on 1st April 2017, bringing together the existing responsibilities of the Education Funding Agency (EFA) and the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), to create a single funding agency accountable for funding education and training for children, young people and adults. The ESFA are accountable for £61 billion of funding a year for the education and training sector, including support for all state-provided education for 8 million children aged 3 to 16, and 1.6 million young people aged 16 to 19.
3. Under the provisions of the Education Act 2011 and the Academies Act 2010, all new state schools are now academies/free schools and the ESFA is the delivery body for many of these, rather than local education authorities. As such, we aim to work closely with local authority education departments and planning authorities to meet the need and demand for new school places and new schools. In this capacity, we would like to offer the following comments in response to the proposals outlined in the above consultation document.

#### **Comments on the Local Plan**

4. As you will be aware, the primary focus at this stage of the Local Plan's preparation is on the soundness of the plan, with regard to it being positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy. The following detailed comments set out the ESFA's view of the plan's soundness in respect of education provision.
5. The ESFA supports the Council's use of Site Development Templates setting out the requirements for land, delivery and offsite contributions for education, specific to each of the site allocations. The requirements are consistent with the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), and the policy requirement for compliance

with the Site Development Templates is considered an effective approach to ensuring education needs are addressed. In this respect, the ESFA supports the following policies:

- 4a: Meeting our Housing Needs
  - 8a: Additional site allocations for Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area
  - 8b: Dalton Barracks comprehensive development framework
  - 15a: Additional site allocations for South East Vale Sub-Area
  - 15b: Harwell Campus comprehensive development framework
6. In light of the potential time lag between the need for schools and the collection of sufficient CIL receipts to pay for them, the Council may be interested in emerging ESFA proposals for forward funding schools as part of large residential developments. We would be happy to meet with Vale of White Horse District Council and Oxfordshire County Council to discuss this opportunity at an appropriate time.
  7. Furthermore, the ESFA is directly involved in the delivery of the Grove CE Academy within your district. We welcome on-going discussions with the district and county councils to progress this project.

#### **Evidence base**

8. It would be useful if a Planning for Schools topic/background paper could be produced, bringing together and summarising all evidence relevant to planning for education, such as the Council's IDP, viability assessment and Oxfordshire County Council's school place planning document. This should explain how the forecast housing growth at allocated sites has been translated (via an evidence based pupil yield calculation) into an identified need for specific numbers of school places and new schools over the plan period, helping to demonstrate more clearly that the approach to the planning and delivery of education infrastructure is justified based on proportionate evidence. If required, the ESFA can assist in providing good practice examples of such background documents relevant to this stage of your emerging plan.

#### **Developer Contributions and CIL**

9. One of the tests of soundness is that a Local Plan is 'effective' i.e. the plan should be deliverable over its period. In this context and with specific regard to planning for schools, there is a need to ensure that education contributions made by developers are sufficient to deliver the additional school places required to meet the increase in demand generated by new developments. The ESFA notes that CIL (adopted September 2017) will be used to secure funds for general school expansion, while Section 106 planning obligations will be used for the provision of education land and site-specific school delivery/expansion. The Council has produced a Developer Contributions SPD (June 2017) which reflects the Local Plan priorities. The ESFA supports the Council's approach to ensure developer contributions address the impacts arising from growth.
10. The ESFA would be particularly interested in responding to any update to the IDP or review of infrastructure requirements, which will inform any CIL review and/or amendments to the Regulation 123 list. As such, please add the ESFA to the database for future CIL consultations.

## **Conclusion**

11. Finally, I hope the above comments are helpful in finalising the Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 2, with specific regard to the provision of land for new schools.
12. Please notify the ESFA when the Local Plan is submitted for examination, the Inspector's report is published and the Local Plan is adopted. At present the ESFA does not intend to appear at the examination.
13. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries regarding this response. The ESFA looks forward to continuing to work with the Council to develop a sound Local Plan which will aid in the delivery of new schools.

Yours faithfully,

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Forward Planning Manager

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