

Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan 2031 Part Two: **Oxfordshire County Council Liberal Democrat Group Comments**

Group Leader: Cllr Richard Webber
Orchard Barn, Sutton Wick Lane, Drayton, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4HJ
richard.webber@oxfordshire.gov.uk
01865 534001

Prepared by Cllr Emily Smith on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group

We support the submission made by the Liberal Democrat Group on the Vale District Council and believe the Vale Local Plan Part 2 is currently **NOT SOUND** and **NOT COMPLIANT WITH THE DUTY TO COOPERATE**.

The Vale Local Plan Part 2 should be paused until we have accurate unmet housing need figures confirmed

- The governments' housing white paper 'Planning for the right homes in the right places' published in September 2017 sets out a new formula for calculating the number of homes needed in each district – and the numbers for Oxfordshire are lower using this new formula. The Vale may need to take a much smaller allocation if this formula is adopted.
- Oxford City have not submitted their Local Plan Part 1. If their plan takes account of the new formula, or more sites are identified within the city boundary for housing, the Vale will not need so many additional sites. Until the Oxford City Plan is confirmed the Vale does not know what allocation of unmet need it needs to take. Therefore, the plan process needs to be paused until the numbers are confirmed.

The Vale has not fulfilled its duty to cooperate in relation to the transport infrastructure planning around the Dalton Barracks Site.

- County Council Highways officers have explained to members of our group that the additional housing at Dalton Barracks cannot be justified by the provision of a Park and Ride at Lodge Hill. A Park and Ride at Lodge Hill would seek to intercept car journeys from further south before reaching Oxford. We do not want to encourage residents from Dalton Barracks to drive to Lodge Hill to get into Oxford. What is required is investment in local bus services and cycle routes into Abingdon and Oxford to discourage car use.
- The Lodge Hill Park and Ride is in Local Transport Plan 4, but it may never be built. There is no funding allocated, no bids in or developments that could realistically contribute s106 funds to this project. It is possible that the sites of the Park and Rides around Oxford Change with Local Transport Plan 5, therefore assumptions should not be made about it going ahead within the Vale Local Plan period up to 2031.
- We are disappointed that Vale Planning Officers produced a map safeguarding land through green belt in Sunningwell for two new road and cycle roads without input from highways officers. The County Highways officers were not consulted or even aware this map was being produced and included in the Local Plan Part 2. The map (on page 2 of Appendix B) shows two roads that cut across private land, up over the highest most visible and steep part of this hill from Sunningwell to the site of the proposed Lodge Hill Park and Ride. If we need a cycle route to Lodge Hill from Dalton Barracks, the route should be through the north Abingdon Housing development – which will have good cycle access and will be well lit and safe.

Sending buses on these small additional roads could well undermine the local busses on other routes around Abingdon and risk commercial viability.

- We ask that the Vale spend more time on the transport infrastructure around the Dalton Barracks sites and take the lead from the highways authority about what sustainable transport solutions are needed.

The village of Shippon should maintain its green belt status

- We welcome the decision to keep Whitecross within the green belt but believe that the existing village of Shippon should remain protected by green belt status. There are areas of the village that might be vulnerable to in-fill development that would change the character of the village. There is no sound justification for removing green belt status and therefore Shippon should remain as it is, within the green belt.
- We support keeping the area of this site that function as a country park within the green belt to ensure that residents have access to green open spaces going forward.

The 90 Homes at Marcham will have a negative impact on congestion and the AQMA therefore should be removed from the plan

- There are three Air Quality Management Areas in the Vale and one is in Marcham. We are concerned about any development that adds to the air pollution in and around Marcham. An earlier draft of Part 2 had 410 homes allocated at Marcham but these were removed because they would have had a significant impact on congestion and the AQMA. The same argument can be made for 90 homes at Marcham because any increase will have a negative impact on air quality. Therefore, the allocation of 90 homes should be removed from the plan.

We support the other points raised by our colleagues in the Vale Liberal Democrat group and recommend that they are invited to take part in the Examination in Public to explain in more details the points both our groups have highlighted.