

Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 2

Statement of Common Ground

Between

Vale of White Horse District Council

and

Oxfordshire County Council

June 2018

II. Transport and Safeguarding

Introduction

1. This statement has been prepared by Oxfordshire County Council (the County Council) and Vale of White Horse District Council (VOWH) to assist the Inspector during the examination of the Submitted VOWH Local Plan 2031 Part 2: Detailed Policies and Additional Sites (referred to hereafter as the Part 2 plan). This statement focuses on the matters which are relevant to the County Council, particularly, those matters raised by the County Council in their response to the Publication (Regulation 19) plan.
2. This statement forms one of a series that cover the following matters:
 - I. Objectively Assessed Need and Unmet Housing Need
 - II. Transport and Safeguarding
 - III. Local Plan Sites
 - IV. Evidence
 - V. Misc
 - a. Education
 - b. Public Health
 - c. Minerals and Waste
 - d. Development Management Policies
 - e. Duty to Cooperate
3. Each statement includes the following sections:
 - a. Background
 - b. Key agreements or Agreed Common Ground
 - c. Proposed Changes
 - d. Signatures
4. This statement is provided without prejudice to matters that parties may wish to raise during the examination, separately, or through additional Statements of Common Ground.

Transport

Background

5. As has been explained in Statement of Common Ground I: Housing, Oxfordshire is a thriving economy, strategically located within the South-East, close to London, and anchoring the Oxford-MK-Cambridge growth corridor. The Oxfordshire authorities, together with OxLEP, are working together on an ambitious, comprehensive and integrated approach to addressing our housing, infrastructure and economic challenges to deliver the potential of our world class knowledge economy and high quality sustainable development across the County.
6. There is already a high degree of consistency and overlap between a series of work-strands being led by the Oxfordshire Growth Board, the Oxfordshire authorities and OxLEP including:
 - Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OXIS; November 2017)
 - Local Transport Plan 4 (Updated 2016)
 - Strategic Economic Plan for Oxfordshire 2016,
 - Emerging Joint Statutory Spatial Plan for Oxfordshire, and
 - Adopted and emerging Local Plans for each district.
7. OXIS identifies cumulative costs, funding streams and gaps in strategic infrastructure funding and informs the district councils' Infrastructure Delivery Plans¹. OXIS identifies Countywide infrastructure requirements that include for example the Culham to Didcot River Crossing, along with local infrastructure requirements for a series of nine growth corridors. These include the Knowledge Spine South, which incorporates much of the Science Vale area that falls within the VOWH, along with parts of South Oxfordshire. As further evidence comes forward infrastructure requirements may change.
8. Within the Knowledge Spine South Corridor, OXIS plans for around 23,000 homes (of which approximately 60% lie within VOWH) and around 200 hectares of employment land (of which approximately 94% lie within VOWH). The local infrastructure identified within OXIS is consistent with that set out within the County Council's Local Transport Plan 4.
9. The VOWH Part 1 plan puts these infrastructure requirements into policy (Core Policy 17: Delivery of Strategic Highway Improvements within the South-East Vale Sub-Area) and safeguards land for the schemes identified. These schemes were all included in the Part 1 plan at the request of the County Council and supported by VOWH. Further schemes are included in Policy updates included in the Part 2 plan and accompanied by further safeguarding maps. With one exception (discussed further below), these are all included at the request of the County Council and are thought to be consistent with the County wide work-strands listed above.
10. Although OXIS doesn't capture all known funding sources, it does identify a significant funding gap for delivery of all the identified infrastructure across Oxfordshire. This is

¹ <https://www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/oxfordshire-growth-board>

recognised by the emerging Oxfordshire Growth Deal that confirms that the £150m towards strategic highway infrastructure included within the deal:

“Does not meet the full funding gap to deliver the infrastructure required to plan for and support the delivery of all 100,000 homes...it will establish an infrastructure fund that will lever in additional investment”, and,

“It will establish an infrastructure fund that will be viewed as a package (and include any successful Housing Infrastructure Fund bid(s))”.

11. It is recognised that the VOWH Part 1 and Part 2 plans contribute approximately 25% of the housing proposed to be delivered by the Oxfordshire Growth Deal up to 2031 and approximately 27% of the proposed employment growth up to 2031 as set out in OxSEP. This partnership approach will necessitate a strategic approach to planning for infrastructure funding and delivery.
12. In September 2017, the County Council submitted expressions of interest for up to £500m of funding from the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) to support transport schemes across Oxfordshire including significant strategic highway schemes within Science Vale. In addition, VOWH submitted a bid to the Marginal Viability element of the HIF and in February 2018 Government confirmed it is taking forward Marginal Viability funding bids for £36m for Oxfordshire of which £7.7m contributes to delivering the Wantage Eastern Link Road within Vale.
13. Oxfordshire, and particularly the County Council, has an excellent track record in securing funding and delivering strategic highway infrastructure. Of the 16 schemes listed in Core Policy 17, a number are already built, and several more have had funding bids submitted in little more than 12 months since the adoption of the Part 1 plan. This is evidence of the successful partnership approach being followed in Oxfordshire and the advantage of pursuing a consistent and joined up approach to planning.
14. OXIS is clear that funding will be forthcoming from three main categories: Public Sector; Private Sector; and Developer Contributions/ CIL receipts, but that no one of these sources will provide all the funding needed, or that Developer Contributions will ever be sufficient to plug the identified gap. It is of course important that any Developer Contributions sought are consistent with national policy and guidance and can only be secured where possible in terms of the CIL Regulation 123 list and Regulation 122 tests:
 - Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms
 - Directly related to the development, and
 - Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
15. The Local Transport Plan 4 includes the goal to support growth and economic vitality and supports the growth aspirations of the SEP, the economic growth strategy for the county. As has already been explained, the high degree of consistency between these Oxfordshire wide strategies, which in turn inform the preparation of the district councils' locals plans, is clearly beneficial.
16. Within the Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area Strategy, as set out in the Part 1 plan, Core Policy 12 puts into policy, safeguarding of land for three highway schemes, including:

- South Abingdon-on-Thames Bypass
 - Diamond Interchange at the A34 Lodge Hill Junction, and
 - Land for improvements to Frilford Lights
17. These schemes were included at the request of the County Council and are consistent with the Local Transport Plan 4 (SV1.3 and SV 2.20).
18. The Part 2 plan includes Core Policy 12a, which seeks to augment the Part 1 plan and includes safeguarding for five further highway schemes, as follows:
- Park and Ride site for accessing Oxford from the A420 corridor at Cumnor
 - Park and Ride site for accessing Oxford from the A34 corridor at Lodge Hill
 - Single carriageway north-bound bus lane between Lodge Hill A34 Interchange and the Hinksey A34 Interchange
 - South Marcham Bypass linking the A415 to the west of Marcham and east of Marcham, and
 - Provision for a public transport and cycle link between Dalton Barracks and the Lodge Hill Park and Ride site.
19. The first four of these items listed by Core Policy 12a are included within OXIS and three are included within the LTP4 (the north-bound A34 Bus Lane was proposed following publication of the current iteration of the LTP). The proposed public transport and cycle link between Dalton Barracks and Lodge Hill is discussed further below.
20. The County Council response identifies concerns around transport impacts at Abingdon and Frilford Lights and the need for more detailed and ongoing transport modelling focusing on the Abingdon area.
21. VOWH is committed to continue working with the County Council to refine the ETI outputs for Abingdon.
22. The Frilford Lights Junction was identified as a location of some highway congestion within evidence supporting preparation of the Part 1 plan and forms part of the strategic highway package supported by a combination of either OXIS or LTP. Land is safeguarded for a highway improvement at Frilford Lights in the Part 1 plan at the request of the County Council. VOWH will continue to work with the County Council to seek funding from a variety of sources to ensure timely delivery of strategic infrastructure alongside the planned growth that makes up the Oxfordshire Growth Deal commitments. More information on this, and the evidence to support it, can be found in VOWH and OCC Statement of Common Ground 4: Evidence (paras 13-19).

Key Agreement

23. The County Council and VOWH agree to continue to work positively in partnership to successfully deliver on transport aims and aspirations and in accordance with OXIS, LTP, OxSEP and adopted and emerging local plans. The County Council and VOWH will continue to work together as part of the Oxfordshire Growth Board.

Safeguarding for Transport Schemes

24. As discussed under the heading of Transport, set out above, the Part 1 and Part 2 plans set out in policy the safeguarding of strategic highway schemes at the request (with one exception) of the County Council and are consistent with at least OXIS, and/ or the LTP, if not both.
25. The County Council's response to the Publication (Regulation 19) plan provides confirmation that the County Council supports the proposed safeguarding for the following highway schemes:
- A34 Bus Lane
 - Cumnor Park and Ride
 - Lodge Hill Park and Ride
 - Marcham Bypass and Frilford Lights
 - Improved Access to A34 near Milton Park
 - Milton Heights Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge
 - Grove Railway Station
 - Didcot-Culham River Crossing
26. The County Council response describes that work is ongoing for some of these schemes, including for example 'Improved access to A34 near Milton Park' and 'Grove Railway Station' and suggests that the proposed safeguarding may need to be subject to a modification in the future to reflect up to date evidence. Similar updates were made during the Part 1 Examination process and VOWH would always seek to support any such recommendations (see '14' and '15' in table below).
27. In relation to the Lodge Hill Park and Ride to Dalton Barracks Bus/ Cycle Link the County Council makes it clear that they consider there is insufficient evidence to support the identification of this scheme (see '13' in table below). VOWH recognises that further work is needed to identify the full extent of sustainable transport modes to support the long-term growth potential at Dalton Barracks and is committed to preparing a Comprehensive Development Framework for this site to be adopted as Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in due course.
28. VOWH notes that the Countywide Infrastructure priorities set out in OXIS includes ten items relating to the delivery of 'Rapid Transit Lines' around the city of Oxford, including 'Rapid Transit Line 3 – Hollow Way to Lodge Hill and Sandford-on-Thames, along with the proposed Park and Ride at A34 South (Lodge Hill) and within the 'Knowledge Spine South' Corridor proposals for the 'A34 bus lane between Lodge Hill and Hinksey Junctions'. Dalton Barracks lies approximately one mile from the proposed Lodge Hill Public Transport Interchange and provides clear potential for sustainable connections to the network to be maximised in the longer-term.
29. The Government announcement concerning the Oxford-Cambridge Expressway could bring significant benefits to the VOWH by helping to relieve congestion on the A34 and may provide an additional strategic route with good accessibility to Dalton Barracks. As the scheme develops, VOWH is committed to working with all relevant stakeholders including the County Council to contribute to planning for this proposal.

Key Agreements

30. The County Council and VOWH agree that all proposed highway safeguarding schemes, with the exception of the proposed bus/ cycle link between Dalton Barracks and Lodge Hill, are appropriate. On the exception, there remains an objection from the County Council.

Summary of substantive points and proposed changes raised by Oxfordshire County Council in response to the Publication (Regulation 19) version of the VOWH Local Plan 2031: Part 2 and VOWH response.

County Council Regulation 19 Comments	VOWH Response
<p>Soundness issue 13. The proposal to safeguard land for a potential bus/ cycle link between Dalton Barracks and Lodge Hill should be deleted (Core Policy 12a and text in Paragraph 2.82 and Appendix B).</p>	<p>VOWH is content for this matter to be informed by further and ongoing work.</p>
<p>Soundness issue 14. If up to date research prior to the Plan being adopted indicates the need for amendment, the safeguarding of access to the A34 near Milton Park should be subject to modifications to reflect the up to date evidence.</p>	<p>Noted. VOWH would seek to support County Council recommendations concerning highway safeguarding should new evidence become available prior to plan adoption.</p> <p>Additional modification (AM27) proposed to amend the safeguarding map to reduce the extent of the area.</p>
<p>Soundness issue 15. If up to date research prior to the Plan being adopted indicates the need for amendment, the safeguarding for a Grove Railway Station should be subject to modifications to reflect the up to date evidence.</p>	<p>Noted. VOWH would seek to support County Council recommendations concerning highway safeguarding should new evidence become available prior to plan adoption.</p>

Signatures

Signed on behalf of Vale of White Horse District Council

Adrian Duffield
Head of Planning

Date 11/6/18

Signed on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council

Susan Halliwell
Director for Planning & Place

Date 13 June 2018