

Comment

Consultee	Mr Francis Walsh (756099)
Email Address	<div></div>
Address	Samadhi Wantage OX12 7HP
Event Name	Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part One - Publication
Comment by	Mr Francis Walsh
Comment ID	LPPub3663
Response Date	22/01/15 16:01
Consultation Point	Core Policy 7: Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services (View)
Status	Submitted
Submission Type	Email
Version	0.2
Q1 Do you consider the Local Plan is Legally Compliant?	No
Q2 Do you consider the Local Plan is Sound (positively prepared, effective and Justified)	No
If your comment(s) relate to a specific site within a core policy please select this from the drop down list.	N/A

Q4 Please give details of why you consider the Local Plan is not legally compliant or is unsound or fails to comply with the duty to co-operate. Please be as precise as possible. If you wish to support the legal compliance or soundness of the Local Plan or its compliance with the duty to co-operate, please also use this box to set out your comments.

Infrastructure

In the last 15 years Wantage and Grove have had several hundred housing units added to their totals. Each of the developments should have resulted in a S106 payment which in turn should have produced improvements in areas such as road, education and medical support capacity.

Having looked at the accounts for the Council it is not clear that these monies have all been collected. Furthermore, it is not clear which of those collected have been spent and on what. The infrastructure in both places has not materially or visibly improved.

To date one could say that:-

? the quality of road surfaces in Wantage and Grove and the wider Vale area have deteriorated considerably

? the A417 to Rowstock is extremely busy at peak times and must be at or above its planned capacity

? the primary schools in Wantage and Grove are at capacity and children have been bussed to outlying schools for a number of years

? the secondary school will run out of places in 2016

? the doctor's surgeries are virtually full and nothing is in place to expand their buildings to accommodate increases in population

? the police station in Wantage has closed and a small replacement office is manned on a few hours per week basis

? the nearest A&E facility is the JR in Oxford. The minor injuries unit at Abingdon is not 24 hours and the X-ray equipment there is often unavailable to investigate injuries further.

? bus services to other than Didcot and Oxford are not good and aspects of those services are under threat

? the amount of land allocated to car parking has been reduced

I was under the impression that, in parallel with housing developments, there should be improvements in the infrastructure. I do not believe that this has been the case so far and have no confidence that things will improve in the future. Will the S106 and CIL monies be collected in a timeframe that will allow spending on the infrastructure and will they be sufficient to fund it all? I think the answer to both questions is no.

The Local Plan posits that the Science Vale will be the major location of employment and therefore it is assumed that a significant proportion of the residents of the new housing in Wantage and Grove will be employed there. Apart from changes to Featherbed Lane and to the Rowstock roundabout no changes are proposed to the A417 to cope with the increased volume of traffic arising from these Wantage/Grove residents commuting to the Science Vale.

Apparently the cycleway between Didcot and Harwell is to have an all weather surface during the life of the plan but no date as to when this will be. The Plan document states 'Cycle Network Improvements Across the Science Vale area will be made' but there is no detail of where and what this applies to and no timeframe information.

A few people cycle from Wantage/Grove to Harwell and Milton along the A417. This is not a comfortable ride, one is not popular with motorists for blocking the road - there is often no room to pass cyclists due to oncoming traffic and motorists give insufficient room to cyclists when they do pass. In essence the traffic flow is impeded by the cyclists but despite raising this as an issue requiring improvement for many years nothing has been done and it is apparent that nothing is planned during the life of the Local Plan 2031.

There is no proposal to construct a cycleway between Wantage and Harwell or Milton during the Plan period let alone one with an all weather surface. The result will be an increase in people using their cars to commute making things even worse for those who do cycle.

The LSTF is to be used to improve bus services between Didcot and Harwell, apparently no such improvements are to be funded for the Wantage/Grove route to Harwell or Milton. This, coupled with the lack of cycleways from the Wantage area, will mean more and more cars being used for the journeys to/from places of occupation. This is surely wholly incompatible with the principles of sustainable development.