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16/12/14

Dear Sirs,

Re: The Vale of the White Horse District Council Local Plan October 2014 - Consultation

I write to accompany my response to the Vale of the White Horse District Council (VWHDC) Local Plan (Oct 2014) as I am thoroughly angered by the processes imposed by the VWHDC to pass comment on their recent publication of their Local Plan document. This documents sets out the VWHDC intentions for the major re-development of my community, the way I live, the people I live with, how I get to work, where I work and how I do my work. This is the same for all the residents of the Vale and as such everyone should be able to provide their feedback to the VWHDC on this plan. The current consultation process excludes a vast number of the community as it is so complex and misleading a large number of the population will be unable to use it.

I completely understand the need for an objective way of collecting responses and feedback to the Local Plan (Oct 2014) and the specific parts of it (due to the size and nature of the document). However the language used in the instructions on how to complete the forms and indeed on the consultation forms themselves, is confusing and misleading. Most people do not read legal documentation and are put off by the use of terms such as "legally compliant" and even with some instructions and explanation of terminology it is not clear as to what this means. I am not sure I understand the terms fully myself however I consider myself well educated with a masters degree!

The way that the VWHDC has chosen to gather feedback, using these forms and requiring one to be completed for each point the person wants to raise with the document, makes it an enormous task which will deter people from persevering to complete the task. If I were to view this sceptically I would suggest that this process has been enforced deliberately to reduce the number of responses received and therefore help ease the project forward with minimal objection. Looking at more objectively, I feel that this process is prohibitive for some members of the community as it is not accessible to certain groups of people in the community, such as the elderly, those with special needs, communication needs, language difficulties or indeed unable to access a computer (although paper copies are available the process clearly works easiest with an online / email format). As such I do not feel that this a fair and open consultation process and is discriminatory to groups of the population within the community.

I have found the format for feedback to be arduous and unnecessarily complex. I have tried to follow it but it did not give me the option to give the feedback I wanted to give and therefore I have completed a separate document where I list all my objections to the Local Plan and I expect these

to be taken on board and addressed. I do not expect them to be brushed under the carpet as they are not given on the appropriate form.

I am sharing my concerns with regard to the nature of this discriminatory consultation process with the local MPs. I would like to know that all residents have the opportunity to give their views on the Local Plan and that the VWHDC is doing everything in it's power to ensure that they provide this. Currently they are prohibiting this.

yours sincerely

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Jenny Rolfe Msc

CC

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