

Stanford in the Vale Parish Council

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Planning Policy
Vale of White Horse District Council
Benson Lane
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VWHDC Local Plan Part 1 Consultation Response

With regards to Core Policy 1 and all others stemming from this inc. policies 4, 7, 8, 13, 15, 20 & 44

1. Stanford in the Vale Parish Council believe that these policies are unsound as VWHDC have adopted full figures from Oxfordshire SHMA, without taking into consideration any constraints that apply. The SHMA itself highlights that constraints are highly relevant when considering sustainable development. Given the rural nature of the District, existing AONB etc., combined with recent confirmation of a Garden City development north of the District, yet still within the County (and therefore the SHMA area), we contend that the figures adopted for housing are excessive, will be detrimental to the rural aspect of the Vale and are at odds with the NPPF aims to achieve sustainable development. A detailed response was submitted to Planning Policy under an earlier Consultation for this plan with regards to the SHMA and potential constraints that should, in our opinion, have been considered by VWHDC. We would urge the Inspector to carefully review the points raised in this earlier consultation and consider whether VWHDC have given them due consideration when considering the impacts of constraints upon the SHMA in preparing the Local Plan.

With reference to Core Policy 20 (Western Vale)

2. Core Policy 20 refers to Great Coxwell Parish as being a larger village. This is incorrect, as identified in the settlement hierarchy. Furthermore, throughout this (and many other sections of the Local Plan Stanford in the Vale has become hyphenated – it is not, and should not be referred to in this way. Whilst these may only appear to be minor inaccuracies (which can be easily corrected), concern remains that there has been insufficient attention to detail in the preparation of this Plan.

With specific reference to the Proposed Strategic Site at Stanford in the Vale (Core Policy 20 and Appendix A), we consider the Draft Plan is not sound because:

3. During the recent Public Enquiry (Appeal Ref: APP/V3120/A/13/2203341), HM Inspector of Planning, Simon Hand, found that *“the proposal should not set a specific precedent for other development on the western side of the road. The rest of the land between the site and the northern end of the village has a different character and relationship to the village than the appeal site”*. The proposed Strategic Site at Stanford in the Vale is “the rest of the land” referred to above and is only being considered following the precedent set by the Inspector’s decision. Given the Inspector’s findings, we believe that VWHDC has failed to provide any justification to continue this precedent, nor does it address the different character and relationship of the proposed Strategic Site with the rest of the village.

Should the examination see fit to continue with a Strategic Site in Stanford in the Vale, as shown, then we consider that the proposals remain unsound for the following reasons, which must be addressed prior to publication:

1. “Upgrade the sewer network.” There is a requirement to not only upgrade the sewer network (along the length of the A417), but also the Sewage Treatment Works. The latter was built to serve a capacity of 1,920 inhabitants. At the 2011 census, 2,093 inhabitants were recorded, thus the sewage works were operating above capacity in 2011, without allowing for any development that has taken place since 2011. Thames Water (the water authority), refused to attend the recent Public Enquiry (Appeal Ref: APP/V3120/A/13/2203341) and acknowledged afterwards that evidence provided by email to the developer was factually incorrect. Given this, we believe it necessary to specify in much greater detail the improvements required.
2. The current appendix fails to recommend any improvements to water pressure, which is frequently complained about, and has been identified during Neighbourhood Plan Public Consultation. Given the points raised in point 1 above, we believe there is a necessity to insist on village wide improvements to water pressure as a pre-requisite to any Strategic Site coming forward.
3. Contribution towards improving the bus service – whilst this is to be commended, recent contributions (from S106 contributions at Appeal Ref: APP/V3120/A/13/2203341) have proven to be insufficient for OCC to fund improvements to the service (which we understand currently receives approx. £100k of funding support each year). This represents a partial failing of the Duty to Co-operate, as OCC must prepare a detailed strategy that will deliver real results in terms of public transport availability for inhabitants.
4. Only very recently has VWHDC published their Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Whilst it is understood that OCC are preparing a plan to address improvements to the A420 corridor, these are required ahead of any new development in order to mitigate the effect on existing road users. There is concern that these plans are not yet sufficiently advanced (since it can already take more than 15 minutes to join the A420 at peak times at locations such as Pusey), in order to accommodate the significant increases in number of dwellings/commuters. Additionally, there is no evidence to show consideration for improvements to prevent well known, recurring flooding issues on the A417 (both at Stanford in the Vale, as well as at Mellors Garage, Challow). Given the indications from the SHMA, this route is set to become even busier in connecting the western Vale to Science Vale. A detailed strategy to improve the infrastructure network in the western Vale is key to delivering Sustainable Development, in line with NPPF requirements. Furthermore, this must be deliverable ahead of such significant increases in housing, in order to avoid being detrimental to the lives and livelihoods of existing residents. Failure to adequately plan for and address such issues would be at odds with the overall aims of the NPPF and risks failing to support a thriving rural economy.
5. In addition to point 4, above, there has been no indication of consideration being given towards healthcare requirements, apart from a general point for “appropriate contributions to be provided towards health care”. Given the sheer scale of development proposed, there is a requirement for a clearly defined strategy to meet the healthcare needs of the community, something which does not appear to have featured in the consultation process to date.



Cllr. Peter Lewis

Chairman – Stanford in the Vale Parish Council