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Date: 19/12/2014 16:47
Subject: RESPONSE TO VWHDC 'LOCAL PLAN'

This is a response to the Vale of White Horse District Council (VWHDC) 'Local Plan 2031 Part 1'.

I am a private resident in the Village of Shrivenham. I am copying this to Councillors Simon Howell and Elaine Ware.

In the case of the Village of Shrivenham the plan reveals a complete lack of empathy with the locality or any sensitivity to conservation of the Village and the Village life. The plan's proposed development for Shrivenham Village is not organic, i.e. it is not driven by natural growth in the Village. There is no local need for the size of the housing development proposed, which equates to a greater than 60% expansion on the current number of households in the Village. A community cannot absorb that size of expansion and still retain its culture and identity.

The proposed construction would significantly increase the population and negatively transform the historic Village of Shrivenham into a commuters' satellite town. This would expand the Village boundaries which together with Swindon's proposed developments to the east of the A417, would draw Shrivenham Village nearer to an inevitable conurbation with the city of Swindon. This would destroy the Village and its character.

The proposed expansion would significantly increase traffic through the Village. Already the traffic flow in the Village - with just 870 households - is problematic for the Village, its character, environment and the levels of noise and congestion. Shrivenham Village has a linear high street which gives it its character. There are limited trading expansion projects within the main street. The solution is not to relocate services, or introduce competing services within the proposed 500-house estate. Given the close proximity of the development, that would significantly damage the Village high street as the centre of Village life.

Similarly, the Village school is integral to the life and character of the Village. Relocating the school as part of the new development would remove an important component of Village life. Such a relocation would likely result in more parents driving their children to school (rather than walking as present) which would further exacerbate the traffic flow congestion in the village.

This 'Local Plan' is not for local people or by local people. It is further evidence of a disconnected and over-centralised bureaucracy in the VWHDC that is more preoccupied with meeting arbitrary targets than representing the interests of local people. The plan certainly shows no acknowledgement of the importance of villages in the national tapestry of the countryside. Rather than conservation of a Village like Shrivenham, the VWHDC offers a plan that would destroy the Village.

Before proceeding any further with its 'Local Plan', I would invite the VWHDC to give the people of the Village of Shrivenham an opportunity to express their choice in a binding referendum - now that would be democratic.

Yours faithfully

Neville McNally
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