



**Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part One:
Strategic Sites and Policies**
Publication Stage Representation Form

Ref:

(For official
use only)

Name of the Local Plan to which this representation relates:

Vale of White Horse Local Plan

Response form for the Vale of White Horse strategic planning policy document, the Local Plan Part one. Please return to Planning Policy, Vale of White Horse District Council, Benson Lane, Crowmarsh, Wallingford, OX10 8ED or email planning.policy@whitehorsedc.gov.uk no later than Friday 19 December 2014 by 4.30 pm precisely.

This form has two parts –

Part A – Personal Details

Part B – Your representation(s). Please fill in a separate sheet for each representation you wish to make.

Part A

1. Personal Details*

**If an agent is appointed, please complete only the Title, Name and Organisation boxes below but complete the full contact details of the agent in 2.*

Title

First Name

Last Name

Job Title
(where relevant)

Organisation
(where relevant)

Address Line 1

Line 2

Line 3

Line 4

Post Code

Telephone Number

E-mail Address
(where relevant)

2. Agent's Details (if applicable)

Part B – Please use a separate sheet for each representation

Name or Organisation : Abingdon Deanery

3. To which part of the Local Plan does this representation relate?

Paragraph

Policy

SO2

Proposals Map

4. Do you consider the Local Plan is :

4.(1) Legally compliant

Yes

No

X

4.(2) Sound (Positively Prepared, Effective and Justified)

Yes

No

X

4 (3) Complies with the Duty to co-operate

Yes

No

Please mark as appropriate.

5. 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.

(continue on a separate sheet/expand box if necessary) **SEE COMMENT ATTACHED**

6. Please set out what modification(s) you consider necessary to make the Local Plan legally compliant or sound, having regard to the test you have identified at 5 above where this relates to soundness. (NB Please note that any non-compliance with the duty to co-operate is incapable of modification at examination). You will need to say why this modification will make the Local Plan legally compliant or sound. It will be helpful if you are able to put forward your suggested revised wording of any policy or text. Please be as precise as possible.

Generally rewording as suggested in the attached comments will in our view ensure the Plan is compliant with with paragraphs 69 and 70 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

I am writing on behalf of the Abingdon Deanery in response to the Publication draft Vale of White Horse Local Plan (the Plan), Community Infrastructure Levy and Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

The Abingdon Deanery comprises 27 parishes covering a geographical area coterminous with the Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub Area and the South East Sub Area (excluding Wantage and Grove) highlighted in the Plan. As such, a significant portion of the strategic growth planned across the Vale of White Horse will impact on upon the Abingdon Deanery, taking into account strategic development sites across the north of Abingdon including the sites within Radley Parish (with Sunningwell and Kennington) and the Valley Park proposal west of Didcot. Also, development proposed within the South East Sub Area (excluding Wantage and Grove) that include development at Milton Heights and urban extensions proposed at East Sutton Courtenay and that for west of Harwell and the North and East of Harwell campus. The cumulative impact of developments set out in Part One of the Plan therefore, will be considerable and felt most acutely at the local level.

Housing development has a significant and far-reaching impact upon existing and future residents. As a local stakeholder the deanery is working with the parishes affected by development to see how best to support them engage with development and the new communities they will house.

Building a Sustainable Community

New development will require appropriate levels of support and facilities in order for new residents to integrate well and for new communities to establish themselves as thriving places. As a local stakeholder the deanery is keen to ensure new development is delivered in a way that will support these new communities, a stated aim of the Plan, and that their integration is properly planned and resourced.

Supporting text to Core Policy 1: *Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development* refers to the **social role** of sustainable development. Healthy communities require good housing and high quality live/ work environments to support the life of the community. The Plan rightly contains the necessary policies to enable necessary development. However, the Plan should also emphasise the need for ‘opportunities to meet’ which allow residents to engage with each other and build community.

Paragraph 69 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that:

“The planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. Local planning authorities should create a shared vision with communities of the residential environment and facilities they wish to see. To support this, local planning authorities should aim to involve all sections of the community in the development of Local Plans and in planning decisions, and should facilitate neighbourhood planning. Planning policies and decisions, in turn, should aim to achieve places which promote:

opportunities for meetings between members of the community who might not otherwise come into contact with each other, including through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres and active street frontages which bring together those who work, live and play in the vicinity;”

The planning system can play an important role in social integration. However, there is little in the Plan specifically to encourage developers to engage in the process of building sustainable community and no requirement placed upon them to facilitate social integration.

Seeking to engage local stakeholders, the developers and the local authority in the process of building sustainable communities should be a stated aim of the Plan.

Paragraph 69 of the NPPF requires the LPA to involve all sections of the community in plan making. However, the “faith community” is consistently overlooked and yet it is usually the local church and church volunteers who deliver the services and activities that create opportunity for people to meet and engage as community. Often with no help or support from either the local authority or the developer. The Plan should speak intentionally to local stakeholders advising them of the vital role they play and contribute to delivering sustainable communities and community building. The Plan should outline a strategy to strengthen this role.

We welcome the council’s stated aim of building sustainable community. However, the council should be clear about how it intends to achieve this aim and define clear roles for local stakeholders, including the faith community and churches, the developer – who must be more actively engaged in facilitating the integration of new residents, and the local authority – whose services are supplemented by the activities of the local parishes. We believe church-led activities occur at the heart of community life and include activities for young people and children, mothers and the aged, as well as gatherings for expressions of worship. Such practices are well modelled here in Vale of White Horse.

The NPPF clearly recognises the value of the social capital invested in local communities by our local churches and all their community-focussed activities, including worship. However, the Plan is silent on this issue.

Shared Spaces

Paragraph 70 of the NPPF goes on to say the LPA should *“plan positively for the provision of and use of shared space, community facilities (including Place of Worship) ... to enhance the sustainable communities and residential environments.”*

The Plan does not encourage developers to consider combining sites and uses, and to co-locate facilities such as community centres and/or other public service accommodation such as a library, to ensure that these vital facilities are cost-effective and operate within hubs of activity. Masterplans should demonstrate how services can be combined in order to provide multi-user accommodation, which could include a place of worship or incorporate “faith space”.

In summary, we acknowledge that the Plan is intended to guide the future development of strategic sites and to that end we offer our support for much of its content. We note also that comment on these issues are made in the supporting text of **Section 2 Key Challenges and Opportunities** page 22 and **Strategic Objective SO2** page 30 of the plan, also **Core Policy 38 Design Strategies for Strategic and Major Development Sites** page 116. Clearly, VOWH council has giving consideration within the Plan to the needs of the existing and

future residents. However, in delivering the stated aim of the Plan all too often insufficient consideration is given to the **process** of building community and range of activity in which existing and new residents are likely to engage in, particularly expressions of Church.

The generally wording within the Plan should reflect a wider range of community activity that could include a Place of Worship, as demonstrated by the NPPF. Also, the principle of shared spaces and co-located services to create community hubs are key to delivering the kinds of community facilities that will allow opportunity for residents to meet and become community.