

# **Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1**

## **Examination**

### **Statement by Vale of White Horse District Council**

#### **Stage 1 – Main Strategic Issues**

#### **Matter 1 – Duty to Co-operate and other Legal Requirements**

**August 2015**

<b><u>Contents Page</u></b>	<b><u>Page Number</u></b>
Question 1.1	2
Question 1.2	5
Question 1.3	11
Question 1.4	14
Appendix 1: Council's approach to Local Plan 2031 Part 1 Consultations	17

**Inspectors Question:**

1.1: Has the Council satisfactorily discharged its Duty to Co-operate to maximise the effectiveness of Local Plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters, including in particular, minerals and waste and housing (see also Matter 4)?

- 1.1.1 The council has undertaken a comprehensive programme of engagement, and formal stages of public consultation, throughout the preparation of the Local Plan. This is demonstrated by Topic Paper 1 - Duty to Co-operate and Cross Boundary Issues<sup>1</sup>, which summarises any cross-boundary issues and the process of engagement. More detailed evidence of these issues and how the council has engaged effectively with the prescribed bodies and other key stakeholders is also set out in the Statement of Compliance with the Duty to Co-operate<sup>2</sup>.
- 1.1.2 Furthermore, co-operation has continued since the submission of the Local Plan and a number of Statements of Common Ground have been prepared in partnership with several stakeholders, These include:
- Oxfordshire County Council to agree on matters of principle to support the Stage 1 Examination
  - South Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council to agree a Memorandum of Understanding on the joint approach to planning for strategic transport
  - Oxfordshire County Council and Highways England to agree on matters relating to the strategic highway network
  - Environment Agency and Thames Water to prepare a Water Cycle Study, and
  - South Oxfordshire District Council, Swindon Borough Council, West Oxfordshire District Council and Cherwell District Council to agree on matters of principle to support the Stage 1 Examination.
- 1.1.3 The Council will continue to engage constructively with the relevant organisations on cross-boundary issues as part of the duty to co-operate,

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<sup>1</sup> **EIP Library Ref: TOP01** - Vale of White Horse District Council (2015) Duty to Cooperate and Cross Boundary Issues. Available at: [http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/dynamic\\_serve.jsp?ID=447617596&CODE=9F34A389B26815A9C0838BCE9E8E2225](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/dynamic_serve.jsp?ID=447617596&CODE=9F34A389B26815A9C0838BCE9E8E2225)

<sup>2</sup> **EIP Library Ref DLP010**: Vale of White Horse District Council (2015) Statement of Compliance with the Duty to Cooperate. Available at: [http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/dynamic\\_serve.jsp?ID=447617201&CODE=711D1923037C8B7BDF3BAFCFCCEEC600](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/dynamic_serve.jsp?ID=447617201&CODE=711D1923037C8B7BDF3BAFCFCCEEC600)

including where new strategic matters arise, or where there are changing circumstances.

### ***Minerals and Waste***

1.1.4 The Vale of White Horse District Council has proactively engaged with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) on matters relating to minerals and waste. On 24 February 2014, OCC consulted on their Draft Minerals and Waste Local Plan and the Vale of White Horse responded to this consultation on the 7 April 2014.

1.1.5 Furthermore, the district council have regularly engaged with OCC on each stage of plan preparation, including on the proposed strategic site allocations. This engagement helped to ensure the site proposals do not undermine the future provision of mineral extraction and waste facilities in the district. The Duty to Co-operate Topic Paper describes how ongoing engagement with OCC on matters relating to minerals and waste has informed plan production. In addition, some minor changes were proposed by OCC in their response to the Regulation 19 Stage of Local Plan consultation, which the Vale accepts. These changes are summarised in the Schedule of Proposed Minor Modifications and include:

1. Amend Paragraph 6.107: (Minor change)

“Oxfordshire County Council is responsible for determining planning applications for minerals and waste and producing the ~~Waste and Minerals Core Strategy~~ Minerals and Waste Local Plan which will safeguard mineral resources, ~~aggregates~~, aggregate rail depots, sites for recycled and secondary aggregate supply, other minerals infrastructure sites and sites for waste management. These areas will be marked on ~~the this Plan's~~ Adopted Policies Map for reference in future following adoption by the County Council. Should the district receive a planning application in any of these areas, the County Council will be consulted on the development. Applicants are advised to review the ~~Waste and Minerals Core Strategy~~ Minerals and Waste Local Plan prior to making a planning application”.

2. Amend Appendices: (Minor change)

Remove Minerals Consultation Areas from Local Plan maps.

1.1.6 The OCC Regulation 19 comments relating to minerals and waste are considered to be minor and the Councils approach to address planning for minerals and waste has also been addressed through the Statement of Common Ground with OCC. The Statement of Common Ground confirms that

the Vale of White Horse District Council have satisfactorily discharged, amongst other matters, the duty to co-operate relating to minerals and waste.

## Housing

- 1.1.7 The main cross-boundary issue relating to housing in the Vale concerns the need to address unmet housing need for the city of Oxford. Dialogue has been undertaken with all the other neighbouring authorities and apart from Oxford, there are no other instances of potential unmet housing need affecting the district.
- 1.1.8 Extensive and effective co-operation at officer and member level has taken place on the matter of addressing unmet housing need for Oxford City and an agreed approach has been put in place between all of the Oxfordshire authorities to address this matter. This dialogue has been driven through the Growth Board for Oxfordshire, which is a joint committee of all Oxfordshire authorities, and each council's Leader is a member. It has focused on the provision for the Oxfordshire Housing Market Area. The Councils approach to addressing unmet housing need is discussed further in Statement 4.1 and this approach is consistent with the approach taken by Cherwell District Council, whose Local Plan has recently been found sound, following examination. The Council considers it to be the most appropriate strategy having regard to circumstances as they exist at present.
- 1.1.9 In particular, it is worth noting that the Inspector's Report into the Cherwell Local Plan demonstrates how Cherwell have effectively dealt with the cross-boundary issue of unmet need. The Inspector's Report, states that:

*"The formal arrangements now in place between the various Oxfordshire Councils to fully address the results of the 2014 SHMA for the county, including the needs of the city, as now referred to in para B.89b of the plan, as modified, reinforce my conclusion that the duty to co-operate has been met by the Council in relation to this plan. Moreover, I also consider that these arrangements should materially assist satisfactory on-going co-operation. This is not withstanding that there is as yet no final agreement on how or where the new housing needs of the city that cannot be met within its boundaries, whatever they may be once finally assessed, would be met, as the duty to co-operate is not a duty to agree."*<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> EIP Library Ref: LNP13 - The Planning Inspectorate (2015). Report to Cherwell District Council. Ref: PINS/ C3105/429/4. Available at: [http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/media/pdf/d/9/Cherwell\\_Local\\_Plan\\_Inspector's\\_Report\\_with\\_Main\\_Modifications\\_2015.pdf](http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/media/pdf/d/9/Cherwell_Local_Plan_Inspector's_Report_with_Main_Modifications_2015.pdf)

**Inspectors Question:**

1.2: Are the likely environmental, social and economic effects of the plan adequately and accurately addressed in the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA)?

Does the SA test the plan against all reasonable alternatives in terms of the overall requirement for land for housing and employment (see also Matters 2 and 4) and its broad spatial distribution (see also Matter 3)?

**1.2 Are the likely environmental, social and economic effects of the plan adequately and accurately addressed in the Habitats Regulations Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal (SA)?**

- 1.2.1 The Council considers that the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and the Sustainability Appraisal (SA), incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), have adequately and accurately assessed and addressed all likely environmental, social and economic effects of the Plan.

**Habitats Regulations Assessment**

- 1.2.2 There are two European sites located within the Vale of White Horse district and the effect of the Plan on these has been assessed within the HRA, these are: Cothill Fen SAC and Hackpen Hill SAC. There are also two European sites adjoining, or close to the Vale, where there is potential for longer range and indirect effects upon these sites by the Local Plan, these are: Oxford Meadow SAC (adjacent to north east corner of the district) and Little Wittenham SAC (2.5 km east of the district). Again, the effect on these has been assessed within the HRA.
- 1.2.3 The HRA has screened all policies within the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 to determine whether they would have any likely significant effects on the European sites (this is discussed in more detail within the Submission HRA Report)<sup>4</sup>.
- 1.2.4 The screening process identified that a number of policies could not be 'screened-out' without further consideration and that there were a number of issues concerning the European Sites, which required further investigation. All strategic housing allocations were 'screened-in' for further assessment as

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<sup>4</sup> EIP Library Ref DLP06 - URS (2015) Vale of White Horse District Council: Habitats and Regulations Assessment – Chapter 4. Available at: [http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/dynamic\\_serve.jsp?ID=447617234&CODE=205985F97DBD37DEBFA773CD605B432B](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/dynamic_serve.jsp?ID=447617234&CODE=205985F97DBD37DEBFA773CD605B432B)

increased housing development was considered to have the potential to lead to effects on the European Sites.

- 1.2.5 The HRA identified any potential likely significant effects on the integrity of the European sites. This involved assessing the effects of the plan on the conservation objectives and key environmental conditions of the European sites that were 'screened-in', as outlined above<sup>5</sup>. This was followed by a detailed assessment of the potential effects upon each site as a result of the planned growth, reflecting the pathways of impact with clear and appropriate conclusions and recommendations for the Plan.
- 1.2.6 The HRA concludes that likely significant effects will not occur on European sites as a result of development set out within the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1 policies or in combination with other plans and projects.
- 1.2.7 The comprehensive methodology, outlined above, clearly demonstrates a thorough and detailed approach to preparing the HRA to ensure the assessment was robust, and included clear recommendations and mitigation measures to inform plan preparation. Natural England were also consulted on the HRA at each stage of plan preparation.

### **Sustainability Appraisal**

- 1.2.8 The SA, incorporating SEA, has been carried out in accordance with the relevant requirements of the EU Directive 2001/42/EC (SEA Directive), which were transposed into UK law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations, 2004 (SI2004/1633). This requires local planning authorities to identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects of implementing the plan. Compliance with the SEA Regulations is set out within the Submission SA Report<sup>6</sup>.
- The SA process has been an iterative one undertaken throughout the preparation of the Local Plan and any 'likely' environmental, social and economic effects have been identified. The findings of the SA have informed the selection and refinement of policies set out within the Local Plan. A Scoping Report was produced in 2012<sup>7</sup> with an SA Report accompanying all

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<sup>5</sup> EIP Library Ref: DLP06 - URS (2015) Vale of White Horse District Council: Habitats and Regulations Assessment – Chapter 5-8. Available at: [http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/dynamic\\_serve.jsp?ID=447617234&CODE=205985F97DBD37DEBFA773CD605B432B](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/dynamic_serve.jsp?ID=447617234&CODE=205985F97DBD37DEBFA773CD605B432B)

<sup>6</sup> EIP Library Ref: DLP04 - URS Infrastructure & Environment UK Ltd (2015). Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Vale of White Horse District Local Plan 2031 Part One – Table 2.2 pg10. Available at: [http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/dynamic\\_serve.jsp?ID=447617212&CODE=3A803AFD84F14E5815E22389971ABEDB](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/dynamic_serve.jsp?ID=447617212&CODE=3A803AFD84F14E5815E22389971ABEDB)

<sup>7</sup> EIP Library Ref: DLP04 - URS Infrastructure & Environment UK Ltd (2015). Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Vale of White Horse District Local Plan 2031 Part One. Available at: [http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/dynamic\\_serve.jsp?ID=447617212&CODE=3A803AFD84F14E5815E22389971ABEDB](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/dynamic_serve.jsp?ID=447617212&CODE=3A803AFD84F14E5815E22389971ABEDB)

iterations of the Local Plan. The assessment has taken account of the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of effects, including cumulative effects, and is in accordance with Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations. The Submission SA Report describes all the stages of the process in detail.

1.2.10 The Submission SA Report clearly demonstrates how the Local Plan policies and site allocations have been appropriately appraised against the SA Framework. Clear recommendations on any identified 'likely' significant environmental, social and economic effects are discussed that shaped the preparation of the Local Plan's policies. The Submission SA Report also sets out any recommendations and mitigation measures required to ensure any 'likely' significant adverse effects are prevented, reduced or offset, as far as possible.

1.2.11 Consultation with statutory bodies and other stakeholders has been undertaken throughout the SA process. The SA Report summarises how any consultation responses have been taken into account<sup>8</sup>.

**Does the SA test the plan against all reasonable alternatives in terms of the overall requirement for land for housing and employment (see also Matters 2 and 4) and its broad spatial distribution (see also Matter 3)?**

1.2.12 The Council considers that the SA process undertaken to inform plan preparation has tested all reasonable alternatives in accordance with the Regulations. Each iteration of the SA provides a clear audit trail of the preferred options taken forward within the Plan. To illustrate the comprehensive approach to testing reasonable alternatives, a high level summary of the main options tested, relating to the requirement for land for housing and employment and its spatial distribution is summarised below (the options for spatial distribution are also discussed under Statement 3.2). The Submission SA Report includes a detailed explanation for how the options tested have informed the plan at each stage of its preparation.

***Requirement for land for housing***

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<sup>8</sup> EIP Library Ref: DLP04.1 - URS Infrastructure & Environment UK Ltd (2015). Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Vale of White Horse District Local Plan 2031 Part One, Appendices – Appendix 33. Available at: [http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/dynamic\\_serve.jsp?ID=447617230&CODE=205985F97DBD37DE45691CD805F3B899](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/dynamic_serve.jsp?ID=447617230&CODE=205985F97DBD37DE45691CD805F3B899)



1.2.13 The early stages of preparing the Vale Local Plan were informed by the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East, which included a housing target for the Vale district (13,294). However, following changes to the planning system in England, and in anticipation of the publication of the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) in April 2014, and to help the Council respond quickly to new evidence on housing need; the Council tested a range of six housing delivery options (housing targets) to inform the 'Draft Plan' stage of plan making (published for consultation in 2013). These were to plan to:

- a) meet the number of homes set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East (13,294 homes over the plan period)
- b) provide more homes than in the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East in line with the need identified in the Housing Needs Assessment (19,688 houses over the plan period)
- c) provide the number of homes set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East plus additional general housing based on maximising potential on the identified preferred strategic site options at the time (approximately 10 % higher; 14,308 houses over the plan period)
- d) provide the number of homes set out in the South East Plan plus a specific target for Extra Care Housing (15,594 houses over the plan period)
- e) provide the number of homes set out in the South East Plan plus additional general housing based on maximising the preferred strategic site options at the time (approximately 10 % higher) plus a specific target for Extra Care Housing (16,608 houses over the plan period), and
- f) provide the number of homes set out in the South East Plan plus additional general housing based on maximising the preferred strategic site options at the time plus all the identified alternative strategic sites and an increased amount in the remaining rural areas based on an initial assessment of capacity of suitable sites (15,898 houses over the plan period).

1.2.14 The proposed distribution for housing (described further below) was informed by SA of a range of potential housing targets. The identified 'objectively assessed need' set out in the Oxfordshire SHMA (20,560 homes up-to 2031) was very similar to Option B (outlined above; 19,688 homes up to 2029). Nonetheless, the Council also subsequently tested the 'objectively assessed need' for the Vale district as set out in the SHMA.

### ***Requirement for land for employment***

1.2.15 The requirement for employment land has been informed by technical evidence, not least the Council's Employment Land Review (ELR). A number of options were tested on this matter and these included:

- A) sites to provide 143 ha employment land<sup>9</sup>
- B) sites to meet the forecast demand (143 ha) plus a surplus of approximately 40 ha to provide for uncertainties around when some sites may be delivered (total 183 ha), and
- C) sites to provide for 143 ha plus a surplus to include the whole of the Didcot A site (total 173 ha).

### ***Overall pattern of development***

1.2.16 Six broad options for housing distribution were considered through the 'Issues and Options' plan making stage (published for consultation in 2007). These were:

- A) locate development within the existing towns and villages
- B) locate development on brownfield or previously developed sites. This would include sites within the towns and villages, but also in the countryside separate from existing communities
- C) locate development as extensions to the edges of the main settlements of Abingdon-on-Thames, Botley, Faringdon, Grove, Wantage and within Harwell Parish to the west of Didcot
- D) locate development as extensions to a small number of villages, to spread development across most of the Vale's villages
- E) locate development in a new settlement which could be based around an existing village or be entirely free standing, and
- F) locate development in settlements along public transport routes with at least an hourly service.

- Two refined housing distribution options were considered through the 'Preferred Options' plan making stage (published for consultation in 2009). These were :

- a) 'Urban Concentration' – Preferred. Which would concentrate most housing development, including specialist housing and that for the elderly, at the main settlements of Abingdon-on-Thames, Botley, Faringdon, Grove and

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<sup>9</sup> The final plan allocated 219 ha employment land to reflect the Enterprise Zone site at Harwell Campus (94 ha/ previously – incorrectly identified by the LEP as 64 ha & to reflect the additional land available at the Campus (35 ha) outwith the Enterprise Zone. This did not alter the selection or distribution of sites and further testing was not deemed necessary.

Wantage and within Harwell Parish to the west of Didcot.

b) 'Urban Focus' – Alternative. Which was similar to Option A, but would direct more development to the edges of villages.

and,

- A further refinement was made to the preferred approach for housing distribution (known as 'Building on our Strengths') through an 'Internal Review' and was published at the 'Draft Plan' plan making stage (published for consultation in 2013).

1.2.17 In addition to testing the housing and employment requirement and the distribution of housing, it is important to remember that site selection also forms an integral strand to plan preparation. These matters are all considered together to ensure the plan represents the most appropriate and sustainable strategy overall. A detailed description of these stages, including the approach to site assessment is set out in the SA Report<sup>10</sup>.

1.2.18 It can therefore be seen that plan preparation has been iterative, it has been informed by technical evidence, public consultation, and by SA of all reasonable and realistic options. In particular, the options tested allowed for a wide range of growth scenarios to be assessed, including for the full OAN figure, and that the chosen distribution is demonstrably the most sustainable.

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<sup>10</sup> **EIP Library Ref: DLP04** - URS Infrastructure & Environment UK Ltd (2015). Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Vale of White Horse District Local Plan 2031 Part One. Available at: [http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/dynamic\\_serve.jsp?ID=447617212&CODE=3A803AFD84F14E5815E22389971ABEDB](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/dynamic_serve.jsp?ID=447617212&CODE=3A803AFD84F14E5815E22389971ABEDB)

### Inspectors Question:

1.3: Is it appropriate for the plan to include only Strategic Policies and Site Allocations and for detailed planning policies and non-site strategic site allocations to be devolved to a Part 2 Local Plan document? Is there a clear justification for this and does it accord with national policy?

- 1.3.1 The Vale of White Horse District Council considers its approach to preparing the Local Plan in two parts, with Part 1 addressing strategic policies and strategic site allocations, and Part 2 addressing detailed policies and non-strategic sites is both clearly justified and fully in accordance with national policy.
- 1.3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes it clear that local plans can be reviewed 'in whole, or in part, to respond flexibly to changing circumstances'<sup>11</sup>. Furthermore, the NPPF goes on to outline in detail those matters that local plans should address, which include setting 'strategic priorities' for the area, as well as 'strategic policies' to deliver, for example 'the homes and jobs needed in the area' and 'indicate broad locations for strategic development'<sup>12</sup>. The council therefore considers the approach taken to the Local Plan to be consistent with national policy.
- 1.3.3 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) makes it clear that the content of Local Plans will 'vary depending on the nature of the area and issues to be addressed', but that all Local Plans should be 'as focused, concise and accessible as possible'<sup>13</sup>. Furthermore, the PPG states that 'additional Local Plans can be produced, for example a separate site allocations document', but there should be 'clear justification for doing so'<sup>14</sup>.
- 1.3.4 Numerous examples of Local Plans being prepared in two parts exist across the country with many examples where the Part 1 document has been found to be 'sound' following examination. In some cases Local Plan Part 2 documents have also been found sound providing confirmation of the acceptability of the approach, if only in principle. A recent and local example of a two-part approach to preparing a Local Plan is provided by Cherwell District Council, whose Local Plan Part 1 was recently found 'sound'<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> **EIP Library Ref: LNP03** - Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). National Planning Policy Framework.- Paragraph 153 Available at: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> **EIP Library Ref: LNP03** - Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). National Planning Policy Framework. Available at: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government (2014). Planning Practice Guidance – Paragraph: 010 Reference ID: 12-010-20140306. Available at: <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/local-plans/preparing-a-local-plan/>

<sup>14</sup> Communities and Local Government (2014). Planning Practice Guidance – Paragraph: 012 Reference ID: 12-010-20140306. Available at: <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/local-plans/preparing-a-local-plan/>

<sup>15</sup> **EIP Library LNP13** - The Planning Inspectorate (2015). Report to Cherwell District Council. Ref: PINS/ C3105/429/4. Available at: [http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/media/pdf/d/9/Cherwell\\_Local\\_Plan\\_Inspector's\\_Report\\_with\\_Main\\_Modifications\\_2015.pdf](http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/media/pdf/d/9/Cherwell_Local_Plan_Inspector's_Report_with_Main_Modifications_2015.pdf)

- 1.3.5 The Vale Local Plan Part 1 is seeking to meet the identified Objectively Assessed Need in full and to allocate all necessary strategic sites. Less than 5% of the identified housing need is to be allocated in the Local Plan Part 2. This two-part approach ensures the timely adoption of the Local Plan Part 1 and thus avoids delay to housing delivery. The approach also gives the opportunity for local communities to propose non-strategic housing sites through Neighbourhood Plans. This strategic approach has been clearly articulated in formal reports to the council's Cabinet throughout the preparation of the plan<sup>16</sup> and in the plan itself<sup>17</sup>.
- 1.3.6 The approach is highly consistent with the Oxford City Deal that seeks to 'accelerate the delivery of housing' and recognizes that provision of quality homes is 'fundamental' to the delivery of innovation led growth<sup>18</sup>. Furthermore, it supports the objective set out within the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan to 'provide the choice of homes needed to support growth'<sup>19</sup>.
- 1.3.7 A recent House of Commons Written Statement<sup>20</sup> outlines the importance of avoiding unnecessary delays to preparing local plans and their role in accelerating housing delivery.
- 1.3.8 In summary, the Vale approach to bringing forward their Local Plan in two parts is considered to be highly consistent with national policy and guidance and is clearly justified. It is fully consistent with the Oxford City Deal and Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan by supporting the timely and accelerated delivery of housing and innovation led growth.

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<sup>16</sup> Vale of White Horse (2014). Local Plan 2031 Cabinet Report – Paragraph 10 Available at: [http://democratic.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/documents/s24300/2014-1003%20Cabinet%20local%20plan%20report%20FINAL\\_1\\_3.pdf](http://democratic.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/documents/s24300/2014-1003%20Cabinet%20local%20plan%20report%20FINAL_1_3.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> **EIP Library Ref DLPO1** - Vale of White Horse District Council (2014) Draft Local Plan 2031 Part 1 – Core Policy 2, pg 18. Available at: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2014-10-27%2001%20VOWHDC%20Local%20Plan%202031%20Contents-Chapters%201.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> **EIP Library Ref: TRA04** - Deputy Prime Minister's Office of State for the Cabinet (Cities and Constitution) The Rt Hon Nick Clegg MP Cabinet Office (2014) Oxford and Oxfordshire City Deal. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/city-deal-oxford-and-oxfordshire>

<sup>19</sup> **EIP Library Ref: EC010** - Oxfordshire LEP Strategic Economic Plan (2014). Oxfordshire LEP Strategic Economic Plan Driving Economic Growth Through Innovation. Available at: [http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/dynamic\\_serve.jsp?ID=447617072&CODE=AAC65B5B887900C828455DC421EEA552](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/dynamic_serve.jsp?ID=447617072&CODE=AAC65B5B887900C828455DC421EEA552)

<sup>20</sup> **EIP Library Ref: LNP18** House of Commons: Written Statement, Communities for Local Government (2015). Minister of State for Housing and Planning (Brandon Lewis). Available at: <http://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-vote-office/July%202015/21%20July/8-Communities-and-Local-Government-Local-Plans.pdf>

### Inspectors Question:

1.4: Is the plan compliant with

- (a) The Local Development Scheme?
- (b) The Statement of Community Involvement?
- (c) The 2004 Act and the 2012 Regulations?

#### (a) The Local Development Scheme?

1.4.1 The Local Plan 2031 Part 1 was submitted in compliance with the Local Development Scheme (LDS) 2015-2018<sup>21</sup> and Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004<sup>22</sup> (as amended by Section 111 of the Localism Act 2011). The timetable for the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 is detailed in the LDS and clearly demonstrates how the Local Plan has been prepared in accordance with this published timetable. As the Local Plan examination progresses, the Council will continue to update the LDS as considered necessary.

#### (b) The Statement of Community Involvement?

1.4.2 The Local Plan 2031 Part 1 has been prepared and submitted in compliance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)<sup>23</sup>. The SCI sets out the district's strategy for ensuring there has been continuous community involvement in preparing the Local Plan.

1.4.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF) states that, in preparing a Local Plan, local authorities should carry out 'early and meaningful engagement and collaboration with neighbourhoods, local organisations and businesses'<sup>24</sup>. This is reflected in the SCI, in particular Paragraph 4.2 which sets out the Council's principles in consulting with the community<sup>25</sup>. The Local Plan has been prepared in accordance with the SCI principles which is clearly demonstrated in **Appendix 1**.

1.4.4 The Council has also published Consultation Statements at each stage of preparing the Local Plan detailing how, what and where community

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<sup>21</sup>EIP Library Ref: **OCD02** Vale of White Horse District Council (2015). Local Development Scheme 2015 – 2018. Available at: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2015~2018%20LDS%20FINAL.pdf>

<sup>22</sup>Office for the Deputy Prime Minister (2004) The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004, available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/5/contents>

<sup>23</sup> EIP Library Ref: **OCD01** - Vale of White Horse District Council (2009) Statement of Community Involvement. Available at: [http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/dynamic\\_serve.jsp?ID=447617020&CODE=C4BEB256BC9E68277DD2F7771D2B660E](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/dynamic_serve.jsp?ID=447617020&CODE=C4BEB256BC9E68277DD2F7771D2B660E)

<sup>24</sup>EIP Library Ref: **LNP03** - Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) The National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph – 155. Available at: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/60777/2116950.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/60777/2116950.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> EIP Library Ref: **OCD01** - Vale of White Horse District Council (2009) Statement of Community Involvement – Paragraph 4.2. Available at: [http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/dynamic\\_serve.jsp?ID=447617020&CODE=C4BEB256BC9E68277DD2F7771D2B660E](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/dynamic_serve.jsp?ID=447617020&CODE=C4BEB256BC9E68277DD2F7771D2B660E)

engagement has taken place at various iterations of the Local Plan Part 1. These Statements accompanied the Draft Local Plan (February 2013 – May 2013), Housing Delivery Update (February 2014 – April 2014) and the Local Plan Publication (November 2014 – December 2014)<sup>26</sup>.

- 1.4.5 In addition to the Consultation Statements, the Council provided a Regulation 22 Statement<sup>27</sup> alongside the Submission Local Plan demonstrating the Council's compliance with Regulation 22 (1) (c) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012<sup>28</sup> and the SCI.
- 1.4.6 Furthermore the Council believe that, through the plan's preparation and consultation, they have continued to work collaboratively with organisations, local communities and individuals to ensure that it's planning policies reflect a collective vision and provided a number of opportunities for the community to comment (**Appendix 1**).

### **(c) The 2004 Act and the 2012 Regulations?**

- 1.4.7 The Local Plan 2031 Part 1 has been prepared and submitted in compliance with Section 20(5) (a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the 2012 Regulations<sup>29</sup>.
- 1.4.8 The Draft Local Plan<sup>30</sup> and the Housing Delivery Update<sup>31</sup> consultations were undertaken in accordance with Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 1.4.9 The consultation on the Local Plan Publication Version was undertaken in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 1.4.10 The Local Plan 2031 Part 1 was submitted to the Secretary of State under Regulation 22 of the 2012 Regulations.
- 1.4.11 The form and content of the Plan is therefore in conformity with regulations 8-10 of the 2012 Regulations, and it has been prepared in accordance with

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<sup>26</sup> Older consultation statements do not form part of the examination library but can be made available at the request of the inspector.

<sup>27</sup> **EIP Library Ref: DLP09** - Vale of White Horse District Council (2015) Regulation 22 Statement. Available at: [http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/dynamic\\_serve.jsp?ID=447617214&CODE=3A803AFD84F14E58E1FE93939D1C39E1](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/dynamic_serve.jsp?ID=447617214&CODE=3A803AFD84F14E58E1FE93939D1C39E1)

<sup>28</sup> Office for the Deputy Prime Minister (2012). The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/767/contents/made>

<sup>29</sup> At earlier stages, consultations would have been under the relevant regulations that were in place at that time.

<sup>30</sup> **EIP Library Ref DLP01** - Vale of White Horse District Council (2014) Draft Local Plan 2031 Part 1 – Core Policy 2, pg 18. Available at: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2014-10-27%2001%20VOWHDC%20Local%20Plan%202031%20Contents-Chapter%201.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> Vale of White Horse District Council (2014) Housing Delivery Update. Available at: [http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/dynamic\\_serve.jsp?ID=447616830&CODE=A436F8BEFBEDEA3FE341AAAD33FE352C](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/dynamic_serve.jsp?ID=447616830&CODE=A436F8BEFBEDEA3FE341AAAD33FE352C)

regulations 18-20 and with Section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act.



## Appendix 1: Council's approach to Local Plan 2031 Part 1 Consultations

SCI key principles	Council's actions
Early involvement	<p>The Council used a variety of methods to involve the community in early engagement including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholder events with Towns and Parish Councils.</li> <li>• Councillor Briefings and Councillor Workshops</li> <li>• Articles published in the Local Plan Newsletter 'Vale Community' detailing upcoming Local Plan consultations</li> <li>• Information published on the Council's website and distributed to an open email address list compiled of registered interested parties</li> <li>• Distribution of leaflets to all households, libraries, towns and parish councils and key stakeholders, providing summary information and exhibition and public meeting dates.</li> </ul>
Recognising the needs of different groups in the community	<p>The Council used a variety of methods to recognise the different needs of the community which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notifying statutory and general consultees of Local Plan consultations via letters and e-mails.</li> <li>• Publishing Local Plan updates on the Council's website and via social media, e.g. Twitter</li> <li>• Publishing Statutory public notices in The Oxford Times, The Herald, and the Swindon Advertiser</li> <li>• Arranging staffed and unstaffed exhibitions on weekdays and weekends, providing details of the consultations and how the community can respond</li> <li>• Publishing and widely distributing leaflets, including mailing to all Vale residents</li> <li>• Widely publicised public meetings held in Vale towns and most affected communities.</li> </ul>
Providing clear opportunities for involvement	<p>Respondents could submit representations by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responding on the Council's on-line consultation system</li> <li>• Downloading a hard copy representation on Council's website</li> <li>• Collecting a representation form from Council offices, libraries and deposit points</li> <li>• Completing or taking a form at the Local Plan exhibitions and public meetings</li> </ul>
Ease of access to information	<p>Local Plan and supporting suite of evidence was made available for public to inspection by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publishing information on Council's website</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing hard copies at local deposit points e.g libraries and the district council offices</li> </ul>
Effective feedback on consultation	<p>Consultation statements were published for the following consultations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft Local Plan 2029 Part 1 (Feb 2013)</li> <li>• Housing Delivery Update (Feb 2014)</li> <li>• Local Plan Publication Version (November 2014)</li> </ul> <p>In response to feedback on the on-line consultation system, the Council published a guidance document on the website on outlining how to register and submit representations.</p>

Source: Statement of Community Involvement (2009). Available at:

[http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/dynamic\\_serve.jsp?ID=454436070&CODE=407FDAF8927B10E33D3601F8AA408CB9](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/dynamic_serve.jsp?ID=454436070&CODE=407FDAF8927B10E33D3601F8AA408CB9),

Regulation 22 Statement: Appendices (2015). Available at:

[http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/dynamic\\_serve.jsp?ID=454436232&CODE=03369568B89589569FEBE0C9883C9276](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/dynamic_serve.jsp?ID=454436232&CODE=03369568B89589569FEBE0C9883C9276)