

VALE OF WHITE HORSE DISTRICT COUNCIL
LOCAL PLAN PART 1 EXAMINATION HEARING

INSPECTOR'S REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION FROM THE COUNCIL

INSPECTOR'S REQUEST:

The Council to consider and if appropriate to suggest new text in the Local Plan that reflects the need for facilities and services to be commensurate with planned growth in Wantage and Grove.

COUNCIL'S RESPONSE:

The Council does not consider it necessary to suggest new text in the Local Plan that reflects the need for facilities and services to be commensurate with planned growth in Wantage and Grove. The Plan makes a number of references throughout which already recognises this. The most notable reference is on p.66, paragraph 5.53 which states as follows (emphasis added):

"The historic market town of Wantage and the nearby Larger Village of Grove are separate settlements with their own unique character and identity. They have a strong functional relationship with many shared services including for health, education and leisure. It is important that growth here is carefully coordinated to seek to ensure that service and infrastructure provision closely matches the needs of the two communities. Grove Airfield will contribute up to 2,500 homes to Grove and provide services and facilities. New development should be successfully integrated with the existing and newly planned communities."

A number of other sections throughout the plan highlight the importance of providing services and facilities to meet planned growth for Wantage and Grove, including the following:

Spatial Vision (p.29)

"The Vale's main settlements will provide healthy and sustainable communities where everyone has a decent place to live and work with good access to leisure and community services and facilities. The service centre roles of Abingdon-on-Thames, Botley, Faringdon, Grove and Wantage will have been maintained and enhanced. The Vale's villages will continue to provide thriving rural communities where appropriate growth has supported local services."

Spatial Strategy – Addressing the needs for retailing (p.44, para 4.35)

"The Council continues to support the steering committees of both Wantage and Faringdon Neighbourhood Development Plans, who seeks to expand on their current retail offering in line with the expected need for the planning period."

South East Vale Sub-Area – Building Healthy and Sustainable Communities (p.69, para 5.60)

“The strategic housing growth will complement the new employment and job creation forecast and will also support the vitality and viability of the area and help to facilitate the delivery of a package of new or enhanced infrastructure, services and facilities. The new homes allocated to this sub-area will be in balance with the forecast new jobs thus helping to deliver sustainable growth.”

South East Vale Sub-Area – Meeting the needs for retailing (p.76, para.5.86 and 5.87)

“The main retail facilities in the Wantage and Grove area are provided by Wantage town centre. Large improvements were delivered to the retail offer in Wantage in 2007 when a major food store and several large non-food (comparison) stores were built, just to the north of the town centre. These new stores, successfully complement the historic Market Square, which includes a number of attractive historic buildings.

Wantage is one of the main shopping and commercial centres within the District. The centre provides a reasonable range and mix of national and independent comparison retailers and has a good range of choice of non-retail services. The vitality and viability of Wantage town centre will be maintained and enhanced through the implementation of Core Policy 32.”

District Wide Policies – Retail development and main town centre uses (p.106, para 6.47 and 6.50)

“The focus for future retail development and other town centre uses will continue to centre on the primary and secondary retail frontages and town centre policies areas as defined in the Local Plan 2011. Local shopping centres, also identified through the Adopted Policies Map, will maintain a healthy level of shopping facilities that serves the surrounding residential areas.

The main retail warehouse provision in the Vale is at Fairacres Retail Park in Abingdon-on-Thames, the Limborough Road/Kings Park area in Wantage, and Seacourt Retail Park in Botley. The Fairacres Retail Park accommodates a high proportion of the total comparison retail floorspace in the district. Any proposals for retail warehouse development or redevelopment will need to follow the approach set out in Core Policy 32.”