

Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 Examination

Statement of Common Ground between

Swindon Borough Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Vale of White Horse District Council and the Western Vale Villages

April 2014

Introduction

1. This Statement of Common Ground has been prepared jointly between Swindon Borough Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Vale of White Horse District Council and the Western Vale Villages (WVV).
2. The Statement sets out the common ground between the parties named above with regard to the Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 and supporting evidence base.

Background

3. The WVV comprise the parishes of Wanborough and Bishopstone in Swindon Borough and Ashbury, Bourton, Compton Beauchamp, Longcot, Watchfield, Shrivenham and Great Coxwell in the Vale of White Horse District. Also party to this Statement of Common Ground are, Littleworth Parish Meeting, Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor Parish Council, and Fyfield and Tubney Parish Meeting, Covingham Parish Council and Woolstone Parish Meeting. For shorthand the above are collectively referred to as “the villages” in the remainder of this Statement.

General Matters

4. The Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 Submission Document June 2013 (SBLP 2026) Policy NC3 proposes that an additional 8,000 houses are allocated as part of a mixed use development to the east of the A419, north and south of the A420.

Policy NC3 states that (among other things):

b. The development shall provide:

- *Sustainable transport links including:*

walking and cycle network improvements that integrate with existing networks and provide good connectivity to the surrounding area;

a bus rapid transit link through the district centre that connects the Eastern Villages to Swindon Town centre as part of phase 1 of the development, which includes residential development north of the A420, the District Centre and the employment allocation;

additional public transport services to connect with Swindon and internally within the development;

an improved gateway junction at White Hart to manage additional demand and deliver high quality public realm;

*improvements to the Oxford Road / Drakes Way and
Covingham Road / Dorcan Way transport corridors;*

*a green bridge across the A419 near Covingham Drive to
provide for walking, cycling and public transport;*

a new link to the Commonhead Roundabout;

*a new road link under or across the Bristol to London railway
line connecting the development north and south, a new and /
or improved accesses to the A420 for proposed residential and
employment uses;*

a 1000 (3|Ha.) space Park and Ride site;

*and measures to minimise rat-running through existing
adjacent villages and east Swindon.*

5. Additional draft policy explaining the need for and the proposed provision of this transport infrastructure is provided under the heading 'Transport' in paragraphs 5.77-5.82 of the SLBP 2026.
6. In paragraph 5.88 of the SBLP 2026 'Key Evidence Base' documents underlying the draft local plan include:
 - Eastern Villages Transport Study (2011) **[CD 15.4]**
 - Eastern Villages Transport Study Update (2012) **[CD 15.5]**
 - Swindon Transport Strategy (2009) **[CD 15.1]**
7. The Executive Summary of the Swindon Transport Strategy (2009) **[CD 15.1]** identified 'main issues and challenges' affecting Swindon including:
 - Journey times are more attractive by car within the urban area than by public transport
 - The railway line causes major severance for access into the town centre by all modes, but especially for pedestrians and cyclists;

- The A419 and A420 act as barriers to pedestrian and cycle movement east-west and north-south, particularly for the proposed Eastern Villages Area;¹
 - Modelling work showed that there would be significant congestion on the highway network with vehicles on a high number of links exceeding capacity, in addition to significant junction delays in the town centre and on the eastern and southern edges of Swindon
8. 'Key interventions' proposed by the Transport Strategy included the following:
- Bus / Rapid Transport – the 'heart of the transport strategy' through the provision of key high frequency transit corridors providing direct access to the town centre / railway station and key facilities throughout Swindon;
 - Walking and cycling – a continuous network for pedestrians and cyclists
 - Parking interventions;
 - Highways: Investment to be targeted at providing necessary access to the new development locations delivering reliable public transport journey times
9. The Swindon Eastern Villages Transport Study – Update Report December 2012 [CD 15.5] was produced to provide a greater understanding of the potential transport impacts of the EV development on the A419, M4 (Junctions 15 and 16) and the A420 east of the White Hart Junction. Among other things, it states that:

4.19 The graphs indicate that journey times will increase significantly on the A420 westbound with the introduction of the EV development, relative to the Do Nothing (DN) scenario. This is due to the extra traffic on the road from this large development as well as the introduction of new EV access junctions which will introduce delay on the A420...

5.5 The White Hart Junction in its current form would not have sufficient capacity to cater for the anticipated increases in traffic volumes arising from the Eastern Villages even if mitigation is provided elsewhere such as providing a full or partial all vehicle link at the Green Bridge.

¹ See also paragraphs 2.4.26

5.6 The optimum solution from both a placemaking and operational perspective would be to convert the existing roundabout to a diamond interchange...

5.11 The extent of works required to the A420 is largely dictated by the need to upgrade existing junctions and provide new junctions along the corridor. These junctions generally require two or more approach lanes in each direction. The western site access and Gablecross are situated sufficiently close together as to necessitate the widening of the remainder of the A420 to a two lane standard as a minimum in the westbound direction...

10. Paragraph 5.87 of the SBLP 2026 states that 'Effective management' of the proposed Eastern Villages development will be achieved through the application of Policy NC3 and through (among other things):
 - *Implementation of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan;*
 - *An Eastern Villages Supplementary Planning Document;*
11. The 'soundness' of the SBLP 2026 will be determined following the Examination before Inspector; that is, whether the draft local plan is:
 - Positively prepared
 - Justified
 - Effective
 - Consistent with national policy (NPPF 182)

Highway Matters

A420

12. The A420 is a primary route which the Oxfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP) expects to be of a standard to allow for free passage of current and expected future traffic for the majority of the traffic day. It should therefore operate with minimal congestion in order to avoid rat running on minor roads.
13. "The Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1 'Housing Delivery Update' consultation published in February 2014 proposes a further 1,290 homes in the Western Vale (over and above those which are already committed), of which about 1,000 would be adjacent to Shrivenham and Faringdon close to the A420. Vale of White Horse District Council published an 'Evaluation of Transport Impacts Stage 2 and 3a Report' alongside the February 2014 Local Plan consultation. This report identifies that the proposed Vale Local Plan strategic sites are likely to lead to some impacts on the A420, particularly around Faringdon. The next stage of the Vale's transport assessment work will include testing potential highway mitigation measures to address traffic

impacts on the A420. This further modelling work will inform the Pre-submission Draft of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1, which is due to be published for consultation in August 2014".

14. Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) proposes to produce a Route Strategy for the A420 as part of its development of its new Local Transport Plan (LTP) during 2014/15. The Route Strategy would be informed by transport study work already undertaken and that planned in Swindon and Oxfordshire, and will take into account development policies and proposals in both authorities, including the impact of the distribution and assignment of traffic arising from the proposed and/or allocated development on the network. This work will be informed by the updated Oxfordshire CC traffic model that is expected to be available for use in the summer of 2014, which will also inform the updated Oxfordshire CC LTP. This would include identifying critical junctions on the A420 and potential solutions to the problem of accommodating present and future development traffic on the road network. The final LTP would be expected to be approved and adopted by OCC in the spring of 2015.
15. The OCC A420 Route Strategy will, amongst other things, review surrounding and parallel roads to quantify the likelihood of rat running being caused by proposed and allocated development traffic and identify effective measures to combat this.
16. The A420 Route Strategy will have the following parameters:
 - Although the geographic extent will cover the whole of the A420 route between the A419 and the A34, cross-boundary issues will focus mainly on the area shown on the map attached to Appendix 1 on this statement.
 - The Strategy will take account of and evaluate the likely individual and cumulative effect on the capacity of and operational effect on the A420 of planned growth in Swindon Borough and the Vale of White Horse District.
 - Critical junctions on the A420 for evaluation in the Route Strategy will include the following:
 - Within Swindon Borough:
 - White Hart Junction (interchange between the strategic and local road network east of Swindon)
 - Gablecross Roundabout
 - Police Station Access
 - Old Vicarage Lane ...
 - New Eastern access to Rowborough
 - New and existing access to EV south of the A420

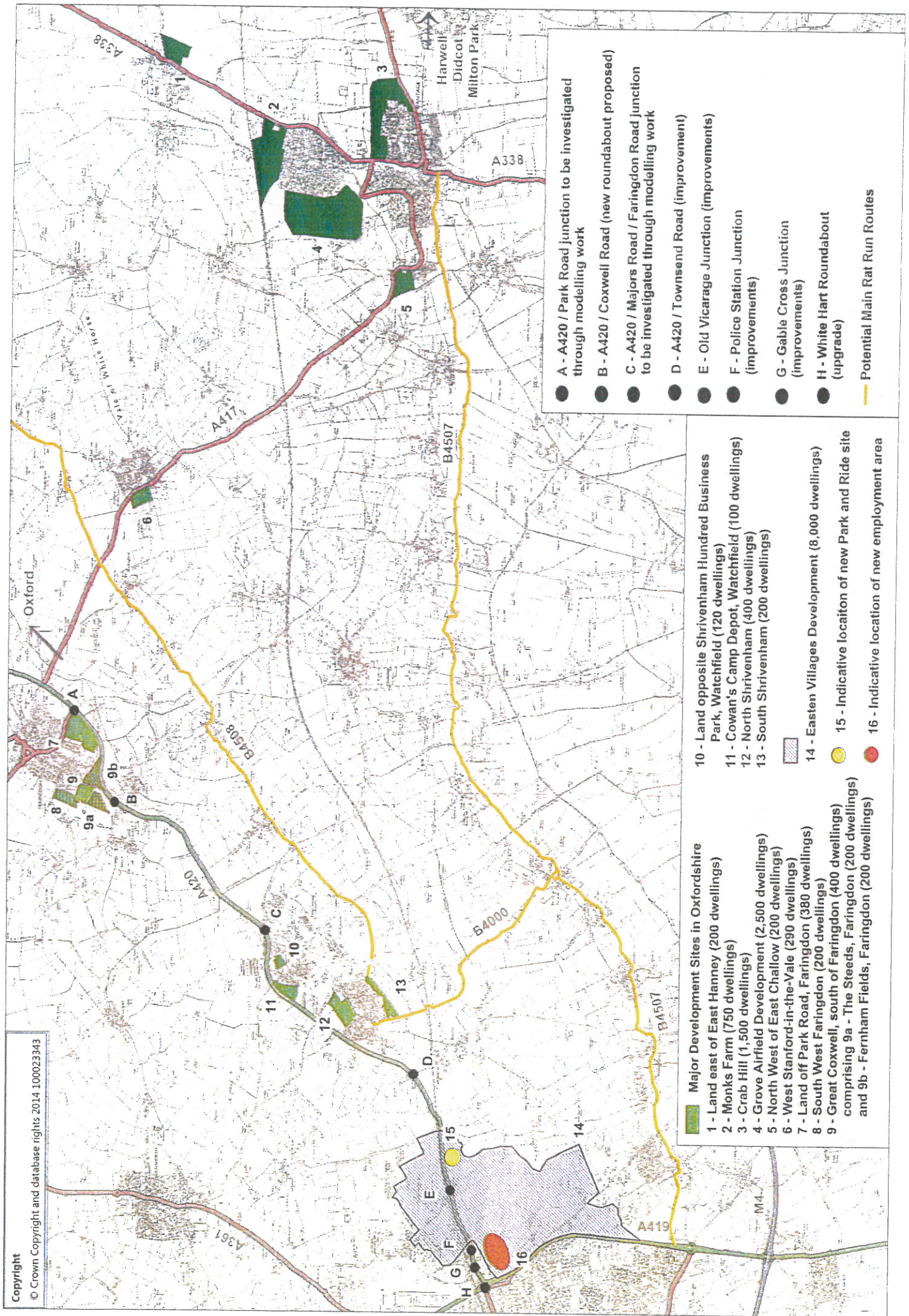
- Within Oxfordshire:
 - Townsend Road, west of Shrivenham
 - B4508 roundabout at Watchfield
 - A420 slip road to Great Coxwell
 - A417 Park Road, Faringdon

This list is not exhaustive, and additional junctions may be identified through the transport modelling work.


- The key other routes to be evaluated in the Route Strategy in terms of the likely impact on their capacity, use and operation of planned growth in Swindon Borough and the Vale of the White Horse District will be:
 - B4508 east of Shrivenham
 - B4000 south of Shrivenham
 - B4507 Swindon – Wantage
 - Any potential mitigation measures required to prevent the use of these roads by through traffic generated by this planned growth will include the timely provision of local traffic calming and traffic/speed management measures, to be agreed with the relevant local communities.
 - Public Transport provision will be a key component of the proposed Route Strategy. Development of the strategic bus route (66) will be the main element, which is likely to be a staged approach. This will include:
 - Enhancement of the morning and evening peak Monday to Friday service to every 20 minutes from June 2014, with additional evening service Mon-Sat
 - Daytime Monday to Saturday 20 minute service plus enhancement to Sunday service from Spring 2015
 - Future enhanced service levels / patterns to be determined
 - At all stages, development of enhanced connections and facilities along the route, including walk/cycle connections, cycle parking and high quality waiting/shelter provision (including real time passenger information where appropriate) will be required
17. Any planning application for development in Swindon Borough or The Vale of White Horse District that will generate significant amounts of movement shall be supported by a Transport Statement or Transport Assessment that takes into account the planned growth in both authorities and the proper accommodation of its traffic consequences on the network.

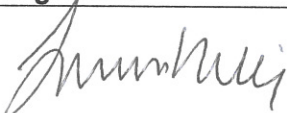
Trip Rates


18. The additional vehicle trip rates as defined in the JMP traffic model have remained consistent as a benchmark for the strategic development proposals namely Eastern Villages (EV). This was initially for 12000 residential units and associated developments in this area. The Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 allocation has been significantly reduced in numbers and is now for 8000 residential units together with associated development. The original (12,000 dwellings) significant highway mitigation improvements as accepted by the Highways Agency (HA), together with the local highway authority (OCC), will be provided as part of the revised (8,000 houses).proposed development.
19. On this understanding, it is broadly common ground among all parties that the JMP vehicle trip rates are considered appropriately used for the specific purposes of the Local Plan/EIP process and in particular for the traffic and transport evaluation of the EV strategic allocation. Any subsequent planning applications on this strategic allocated area will be subject to, and be in accord with, the stringent travel plan policies relating to this site allocation, and any proposed development will be required to comply with these policies when submitted as a full or outline planning application on any part of the allocated area so as to concur with Policy NC3 of the Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026.

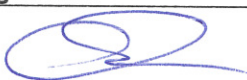


Statement of Common Ground

Signed on behalf of Swindon Borough Council		
Name & position	Signature	Date
Philip Smith Planning Policy Manager		25/3/14

Signed on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council		
Name & position	Signature	Date
John Disley Policy & Strategy Manager		27/03/2014

Signed on behalf of Vale of White Horse District Council		
Name & position	Signature	Date
MARK WILLIAMS PLANNING POLICY PROJECT LEAD		31/3/2014

Signed on behalf of Western Vale Villages and the representatives named here: Wanborough PC (Gary Sumner), Bourton PC (Maggie Brown), Ashbury PC (Marion Turner), Bishopstone PC (Nigel Crisp), Longcot PC (Phil Young), Compton Beauchamp Parish Meeting (Charles Lochrane), Watchfield PC (Sue Nodder), Shrivenham PC (Elaine Ware), Great Coxwell PC (Annabelle Zinovieff), Littleworth Parish Meeting (David Mackay), Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor Parish Council (Brian Forster), Fyfield and Tubney Parish Meeting (John Watts), Covingham Parish Council (Val Curtis), Woolstone Parish Meeting (Henry Snell)		
Name & position	Signature	Date
GARY SUMNER CHAIR WANBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL		25/3/14

