

Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1

Examination Hearings

Examination Stage 2

Written Statement by Vale of White Horse District Council

in relation to:

Matter 7 – Supporting Infrastructure and Services (Policies CP7, CP12, CP17 – CP19, CP21 and CP33 – CP36)

Version: Final
Dated: 06 January 2016

Matter 7 - Supporting Infrastructure and Services (Policies CP7, CP12, CP17 – CP19, CP21 and CP33 – CP36)

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The Local Plan 2031 Part 1 has been developed to support sustainable development, enable delivery of continued economic prosperity, and build healthy and sustainable communities in the District. Bringing forward infrastructure and services in a timely fashion will be key to supporting development, and therefore policies are proposed in the Local Plan that will help ensure that appropriate infrastructure provision can reasonably expect to come forward with development in this plan period.
- 1.2 When setting out the spatial vision for the Plan, the need to promote sustainable transport and accessibility was considered as one of 4 overarching strategic objectives, and this focus is reflected in the development of a number of Local Plan policies, Core Policy 12, Core Policy 17, Core Policy 18, Core Policy 19, Core Policy 21, Core Policy 33, Core Policy 35 and Core Policy 36. These policies set out to support and promote transport infrastructure and service delivery in those areas identified for development growth, and where possible reduce the need to travel, particularly by less sustainable means. However, the Plan also recognises that development should provide for all the necessary on-site and where appropriate, off-site infrastructure through the planning process, taking into account viability matters. This expectation is set out in more detail in Core Policy 7.
- 1.3 In developing the Local Plan policies that support provision of infrastructure and services, relevant guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)¹ has been followed, along with that set out in the Planning Practice Guidance.² Policies including Core Policy 7 have also needed to take account of the Community Infrastructure Levy regulations and guidance.³ More detail on how these Local Plan policies to deliver infrastructure and services meet the test of soundness as set out in paragraph 182 of the NPPF⁴ is provided in Section 3 of this statement.
- 1.4 Planning Practice Guidance⁵ also sets out the need to work with others in developing Local Plan policies, and this is particularly important in the context of planning and funding infrastructure, given that the local planning authority is generally reliant on others for delivery of

¹ National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012, at:

<http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/>

² <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/>

³ <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/community-infrastructure-levy/>

⁴ National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012

⁵ <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/>

infrastructure improvements. Good cross-organisational working arrangements are already in place, and the district pro-actively engages with others to help deliver infrastructure and growth aspirations set out in the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan (SEP).⁶

- 1.5 Delivery of relevant programmes of work, especially transport infrastructure improvements, is co-ordinated through a Growth Board⁷ at which leaders and chief executives of the County and District Councils in Oxfordshire are able to make key decisions and monitor delivery of growth and supporting infrastructure. Other relevant cross-organisational working with infrastructure providers such as Thames Water, the Bus Operators and Highways England is also on-going. Further detail on this is given in the Statements of Common Ground (SOCGs) referenced in Appendix 3.
- 1.6 Taking into account the spatial strategy set out in the Plan the focus for infrastructure improvements and investment is greater in certain parts of the District. A particular focus for new infrastructure and service delivery is Science Vale in the South-East Vale area, where substantial new jobs and homes are planned to come forward in and around Didcot, around Abingdon and along the A420 corridor in the Western Vale area. This is reflected in the policies related to infrastructure, and further detail is provided in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).⁸
- 1.7 Set out in the sections below is the rationale behind each of the Infrastructure and Service related policies, and how they meet the tests of soundness.

Question 7.1

Does the plan make adequate and soundly based provision for the infrastructure and services necessary to support new development?

2. The Council's Response to Question 7.1

- 2.1 Core Policy 7 sets out the requirement for developers to provide for necessary on-site and where relevant, off-site infrastructure. It takes account of the Council's 'Delivering Infrastructure Strategy'⁹, and the approach to securing funding for infrastructure in line with the CIL regulations, and the proposed CIL charging schedule to be examined following the Local Plan. In due course, the CIL charging schedule will

⁶ Oxfordshire LEP Strategic Economic Plan, March 2014 (08 ECO10)

⁷ <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/oxfordshire-growth-board>

⁸ Local Plan 2031 Part 1, Infrastructure Delivery Plan, March 2015 (01 DLP07)

⁹ Vale of White Horse Delivering Infrastructure Strategy, July 2014 (10 INF03)

also be complemented by a SPD that sets out the circumstances in which S106 and S278 agreements would continue to be appropriate.

- 2.2 Core Policy 7 recognizes that development will be required to provide necessary on-site and, where appropriate, off-site infrastructure arising from the proposal. The type and level of infrastructure and service provision associated with proposed development is set out in more detail in the Vale IDP¹⁰ and the site development templates in Appendix A of the Plan. Core Policy 7 also recognizes that the contribution development is able to make to infrastructure costs needs to be based on sound viability work, taking into account guidance outlined in Paragraphs 173 to 176 of the NPPF.¹¹ The starting point for the Council's viability assessment is the Local Plan Viability report¹². This sets out how particular sites are able to contribute to necessary infrastructure and, along with the CIL viability work¹³, evidences where and to what extent, Local Plan sites are able to contribute towards infrastructure requirements set out in the Plan. Core Policy 7 also recognizes the need for flexibility in noting that independent assessment of viability may need to be undertaken on a site-by-site basis as development comes forward.
- 2.3 A minor amendment to Policy Core Policy 7 is however proposed in light of consultation responses received. The modification is intended to clarify the process of securing infrastructure improvements linked to new development, and is referenced in Appendix 1.
- 2.4 Core Policy 12 sets out the need for land to be safeguarded to support the future delivery of transport schemes to enable growth to come forward within the Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe sub-area. Improvements to the A34 Lodge Hill Junction have been identified within the IDP¹⁴ and are important to supporting sustainable growth in the Abingdon area, whilst land for the South Abingdon By-pass is safeguarded to ensure that development does not prejudice the future delivery of this scheme should it be required beyond the plan period. A minor modification to this policy is proposed to reference 'Frilford Lights' to be consistent with Map E16 in Appendix E of the Local Plan.
- 2.5 Core Policy 17 sets out the key strategic transport improvements which are required to support sustainable growth within Science Vale, where 74% of Vale allocations (10,320 dwellings) are allocated by the Local Plan, and where additional growth of nearly 3000 dwellings are

¹⁰ Local Plan 2031 Part 1, Infrastructure Delivery Plan, March 2015 (01 DLP07)

¹¹ National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012

¹² Local Plan Viability Report, October 2014 (10 INF01)

¹³ CIL Viability Study, October 2014 and CIL Viability Update, February 2015 (11 CIL01 and 11 CIL 02.7)

¹⁴ Vale of White Horse Infrastructure Delivery Plan, March 2015, Section 6, Local Transport (01 DLP07)

planned for neighbouring South Oxfordshire.¹⁵ Significant funding has already been secured for several of these schemes (see Section 3.11 and the IDP), but funding will still be required from development. The schemes identified by Core Policy 17 are also closely aligned with those scheme priorities set out in the Local Transport Plan 4 Science Vale Transport Strategy.¹⁶ and in the Science Vale section of the Oxfordshire SEP.¹⁷ Evidence on scheme benefits is also shown in the Evaluation of Transport Impacts Study.¹⁸ A minor amendment to the text at bullet 7 is proposed to include reference to the 'Southern Didcot Spine Road' following discussions with the County Council. This requires a minor amendment to the title to Map E3, and supports Core Policy 18 on safeguarding. These amendments are set out in Appendix 1.

- 2.6 Core Policy 18 identifies the need for land to be safeguarded to support the future delivery of transport schemes to help enable planned growth to come forward within the South- East Vale Sub-Area. This policy is complementary to Core Policy 17 and Core Policy 19, which identify transport projects required to support growth both within the Local Plan period and beyond. Minor modification to the text is proposed (as set out in Appendix 1), and changes to maps supporting this policy proposed for Maps E3 and E11 in Appendix E, and the key for Maps E13 and E15 in light of discussions with the County Council and South Oxfordshire. A further reference to the historic environment in the policy is proposed following the representation from English Heritage. These are set out in Appendix 1.
- 2.7 Core Policy 19 sets out the Council's on-going commitment to work with partners to help deliver the re-opening of a rail station at Grove, and the Local Plan proposes to safeguard land in the vicinity of the proposed station. The policy is consistent with the proposal SV 1.7 of the Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan, which promotes the provision of a station at this location as part of 'a wider proposal to improve rail connectivity with Didcot and neighbouring areas, such as Swindon and Bristol.'¹⁹ It also recognises the need to ensure that sustainable transport options are prioritised for the longer-term as economic growth comes forward.
- 2.8 Core Policy 21 states the need for land to be safeguarded to support the future delivery of transport schemes that will help enable development to come forward within the Western Vale Sub-area. The policy takes account of the evidence contained within the Local Plan

¹⁵ South Oxfordshire Core Strategy, December 2012, at: <http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/core-strategy/adopted-core-strategy>

¹⁶ Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan 4, September 2015, Volume 2, part ii (09 TRA 10)

¹⁷ Oxfordshire LEP Strategic Economic Plan, March 2014, especially pages 107-123 (08 ECO10)

¹⁸ Evaluation of Transport Impacts Study to inform the Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan 2031: Part 1 Strategic Sites and Policies, November 2014 (09 TRA 02)

¹⁹ Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan 4, Volume 2, part ii, page 8 (09 TRA 10)

Evaluation of Transport Impacts Study²⁰ and Local Transport Plan 4 A420 Route Strategy. A minor amendment is proposed to the supporting Map E17 to include an additional blue circle on the A420 to the north of Shrivenham to recognise the potential of a highway upgrade in this vicinity. This follows discussions with the County Council, and takes account of Proposal 3 of the A420 Route Strategy in the final LTP 4. This is set out in Appendix 1.²¹

- 2.9 Core Policy 33 sets out how the council will work with the County Council and other partners to promote sustainable transport accessibility for new development. This includes ensuring that development is brought forward to support measures outlined in the Local Transport Plan, and is specifically designed to help support sustainable transport access, minimising traffic impacts on the road network. The policy is intended to be complementary to Core Policy 34 and Core Policy 35, as well as other policies in the plan such as Core Policy 37 on Design and Local Distinctiveness, and Core Policy 45 on Green Infrastructure. It is also consistent with the NPPF as set out in Section 3 below.
- 2.10 Core Policy 34 recognises that the Council will continue to need to work with Highways England and Oxfordshire County Council in planning for managing traffic on the A34, including the Air Quality impacts of traffic on this route. Investment for better managing traffic along the A34, including a major corridor study to review longer-term options for improving strategic road access between Oxfordshire and Cambridge was announced as part of the Road Investment Strategy in November 2014,²² and the district will continue to work positively with others to understand how plans for growth can be appropriately considered as part of this more detailed work. This is set out in more detail in the SOCG with Highways England and Oxfordshire County Council.
- 2.11 As the statutory authority required to monitor and if necessary, designate air quality management areas, the Council will in particular wish to monitor and understand how any changes to traffic management along the A34 will impact on this area, including the Oxford Meadows SAC and the Botley Air Quality Management Area located adjacent to the A34.²³
- 2.12 A minor textual modification is proposed to Core Policy 34 replacing 'Highways Agency' with 'Highways England'. This is required to acknowledge the change in status of the organisation responsible for managing the core road network (see Appendix 1).

²⁰ Evaluation of Transport Impacts Study to inform the Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan 2031: Part 1 Strategic Sites and Policies, November 2014 (09 TRA 02)

²¹ Local Transport Plan 4, Volume 2, part ii, Page 90 (09 TRA 10)

²² Department for Transport, Road Investment Strategy: for the 2015/16 to 2019/20 Road Period, March 2015 (09 TRA 11)

²³ <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/environment/pollution/air-quality>

- 2.13 Core Policy 35 sets out how the Council will ensure that new development promotes public transport, cycling and walking. This policy is key to ensuring that impact of new development on the transport network is appropriately mitigated and builds on standard practice for ensuring that sustainable modes of transport are supported through the design and delivery of site layouts, and appropriate mechanisms, such as provision of a travel plan for major developments. These policies will assist the County Council in particular, in delivering their plans for sustainable transport improvements as set out in the Local Transport Plan 4.²⁴
- 2.14 Core Policy 36 sets out the district's intention to ensure that electronic communication infrastructure, in particular superfast broadband, is provided for all new development. This policy will ensure that opportunities for working and accessing services at home are maximised, thereby reducing the need to travel and supporting economic growth. This policy is complementary to the Better Broadband for Oxfordshire project, supported by Oxfordshire County Council.²⁵

3. Summary of how the Policies and Proposals for Infrastructure and Services meet the 'tests of soundness'

- 3.1 The following section sets out in more detail how the policies related to supporting infrastructure and services meet the 'tests of soundness' set out in paragraph 182 of the NPPF²⁶.

Positively Prepared

- 3.2 At the outset of the plan making process, it was recognized that infrastructure and service provision would need careful consideration in understanding how best to support delivery of new housing and employment needs. Core Policy 3 on Settlement Hierarchy, for example, is informed by evidence that set out where locations for proposed development would best tie in with infrastructure and service provision.²⁷ The spatial strategy set out in the Plan has taken full account of this work, and where planned infrastructure investment will come forward, focusing strategic development within Science Vale and the main service centres and settlements across the district.²⁸ Further evidence base work, including the Evaluation of Transport Study and Water Cycle Study has helped refine the strategic infrastructure issues

²⁴ Local Transport Plan 4, September 2015 (09 TRA 10)

²⁵ <http://www.betterbroadbandoxfordshire.org.uk/home>

²⁶ National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012

²⁷ Town and Villages Facilities Study, February 2014 (13 COM04)

²⁸ See Topic Paper 2, Spatial Strategy, November 2014 (02 TOP02)

and requirements in these settlements associated with the proposed strategic sites allocations.²⁹

- 3.3 Building on this evidence base work and extensive discussions with key infrastructure providers such as the County Council and Thames Water, infrastructure requirements were identified in the Vale IDP.³⁰ This document has been refined and updated following feedback given at pre and post-submission consultation, and taking account of on-going partnership work such as that through the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership Growth Board.³¹ The IDP sets out in clear detail infrastructure requirements across the District that support planned growth in the Local Plan, including the more specific requirements associated with each strategic site and relevant funding mechanisms. It also gives an outline of the phasing for this infrastructure, set out by the Sub-Areas identified in the plan. This is complemented by requirements outlined in the site development templates in Appendix A of the Plan.
- 3.4 Having an up to date IDP also allows for tracking of infrastructure requirements throughout the plan period through annual review and updating, and in turn that assists in monitoring delivery of the Plan. In short, it ensures that evidence underpinning infrastructure policies continues to be relevant and up to date, and that sustainable development is able to be delivered. Key areas for review and proposed amendments agreed through SOCGs for updating of the IDP in 2016 are set out in Appendix 2.

Justified

- 3.5 In line with requirements set out in the Local Plan Regulations, extensive consultation has been undertaken on the Vale Local Plan and this has helped shape development of its policies. A summary of consultation and how the District has responded in developing the Plan is set out in the Council's Regulation 22 Consultation Statement.³² Representations made at pre-submission and submission stage made clear the importance of planning positively for infrastructure to enable new development to be sustainable. Representations also asked for more clarity on relevant infrastructure provision, funding and delivery mechanisms. There were also a large number of representations made regarding transport improvements required to help support proposed development. Further detail on infrastructure provision as set out in both the IDP and site development templates in Appendix A of the Local Plan, was supported by extensive engagement with

²⁹ Evaluation of Transport Impacts Study to inform the Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan 2031: Part 1 Strategic Sites and Policies, November 2014 (09 TRA 02) and Vale of White Horse Water Cycle Study, September 2015 (16 WWF 01 and 01.1)

³⁰ Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031, Part 1, Infrastructure Delivery Plan, March 2015 (01 DLP07)

³¹ <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/oxfordshire-growth-board>

³² Local Plan 2031, Part 1, Regulation 22 Consultation Statement, March 2015 (01 DLP09)

infrastructure providers as evidenced in relevant SOCGs, and referenced in Appendix 3. Core Policy 12, Core Policy 17, Core Policy 18, Core Policy 19, Core Policy 21 and Core Policies 33-36 are also drafted to help ensure that sustainable transport accessibility for the area can be enabled for the plan period and beyond.

- 3.6 In terms of the strategic allocation of development, the Council's statement on Matter 3, Spatial Strategy and 'Ring-Fence', dealt with at Stage 1 of the examination sets out how the allocation of housing is consistent with concentrating new sites in areas of planned economic growth. Many of the Local Plan's housing allocations (10,320 dwellings) are in Science Vale, which complements and balances with employment growth in this part of the Vale, and the existence of two Enterprise Zones. Focusing development in this area, and at other local service centres such as Abingdon and Farringdon helps facilitate more effective planning and funding for infrastructure provision, and is consistent with other strategy and policy documents, including the Oxfordshire SEP and Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan.³³
- 3.7 Evidence base studies on infrastructure planning also support the approach towards allocating the majority of housing in identified growth areas. On transport, for example, the Evaluation of Transport Impact Study shows that locating significant levels of housing development in Science Vale is complementary to the planned Science Vale Transport Infrastructure Package, much of which is already in detailed planning or construction stages. Concentrating development in this area also gives the fullest possible opportunity to support sustainable transport opportunities through reducing length of trips, particularly at peak times for journeys to work, and enabling people to travel by bus, walk and cycle modes. For example, the evidence based study on Didcot to Harwell Bus options shows clear potential for service improvements linked to growth³⁴. Ensuring options for sustainable transport from new development are maximized is supported by Core Policy 33 and Core Policy 35, and recognized in the SOCG with the bus operators, referenced in Appendix 3.
- 3.8 Having certainty of higher numbers of housing coming forward at a number of strategic sites within the Science Vale area, including strategic sites within South Oxfordshire that are already allocated in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan also allows for more certainty on planning for education, leisure, health and utility provision. More detail of infrastructure requirements associated with the Vale strategic sites in Science Vale is given within the IDP, which recognises that funding for these requirements will come forward from a variety of sources, including Community Infrastructure Levy and S106 developer contributions where these are directly related to particular sites. Further detail on how the Council has worked with infrastructure

³³ Local Transport Plan 4, Volume 2 (09 TRA10)

³⁴ Didcot-Harwell Public Transport Study, Atkins, 14/08/2014 (09 TRA07)

providers in development of the plan is given in Topic Paper 1 on The Duty to Co-operate and Cross Boundary Issues, and Topic Paper 6 on Transport and Accessibility.³⁵

Effective

- 3.9 As set out in the introduction, local planning for the major infrastructure required to support growth plans is well underway, with good partnership arrangements in place to support planning and delivery of critical infrastructure between the Council, infrastructure providers including the County Council, Highways England and the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership. For transport schemes, the Vale of White Horse, South Oxfordshire and the County also have a Memorandum of Understanding on the Planning and Delivery of Transport Infrastructure, recognizing the need to work together to develop supporting policy and secure funding for major transport schemes that help enable growth to come forward.³⁶
- 3.10 Core Policy Core Policy 7 is clear that developments will be required to contribute towards on-site and off-site infrastructure, but the amount they are able to contribute will take account of viability constraints. Once a CIL tariff is in place, strategic infrastructure will largely be contributed towards through this mechanism, whilst more directly related infrastructure will continue to be secured through Section 106 or Section 278 agreements. Based on the documents submitted for the CIL examination, approximately £5.7 million per year is likely to come forward through CIL, or £91.7 million over the plan period. This is calculated to be able to provide funding for approximately a quarter of key strategic infrastructure requirements.³⁷ Given the funding gap identified through the CIL examination, securing match funding is key to enable delivery of strategic infrastructure, particularly transport improvements in the Science Vale growth area that straddles Vale of White Horse and part of South Oxfordshire.
- 3.11 Over the past few years, the District and County Council have been very successful in securing commitments to match funding for schemes, particularly strategic transport schemes in the Science Vale area that is able to support delivery of new development. This includes:
- £10 million of central government funding from the Pinch Point pot towards upgrades at Chiltern and Milton Interchanges on the A34, matched by £11.5 million to come forward from EZ

³⁵ Topic Paper 1, The Duty to Co-operate and Cross Boundary Issues, and Topic Paper 6 on Transport and Accessibility (02 TOP01 and 02 TOP06)

³⁶ Memorandum of Understanding On the Planning and Delivery of Transport Infrastructure, as shown in Appendix 2 of the Statement of Common Ground between Vale of White Horse and Oxfordshire County Council for Stage 1 of the examination hearings, dated 21/8/2015 (20 SCG01)

³⁷ Community Infrastructure Levy Infrastructure and Funding Report, February 2015 (11 CIL 02.3)

business rates and secured S106 monies. These schemes are underway and programmed for completion in 2016.³⁸

- £6.1 million central government funding from the City Deal pot, matched by up to £22.7m to come forward from EZ business rates for road improvements to improve access to the Science Vale EZ. These schemes are underway and should be complete within the next 2 years.³⁹
- £1 million revenue from the Local Sustainable Transport Scheme pot, for delivering an upgrade in frequency of the Didcot Parkway to Harwell bus service and for cycle promotion schemes.⁴⁰
- £108.5 million Local Growth Fund allocation to the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, with an additional £9.9 million to 2020/21. This includes funding of £4.5 million to the Science Vale Cycle Network, £9.5 million to Didcot Station Car Park Expansion, and an outline commitment to further develop plans for upgrading the A34 Lodge Hill junction so that improvements can be delivered in the future.⁴¹
- Recently securing designation of an additional Enterprise Zone around Didcot, which will bring in significant additional funding from business rates over the next few years that can be used to support infrastructure delivery.⁴²
- Recently securing designation of Garden Town status for the greater Didcot area that will help ensure that funds are available to develop infrastructure planning in more detail over the next few years.⁴³

3.12 In addition, the district has worked positively with the County Council, inputting information to business cases for Science Vale transport infrastructure schemes submitted to the Local Enterprise Partnership. Should further funding become available, for example, through the £475 million local major road investment fund announced in the National Autumn Statement, business cases are therefore ready to help secure additional funding.

3.13 It is recognised that funding beyond the next election from 2020 onwards is less certain. However, it is considered that through regular review of the IDP and on-going successful partnership working with infrastructure providers, there is flexibility to respond to changing

³⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-pinch-point-fund> and <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/major-current-roadworks>

³⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/city-deal-oxford-and-oxfordshire>

⁴⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-sustainable-transport-fund-funding-decisions-2015-to-2016>

⁴¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/oxfordshire-growth-deal>

⁴² <http://enterprisezones.communities.gov.uk/>

⁴³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-garden-towns-to-create-thousands-of-new-homes>

circumstances, and ensure that the District is well placed to capitalise on funding opportunities as they arise.

Consistent with National Policy

General Infrastructure:

- 3.14 Paragraph 177 of the NPPF notes ‘that local planning authorities understand district-wide development costs at the time Local Plans are drawn up. For this reason, infrastructure and development policies should be planned at the same time, in the Local Plan.’ However, paragraph 173 to 176 makes clear the importance of viability to ensure that development in the plan ‘should not be subject to such a scale of obligations and policy burdens that their ability to be developed in threatened.’⁴⁴ Development of the Vale Local Plan Part 1 has therefore taken a balanced approach, ensuring that relevant infrastructure has been identified with providers, evidenced within the IDP and set out in core policies in the Local Plan. At the same time, the Plan ensures that development is not overburdened and is able to pay for key infrastructure through S106 and/or CIL, whilst still being viable, tested through the Local Plan and CIL viability reports. Core Policy 7 also makes clear that viability should be considered again in more detail when development sites come forward to application, ensuring that a flexible approach is undertaken in applying Local Plan policies.

Sustainable Transport and Accessibility:

- 3.15 Paragraph 29 of the NPPF sets out that ‘the transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, giving people a real choice about how they travel. However, the Government also recognises that different policies and measures will be required in different communities and opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary from urban to rural areas.’ Paragraph 34 also notes that ‘plans and decisions should ensure developments that generate significant movement are located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximized,’ whilst Paragraph 37 notes that ‘planning policies should aim for a balance of land uses within their area so that people can be encouraged to minimise journey lengths for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities.’⁴⁵
- 3.16 The Vale Local Plan Part 1 supports this approach, by locating strategic housing sites in Science Vale close to employment growth areas, frequent bus routes and rail lines, and elsewhere close to public transport corridors on the A420, and in Abingdon. Core Policy 33 and

⁴⁴ National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012

⁴⁵ National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012

Core Policy 35 also support delivery of sustainable transport improvements in line with policies outlined in the County Council's Local Transport Plan 4, and are drafted to ensure that strategic allocation sites positively plan to promote sustainable transport options through master-planning and have transport assessments and travel plans at the outset. This approach is generally supported by the bus companies, will help delivery of new transport infrastructure for cycling and walking, and enable design of development to ensure residents have choice in how they travel to work and access services. However, it does need to be recognized that part of the Vale is rural in nature, and opportunities for sustainable transport will be less in those areas.

Major Transport Schemes:

- 3.17 Paragraph 41 of the NPPF states that 'Local planning authorities should identify and protect, where there is robust evidence, sites and routes which could be critical in developing infrastructure to widen transport choice.'⁴⁶ Evidence based work, particularly that undertaken as part of the Evaluation of Transport Impact Study has identified key transport schemes seen necessary to support growth. Many of these are set out in the Science Vale Transport Package, identified in the IDP. Core Policies Core Policy 18, Core Policy 19 and Core Policy 21 therefore set out to ensure that land is appropriately safeguarded for strategic transport schemes, so that proposals for development do not harm their delivery. In the case of Western Wantage Link Road, Abingdon By-pass and Grove Station this includes schemes that may be needed beyond the plan period.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The Council considers that in respect of this matter, it can justify that the Local Plan meets the tests of soundness set out in the NPPF subject to minor modifications it sets out in Appendix 1 to this Written Statement.

⁴⁶ National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012

Appendix 1:

The Council's Suggested Minor Modifications in relation to issues raised to Matter 7.

Ref.	Issue Raised	Modification Suggested
Core Policy 7	Policy wording	Amended text as submitted as part of the Schedule of Proposed Changes, Part A prior to the Examination Stage 1
Core Policy 12	Policy wording	Add additional scheme on list of schemes of ' Land for Improvements to Frilford Lights ' to be consistent with publishing of the map E16 on Appendix E.
Core Policy 18	Policy wording	Change text in brackets in paragraph 2 of Core Policy 18 to ' (as shown by maps in Appendix E and the Adopted Policies Map) .'
Core Policy 18	Policy wording	Add to paragraph 4 of Core Policy 18: 'Landscaping, ' the historic environment ', and means of access.
Core Policy 17,18 and Appendix E	Policy wording and accuracy of Map E3	Amend text in bullet 7 of Core Policy 17 to read, 'A new Harwell Link Road between the B4493 and A417 and Southern Didcot Spine Road ' Amend title on map E3 to state, 'Harwell Strategic Link Road and Southern Didcot Spine Road .'

Core Policy 18 and Appendix E	Accuracy of Map E11	Add an additional blue circle at junction of A4185 and Thompson Avenue to ensure all junctions that may need upgrading are included on map.
Core Policy 18 and Appendix E	Accuracy of Maps E13 and E15	Change map key to reference ' area of search (SODC) ,' rather than 'area of investigation'
Core Policy 21 and Appendix E	Accuracy of Map E17	Expand map and add additional blue circle on the A420 to the north-east of Highworth Road to indicate that a junction improvement may be needed to support development growth in the future
Core Policy 34	Change in name of statutory body	Replace reference of 'Highways Agency' to ' Highways England. '

Appendix 2:

Schedule of Updates Required for the IDP

<i>Page / reference</i>	<i>Proposed amendment</i>	<i>Reason</i>
Tables 2, 3 and 4	For sewage upgrade works, change reference to funding from S106 to 'developer funded'	To take account of latest guidance on securing upgrades to the sewage work associated with development
Tables 2, 3 and 4 and Appendix 1	Review latest funding and costs associated with key infrastructure, including education provision	To take account of the latest position of planning for schools, including information set out in the statement from Oxfordshire County Council
Table 5	Review latest funding and costs associated with each scheme in the Science Vale Transport Package	To take account of SOCG with OCC, and latest work on these schemes
Table 5	<p>'South facing slips on A34 at Lodge Hill' text will be changed and appears below:</p> <p>'Growth arising directly from north Abingdon, South Kennington and North West Radley sites requires the creation will help to facilitate delivery of south facing slips on the A34 at Lodge Hill. It will be necessary for the slips to be delivered early in the phasing of the development.'</p>	To take account of the SOCG with Highway's England from LPP 1, Stage 1.

Page 26	To review section of the text on infrastructure provision associated with water and waste water provision	To take account of the latest approach to water/ waste water provision as set out in the statement of common ground with Thames Water

Appendix 3:

Relevant Statements of Common Ground

Vale of White Horse and Oxfordshire County Council, LPP 1, Stage 1 and Stage 2

Vale of White Horse, Thames Water and the Environment Agency, LPP 1, Stage 1

Vale of White Horse, Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford Bus Company and Stagecoach in Oxfordshire, LPP 1, Stage 2

Vale of White Horse, Oxfordshire County Council, Highways England, LPP 1, Stage 1 and Stage 2

Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire District Council, LPP 1, Stage 1 and 2

Vale of White Horse, Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS England, LPP 1, Stage 2