

Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1

Examination Hearings

Stage 1 - September 2015

Statement of Common Ground

Between

Vale of White Horse District Council

and

Cherwell District Council

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared jointly by the parties identified above ("the parties") to document matters agreed with regard to the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1.
- 1.2. The Statement sets out the confirmed points of agreement between Vale of White Horse District Council and Cherwell District Council with regard to the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1 and supporting evidence base, to assist the Inspector during Stage 1 of the Examination in Public. The Statement is provided without prejudice to other matters of detail that the parties may wish to raise during the hearings.

2. Duty to Cooperate

- 2.1. Vale of White Horse District Council has continuously engaged with Cherwell District Council through the evolution of the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 on a number of cross boundary issues. This engagement has primarily occurred through the Oxfordshire Growth Board (joint Committee of Councillors) (formerly the Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership), its Executive Officer Group, and supported by the Post-SHMA Project Team and the Oxfordshire Planning Policy Officers group (OPPO). Meetings are held on a frequent and regular basis to ensure effective co-operation on strategic issues. Engagement through the Growth Board and OPPO has provided common understanding of the planning issues faced by both authorities. It has assisted the framing of respective Local Plan issues and objectives.

3. Matters on which the parties agree

- 3.1. The parties agree that:
 - i. Vale of White Horse District Council and Cherwell District Council have a positive working relationship

- ii. Vale of White Horse District Council has fully complied with the duty to cooperate with Cherwell District Council during the preparation of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan
- iii. Vale of White Horse District Council and Cherwell District Council cooperated together with the other Oxfordshire Councils on a continuous basis in the production of the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment published in April 2014. Through the Oxfordshire Growth Board they continue to engage on meeting the housing needs identified by the SHMA
- iv. All the Oxfordshire Councils are signatories to the Oxfordshire Statement of Co-operation to the effect that each will seek to meet their own needs in full, but if they cannot, they will co-operate to meet the housing needs within the HMA area through a collaborative managed process
- v. The Oxfordshire Councils agree that the level of need identified for Oxford City in the SHMA is unlikely to be met within its administrative boundaries. It is currently being considered on a cooperative basis through the Oxfordshire Growth Board
- vi. There is an agreed countywide process for considering unmet need arising from Oxford City. A timetable and programme of work was agreed by the Oxfordshire Growth Board on 20 November 2014.
- vii. The countywide process was the subject of discussion at the Cherwell Local Plan Hearings in December 2014. The adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 states (para. B.95):

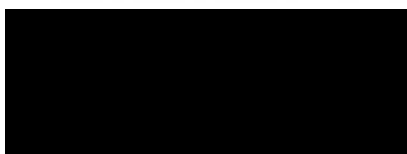
"Cherwell District Council will continue to work under the 'Duty to Co-operate' with all other Oxfordshire Local Authorities on an on-going basis to address the objectively assessed need for housing across the Oxfordshire Housing Market Area and to meet joint commitments such as the Oxford and Oxfordshire City Deal (2014). As a first step Cherwell District Council has sought to accommodate the housing need for Cherwell District in full in the Cherwell Local Plan. Cherwell District Council recognises that Oxford may not be able to accommodate the whole of its new housing requirement for the 2011-2031 period within its administrative boundary. The urban capacity of Oxford is as yet unconfirmed. Cherwell District Council will continue to work jointly and proactively with the Oxfordshire local authorities and through the Oxfordshire Growth Board to assess all reasonable spatial options, including the release of brownfield land, the potential for a new settlement and a full strategic review of the boundaries of the Oxford Green Belt. These issues are not for Cherwell to consider in isolation. These options will need to be undertaken in accordance with national policy, national guidance, the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) regulations, and the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) to establish how and where any unmet need might best be accommodated within the Oxfordshire Housing Market Area. Joint work will need to comprehensively consider how spatial options could be supported by necessary infrastructure to ensure an integrated approach to the delivery of housing, jobs and services. Full public consultation will be central to a 'sound' process and outcome. If this joint work reveals that Cherwell and other Districts need to meet additional need for Oxford, this will trigger a partial review of the Local Plan, to be completed within two years of adoption, and taking the form of the preparation of a separate Development Plan Document for that part of the unmet need to be accommodated in the Cherwell District. The Council will

engage in joint working on supporting technical work such as countywide Sustainability Appraisal as required to support the identification of a sustainable approach to meeting agreed, unmet needs."

- viii. Managed by a jointly appointed Programme Manager, the countywide workstreams in progress include defining Oxford's unmet needs, a Green Belt study, work on strategic options including sustainability assessment, and an assessment of infrastructure requirements. A number of consultants have been appointed to help facilitate the process and to provide technical and independent support. The work will result in an agreed understanding of unmet needs and the apportionment of this need to individual districts to test and pursue through individual local plans
 - ix. The parties agree that the duty to co-operate has been met with respect to matters of strategic importance between the two districts. It is agreed the parties will continue to cooperate and work together on cross boundary issues to ensure that strategic priorities are met
 - x. It is agreed that the objectively assessed needs (housing and employment) for Vale of White Horse can most sustainably be met within the Vale of White Horse district and that there is no identified requirement to meet the Vale of White Horse's requirement within Cherwell District
- 3.2. The two Councils have worked collaboratively on Local Plan issues and in evidence gathering where appropriate. The two Councils were previously involved in the preparation of the 2007 Oxfordshire SHMA and have discussed respective Core Strategy/Local Plan issues with all Oxfordshire authorities at OPPO meetings over the course of Local Plan preparation. Other specific, joint areas of engagement have included those related to identifying the accommodation needs of Travelling Showpeople (2008) and respective studies for assessing the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers.

Signatures

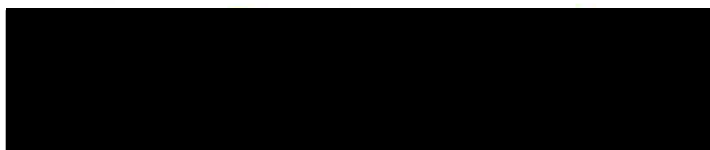
Signed on behalf of Vale of White Horse District Council



Adrian Duffield
Head of Planning

20 August 2015

Signed on behalf of Cherwell District Council



Adrian Colwell
Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy

20 August 2015

