

Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1

Examination Hearings

Stage 1 - September 2015

Statement of Common Ground

Between

Vale of White Horse District Council

and

Swindon Borough 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 Swindon Borough Council with regard to the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1 and supporting evidence base, which will assist the Inspector during Stage 1 of the Examination in Public.
- 1.3. Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 was adopted 26 March 2015.

2. Duty to Cooperate

- 2.1. As set out in TOP01 (Topic Paper 1: Duty to Co-operate and Cross Boundary Issues) and subsequently through DLP10 (Statement of Compliance with the Duty to Co-operate), Vale of White Horse District Council have continuously engaged with Swindon Borough Council through the evolution of the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 on a number of cross boundary issues, including in particular transport and the emerging “Eastern Villages” development east of Swindon.
- 2.2. Swindon Borough Council has continuously engaged with Vale of White Horse District Council in the preparation of the emerging Local Plan 2031 Part 1, including consultation within the context of the preparation of the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

- 2.3. All Oxfordshire councils participated in the Oxfordshire SHMA process and have agreed a common duty to cooperate policy wording and are signatories to the Oxfordshire Statement of Cooperation to the effect that each will seek to meet their own needs in full, but if they cannot, to cooperate to meet the HMA needs within the HMA area through a managed process. The level of need identified in Oxford city is unlikely to be met within its constrained boundaries thus will need to be considered through the duty to cooperate process. This is likely to impact on housing requirements in the surrounding Oxfordshire districts to an extent that may be significant but is yet to be determined.
- 2.4. It is agreed the Councils' will continue to work together on cross boundary issues, in particular transport, to ensure a coherent strategy that supports the delivery of proposals including the appropriate mitigation.

3. Agreed Matters

Duty to Co-operate

- 3.1. The parties agree that the duty to co-operate has been met with respect to matters of strategic importance between the two districts.

Objectively Assessed Needs for Swindon Borough

- 3.2. It is agreed that the requirement for development in Swindon can most sustainably be met at locations within Swindon Borough and there is no identified requirement to meet Swindon's requirements within the Vale of White Horse.

Objectively Assessed Needs for Vale of White Horse

- 3.3. It is agreed that the requirement for development in the Vale of White Horse can most sustainably be met within the Vale of White Horse and there is no identified requirement to meet the Vale of White Horse's requirement within Swindon Borough.
- 3.4. Should the proposed strategy and level of growth for either Vale of White Horse or Swindon change, Vale of White Horse District Council, Oxfordshire County Council and Swindon Borough Council, as co-operating authorities, will continue to discuss the most appropriate strategy. Swindon Borough Council has initiated work on a review of its Local Plan, but this is at an early stage and will not impact upon the examination of Vale's Local Plan 2031 Part 1.
- 3.5. It is agreed that based on the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1 evidence base as published at the date of this statement, that in seeking to meet in full the objectively assessed needs that reflect strong projected employment growth, the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 would provide more opportunities for those working in the Vale, to live in the Vale.

A420 Strategy

- 3.6. The parties are actively engaged in joint working with Oxfordshire County Council on the coordination of strategic growth and any necessary improvements to infrastructure. Swindon's Local Plan was adopted in March 2015 and it provides for a significant growth of 8,000 houses on the eastern edge of Swindon bordering VOWH adjoining the A420 transport corridor. The parties agree that Oxfordshire County Council's

commitment to prepare an A420 Route Strategy, as set out in Local Transport Plan 4, is the most effective solution to this strategic matter.

Signatures

Signed on behalf of Vale of White Horse District Council



Adrian Duffield
Head of Planning

20 August 2015

Date

Signed on behalf of Swindon Borough Council



Richard Bell
Head of Planning

20 August 2015

Date