

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

Oxfordshire County Council

And

Highways England

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Statement relates to strategic transport matters of common interest to the three parties. It is recognised that all parties have policies and plans to support planned development within the Vale of White Horse, recognised as a focus for growth within the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership Strategic Economic Plan.
- 1.2. The District Council is positively planning for growth through policies included within their Local Plan Part 1. It is also committed to develop more detailed policies to support the focus of growth within the Science Vale area through development of a joint Area Action Plan with South Oxfordshire, and support the development of relevant infrastructure identified within the Infrastructure Delivery Plans.
- 1.3. Highways England is a public sector company, owned by the Government. A primary role is to support a growing economy. Its Strategic Business Plan has been published in response to the Government's Roads Investment Strategy. It sets out the main activities and describes how Highways England will go about delivering the Investment Plan.
- 1.4. Oxfordshire County Council supports development and delivery of strategic transport infrastructure in line with policies within its Local Transport Plan 4. This includes undertaking feasibility work for identified schemes, and the development of business cases associated with helping to secure funding towards transport improvements required to support growth. It also includes plans for promotion of sustainable transport

options in growth areas, including in Science Vale through improvements in public transport, walking and cycling networks.

2. Work on the Local Plan to date

- 2.1. Development of the Local Plan Part 1 has required undertaking of transport modelling using the County Council Oxfordshire Strategic Transport (OSM) model, both to assist with site assessment, and to establish proposed transport mitigation. The results of this transport modelling are presented in evidence used to support the submission Local Plan Part 1 document.
- 2.2. The latest published work is the 'Evaluation of Transport Impacts (ETI) Study to inform the Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan 2031: Part 1 Strategic Sites and Policies, November 2014.' This report identifies the necessity of a number of strategic transport schemes in mitigating the impact of further transport demand arising from planned new development, including (but not limited to) the following:
 - Junction improvements along the A34 including at Chilton, Milton and Lodge Hill;
 - Improvements to the A4130 corridor around Didcot, including a new bridge and highway link over the railway;
 - A proposed new crossing of the Thames between Didcot and Culham Science Centre, linking to a new road from the Science Centre to the B4015 towards Oxford.
- 2.3. The ETI also recognises the role that public transport and smarter choice measures can have in improving transport choice within the Vale of White Horse, particularly within the main areas of growth where investment in sustainable transport options can be prioritised. This will enable new residents and workers to travel more easily by public transport, cycling and walking, thereby helping to reduce pressure on the highway network.

3. Agreement and actions moving forward

- 3.1. All parties recognise the need to plan positively for growth in homes and jobs in the Vale of White Horse, with the Local Plan Part 1 ensuring that this growth is planned for strategically, and ensuring that development is sustainably located. In particular, they support the policies focusing growth within the Science Vale area and for housing in north Abingdon, while recognising that infrastructure investment in sustainable transport schemes will be needed to support development in these areas.
- 3.2. The District and County Council are committed to developing and where possible bringing forward those schemes identified through the evidence base work undertaken to date, and are actively engaged in development of business cases to secure funding towards several of these schemes through the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership. This partnership working is reflected in the recent 'Memorandum of Understanding on the Planning and Delivery of Transport Infrastructure' signed by the Vale of White Horse District Council, Oxfordshire County Council and South Oxfordshire District Council in July 2015.

- 3.3. Where these schemes have an impact on the strategic road network, in particular the A34, there is a need to positively engage with Highways England on development of these schemes, ensuring that any traffic impacts are understood and where relevant appropriate engineering standards are followed. In the development of schemes such as A34 junction improvements, there is a need for cross-organisational project team working to ensure that appropriate processes and guidance are followed.
- 3.4. Highways England will continue to plan for investment in the A34 strategic route in line with commitments outlined in their Delivery Plan 2015-20. In the short-term this will include improvements at the Botley Interchange, and £15 million investment in technology improvements to provide better driver information along the route.
- 3.5. As part of the Autumn 2014 Roads Investment Strategy announcement, the Government announced that the Department for Transport will carry out a strategic study of the road network between Oxford and Cambridge which is expected to include the A34 from M4 J13 to M40 J9. Any potential large scale improvements on the A34 will be identified through this study. The county council and district will input positively into this work.
- 3.6. To reflect the discussions that have continued since the publication of Vale of White Horse District Council's Local Plan 2031 Part 1, the district council agree to a change to their Infrastructure Delivery Plan. This change will provide clarity and reflects policies including Core Policy 8 as set out in the Local Plan:
- 3.7. Table 2 on P12, under project titled, 'South facing slips on A34 at Lodge Hill' text will be changed as a minor modification and appears below:

~~'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.'~~

Signatures

Signed on behalf of Vale of White Horse District Council



Adrian Duffield, Head of Planning

Date: 20 August 2015

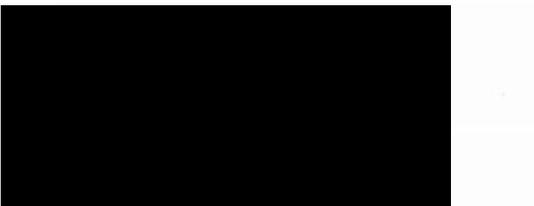
Signed on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council



Bev Hindle, Deputy Director for Strategy and Infrastructure Planning

Date: 20 August 2015

Signed on behalf of Highways England



Patrick Blake, Assistant Asset Manager

Date: 20 August 2015