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How to comment on this document

This is the 'Publication Version' of the Vale Local Plan 2031, which is intended for submission to the Secretary of State in March 2015 for independent public examination.

Comments to this version of the plan can only relate to the matters of soundness, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework:

Has the plan been positively prepared – will the plan meet development needs and infrastructure requirements and is it consistent with achieving sustainable development?

Is the plan justified – is the plan based on a robust and credible evidence base?

Is the plan effective – can the plan actually be delivered and is it able to respond to change?

Is the plan consistent with national policy – is the plan consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework?

Further guidance on the requirements for submitting comments at this stage can be found on the Council's website at:

www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/localplan and at local libraries and Council offices.

The consultation will take place for six weeks from Friday 7 November to Friday 19 December 2014.

There are a number of ways you can respond:

1. The Council's online consultation portal:

<https://consult.southandvale.gov.uk/vale>

Once you have accessed the portal, simply click the 'add comment' tab located top right of the page.

2. Visit the Council's offices or local libraries across the District

3. Complete a response form available online

www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/localplan or at the above locations and send via the following:

- Email: planning.policy@whitehorsedc.gov.uk
- By post:

Planning Policy Team

Vale of White Horse District Council

Benson Lane

Crowmarsh Gifford

Wallingford

OX10 8ED

A Local Plan newsletter called 'Vale Community' is also available via email, and will feature useful information about the Local Plan document.

To receive this, type 'subscribe' in an email header to the following address: localplan@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Views should be made on the plan using the above methods by 5pm on Friday 19 December 2014.

FOREWORD

This is our Local Plan. It sets out a vision for how the Vale should develop and grow until the year 2031. It includes how and where new houses should be built, where new jobs should be placed, and what infrastructure, such as schools and roads, will be needed to support them.

This Local Plan conforms with the latest national planning guidelines. It is based on the very latest evidence and engagement with the views of people in our communities.

The Vale is a special place. It's uniquely beautiful with a rich natural and man-made heritage, but it's also home to cutting-edge science and technology. It's a great place to live.

Not only is this one of the highest quality places to live in the country, it is also one of the most expensive. Providing more houses will help make housing more affordable and available, and help people build their lives and families in the Vale.

The amount of housing we have to provide will have a lasting effect on the Vale. With this plan and associated documents we will make sure new developments are in the right places, that they suit their surroundings and that they're supported by the appropriate infrastructure.

This plan is to make sure we look after what is best about the Vale; that we help the district grow and develop in a way that protects its historic and rural features, whilst enhancing and strengthening its status as a home for technology and innovation.

This is our Local Plan and it contains our vision for the Vale.

Councillor Matthew Barber
Leader of the Council

Councillor Michael Murray
Cabinet Member for Planning Policy

Executive Summary

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Vale of White Horse **Local Plan 2031 Part 1: Strategic Sites and Policies** provides a policy framework for the delivery of sustainable development across the district up to 2031.

The plan sets out the Spatial Strategy and strategic policies for the district to deliver sustainable development. It identifies the number of new homes and jobs to be provided in the area and makes provision for retail, leisure and commercial development and the infrastructure needed to support them.

The Local Plan 2031 has been prepared in compliance with national policy and in particular the National Planning Policy Framework. Significant weight has been attached to ensuring that the plan delivers the necessary sustainable development and has been informed by:

- **Core Policy 1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development**

The plan housing target reflects the Objectively Assessed Need for the Vale of White Horse District as identified by the up-to-date Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for Oxfordshire. The SHMA sets out how many new homes are required across Oxfordshire and for each district up to 2031.

The housing target does not currently include any unmet need for housing that may be identified in the future. This may arise if other authorities are unable to meet, in full, their own Objectively Assessed Need. However, the plan does set out, in policy, a positive approach to dealing with any unmet need, should it arise:

- **Core Policy 2: Cooperation on Unmet Housing Need for Oxfordshire**

Chapter 2: Key Challenges and Opportunities

The Vale is a predominantly rural area located in the south-west of Oxfordshire. It is an attractive and popular place to live. It contains the historic market towns of Abingdon-on-Thames, Faringdon and Wantage and a myriad of smaller and more rural settlements.

The district includes the majority of the Science Vale area, an internationally significant location for innovation and science-based research and business. Within the Vale, this includes the two Enterprise Zone sites at Harwell Campus and Milton Park. These sites are expanding and will provide for a significant number of new jobs.

The district benefits from many opportunities, particular those associated with growth and the creation of new jobs. However the district also faces a series of challenges to realising its potential.

For this reason, the Local Plan 2031 identifies a number of key challenges and opportunities that are faced by the district and these are focused around four thematic areas. These are central to the Local Plan 2031 and are carried throughout the document. These are:

- **building healthy and sustainable communities**
- **supporting economic prosperity**
- **supporting sustainable transport and accessibility, and**
- **protecting the environment and responding to climate change.**

Chapter 3: Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives

We have developed a Spatial Vision for the district to set out how the Local Plan 2031 will help us to plan effectively for the future and ensure we strike an appropriate balance between meeting the needs of our existing communities and ensuring the necessary growth is sustainably accommodated. **The Spatial Vision establishes the direction of travel for future development and investment in the district.**

Our twelve Strategic Objectives help us to deliver the Spatial Vision and ensure the plan is focused on the key challenges and opportunities facing the area.

Chapter 4: Spatial Strategy

Our strategy makes provision for growth of around 23,000 new jobs, 219 hectares of employment land, and at least 20,560 new homes, to be delivered during the plan period from 2011 to 2031.

A map of the strategic growth across the district is shown over page.

Our Spatial Strategy is called '**Building on our Strengths**' and shows where new homes will be built, where opportunities to provide new jobs will be created, and where new infrastructure and services (such as new roads, schools, shops and leisure facilities) will be required.

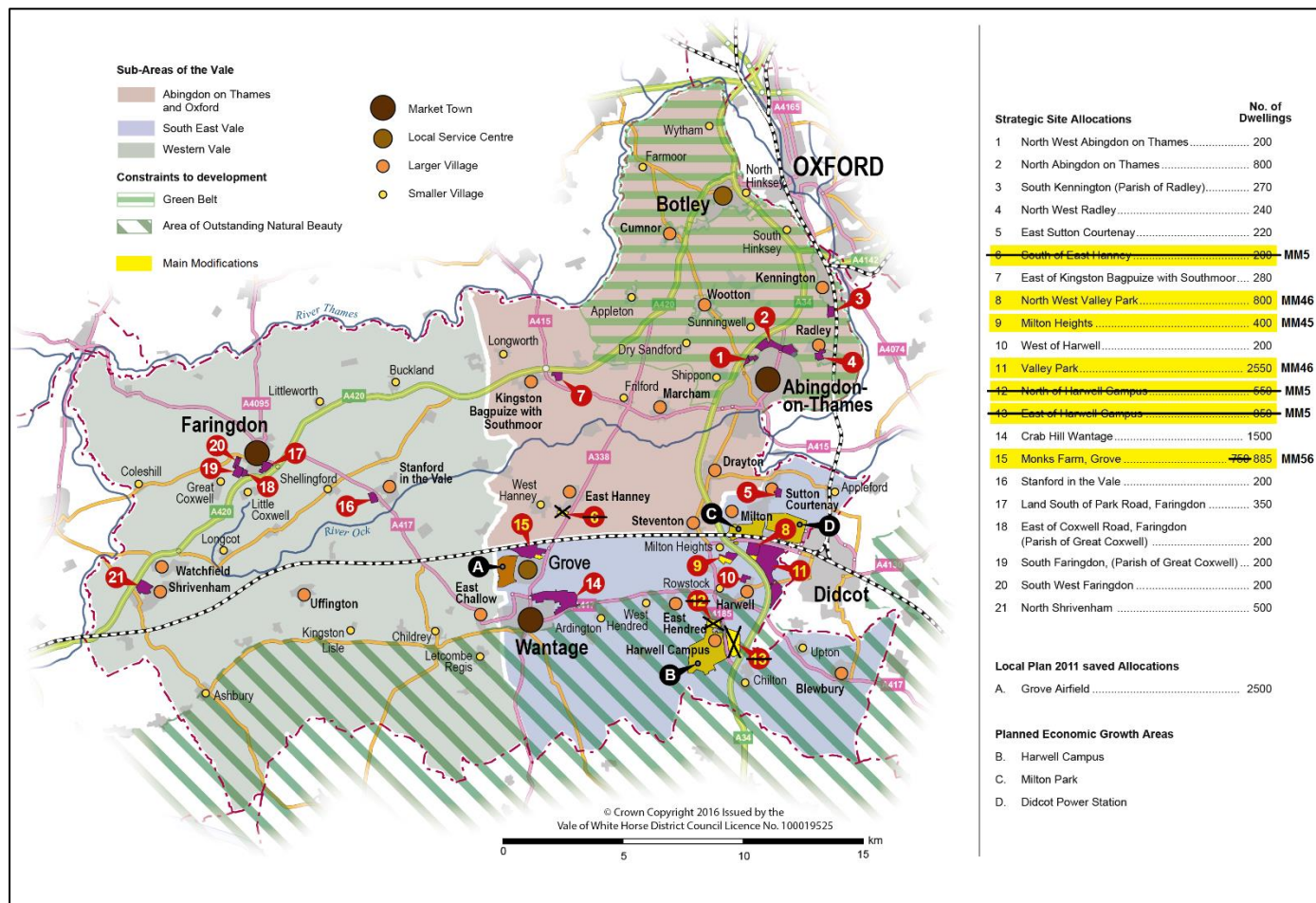
The Spatial Strategy has three main strands. These are:

- **focus sustainable growth within the Science Vale Area**
- **reinforce the service centre roles of the main settlements across the district, and**
- **promote thriving villages and rural communities whilst safeguarding the countryside and village character.**

The Spatial Strategy is underpinned by five core policies:

- **Core Policy 3: Settlement Hierarchy** – which classifies the settlements in the Vale according to their role and function
- **Core Policy 4: Meeting our Housing Need** – which specifies the scale and location of new housing ensuring development is built in the most appropriate locations
- **Core Policy 5: Housing Supply Ring Fence** – which identifies a core area within Science Vale where new homes will be provided to achieve sustainable development in accordance with the spatial strategy. The area will have a separate housing and supply target from the rest of the district
- **Core Policy 6: Meeting Business and Employment Needs** – which specifies the scale and location of opportunities for economic growth to ensure that sufficient new jobs are provided across the Vale in appropriate locations, and
- **Core Policy 7: Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services** – to ensure new services and facilities are delivered alongside new housing and employment.

Map showing the strategic growth planned across the Vale of White Horse District



Chapter 5: Sub-Area Strategies

We have developed three Sub-Area Strategies to give spatial expression to our Local Plan 2031 and ensure that it is locally distinctive. These include policies that apply to specific locations and are:

Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area -

which covers the northern and north-eastern part of the Vale, which have strong linkages with the City of Oxford. This area contains the market town of Abingdon-on-Thames, the local service centre of Botley and several larger villages including Cumnor, Drayton, East Hanney, Kennington, Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor, Marcham, Radley, Steventon and Wootton. A large part of this area is located within the Oxford Green Belt.

Core Policy 8: Spatial Strategy for the Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area

Core Policy 9: Harcourt Hill Campus

Core Policy 10: Abbey Shopping Centre and Charter, Abingdon-on-Thames

Core Policy 11: Botley Central Area

Core Policy 12: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Highway Improvements

Core Policy 13: The Oxford Green Belt

Core Policy 14: Upper Thames STRATEGIC STORAGE WATER Reservoirs

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South East Vale Sub-Area -

which includes much of the Science Vale area and contains the market town of Wantage, the local service centre of Grove as well as a number of significant employment sites, including Harwell Campus, Milton Park and Didcot A Power Station. The area also contains a number of larger villages including Blewbury, East Hendred, Harwell, Harwell Campus and Sutton Courtenay.

Core Policy 15: Spatial Strategy for the South East Vale Sub-Area

Core Policy 16: Didcot A Power Station

Core Policy 17: Transport Delivery for the South East Vale Sub-Area

Core Policy 18: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Highway Improvements

Core Policy 19: Re-opening of Grove Railway Station

Western Vale Sub-Area -

which is a more rural area stretching from the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) to the River Thames, containing the market town of Faringdon and several larger villages including East Challow, Shrivenham, Stanford-in-the-Vale, Uffington and Watchfield.

Core Policy 20: Spatial Strategy for the Western Vale Sub-Area

Core Policy 21: Safeguarding of Land for the Strategic Highway Improvements

Chapter 6: District Wide Policies

The Local Plan 2031 Part 1 also includes strategic policies that are necessary to complement those set out in **Chapters 4 and 5**. These policies will apply across the district as a whole and provide greater detail to ensure a balance is met between addressing local housing needs, supporting economic growth and protecting the Vale's high quality natural and built environment, and the quality of life in existing settlements.

The policies included are:

Building Healthy and Sustainable Communities

Core Policy 22: Housing Mix

Core Policy 23: Housing Density

Core Policy 24: Affordable Housing

Core Policy 25: Rural Exception Sites

Core Policy 26: Accommodating Current and Future Needs of an Ageing Population

Core Policy 27: Meeting the Housing Needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

Supporting Economic Prosperity

Core Policy 28: New Employment Development on Unallocated Sites

Core Policy 29: Change of Use of Existing employment Land and Premises

Core Policy 30: Further and Higher Education

Core Policy 31: Development to Support the Visitor Economy

Core Policy 32: Retail Development and other Main Town Centre Uses

Supporting Sustainable Transport and Accessibility

Core Policy 33: Promoting Sustainable Transport and Accessibility

Core Policy 34: A34 Strategy

Core Policy 35: Promoting Public Transport, Cycling and Walking

Core Policy 36: Electronic Communications

Protecting the Environment and Responding to Climate Change

Core Policy 37: Design and Local Distinctiveness

Core Policy 38: Design Strategies for Strategic and Major Development Sites

Core Policy 39: The Historic Environment

Core Policy 40: Sustainable Design and Construction

Core Policy 41: Renewable Energy

Core Policy 42: Flood Risk

Core Policy 43: Natural Resources

Core Policy 44: Landscape

Core Policy 45: Green Infrastructure

Core Policy 46: Conservation and Improvement of Biodiversity