

Chapter 3: Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives

Overview

The Vale of White Horse District consists of a network of historic market towns and other settlements set in a diverse and attractive rural landscape. The district benefits from excellent connectivity to nearby urban centres and beyond, and houses an internationally significant cluster of research and innovation businesses.

The district benefits from many opportunities, particularly associated with the potential for growth and job creation. However, the district also faces a series of challenges to realising this potential.

The Local Plan 2031 Part 1 focuses on how places function and where development should take place to meet identified needs. In planning for the future we have a clear vision of what we want the Vale of White Horse to be like in 2031.

This chapter builds on the key challenges and opportunities identified in **Chapter 2** and sets out the spatial vision and strategic objectives for the plan period up to 2031. The spatial vision and strategic objectives will help us plan effectively for the future and ensure we strike an appropriate balance between meeting the needs of existing communities and ensuring the necessary growth is sustainably accommodated.

The spatial vision reflects national and local priorities, including those set out in the Strategic Economic Plan and the challenges and opportunities facing the Vale. It establishes the direction of travel for future development and investment in the district.

The strategic objectives will help us to deliver the spatial vision and ensure the plan is focused on the key challenges and opportunities facing the area.

This chapter is arranged into the four key thematic areas:

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

Spatial Vision

3.1 The Vale Local Plan 2031 Part 1 – spatial vision is shown in the box on the right:

Spatial Vision

By 2031 the Vale of White Horse will have thriving and prosperous communities that have benefited from economic growth and our strength in science and innovation continue to be internationally recognised. The Science Vale area will have become a first choice location for high value added business and research. New residential and economic growth will have been focused on the Science Vale area and will have delivered balanced and sustainable growth that has made a significant contribution to delivering important infrastructure. Strategic road and rail improvements will have been implemented, including those at Harwell, west of Didcot and at Wantage.

The Vale's main settlements will provide healthy and sustainable communities where everyone has a decent place to live and work with good access to leisure and community services and facilities. The service centre roles of Abingdon-on-Thames, Botley, Faringdon, Grove and Wantage will have been maintained and enhanced. The Vale's villages will continue to provide thriving rural communities where appropriate growth has supported local services.

*New development will have respected the local character of the Vale, protecting its outstanding and distinctive **HISTORIC**, natural and built environment. ~~and will continue to conserve and enhance its important heritage~~ **THE IMPORTANT HISTORIC HERITAGE OF THE VALE WILL HAVE BEEN, AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE, CONSERVED AND ENHANCED.** High design and environmental standards will have been achieved through new development, which will be resilient to the likely impacts of climate change.*

Strategic objectives

3.2 A series of strategic objectives have been developed to help us deliver the spatial vision for the Vale of White Horse. The strategic objectives are focused around the four overarching themes and the key challenges and opportunities faced by the area identified in **Chapter 2**. Information about the monitoring of these objectives is set out in **Chapter 7: Implementing the Plan**.

Strategic Objectives: Building healthy and sustainable communities

- SO 1:** Provide for a range of homes across the district to deliver choice and competition in the housing market and to meet the identified need, including for affordable housing.
- SO 2:** Cater for existing and future residents' needs including the needs of different groups in the community and provision for a growing older population.
- SO 3:** Direct growth to the most sustainable locations in the district, ensuring development is integrated with and respects the built, and natural **AND HISTORIC** heritage and creates attractive places in which people will want to live, as well as being supported by a sufficient range of services and facilities.
- SO 4:** Improve the health and well-being of Vale residents, reduce inequality, poverty and social exclusion and improve the safety of the Vale as a district where everyone can feel safe and enjoy life.

Strategic Objectives: Supporting economic prosperity

- SO 5:** Support a strong and sustainable economy within the district, including the visitor economy.
- SO 6:** Support the continued development of Science Vale as an internationally significant centre for innovation and science based research and business.
- SO7:** Maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the Vale's town centres and local shopping centres in order to strengthen their service centre roles.

Strategic Objectives: Sustainable transport and accessibility

- SO 8:** Reduce the need to travel and promote sustainable modes of transport.
- SO 9:** Seek to ensure new development is accompanied by appropriate and timely infrastructure delivery to secure effective sustainable transport choices for new residents and businesses.

Strategic Objectives: Protecting the environment and responding to climate change

- SO 10:** Maintain and improve the natural environment including biodiversity, landscape, Green Infrastructure and waterways.
- SO 11:** Ensure all new development achieves high quality design standards and conserves and enhances the natural, historic, cultural and landscape assets of the Vale.
- SO 12:** Minimise greenhouse gas emissions and other pollution (such as water, air, noise and light) across the district and increase our resilience to likely impacts of climate change, especially flooding