

Local Plan 2031

Part 1

Strategic Sites and Policies



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Foreword

» 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.

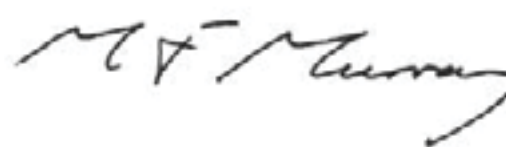
The amount of housing we have to provide will have a lasting effect on the Vale. With this plan and associated documents we will make sure new developments are in the right places, that they suit their surroundings and that they're supported by the appropriate infrastructure.

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



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, particularly 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.**



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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, 218 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:

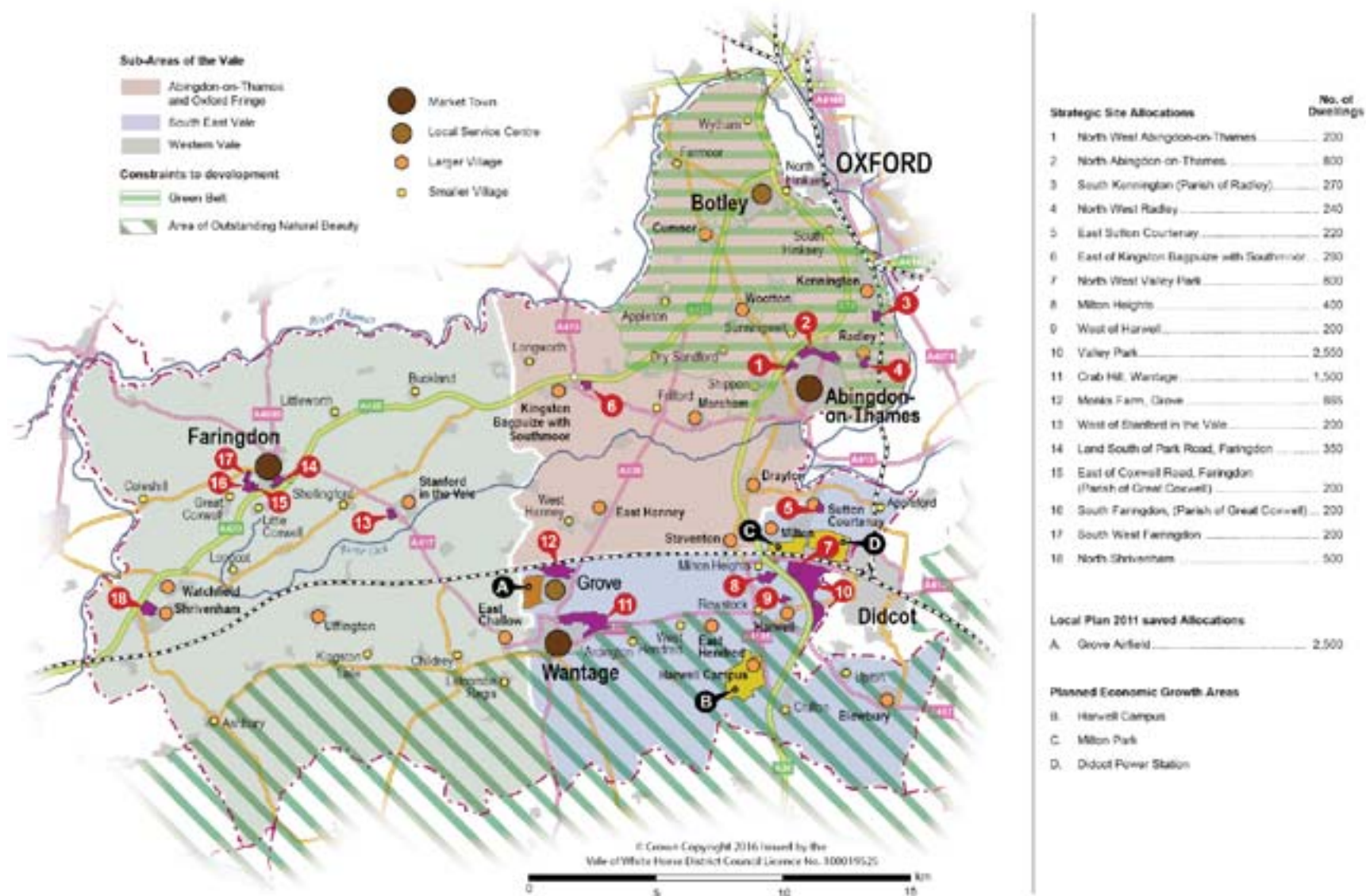
- **Core Policy 3: Settlement Hierarchy** – which classifies the settlements in the Vale according to their role and function
- **Core Policy 4: Meeting our Housing Need** – which specifies the scale and location of new housing, ensuring development is built in the most appropriate locations
- **Core 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.



Executive Summary



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





Executive Summary

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 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: Strategic Water Storage Reservoirs**

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**



Executive Summary



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

1 Introduction



Overview

The Local Plan 2031 Part 1 sets out a framework for how future development across the district will be planned and delivered and how it will be used to inform decisions on planning applications.

This chapter summarises the role of the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 and outlines our approach to its preparation.

In particular, this chapter describes how the plan is consistent with, and has been informed by, national policy and how it meets the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) with regard to being:

- **positively prepared**
- **justified**
- **effective, and**
- **consistent with national policy.**

This chapter sets out two core policies, which underpin and inform the Local Plan 2031 Part 1. These are:

Core Policy 1:
Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Core Policy 2:
Cooperation on Unmet Housing Need for Oxfordshire

1 Introduction

What is the Local Plan?

1.1 The Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 provides a policy framework for the delivery of sustainable development across the district. It replaces the Local Plan 2011 and is made up of a number of separate parts. The most significant include:

- **Local Plan 2031 Part 1: Strategic Sites and Policies.** The Local Plan 2031 Part 1 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 for the plan period up to 2031. It makes provision for retail, leisure and commercial development and for the infrastructure needed to support them. The Local Plan 2031 Part 1 sets out the Spatial Strategy for the location of development across the district and allocates large-scale (referred to as strategic)

development sites. It includes district-wide policies to ensure that development contributes to meeting the Strategic Objectives of the plan, such as policies relating to sustainable construction and conservation of the built, historic and natural environment.

- **Local Plan 2031 Part 2: Detailed Policies and Additional Sites.** The Local Plan 2031 Part 2 will set out policies and locations for housing for the Vale's proportion of Oxford's housing need unable to be met within the city boundaries. This document will also contain policies for the part of Didcot Garden Town that lies within the Vale of White Horse District and detailed Development Management policies to complement Local Plan 2031 Part 1. It will replace the Saved Policies of the Local Plan 2011, and may allocate additional development sites for housing and other uses¹.
- **Adopted Policies Map.** This shows the sites identified for

development and areas where particular policies apply. It will be updated as each part of the Local Plan 2031 is adopted.

1.2 The Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out the timetable for preparing each part of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 and is available on the Council's website².

The Development Plan

1.3 The Local Plan 2031 prepared by Vale of White Horse District Council will be used to inform decisions on planning applications across the district, in conjunction with any Development Planning Documents (DPDs) relating to minerals and waste prepared by Oxfordshire County Council, and any neighbourhood plans prepared by the community.

1.4 Neighbourhood plans can be prepared by either town or parish councils, or a neighbourhood forum, and make up part of the 'Development Plan' for the district as described above. They can provide an important layer of planning for local areas and set out in more detail how a community wishes to see its area develop.

1.5 Where neighbourhood plans are prepared they must be in general conformity with the policies set out in the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 and any other strategic policies set out in future planning documents in accordance with The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012³.

1.6 The Council will continue to support communities who wish to prepare neighbourhood plans. Details of how the Council can help with the preparation of neighbourhood plans are set out on the Council's website⁴.

¹ A number of Saved Policies in the adopted Local Plan 2011 will continue to apply for planning applications, until they are reviewed as part of the Local Plan 2031 Part 2 (**Appendix G**)

² <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/lds>

³ The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/637/note/made>

⁴ <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplans>

1 Introduction

Figure 1.1: An illustration of the documents that make up the Vale of White Horse Local Plan and Development Plan



1.7 These documents together make up the 'Development Plan' for the district (see **Figure 1.1**). All planning applications will be determined in accordance with the 'Development Plan' taken as a whole, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

National Planning Policy

1.8 Government planning policy and guidance is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for achieving sustainable development and is complemented by the NPPG, which provides additional guidance for practitioners.

1.9 The Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 has been prepared in compliance with national policy. In particular, the NPPF states that for a local plan to be considered sound, it must comply with the legal

and procedural requirements of plan making, such as the 'duty-to-cooperate'⁵ and demonstrate that it is:

- a. positively prepared
- b. justified
- c. effective, and
- d. consistent with national policy.

a. Positively prepared

1.10 The NPPF states that: ***"the plan should be prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development"***⁶.

1.11 Vale of White Horse District Council is working in partnership with its neighbouring authorities under the 'duty-to-cooperate' and significant

⁵ CLG (2012) *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*, Paragraph 182

⁶ CLG (2012) *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*, Paragraph 182

1 Introduction

weight has been attached to ensuring that the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 delivers the necessary sustainable development.

1.12 To ensure these requirements are fully incorporated, the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 is therefore underpinned and informed by two core policies that are described further below:

- Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development, and
- Cooperation on Unmet Housing Need for Oxfordshire

Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

1.13 Sustainable development is defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs⁷. This means that we should consider the long-term consequences of development alongside our short-term priorities.

1.14 The NPPF provides the Government's view of what sustainable development in England means in practice for the planning system. Broadly, there are three dimensions to sustainable development, which need to be considered together. These are:

- **an economic role** – contributing to building a resilient, responsive and competitive economy through the timely delivery of sufficient land in the right locations to support growth and by coordinating development requirements such as the provision of infrastructure
- **a social role** – supporting vibrant and healthy communities through the provision of housing, the creation of high quality living and working environments and accessible local services, and
- **an environmental role** – protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment, using resources prudently, ensuring climate change resilience and supporting the move

Core Policy 1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Planning applications that accord with this Local Plan 2031 (and where relevant, with any subsequent Development Plan Documents or Neighbourhood Plans) will be approved, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant planning permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise, and unless:

- any adverse impacts of granting planning permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole, or
- specific policies in the Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

to a low-carbon economy⁸.

1.15 When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained

in the NPPF in accordance with **Core Policy 1**.

1.16 The Council will work proactively with applicants to ensure that proposals that will achieve sustainable development can be approved.

⁷ CLG (2012) *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*, Page 2

⁸ CLG (2012) *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*, Page 2

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Oxfordshire Unmet Housing Need

1.17 The 'duty-to-cooperate' set out in the Localism Act is both a legal duty and test of effective plan-making. It requires cooperation on issues of common concern in order to develop sound local plans.

1.18 Within Oxfordshire, co-operative working is managed through the Oxfordshire Growth Board (superseding the former Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership Board, SPIP). The board comprises the leaders of all Oxfordshire Councils supported by an executive committee and officer working groups. Vale of White Horse District Council also works directly with authorities within and outside the county area where it is necessary to plan effectively on matters of strategic and sub-regional significance or cross border interest that are not Oxfordshire-wide.

1.19 As part of implementing the 'duty-to-cooperate', the leaders of all Oxfordshire authorities, including the Vale of White Horse, have agreed a joint Oxfordshire Statement of Cooperation⁹. This sets out that all the Oxfordshire Councils agree to engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis in any process that involves the following:

- the preparation of Development Plan Documents
- the preparation of other local planning documents
- the planning and prioritisation of infrastructure and investment in Oxfordshire to support economic growth of the area
- activities that support any of the above so far as they relate to sustainable development or use of land that has or would impact on more than one of the parties, and
- the parties also agree to act expediently when undertaking joint working to avoid unreasonable delay

1.20 The Oxfordshire Statement of Cooperation sets out how the outcomes of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment¹⁰ would be managed, should any of the Local Planning Authorities in Oxfordshire not be able to meet their full objectively assessed housing need. The statement includes a diagram of the process to review the findings of the SHMA and identify how any unmet need should be met in the housing market area. This is reproduced as **Figure 1.2**.

1.21 The steps identified in **Figure 1.2** are not necessarily sequential and will be applied flexibly and strategically to ensure the process is implemented in the most effective and efficient way. The Growth Board is working with a former senior planning inspector and 'critical friend' advisor to establish a robust process and timetable for this work, which has started, but is likely to take at least

Figure 1.2: Proposed Duty-to-Cooperate process for any unmet housing need



⁹ <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/oxfordshire-growth-board>

¹⁰ Local Planning Authorities are required to prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) to identify the objectively assessed need for housing in their housing market area.

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12-18 months to complete with the active participation of all Oxfordshire Councils¹¹. Supporting technical work includes an Oxfordshire-wide Strategic Green Belt Review¹², which was informed by the local Green Belt Review prepared to support this Local Plan 2031 (see **Core Policy 13**).

1.22 Within Oxfordshire, the Vale of White Horse, West Oxfordshire and Cherwell District Councils are all reviewing their ability to meet their housing needs as identified in the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment, by completing reviews of their Local Plans already at an advanced stage of preparation. South Oxfordshire District Council has initiated a review of its 2012 Core Strategy. Oxford City is undertaking a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) to inform its ability to meet its own housing needs but has stated that it does not expect

to be able to accommodate them in full as the city area is constrained, particularly by areas of flood plain and the Oxford Green Belt.

1.23 The Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 will meet, in full, our own objectively assessed need for 20,560 homes between 2011-2031 (see **Core Policy 4: Meeting our Housing Needs**). This is a first and important step towards meeting the full needs of the housing market area without unreasonable delay.

1.24 The Council also acknowledges the need to plan for any overspill of un-met housing from the wider market area, in particular Oxford City. **Core Policy 2** sets out how the Council will work cooperatively to address overspill of unmet need from other parts of the housing market area. The Vale

of White Horse approach (set out in **Core Policy 2**) is to address unmet need through the preparation of the Local Plan 2031: Part 2. This will ensure the quantum of unmet need, to be provided for within the Vale, is addressed in a timely manner and is informed by a robust approach to plan making, in accordance with national policy and legislation.

1.25 In November 2015, the Oxfordshire Growth Board agreed a working assumption unmet need housing requirement figure of 15,000 to inform the Growth Board process to apportion this level of housing between the Oxfordshire authorities¹³. The figure of 15,000 is a 'working assumption' to be used as a benchmark for assessing the apportionment of unmet need in each Local Planning Authority area.

1.26 The preparation of the Local Plan 2031: Part 2 will be closely informed by the Oxfordshire Growth Board process to apportion the 'working assumption' unmet figure of 15,000, and is currently expected to report in October 2016¹⁴.

1.27 Whilst the Local Plan 2031: Part 2 is in preparation, the Council's housing requirement will be 20,560. However, if the Part 2 plan is not adopted within two years of the adoption of Local Plan 2031: Part 1, then from that time until the adoption of the Part 2 plan, the Council's housing requirement will be 20,560 plus the agreed quantum of Oxford's unmet housing need to be addressed within the Vale of White Horse District¹⁴.

¹¹ The Oxfordshire Growth Board signed a Memorandum of Cooperation – 26 September 2016 – which agrees the apportionment of unmet housing need for Oxfordshire; <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/oxfordshire-growth-board>

¹² LUC (2015) Oxford Green Belt Study; available at: <http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=11057>

¹³ Oxfordshire Growth Board (2015), Agenda and Minutes of Oxfordshire Growth Board, 19 November 2015. Available at: <http://modgov.cherwell.gov.uk/ielistdocuments.aspx?cid=528&mid=2807&ver=4>

¹⁴ The Oxfordshire Growth Board signed a Memorandum of Cooperation – 26 September 2016 – which agrees the apportionment of unmet housing need for Oxfordshire; <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/oxfordshire-growth-board>

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b. A justified plan

1.28 The NPPF states that: *“the plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence”*.

1.29 To help understand the issues facing the district, the Council has gathered a range of background evidence¹⁵ and taken into account the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) to develop locally distinctive policies.

1.30 The Council has also taken account of its other plans and strategies and those of other organisations and those produced at the local level, including the Sustainable Community Strategies for the Council, the Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan (LTP)¹⁶, Strategic Economic Plan (SEP)¹⁷, and the

strategies and programmes of the District Council, town and parish councils, neighbouring authorities and other organisations. The Local Plan 2031 Part 1 will help to facilitate the delivery of many of the aspirations and objectives set out in these other plans and strategies.

1.31 A series of reasonable alternatives were developed and considered to inform the Publication Version of the Local Plan 2031 Part 1. The reasonable alternatives are set out in our previous stages of consultation and topic papers. The alternatives have also been assessed through the Sustainability Appraisal (SA), which is described further below.

c. An effective plan

1.32 The NPPF states that: *“the plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities”*.

1.33 To ensure the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 forms a realistic, deliverable and viable plan, we have worked closely with landowners and developers to ensure the proposed strategic development sites are deliverable. A Local Plan Viability Study has been published alongside this Publication Version of the Local Plan¹⁸.

1.34 The Council has worked closely with organisations such as the Environment Agency, Natural England, Historic England, Highways England, Thames Water and Oxfordshire County Council who are responsible for providing or managing key services including water resources, education and transport.

1.35 The Council’s commitment to working with our partners ensures that proper sustainable planning can be achieved across administrative boundaries, with examples including:

- the Oxfordshire Statement of Cooperation agreed in advance of the publication of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment for Oxfordshire and ongoing work with the Oxfordshire Growth Board
- a statement of common ground between the Vale of White Horse, Swindon Borough Council, Oxfordshire County Council and the Western Vale Villages to ensure cross boundary infrastructure issues are adequately addressed (see **Chapter 5** for more details)
- working jointly with South Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council to ensure we plan effectively for job growth and housing needs along with supporting infrastructure

¹⁵ A series of topic papers and technical studies are available from the Council website: www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence

¹⁶ <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/connecting-oxfordshire>

¹⁷ Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) (2014) *Strategic Economic Plan* - <http://www.oxfordshirelep.org.uk/>

¹⁸ www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence

1 Introduction

across Science Vale, including Didcot Garden Town (see **Chapter 5** for more details), and

- a memorandum of understanding with South Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council to agree an approach to delivering strategic highway infrastructure across the Science Vale area, including those that span the district boundaries.

1.36 The approach to preparing the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 is fully consistent with the Localism Act 2011. We have worked collaboratively with local communities, stakeholders and neighbouring authorities and consulted widely to ensure, as far as possible, that the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 reflects a collective vision and a set of agreed priorities for the sustainable development of the Vale. Where communities are working to develop neighbourhood plans, these have also helped to inform the

preparation of the Local Plan 2031 Part 1.

d. Consistent with national policy

1.37 The NPPF states that: *“the plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the framework”*.

1.38 The preparation of the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 has involved the testing of reasonable alternatives through Sustainability Appraisal (SA), that incorporates a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA). Both reports have been published alongside this document¹⁹.



¹⁹ www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence

1 Introduction



Core Policy 2: Cooperation on Unmet Housing Need for Oxfordshire

The Council will continue to work under the ‘duty-to-cooperate’ with all other Oxfordshire local authorities on an ongoing basis to address the objectively assessed need for housing across the Oxfordshire housing market area.

As a first step, Vale of White Horse District Council has sought to accommodate the housing need for Vale of White Horse District in full in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1. The Council recognises that Oxford City is unlikely to be able to accommodate the whole of its new housing requirement for the 2011-2031 period within its administrative boundary.

In tandem, the Council will continue to work jointly and proactively with all of the other Oxfordshire local authorities and through the Oxfordshire Growth Board to address any unmet housing need. This will include assessing all reasonable spatial options, including the release of brownfield, the potential for new settlements and a full strategic review of the boundaries of the Oxford Green Belt. These issues are not for the Council to consider in isolation.

To ensure Oxford’s unmet need is addressed, the Council will allocate sites to contribute towards Oxford’s unmet housing need within the Local Plan 2031: Part 2, to be submitted to the Secretary of State, within two years of adoption of the Local Plan 2031: Part 1. This will ensure that unmet need is considered and planned for in a timely manner and is tested through a robust plan-making process in accordance with national policy, national guidance, the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations, and the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).

Whilst the Local Plan 2031: Part 2 is in preparation, the Council’s housing requirement will be 20,560. However, if the Part 2 plan is not adopted within two years of the adoption of Local Plan 2031: Part 1, then from that time until the adoption of the Part 2 plan, the Council’s housing requirement will be 20,560 plus the agreed quantum of Oxford’s unmet housing need to be addressed within the Vale of White Horse District.



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2 Key Challenges and Opportunities

Overview

The Vale is a predominantly rural area located in south-west Oxfordshire and is bounded to the north and the east by the River Thames and by the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), which runs through the south of the district. It is an attractive and popular place to live and contains parts of the Oxford Green Belt.

The district contains the historic Market Towns of Abingdon-on-Thames, Faringdon and Wantage, the Local Service Centres of Botley and Grove and a number of Larger and Smaller Villages.

The Vale is located between the larger centres of Swindon, Oxford and Didcot, which are all expected to continue to grow in the future and it is important we plan effectively to deliver coordinated development across the Vale and with our neighbours.

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 both new jobs and wider opportunities to the district as a whole.

This chapter identifies some of the key challenges and opportunities faced by the Vale of White Horse that the Local Plan 2031 aims to address.

This chapter is structured around four thematic areas that are central to the Local Plan 2031 and are carried through 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**

2 Key Challenges and Opportunities

Introduction

2.1 The district takes its name from the 3,000-year-old figure cut into the chalk downs near Uffington. It is a largely rural district and covers an area of some 580 square kilometres (224 square miles; see **Figure 2.1**).

2.2 The main settlements within the Vale of White Horse are the three historic Market Towns of Abingdon-on-Thames, Faringdon and Wantage, which provide essential services for the surrounding rural areas. There are also two 'Local Service Centres' at Botley and Grove. Botley consists of parts of North Hinksey and Cumnor parishes and is a mainly residential area on the outskirts of the city of Oxford. Grove is a large village located to the north of Wantage and functions as a significant centre for housing and employment in its own right.

2.3 There are more than 70 villages across the Vale, ranging from small hamlets, to large villages. Beyond

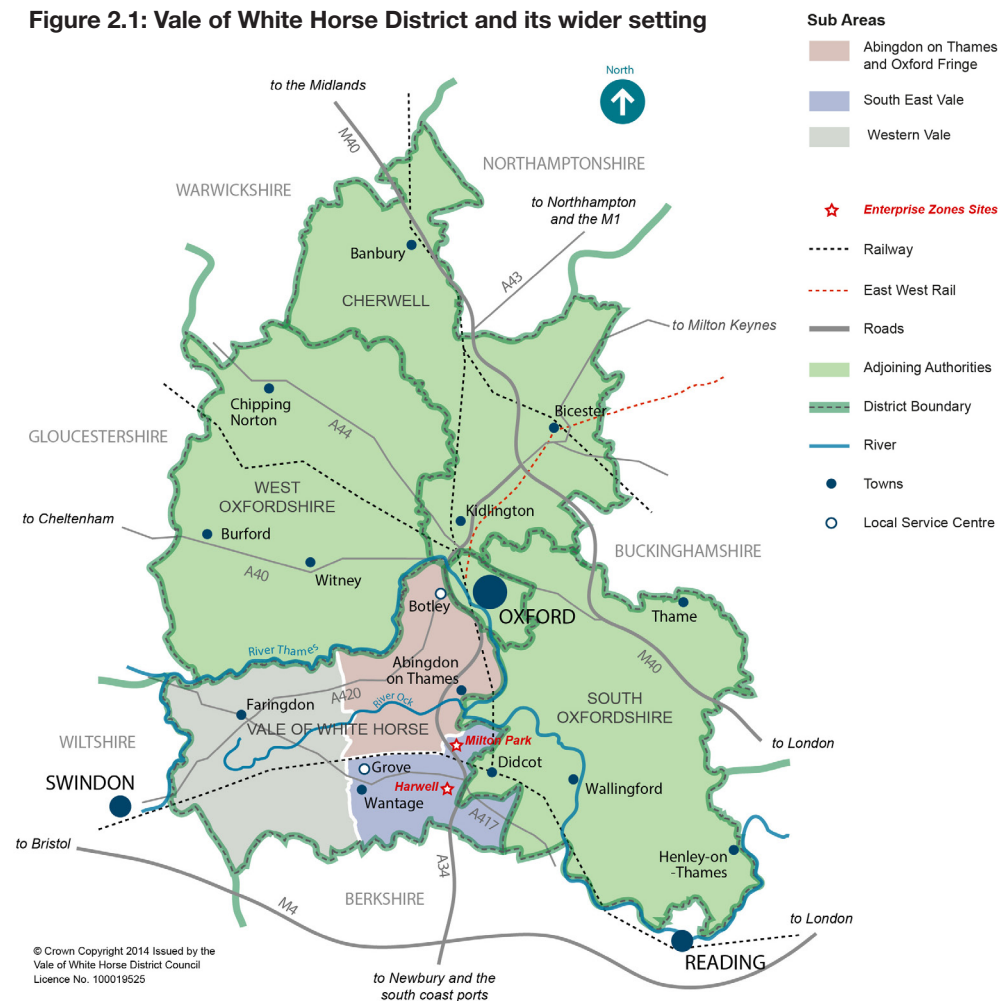
these, in the wider countryside, there are many isolated farmsteads and small groups of dwellings.

2.4 The Vale falls between the larger centres of Oxford to the north-east, and Swindon to the south-west. Didcot lies to the south-east boundary of the Vale in neighbouring South Oxfordshire. All three of these centres are expected to accommodate major growth in the next decade and beyond. Although the town of Didcot falls mainly within South Oxfordshire, its associated growth to the west of the town extends into the Vale district.

2.5 We need to plan effectively for the Vale in partnership with our neighbours and have a 'duty-to-cooperate' on key cross boundary issues. This process ensures that proper sustainable planning can be achieved across administrative boundaries²⁰.

2.6 This chapter summarises the key challenges and opportunities facing the district that the Local Plan 2031 should address.

Figure 2.1: Vale of White Horse District and its wider setting



20 Duty to Cooperate Topic Paper www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence

2 Key Challenges and Opportunities

Building healthy and sustainable communities

2.7 People in the district generally enjoy a high standard of living and there are relatively low levels of deprivation. The Vale is ranked 306 out of 326 authorities nationally, with 326 being the least deprived local authority²¹.

2.8 The planning system plays an important role in creating the right environments to enhance existing communities and to create new ones. This includes creating places that:

- Facilitate the right type of housing in the most sustainable locations
- Provide for, or seek contributions towards, the provision of services and facilities to benefit the community, including libraries, schools, health and leisure facilities

- Set out a physical layout that enhances connections between residential areas and town and village centres, education, employment and recreation opportunities
- Set out a physical layout that is intuitive to navigate using street hierarchy, landmarks, buildings' form and function to form visual clues in the townscape, and
- Safe and accessible streets and spaces, including high quality useable public open space for the benefit of the local community.

Key challenges and opportunities

Providing for our housing need

- Providing for the objectively assessed housing need of 1,028 units per annum, which has been identified for the district (this

equates to 20,560 new homes between 2011 and 2031)²². It is important the Local Plan 2031 meets the objectively assessed housing need by providing enough new homes of appropriate type and size and in sustainable locations

- Providing for sufficient affordable homes in our towns and villages (273 affordable homes are needed per year between 2011 and 2031)²³
- Meeting the needs of an increasingly ageing population over the period of the plan to 2031. The total number of people aged 55 and over is expected to increase by almost 50 % during the plan period
- Meeting the needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling show people, and
- Making an appropriate contribution to addressing any identified unmet need for housing across the

Oxfordshire Housing Market Area (see **Core Policy 2**).

Providing new community facilities

Ensuring high quality and accessible services and facilities are provided in accessible, viable locations as part of new development when they are needed, so existing and new residents can enjoy a good quality of life.

Meeting the needs of our rural areas

Supporting some development across the rural areas to retain and enhance services to help improve the vitality and sustainability of our rural communities.

²¹ The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2010 prepared by DCLG

²² GL Hearn (2014) Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment- http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2014-04-14_Final%20SHMA%20Report.pdf

²³ GL Hearn (2014) Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment- http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2014-04-14_Final%20SHMA%20Report.pdf

2 Key Challenges and Opportunities

Supporting economic prosperity

2.9 The Vale benefits from a very strong knowledge-based economy and has almost 5,500 businesses located within the district²⁴. The Vale's workforce is highly skilled with a higher than average proportion of managers, professionals and associate professionals²⁵. The levels of unemployment in the Vale are also relatively low at less than half the national average²⁶. Furthermore, the Vale is consistently ranked within the top 20 % of districts in the UK Competitiveness Index²⁷.

2.10 The strategic focus for economic and employment growth in the district is the Science Vale area, which extends east-west from Culham and Didcot to Wantage and Grove (**Figure 2.2**). Science Vale is an internationally significant

location for innovation and science-based research, business and is one of the key growth areas for Oxfordshire identified within the Strategic Economic Plan. As such, Science Vale has attracted significant government investment to help unlock and maximise the area's world class assets and economic potential, including City Deal, Local Growth Fund and Enterprise Zone status for Harwell Campus and Milton Park. It is also home to around 13 % of research and development jobs within the South-East of England.

Key challenges and opportunities

Providing new employment land and supporting science and innovation

- Providing sufficient employment land across the Vale to ensure

that suitable sites are available to support the projected employment growth of 23,000 jobs up to 2031²⁸.

- Maximising the opportunity to nurture science, research and innovation and attract new high value businesses to the Enterprise Zone sites at Harwell Campus and Milton Park so that Science Vale continues to make a major contribution to both the Oxfordshire and UK economy.
- Using Local Development Orders (LDOs), such as that at the Milton Park site to speed up delivery on sites, including potentially at Harwell Campus²⁹.
- Retaining other notable employers and employment locations in the district such as Williams F1 in Grove and Abingdon Science Park.
- Supporting the economy of the towns and rural areas in the district and providing a range of

employment opportunities close to where people live.

- Didcot A Power Station is a site in a prime location on the edge of Didcot and provides a key opportunity for redevelopment for further economic growth and other mixed-use development within the Vale.

Supporting a skilled workforce

- Maintaining a highly skilled labour force that will meet business requirements, including the particular skills needed to support Science Vale. Initiatives such as the Oxfordshire Skills Strategy³⁰ will help to support skills provision, which will in turn benefit the local population who can share the benefits of economic success and will reduce the need for in-commuting.

24 ONS Business Demography 2012 dataset

25 Labour Market Profile: VVHDC (www.nomisweb.co.uk)

26 Based on Job Seekers Allowance data

27 <http://www.cforic.org/downloads.php>

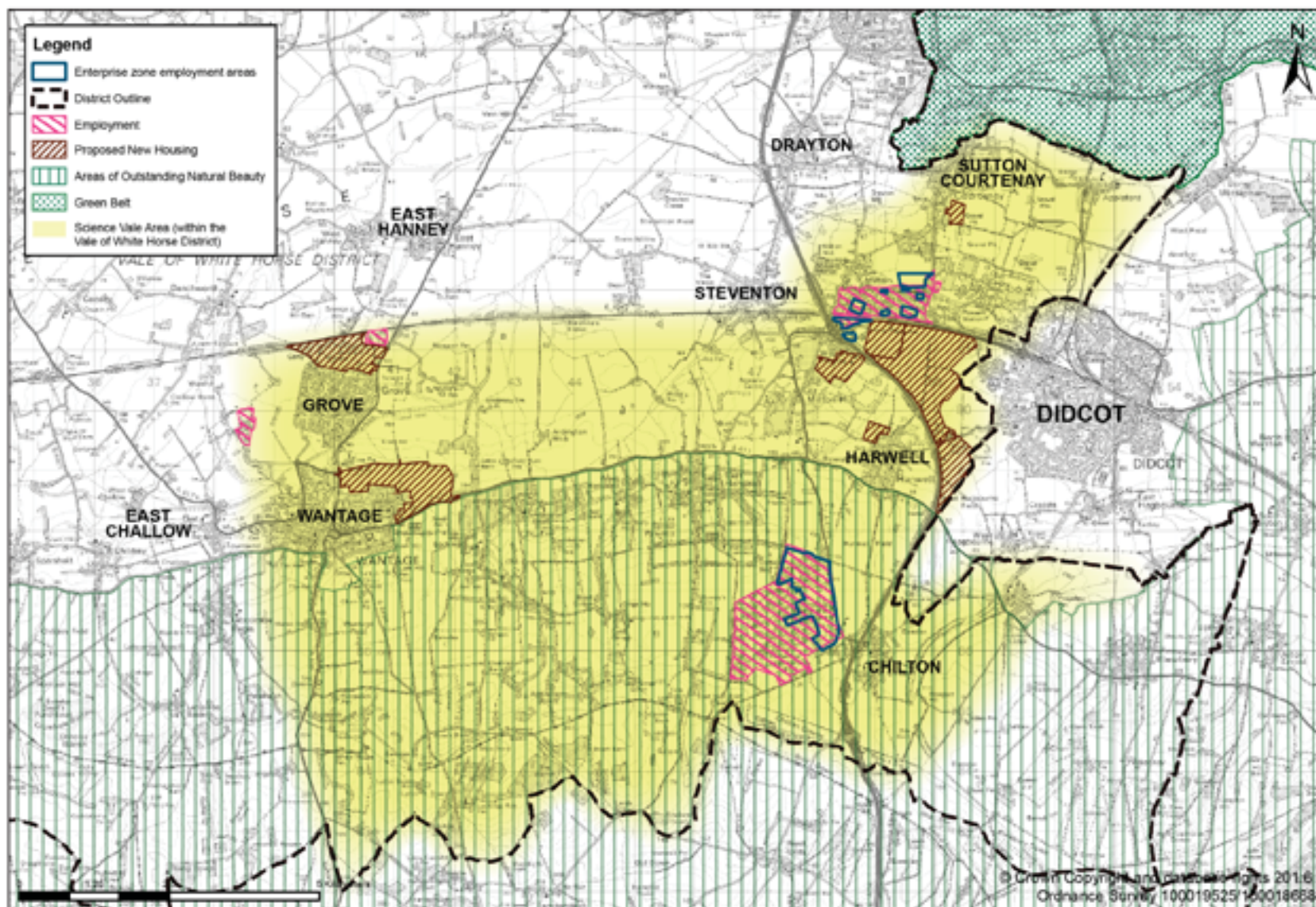
28 Employment Land Review addendum (2014)- <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence>

29 The LDOs will provide a simplified planning framework to help make it easier to deliver new development at these sites more quickly.

30 Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) (2014) *Oxfordshire Skills Strategy to 2020: Building a responsive skills support system*, available at: <http://www.oxfordshirelep.org.uk/content/oxfordshire-skills-strategy-2020>

2 Key Challenges and Opportunities

Figure 2.2: Science Vale area within the Vale of White Horse District



2 Key Challenges and Opportunities

Promoting tourism

- The tourism industry in the Vale generated approximately £202 million worth of income for local businesses in 2011³¹. However, a significant proportion of this was generated by day visitors.
- Increasing the economic impact and value of tourism by taking steps to convert day visitors to overnight visitors, in particular by addressing the shortage of hotel accommodation³².
- Supporting growth in conferencing and business tourism stimulated by anticipated growth in the Enterprise Zone.

Supporting our rural economies

- Supporting the growth and expansion of rural businesses (including village shops and public houses) to maintain sustainable rural settlements and reducing the need to travel.

- Supporting the agricultural economy including appropriate farm diversification schemes will help to maintain a healthy rural economy.

Supporting the role of our main settlements for retailing

- Supporting Market Towns and Local Service Centres to maintain their vitality and viability in meeting local retail needs in the face of competition from nearby, larger centres, such as Oxford, Swindon and Reading, which many people visit for their non-food (comparison) shopping.
- Successfully redeveloping the Charter Area in Abingdon-on-Thames and the Central Botley area provides an opportunity to strengthen these key centres in the district.
- Creating attractive town centre environments, which appeal to visitors and shoppers alike and incorporate vibrant evening

economies, would strengthen the role of the centres in the Vale in the face of competition from larger nearby centres that have a greater diversity of facilities.



³¹ The Economic Impact of Tourism on Vale of White Horse (2011), available online at: http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Vale%20Tourism%20Economic%20Impact%20Estimates%202011_1.pdf

³² Hotel Solutions (July 2014) - Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire Hotel Needs Assessment, available at <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence>

2 Key Challenges and Opportunities

Supporting sustainable transport and accessibility

2.11 The Vale of White Horse is easily accessible from other parts of the UK, particularly the south west and east, and the midlands. The A34 trunk road provides good access between the M4 to the south, and the M40 to the north. The A420 and A417 roads cross the district and provide links to Swindon in the west and Didcot in the east.

2.12 Whilst there are two railway main lines (Bristol to London and Oxford to London) running through the district, there are only two stations on the Oxford line and none on the Bristol line within the Vale.

2.13 It is important that growth across the district effectively addresses any highway constraints and helps to deliver a shift towards more sustainable modes of travel.

Key challenges and opportunities

Supporting sustainable travel and improving public transport

- Maintaining the very good bus services, particularly between the main settlements.
- Providing viable bus services in the more rural parts of the district, that provide an attractive alternative to the car.
- Ensuring that employment and housing growth is located to reduce the need to travel by car and encourage walking and cycling for short journeys.
- Supporting improvements to public transport, cycling and walking to provide attractive alternatives to travelling by car and to help minimise traffic congestion, particularly between the district's main employment and service centres.

- Supporting the ambition of re-opening the railway station at Grove to help increase access to the national rail network within the district.

Providing for new road infrastructure

- Addressing congestion, particularly at peak times on the A34 trunk road adjacent to Abingdon-on-Thames, Botley and around Science Vale. It is important the road network operates safely and efficiently for the economic success of the district to be maximised.
- Working with partners to help address any capacity issues to ensure new development can be adequately accommodated whilst addressing congestion and safety on the road network.
- Facilitating the implementation of the new infrastructure (such as new roads) identified in the Science Vale Area Strategy³³ to help maintain a

- safe and efficient transport network.
- Balancing the delivery of major investment in new roads and public transport with the wider needs for other infrastructure improvements arising from proposed development.

Helping to make our rural areas more accessible

- Continuing to help people in rural areas without a car to access the services available in the Market Towns and Local Service Centres.

Supporting the delivery of superfast broadband

- Increasing provision of superfast broadband coverage across the district in line with the Better Broadband for Oxfordshire Project³⁴ and to deliver the roll-out of next-generation mobile broadband.

³³ Oxfordshire County Council, Local Transport Plan 3, 2011-2030
³⁴ <http://www.betterbroadbandoxfordshire.org.uk/cms/>

2 Key Challenges and Opportunities

▶ Protecting the environment and responding to climate change

2.14 The high quality and rural nature of the Vale is borne out by the many designations that cover the district (such as Oxford Green Belt, North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and 52 designated Conservation Areas). It is important that development protects, maintains and enhances the special characteristics of the built and natural environment of the Vale to ensure it remains a popular place for people to live, work and to visit.

2.15 The Vale has a long frontage to the River Thames and contains the River Ock and its tributaries including the Letcombe Brook. It also contains a significant proportion of the route of the Wilts and Berks Canal, the subject of an ambitious restoration project.

Key challenges and opportunities

Responding to climate change

- The Vale will need to play its part in meeting Government targets for reducing Greenhouse Gas emissions through low carbon and renewable energy generation, improving the energy efficiency of development and promoting more efficient use of materials and natural resources.
- Equipping new development to adapt to the warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers that are predicted for the UK³⁵.

Protecting water resources

- Ensuring there is enough water available to meet needs, as the Vale is in an area of water stress, through prudent water resources management, including preventing flooding through the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage

Systems (SUDS) and climate change adaptation.

- Waste water treatment facilities and resources within the district are in need of upgrading and new facilities are required to allow new housing and employment growth to be sustainably delivered.
- Improving access to waterways that add diversity and interest to the locality, enhancing open spaces and providing corridors for recreation, tourism and wildlife.

Protecting our high quality landscape

- The landscape of the district is central to the rural character of the Vale, from the Corallian Ridge, to the Lowland Vale, to the North Wessex Downs AONB. Key landscape features need to be respected, retained and enhanced to maintain the local character and distinctiveness of the landscape of the Vale.

Protecting biodiversity

- Biodiversity in the district is supported by a network of local, national and international wildlife designations. These will need to be protected and enhanced where possible through restoring, expanding and linking key wildlife habitats and species populations.
- Supporting informal recreation and providing open spaces and Green Infrastructure to accommodate a rise in local populations and have due regard to the existing value of the natural environment for both people and biodiversity.

³⁵ <http://ukclimateprojections.defra.gov.uk>

2 Key Challenges and Opportunities



Conserving our historic environment

- The Vale contains 52 designated Conservation Areas, over 2,000 Listed Buildings, eight Registered Parks and Gardens, and 68 Ancient Monuments, as well as non-designated heritage assets.
- Conserving and enhancing all historic assets and their settings for future generations to enjoy is important. Opportunities exist for new development to re-create the quality and character of these historic places to inform a high quality urban environment.





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.**

3 Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives

Spatial Vision

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

Strategic Objectives

3.2 A series of Strategic Objectives (SO) 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**.

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 continues 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. 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.

3 Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives

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, 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.

3 Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives



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.



4 Spatial Strategy

Overview

This chapter sets out our Spatial Strategy for the future shape of development across the Vale, which is called: ‘Building on our strengths’ (see **Figure 4.1**). This 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 seek to:

- 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 makes provision for growth of around 23,000 new jobs, 218 hectares of employment land, and at least 20,560 new homes, to be delivered during the plan period from 2011 to 2031.

The Spatial Strategy has been informed by the key challenges and opportunities facing the district outlined in Chapter 2 and will help us to deliver our vision and objectives outlined in Chapter 3.

Significant weight has been attached to ensuring our strategy delivers sustainable development and it has been informed by the Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development (**Core Policy 1** – see Chapter 1).

4 Spatial Strategy

➤ The Strategy

4.1 A common theme running through the strategy is the need to support the delivery of new housing and jobs to be complemented by new services, facilities and infrastructure – **Figure 4.1**.

4.2 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 land 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.

Sub-Area Strategies

4.3 We have also developed three **Sub-Area Strategies**, which give spatial expression to the strategy and ensure that it is locally distinctive and focused on each part of our district. These are set out in **Chapter 5 (See Figure 4.2)**. The three sub-areas are:

- **Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe** – which covers the northern and north eastern part of the Vale, which have strong linkages with the city of Oxford. It 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.

- **South East Vale** – 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, Milton and Sutton Courtenay.
- **Western Vale** – 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.

Science Vale

4.4 We are working jointly with South Oxfordshire District Council to plan for the Science Vale locality, which spans district boundaries. Additional delivery and implementation details for our proposals across the Science Vale locality will be included within the Local Plan 2031 Part 2. This is discussed more in **Chapter 5**.

District wide policies

4.5 We have developed district wide policies set out in **Chapter 6**, which apply across the Vale for specific issues. These policies are needed to complement the Spatial Strategy and Sub-Area Strategies to help ensure the Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives can be successfully delivered. They build on, rather than duplicate, national guidance and are important to enable the determination of development proposals in a consistent manner.

4 Spatial Strategy

4.6 We have saved some policies from the Local Plan 2011, as identified in **Appendix G**. These policies remain relevant for planning for the Vale and we will continue to apply these saved policies for Development Management purposes until they are replaced by the Local Plan 2031 Part 2.



4 Spatial Strategy

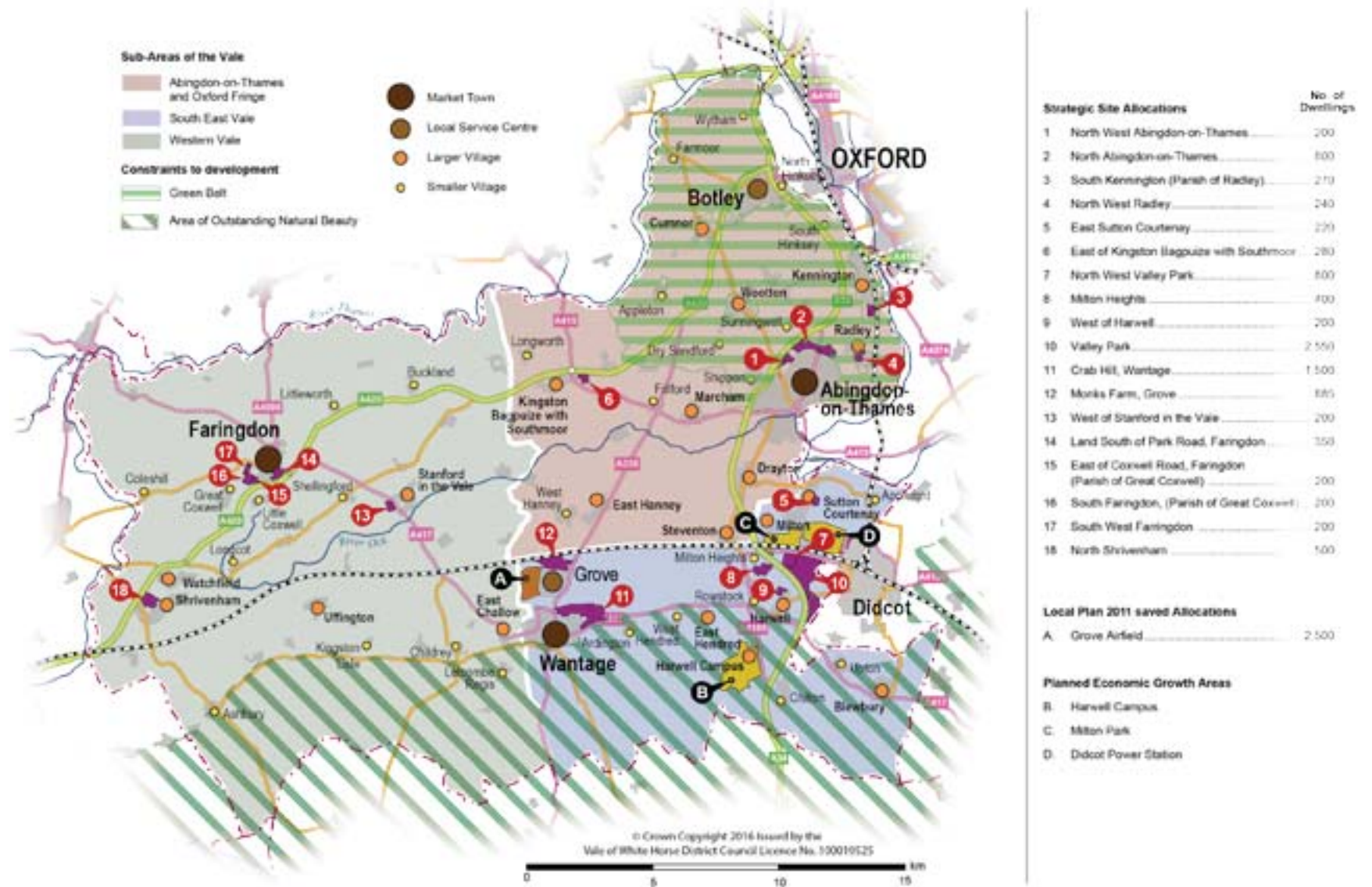
Figure 4.1: ‘Building on our strengths’- a sustainable strategy for the Vale of White Horse

➤ **The strategy will support the delivery of sustainable growth through three key strands:**

Focusing sustainable growth within the Science Vale area, by	Reinforcing the service centre roles of the main settlements across the district, by:	Promoting thriving villages and rural communities whilst safeguarding the countryside and village character, by:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promoting Science Vale as a world-class location for science and technology-based enterprise and innovation, especially the Enterprise Zone sites at Milton Park and Harwell Campus • allocating appropriate land for strategic housing growth to help improve the self-containment of the area. New homes will be delivered at five key locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Grove – Harwell and Milton Parishes, east of the A34 – Harwell Campus – Milton Parish, west of the A34 – Wantage • supporting the redevelopment of surplus land at Didcot A Power Station • delivering a comprehensive package of strategic and local infrastructure and services alongside the housing and employment growth, and • working jointly with South Oxfordshire District Council to drive forward the delivery of high quality development across Science Vale including the provision of enabling infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • concentrating larger shopping, tourism and community facilities at Abingdon-on-Thames, Botley, Faringdon, Grove and Wantage to improve their vitality and ensuring they are widely accessible • focusing housing growth at the Market Towns, Local Service Centres and Larger Villages • allocating strategic housing growth at Abingdon-on-Thames and Faringdon, in addition to the growth within the Science Vale area, to strengthen their service centre roles, and • allocating land for strategic employment growth at Faringdon and Grove to complement the Science Vale sites and to provide jobs close to where people live. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allocating strategic housing growth at our Larger Villages of Harwell, Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor, Radley, Shrivenham, Stanford-in-the-Vale and Sutton Courtenay to help maintain their vibrant communities • identifying appropriate housing requirements for the rural areas to inform neighbourhood plans or the Local Plan 2031 Part 2 • focusing development within the rural areas to the Larger Villages, thus helping to maintain their vitality and the sustainability of local services, and • supporting appropriate development in the Smaller Villages to help meet the local needs of rural communities.

4 Spatial Strategy

Figure 4.2: Map showing the strategic growth across the three Sub-Areas within the Vale of White Horse District



4 Spatial Strategy

➤ Settlement Hierarchy

4.7 The Settlement Hierarchy (**Core Policy 3**) defines the settlements across the Vale of White Horse District into four tiers based on an assessment of their facilities, characteristics and functional relationships with their surrounding areas³⁶. Each tier of settlement has a different strategic role:

- Market Towns
- Local Service Centres
- Larger Villages, and
- Smaller Villages

4.8 The Local Plan 2031 protects and enhances the services and facilities provided by the Market Towns, Local Service Centres and our Larger Villages and ensures that any new facilities, homes and jobs are focused on these settlements. This will help to ensure the delivery of sustainable development because:

- these settlements provide the best

range of services and facilities and new development will help to support and enhance them

- locating new homes in the communities with the best services and facilities will enable the residents in the new homes to access them by walking, cycling and public transport, so reducing the need to travel by car
- it will enable more affordable homes to be built where there is most need, and
- the main service providers, including the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, the County Council and the emergency services, prefer this approach because it will help them to deliver their services more efficiently.

4.9 The settlement boundaries for Market Towns and Local Service Centres³⁷ are shown by the Adopted Policies Map. These boundaries may be reviewed and updated in the future either through the Local Plan 2031 Part 2, or neighbourhood plans.



³⁶ Town and Village Facilities Study (2014), available at: www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence

³⁷ There is no settlement boundary defined for Botley as the Oxford Green Belt provides a policy limit on development around the settlement.

4 Spatial Strategy



Core Policy 3: Settlement Hierarchy

Market Towns

Market Towns are defined as settlements that have the ability to support the most sustainable patterns of living within the Vale through their current levels of facilities, services and employment opportunities.

Market Towns have the greatest long-term potential for development to provide the jobs and homes to help sustain, and where appropriate, enhance their services and facilities to support viable and sustainable communities in a proportionate manner.

Local Service Centres

Local Service Centres are defined as larger villages or neighbourhoods to larger settlements with a level of facilities and services and local employment to provide the next best opportunities for sustainable development outside the Market Towns.

Larger Villages

Larger Villages are defined as settlements with a more limited range of employment, services and facilities. Unallocated development will be limited to providing for local needs and to support employment, services and facilities within local communities.

Smaller Villages

The Smaller Villages have a low level of services and facilities, where any development should be modest and proportionate in scale and primarily be to meet local needs.

The Settlement Classifications are:

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

Market Town:	Abingdon-on-Thames
Local Service Centre:	Botley
Larger Villages:	Cumnor, Drayton, East Hanney, Kennington, Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor, Marcham, Radley, Steventon and Wootton
Smaller Villages:	Appleton, Dry Sandford, Farmoor, Frilford, Longworth, North Hinksey, Shippon, South Hinksey, Sunningwell, West Hanney and Wytham

South East Vale Sub-Area:

Market Town:	Wantage
Local Service Centre:	Grove
Larger Villages:	Blewbury, East Hendred, Harwell, Harwell Campus* Sutton Courtenay and Milton
Smaller Villages:	Appleford, Ardington, Chilton, Milton Heights**, Rowstock, Upton and West Hendred

Western Vale Sub-Area:

Market Town:	Faringdon
Larger Villages:	East Challow, Shrivenham, Stanford-in-the-Vale, Uffington and Watchfield
Smaller Villages:	Ashbury, Buckland, Childrey, Coleshill, Great Coxwell, Kingston Lisle, Little Coxwell, Littleworth, Longcot, Letcombe Regis and Shellingford

Those villages not included within the categories described above are considered to form part of the open countryside.

*Harwell Campus has facilities and services equivalent to a Larger Village.

**Milton Heights has facilities and services within a short walk that are equivalent to those offered by a Larger Village.

4 Spatial Strategy

Meeting our housing needs

4.10 The Local Plan 2031 Part 1 makes provision for 20,560 new homes to be delivered during the plan period (2011/12 to 2030/31; **Core Policy 4**). This reflects the Objectively Assessed Need for Vale of White Horse District Council as identified by the up-to-date Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for Oxfordshire.

4.11 If or when required, any needs arising elsewhere in the Housing Market Area, will be addressed by timely and effective cooperative working in accordance with **Core Policy 2** (see **Chapter 1**).

Sources of housing supply

4.12 A number of sources of housing supply will ensure a continuous supply of housing delivery across the plan period. These sources include:

- strategic allocations made within this plan
- retained Local Plan (2011) allocations
- existing planning commitments
- additional sites to be identified through neighbourhood plans, or identified through the Local Plan 2031 Part 2, and
- sites not yet identified that will come forward through the development management process in accordance with the policies set out in the Local Plan 2031. These are sometimes known as ‘windfalls’.

4.13 The strategic allocations (listed in **Core Policy 4** and outlined in more detail within the Sub-Area Strategies) are central to the delivery of the Local Plan 2031 and the Strategic Objectives for the Vale.

4.14 To identify the strategic allocations, we have followed a comprehensive selection process, which began with an assessment of land surrounding each of our most sustainable settlements and key business parks. This helped to identify the broad locations that offered the most suitable locations for development, which were then comprehensively tested, including by the Sustainability Appraisal, Evaluation of Transport Impacts Study, Viability Study, Landscape Study and review of responses to earlier stages of consultation³⁸.

4.15 The scale of development on these strategic sites will enable infrastructure to be provided that offers wider benefits to their local areas.

³⁸ More information about how we have selected the strategic allocations is set out in our Topic Papers available from the Council website: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/Main.jsp?MODULE=FolderView&ID=627981346&CODE=5C4C901196E98386319052F2DED5F64A&NAME=02+TOP+-+Topic+Papers&REF=Local%20Plan%202031%20Part%201%20Examination%20Library>

4 Spatial Strategy



Core Policy 4: Meeting Our Housing Needs

The housing target for the Vale of White Horse District is for at least 20,560 homes to be delivered in the plan period between 2011 and 2031^a. 12,495 dwellings will be delivered through strategic allocations. 1,840 dwellings remain to be identified and will be allocated through the Local Plan 2031 Part 2 or Neighbourhood Development Plans or through the Development Management process. The contribution of all sources of housing supply are shown by the following table:

Category		Number of Dwellings
Housing requirement for the full plan period (Apr 2011 to Mar 2031)		20,560 ^a
Housing Completions (Apr 2011 to Mar 2016)		3,065
Housing Supply (Apr 2016 to Mar 2031)	Known Commitments	4,468
	Local Plan 2031 Part 1 allocations	12,495
	Local Plan 2031 Part 2 allocations	1,000 ^b
	Windfalls	840

^a This target addresses needs arising in the Vale of White Horse. If or when required, needs arising elsewhere in the Housing Market Area, will be addressed by timely and effective cooperative working in accordance with Core Policy 2.

^b The Local Plan Part 2 allocation will be reduced where dwellings are allocated in Neighbourhood Development Plans or come forward through the Development Management Process.

Strategic Allocations-

Development will be supported at strategic site allocations where it meets the requirements set out within the Site Development Templates shown by **Appendix A** and in accordance with the policies of the Development Plan taken as a whole. The following tables show how the level of housing required through strategic development sites will be distributed:

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

Settlement/ Parish	Settlement/ Type	Site Name	Number of Dwellings
Abingdon-on-Thames	Market Town	North of Abingdon-on-Thames	800
		North-West of Abingdon-on-Thames	200
Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor	Larger Village	East of Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor	280
Radley		North-West of Radley	240
		South of Kennington	270
Sub total			1,790

Continued overleaf

4 Spatial Strategy



Core Policy 4: Meeting Our Housing Needs

South East Vale Sub-Area:

Settlement/ Parish	Settlement/ Type	Site Name	Number of Dwellings
Wantage	Market Town	Crab Hill ^c (North East Wantage and South East Grove)	1,500
Grove	Local Service Centre	Grove Airfield ^{c,d}	2,500
		Monks Farm (North Grove)	885
Harwell and Milton Parishes east of the A34 adjoining Didcot Town	Adjoining Didcot Town	Valley Park ^f	2,550
		North-West of Valley Park	800
Harwell	Larger Village	West of Harwell	200
Milton Parish west of the A34		Milton Heights (Smaller Village)	400
Sutton Courtenay		East of Sutton Courtenay	220
Sub total			9,055

Western Vale Sub-Area

Settlement/ Parish	Settlement/ Type	Site Name	Number of Dwellings
Faringdon	Market Town	Land South of Park Road, Faringdon ^c	350
		South-West of Faringdon	200
Great Coxwell Parish	Adjoining Faringdon Market Town	East of Coxwell Road Faringdon ^c	200
		South of Faringdon	200
Shrivenham	Larger Village	North of Shrivenham	500
Stanford-in-the- Vale		West of Stanford- in-the-Vale	200
Sub total			1,650

^c These sites have 'Resolution to Grant' planning permission subject to legal agreement as at Sept 2014

^d Saved Local Plan 2011 Allocation

Continued overleaf

4 Spatial Strategy



Core Policy 4: Meeting Our Housing Needs

Development at Market Towns, Local Service Centres and Larger Villages

There is a presumption in favour of sustainable development within the existing built area of Market Towns^e, Local Service Centres^e and Larger Villages in accordance with Core Policy 1.

Development outside of the existing built area of these settlements will be permitted where it is allocated by the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 or has been allocated within an adopted Neighbourhood Development Plan or future parts of the Local Plan 2031. This development must be adjacent, or well related, to the existing built area of the settlement or meet exceptional circumstances set out in the other policies of the Development Plan and deliver necessary supporting infrastructure.

Development at Smaller Villages

At the Smaller Villages, limited infill development may be appropriate within the existing built areas of these settlements, or if it is allocated within an adopted Neighbourhood Development Plan or future parts of the Local Plan 2031. Proposals for limited infill development will be supported where they are in keeping with local character and are proportionate in scale and meet local housing needs, and/ or provide local employment, services and facilities.

Open Countryside

Development in open countryside will not be appropriate unless specifically supported by other relevant policies as set out in the Development Plan or national policy.

^e As defined by the Settlement Boundaries shown by the Adopted Policies Map

^f The allocation at Valley Park has the capacity to deliver more housing subject to further appropriate infrastructure improvements. Housing which is in addition to the 2,550 homes is expected to be delivered after 2031

4 Spatial Strategy

➤ Housing supply ring-fence

4.16 The Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan³⁹ identifies Science Vale as one of three key growth areas on the 'Oxfordshire Knowledge Spine', with significant potential to build on the extensive existing research infrastructure and the designated Enterprise Zone. The wider strategy of the Local Economic Partnership includes supporting economic growth to ensure that we maximise the potential of this important area.

4.17 Further analysis⁴⁰ of the economic forecasts prepared for the Oxfordshire Housing Market Area⁴¹ indicates that around 15,850, or almost 70%, of the 23,000 new jobs forecast for the district to 2031 are likely to be located in the Science Vale area. New scientific and research jobs will principally be provided at the two Enterprise Zone sites at Harwell Campus and Milton

Park. There will also be significant general business and indirect service sector employment growth that is likely to locate in the surrounding business locations, such as Williams F1 in Grove and the Didcot A site, and in the main town centres including Wantage.

4.18 It is the jobs being created in Science Vale that generate the need for a significant proportion of the houses required in the district. The majority (almost 75%) of our strategic housing growth is allocated within close proximity to these key Science Vale business locations. Our plans for significantly enhancing and delivering new infrastructure are also focused on the Science Vale area to enable our growth potential to be realised. This infrastructure cannot currently be delivered without the planned housing.

4.19 The Council is therefore adopting a 'ring-fence' approach to

housing supply to help ensure that jobs, homes and infrastructure are provided together. This will help to achieve sustainable development by minimising the need to travel and the burden on transport networks. The central planning justification for the ring fence is that it supports the delivery of our Local Plan Spatial Strategy focus on development in Science Vale. The ring fence serves to concentrate housing growth and infrastructure investment in this location and reinforces our commitment to the Spatial Strategy. In doing so it also improves our ability to seek external funding to support infrastructure delivery and accelerate housing growth.

4.20 The funding of Science Vale infrastructure will include significant contributions from housing development. Enabling loans to be repaid from future Enterprise Zone business rates will help deliver infrastructure earlier than might

otherwise be achieved. If housing growth does not take place in the ring fence area, Enterprise Zone and other business growth prospects would be harmed and business rates' contributions to infrastructure provision jeopardised.

4.21 The ring-fence area encompasses the Science Vale geographical area, as shown on **Figure 4.3**. This area complements the Didcot ring-fence in the adopted South Oxfordshire Core Strategy, and will support the delivery focus of growth at Science Vale. Growth in both districts will contribute to the shared strategic infrastructure package set out in the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

39 Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) (2014) *Strategic Economic Plan*- <http://www.oxfordshirelep.org.uk/>

40 GL Hearn (2014) Science Vale Housing and Employment Study draft report, Vale of White Horse District Council (June 2014)

41 *Economic Forecasting to Inform the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan and Strategic Housing Market, Assessment* (Cambridge Economics February 2014)

4 Spatial Strategy

4.22 The housing supply calculation will be undertaken on two separate areas: the ring fence area as set out in this policy and the rest of the district, with each of the areas having its own housing target and monitoring approach. The respective housing targets, ring fence 11,850 dwellings and rest of district 8,710 dwellings equate to the housing requirement for the whole of the district as identified within **Core Policy 4**. The approach taken to each of the supply areas, Liverpool* for the ring fence area and Sedgefield** for the rest of district area, will ensure the delivery of housing within the Science Vale area

is assessed over a longer period with the economic and housing needs coming forward in parallel. The Council is therefore ensuring there is a boost in housing supply whilst a balance is struck in the delivery of economic and housing needs in the Science Vale area. The two supply calculations are combined to provide a district wide calculation.

*The Liverpool approach seeks to meet a backlog of housing supply by spreading it evenly over the whole plan period.

**The Sedgefield approach seeks to meet a backlog of housing supply within the first five years.



4 Spatial Strategy

Core Policy 5: Housing Supply Ring-Fence

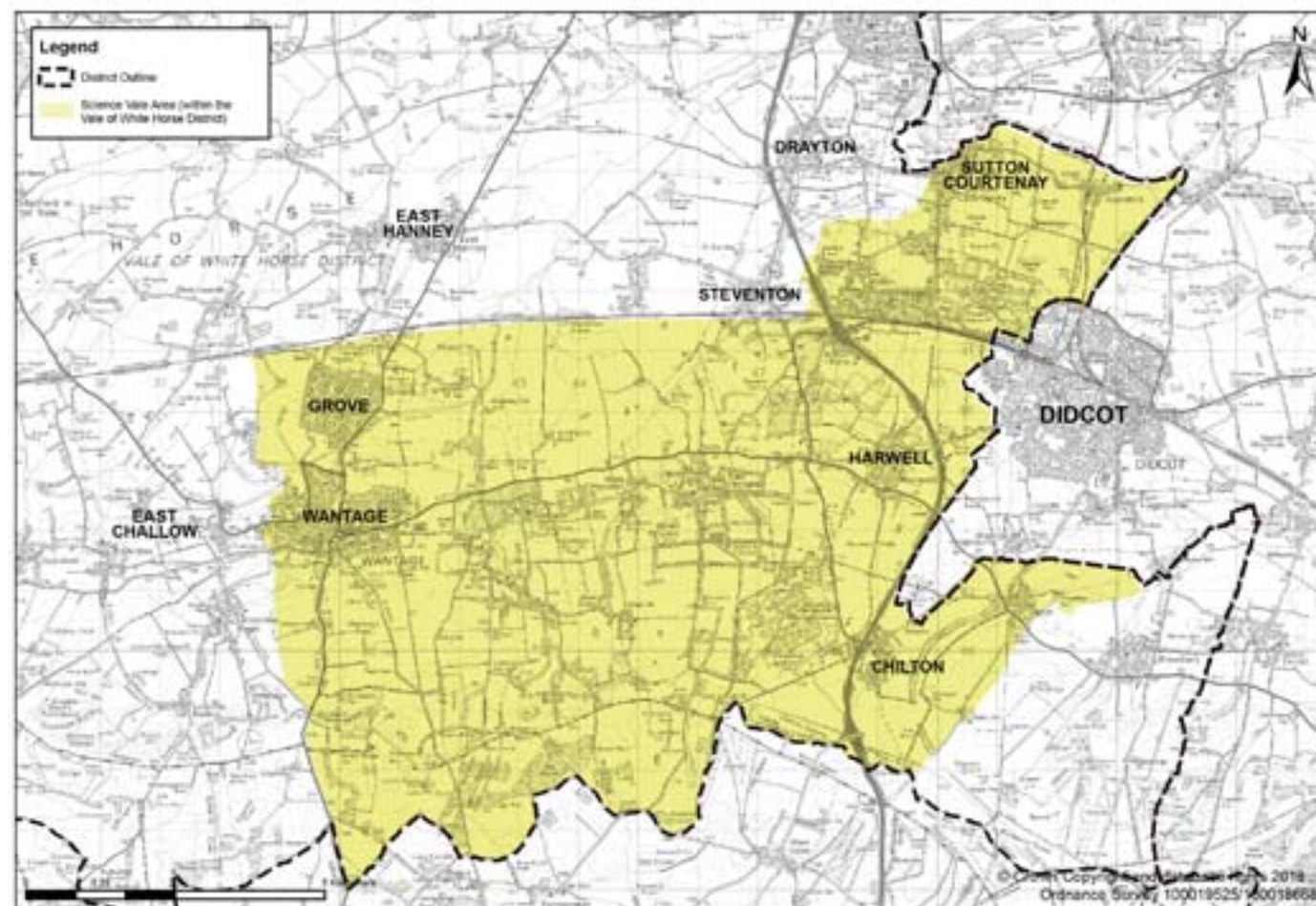
The Council will employ a ring-fence approach to housing delivery in the Science Vale area as shown by **Figure 4.3** and set out on the Adopted Policies Map.

For the purposes of the assessment of housing land supply, the ring-fence area will be treated as a separate sub-area with a housing requirement of 11,850 homes in the plan period (593 homes per annum) in support of the 15,850 jobs planned in this sub-area and as a contribution towards the district's housing need set out in **Core Policy 4**.

The supply calculations for the ring-fence area and the rest of district area will be combined to provide a district wide calculation.

Any proposals for development within the ring fence area, whether a five year housing supply is in place or not, will still need to demonstrate conformity with relevant national and local policy.

Figure 4.3: Housing supply ring-fence area



4 Spatial Strategy

Meeting business and employment needs

4.23 Overall demand for employment land in the Vale is strong due to a combination of local assets, including: excellent quality of environment; high-quality research and science facilities; a large catchment pool of skilled labour; and existing science and business parks with growth aspirations and where the demand for growth is expected to remain buoyant throughout the plan period⁴².

4.24 This strategy makes provision for around 218 hectares of strategic employment land for new employment development in accordance with our assessed needs, set out in our Employment Land Review⁴³ and it is anticipated that this will deliver approximately 23,000 jobs between 2011 and 2031. This land will be provided by a combination of different sites including:

- provision of employment land as

- part of mixed use urban extensions
- sites covered by the adopted Milton Park Local Development Order, and
- vacant and developable land retained from Vale Local Plan 2011 allocations for employment land.

4.25 Employment provision within the Vale is led by Science Vale, and in particular, the Enterprise Zone sites at Milton Park and Harwell Campus. Milton Park is a large science park and a major regional and national hub for knowledge-intensive industries. Harwell Campus is home to a number of world leading science research facilities including, for example, the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory and the European Space Agency. Milton Park and Harwell Campus account for 156 hectares of the identified demand for new employment land.

4.26 Additional detail to assist the delivery and implementation of growth across the Didcot Garden

Town area will be set out in the Local Plan 2031 Part 2.

4.27 Overall the employment provision within the Science Vale area accounts for around 15,850 projected jobs, which equates to around 70 % of the planned total for the district.

4.28 There is an adopted Local Development Order (LDO) for Milton Park⁴⁴ that allows for the intensification and expansion of the existing site. The LDO is designed to allow development within the B1, B2 and B8 use classes. It also permits elements of other uses so long as they support the vitality and viability of the park and complement the primary business uses. A map showing the area covered by the LDO and the area covered by saved Policy E5 (which is slightly smaller) is provided in **Appendix C**.

4.29 Employment land will also be provided as part of mixed-use strategic sites at Land South of Park Road, Faringdon and Monks Farm, North Grove. This employment land

will help to ensure that jobs are available close to people's homes.

4.30 The strategy identifies that the Didcot A Power Station site is an appropriate location for employment development to contribute to the 218 hectares to be provided. The size of this site could also provide additional land, and/ or accommodate mixed-use development, over and above the identified requirement, in the latter stages of the plan period. Any development on this site should come forward in accordance with **Core Policy 16: Didcot A Power Station**.

4.31 Policy CSEM2 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Core Strategy⁴⁵ indicates that 6.5 hectares of employment land will be provided at Didcot, within the Vale of White Horse District, in order to help meet the town's needs. This 6.5 hectares is included within the 28 hectares to be provided at Milton Park and contributes towards the identified requirement of 218 hectares for the Vale of White Horse District.

⁴² URS (2012) Vale of White Horse Employment Land Review Update

⁴³ URS (2012) Vale of White Horse Employment Land Review Update

⁴⁴ Milton Park Local Development Order, December 2012, available at: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/milton-park-local-development-order>

⁴⁵ South Oxfordshire District Council, South Oxfordshire Core Strategy, December 2012, available at: <http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/core-strategy/adopted-core-strategy>

4 Spatial Strategy



Core Policy 6: Meeting Business and Employment Needs

218 hectares of land is identified for future employment development on the following strategic sites and saved Vale Local Plan 2011 allocations.

Site Name	Sub-Area	Type of Site	Available Development Land (Hectares)
Milton Park	South East Vale	Saved Local Plan 2011 allocation	28*
Harwell Campus		Saved Local Plan 2011 allocation	93 (Enterprise Zone)
			35 (Outwith EZ)
Monks Farm, North Grove		New mixed use strategic allocation	6
Didcot A		Identified future potential supply	29**
South of Park Road, Faringdon	Western Vale	New mixed use strategic allocation	3
		Other saved Local Plan 2011 allocations	24.2
Total			218

*The 28 hectares to be provided at Milton Park includes sites covered by the Local Development Order (LDO) which are not within the area of the Local Plan 2011 allocation. A map showing the extent of the LDO and the area of the Local Plan 2011 allocation is included at **Appendix C**.

** The Didcot A Power Station site consists of around 47 hectares for potential redevelopment. The Employment Land Review recommends that 29 hectares of this land should be identified for employment development. Development at this site should be considered in accordance with **Core Policy 16: Didcot A Power Station**.

Employment and business development as part of mixed-use development will be supported at Monks Farm, Grove and South of Park Road, Faringdon where this meets the requirements set out within the Site Development Templates shown by **Appendix A**, and in accordance with the Sub-Area Strategies.

The other saved Vale Local Plan 2011 employment allocations are:

Site Name	Sub-Area	Available Development Land (Hectares)
Abingdon Business Park at Wyndyke Furlong	Abingdon/ Oxford Fringe	0.7
Abingdon Science Park at Barton Lane		0.7
Cumnor Hill		0.3
Wootton Business Park		1.5
Milton Hill Business and Technology Park	South East Vale	11.2
Grove Technology Park		5.4
Land adjacent to A420 (4&20 site), Faringdon	Western Vale	4.2
Land north of Park Road (HCA site), Faringdon		0.2
Total		24.2

Continued overleaf

4 Spatial Strategy



Core Policy 6: Meeting Business and Employment Needs

Proposals for employment related development on unallocated sites will be supported in accordance with **Core Policy 28: New Employment Development on Unallocated Sites**. In addition to the sites identified for new employment development, a number of existing strategic employment sites have been identified in the Sub-Area Strategies. These sites will be safeguarded for employment uses in accordance with **Core Policy 29: Change of Use of Existing Employment Land and Premises**.

Addressing the needs for retailing

4.32 The focus of Vale's existing retail offering occurs in the three historic Market Towns of Abingdon-on-Thames, Wantage and Faringdon. One of the Strategic Objectives of this Local Plan 2031 is to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the existing centres in these settlements.

4.33 It is important that existing centres remain active and vibrant in light of changing trends. The historically and naturally constrained nature of Vale's Market Towns limits the potential for significant retail expansion to accommodate the district's need up to 2031.

4.34 It is key that retail development is provided in the most sustainable locations, close to where people live and work. In Abingdon-on-Thames, the redevelopment of the Abbey Shopping Centre and Charter area, phase one of which has been completed, continues to be a priority

for the Council and is set out in **Core Policy 10: Abbey Shopping Centre and the Charter, Abingdon-on-Thames**.

4.35 The Council continues to support the steering committees of both Wantage and Faringdon Neighbourhood Development Plans who seek to expand on their current retail offering in line with the expected need for the plan period.

4.36 Vale's strategy identifies a significant level of housing growth to occur in the South East Vale Sub-Area and in particular on land to the west of Didcot, the town centre of which is located in South Oxfordshire. Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire District Councils will continue to work together through the 'duty-to-cooperate' to ensure that the cumulative retail need arising for the wider Didcot area from new strategic site allocations can be successfully delivered through the continued expansion of the Orchard Centre in the town centre and through the new district centre at Great Western Park.

4 Spatial Strategy

4.37 Outside of the main towns, Botley is strategically well located on the western edge of Oxford City. The upgrading of its central area is a priority of the Council, and is supported by **Core Policy 11: Botley Central Area**. A new local shopping centre is planned for the strategic site at Grove airfield also to provide for future growth in the area. This will complement the existing centre at Millbrook Square.

4.38 Some of the larger strategic site allocations within the district may be capable of providing some retail provision to predominantly cater for the day-to-day needs of their immediate residents. Such schemes will need to demonstrate that they will not undermine the vitality and viability of the retail provision in the Market Towns and Didcot.

4.39 **Core Policy 32: Retail Development and other Main Town Centre Uses** provides greater detail on how retail development, along with other main town centre uses are to be provided in the district.

► Providing supporting infrastructure and services

4.40 Successful infrastructure delivery is important to ensure the wider aims of this strategy can be met. These include delivering sustainable growth across the Vale.

4.41 Infrastructure can cover a range of services and facilities. These can include:

- physical and transport infrastructure such as roads, bus services, water, drainage, waste management, sewage treatment and utility services
- social infrastructure such as education, health facilities, social services, emergency services and other community facilities such as libraries and cemeteries, and
- Green Infrastructure such as parks, allotments, footpaths, play areas and natural and amenity green space.

4.42 Delivery of certain types of infrastructure will be more important to development coming forward than others:

Essential infrastructure is that which is required to make development happen in a timely and sustainable manner. Such infrastructure is therefore needed to ensure that impacts of development are mitigated and that new development comes forward with necessary supporting facilities. Not investing in this infrastructure may well result in delays to development coming forward. Examples of essential infrastructure associated with developments are roads, public transport improvements, schools and foul water treatment upgrades.

Other infrastructure is that which is important to meet the overall cumulative needs of developments, but is not seen as likely to prevent an individual development coming forward in the short-term.

4.43 Any new development increases the use of, or demand for, existing services and facilities. Where new homes or jobs are developed and there is insufficient capacity to meet additional demand it is critical that essential infrastructure is provided to meet the demand created.

4.44 Infrastructure delivery is important to ensure new development is sustainable and this is particularly important across the Science Vale area. This is where around 70 % of our projected jobs and 75 % of our strategic housing is directed. Essential strategic highway infrastructure has been identified to support the identified growth across Science Vale and this is discussed further within the South East Vale Sub-Area.

4 Spatial Strategy

4.45 New services and facilities should be planned to meet the demand created by new development and be delivered at appropriate timescales. This will ensure that the needs of both the existing community and future residents are provided for. We will therefore only grant planning permission for new development once the delivery of infrastructure within appropriate timescales has been secured.

4.46 Infrastructure has been traditionally provided or funded by developers through legal agreements under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990). The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was introduced in the Planning Act 2008 and defined in the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended). CIL provides a tariff that local authorities can levy on new development, thus providing more certainty over development costs. Vale of White Horse District Council is preparing a

CIL Charging Schedule alongside the Local Plan 2031 Part 1. The Council's approach to infrastructure is also set out in more detail in the Delivering Infrastructure Strategy⁴⁶.

4.47 One of the steps in the process of introducing CIL is to identify the infrastructure that is needed to support future growth and how much it is likely to cost. An Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) has been prepared in support of the Local Plan 2031 Part 1⁴⁷.

4.48 The requirement to provide new or enhanced infrastructure must not be so onerous as to render development unviable, taking into account other policy requirements such as affordable housing provision. For this reason an independent viability study has been carried out to inform this strategy and the IDP⁴⁸.

4.49 Effective partnership working is essential between public, private and voluntary sectors to ensure infrastructure is efficiently provided and maintained. The Council continues to work closely with a range of stakeholders, including: the Environment Agency, Highways England, Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, Oxfordshire Local Economic Partnership (LEP), Thames Water and Town and Parish Councils.

⁴⁶ <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/delivering-infrastructure>

⁴⁷ A separate IDP will also be prepared to accompany Local Plan 2031 Part 2

⁴⁸ www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence

4 Spatial Strategy



Core Policy 7: Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services

All new development will be required to provide for the necessary on-site and, where appropriate, off-site infrastructure requirements arising from the proposal. Infrastructure requirements will be delivered directly by the developer and/or through an appropriate financial contribution prior to, or in conjunction with, new development. Where appropriate, developers will be expected to collaborate on the provision of infrastructure which is needed to serve more than one site. In ensuring the timely delivery of infrastructure requirements, development proposals must demonstrate that full regard has been paid to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and all other relevant policies of this plan.

If infrastructure requirements could render the development unviable, proposals for major development should be supported by an independent viability assessment on terms agreed by the relevant parties including the Council and County Council, and funded by the developer. This will involve an open book approach. Where viability constraints are demonstrated by evidence, the Council will:

- i. prioritise developer contributions for essential and then other infrastructure in line with the definitions as set out in paragraph 4.42 and the detail of requirements outlined in the IDP, and/or

- ii. use an appropriate mechanism to defer part of the developer contributions requirement to a later date, or

- iii. as a last resort, refuse planning permission if the development would be unsustainable without inclusion of the unfunded infrastructure requirements taking into account reasonable contributions from elsewhere including CIL

The Council's Delivering Infrastructure Strategy will include both a CIL Charging Schedule and a Supplementary Planning Document for Section 106 and Section 278 legal agreements that will provide more detail about its approach to securing developer contributions.

Upon adoption of the CIL Charging Schedule, CIL will be used to pool developer contributions towards a wide range of new and improved infrastructure necessary to deliver new development.

Where not covered by the CIL Charging Schedule, infrastructure and services, including provision for their maintenance, should be delivered directly by the developer through the development management process and in accordance with the Regulation 122 Tests*.

Infrastructure and services will be sought through the negotiation of planning obligations, conditions, levy, undertaking and/or other agreement as secured through the planning permission, to mitigate the direct impacts of development and secure its implementation.

* The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010.