

Planning
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West Berkshire Council

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Your reference: West Berkshire Local Plan Review – Reg 18 Consultation

05 February 2021

Dear Sirs,

West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2020 – 2037 Emerging Draft

Thank you for providing the opportunity to comment on your Emerging Draft of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2020 to 2037.

Vale of White Horse District Council supports the logical approach that the draft Plan takes to meeting future growth needs across West Berkshire and we support the underlying principles behind the proposed spatial distribution of development, particularly in the context of the physical constraints to development, with 74% of West Berkshire lying within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

As the North Wessex Downs AONB stretches across the southern part of our own district, we are supportive of Policy SP2 as drafted and are pleased to see that it is consistent with the spatial context and strategic objectives set out in the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan 2019-2024.

We note that Policy SP1 (Spatial Strategy) proposes ‘*appropriate and sustainable growth*’ in the AONB that conserves and enhances its special landscape qualities, as set out in Policy SP2. We also note that Policy SP15 (Sites Allocated for Residential Development in the North Wessex Downs AONB) identifies six large housing sites (total of 350 dwellings) and five small/medium sites (total of 50 dwellings), with sites to accommodate a further 20, 55 and 25 dwellings identified within the respective Neighbourhood Plans for Hermitage, Hungerford and Lambourn. We see that there are existing allocations in the AONB at the rural service centres and service villages that are still to be delivered and which will largely meet housing need in this rural area. Overall, the level of growth appears commensurate with the environmental constraints and the need for a higher level of landscape protection and enhancement within the AONB and its setting.

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We are pleased to see the draft Plan's acknowledgement of the urgent need to respond to climate change, which is a high priority corporate objective for the Vale of White Horse District. In particular, we support the criteria-based approach to the assessment of development proposals set out in Policy SP5 (Responding to Climate Change).

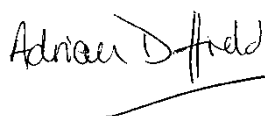
Given the overall scale of residential development proposed across West Berkshire, we support the inclusion in Policy SP22 (Transport) of a requirement for development proposals of 60+ dwellings to be accompanied by a full Transport Assessment. We also support the need to mitigate the impact of planned growth on local transport networks and the strategic road network, particularly any adverse impacts on the capacity and traffic flow of the A34.

We note the future shortfall in Gypsy and Traveller pitch provision identified in paragraph 11.30 and will look forward to understanding how this will be addressed through future versions of the Plan.

At Vale of White Horse District Council, we are committed to working collaboratively with our neighbouring authorities. Thank you again for the opportunity to review your consultation document and we hope that a positive working relationship between the two councils continues as you progress with your Local Plan Review to 2037.

Whilst we have no further comments to make on your Emerging Draft Local Plan, we wish to reserve the right to make any further representations, as necessary, at an appropriate stage in the statutory plan making process.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Adrian Duffield". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

Adrian Duffield
Head of Planning
Vale of White Horse District Council