

Policy and Programmes

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9 December 2024

Dear Mr [REDACTED],

Submission of the South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Joint Local Plan 2041 for examination

In accordance with Regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, both councils named above hereby submit to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, their Joint Local Plan 2041 for examination. This follows the unanimous support received from both councils for the draft publication plan to progress towards submission.

The scope of the Joint Local Plan

This plan is our first Joint Local Plan, covering two district council areas. The Plan's strategy merges existing local plan strategies of South and Vale and has been in preparation since March 2021. We work in a shared service and have brought our planning policy teams together to do it. The plan period is 2021 to 2041. Once adopted, the plan will replace the separate adopted plans for Vale of White Horse (Part 1 2016, Part 2 2019) and South Oxfordshire (2020).

The Joint Local Plan provides for a supply of housing of around 40,000 homes, well above the quantified requirements for South and Vale, which are around 16,500 and 14,500 respectively. Similarly, the quantum of planned employment land comfortably exceeds the employment land requirements. To provide some background, our adopted plans were prepared in the context of a Growth Deal with government at the time and contained historically high levels of planned housing, as well as providing around 7,000 homes for the unmet needs of neighbouring Oxford. With many allocated strategic sites scheduled to deliver for many years beyond the plan periods of the adopted plans, there has been no need to identify further new greenfield sites in the Joint Local Plan, although we have proposed an expanded allocation on brownfield land at one of our

three Garden Communities. The Joint Local Plan provides all the housing needed to meet our requirements, and our agreed commitments to Oxford's unmet needs, with a healthy surplus to assist with deliverability. The focus for this new Joint Local Plan has been on providing a unified set of policies which raise quality standards for the existing planned development, and on securing the necessary infrastructure.

The plan does not include Minerals and Waste elements, we are a two tier authority and forward planning for minerals and waste is dealt with by Oxfordshire County Council. We do have a significant number of 55 made neighbourhood plans in South and Vale that form part of the councils' development plan (36 in South Oxfordshire, 19 in Vale).

Achieving a single spatial strategy for South and Vale brings advantages like planning better for Didcot Garden Town (which spans across both districts) and for the area called Science Vale which contains advanced science, space and engineering campuses many of which are spin offs from Oxford University or a legacy of government investment in fusion research. The districts are very similar and well balanced, as well as being closely aligned politically. The Joint Local Plan has been developed through innovative consultation methods and digital planning, has been shortlisted for 3 national awards and was developed with an ambition to write the plan in plain English and be more accessible to a wider audience.

NPPF transitional arrangements

With the Joint Local Plan at a well-developed stage of plan preparation, we are working under the transitional arrangements in paragraph 226c of the [draft National Planning Policy Framework](#). This means that the Joint Local Plan is likely to be examined under current version of the NPPF dated Dec 2023. Once adopted, the councils will start work on a new plan to address national policy requirements at that time.

Procedural matters

I confirm the Submission documents have been sent in accordance with the regulations and PINS service level agreement. I attach as **appendix one** to this letter the signed service level agreement, and as **appendix two** a copy of the Statement of Submission.

Regarding matters identified in the PINS SLA as matters to be confirmed at the Submission of Documents:

(a) A summary of the main documents we are submitting and where to download electronic copies of those documents.

Our main submission documents are:

- The Joint Local Plan

- The policies map
- The Regulation 22(1)(c) consultation statement setting out how the LPA has complied with Regulations 18 & 19 and containing a summary of the main issues made pursuant to Regulation 20
- The final Sustainability Appraisal Report, including a recently published addendum which is subject to a current consultation.
- Representations in line with the requirements detailed in the Procedure Guide for Local Plan Examinations
- Supporting documents relevant to the preparation of the local plan

These submission documents including those required by the regulations are being published on our website in an examination library¹. We are also supplying them to PINS electronically (via electronic transfer). The Council would be happy to provide hardcopy documentation following submission should it be of assistance to, and requested by, the Inspector(s).

The Council has also prepared a list of Proposed Modifications, which the Council hope will be of assistance to the Inspector(s).

(b) An estimate of the likely duration of any hearing part of the examination

We anticipate that the examination will need to sit for three weeks.

(c) The preferred date for the opening of any hearing part of the examination.

We request that the sitting sessions of the examination are scheduled to commence around Easter/ May 2025. This will help us fulfil our commitment to adopt the Joint Local Plan in December 2025, as set out in the Local Development Scheme. December 2025 is when the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 will become five years old.

(d) The contact details of the appointed Programme Officer

We have appointed Ian Kemp as programme officer:

Ian Kemp
PO Box 241
Droitwich
Worcestershire
WR9 1DW
Telephone: 07723 009166
Email: ian@localplanservices.co.uk

I also confirm that we would wish the appointed Inspector(s) to recommend Modifications in his/her report, should these be deemed appropriate and necessary to

¹ Examination library is at www.southandvale.gov.uk/JLPEvidence. The councils' main Examination webpage is at www.southandvale.gov.uk/JLP-Examination.

achieve a sound and legally compliant plan and this letter should be taken as the councils' formal invitation to that effect.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me or the Programme Officer via the contact details above.

We look forward to working with the Planning Inspectorate to efficiently deliver the examination in public of the Joint Local Plan.

Yours sincerely



Policy Manager