



Independent Examination of the South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Joint Local Plan 2041

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Programme Officer – Mr Ian Kemp

19 February 2026

██████████
Policy Manager
Abbey House
Abbey Close
Abingdon
Oxfordshire
OX14 3JE

Dear ██████████,

Examination of the South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Joint Local Plan 2041

1. We would like to thank the Councils for their contributions at the Procedural Meeting (PM) which was held in public and live streamed on 12 February 2026. The recording of the meeting has also been made available on the examination website. The meeting did not discuss the detail of submitted evidence or issues of soundness, to ensure fairness to other representors.
2. The PM started by summarising the matters which gave rise to the need for the meeting. We then reviewed the list of outstanding matters from the first set of hearings [ID09]. All Action Points have been submitted to the examination library, except Action Point 4, for which further Sustainability Appraisal (SA) work is required. The Councils indicated that this work would take approximately six weeks. As the additional SA work would be necessary for any re-convened hearings, we would ask that the Councils commission this work at their earliest convenience.
3. The Councils confirmed that the Water Cycle Study, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and the HRA Addendum (agreed with Natural England) are complete. Updated Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) with Natural England and the Environment Agency are expected by the end of February 2026 and all site specific SoCGs by 27 March 2026. We ask that these documents be submitted as soon as they are ready.

4. In our letter of 6 January 2026 [ID13], we gave the Councils advance notice that we would like a note on how they consider that the Plan would meet the national policy requirement for 'maintaining effective cooperation' in anticipation of the removal of the DtC. The Councils anticipated its submission by 27 February 2026. We ask that this is submitted as soon as it is ready.
5. At this stage, given changes in circumstances relating to the forthcoming removal of the DtC together with the passage of time since the first set of hearings, we anticipate that some aspects from those hearings would be likely to need revisiting before we would be able to move onto other topics in the Plan. During the meeting we highlighted these as being updating the Local Development Scheme; reviewing the housing requirement; considering the effect of the additional SA work and the HRA addendum and re-assessing the DtC matters in relation to the national policy requirement for 'maintaining effective cooperation.'
6. At this stage, our preliminary view is that the next round of hearing sessions could focus on changed circumstances and the further consideration of some elements from the first stage of hearings. After that, another set of hearings could then consider outstanding matters.
7. At the meeting, we committed to take into account the Councils' preferences for a future hearings programme as far as possible. We are currently exploring resourcing options for the examination to ensure adequate capacity and resilience for delivering a potential future programme. We will need to reflect on the further material you have committed to provide ahead of setting out any further views on timetabling.
8. We would be grateful for this letter to be added to the examination library with a link to it from the latest news webpage. We are not inviting any comments on this letter from any other parties at this stage.

Yours sincerely

Caroline Mulloy and Rachael Bust

Inspectors