

## Policy and Programmes

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9 October 2025

Dear Swindon Borough Council

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your draft Swindon Local Plan 2043 Regulation 18 consultation.

Our respective officers met in September 2025 to consider the potential strategic matters that the Swindon Local Plan 2043 may have in relation to Vale of White Horse. This was a productive meeting, with several matters identified for further discussions relating to the New Eastern Villages (NEV) allocation, flood risk, transport, health facilities planning, wider landscape and large-scale renewables.

In relation to the Swindon Local Plan consultation, generally we support your vision and objectives with a focus on rejuvenation of Swindon central area. We support what you described as the 'new strategic direction' on page 25 of your consultation document which describes the new focus on rejuvenation and urban housing density. This context helps you to present a clear spatial strategy in Policy SS1 Swindon's Spatial Approach to Growth.

We note that Policy SP2: Homes for the Community sets out that you have a housing requirement meeting the government standard method, of 24,100 new homes to 2043. Policy SP2 sets out that your housing requirement will be met, and the sources of supply are all listed in section 2 of the policy.

Our review of the consultation version of the Swindon Local Plan 2043 has identified some specific catchment-related matters which have the potential to impact areas around the Swindon and Vale border, specifically in our Watchfield and Shrivenham wards, as outlined below.

There are around 2,000 additional homes proposed in your emerging plan for the NEV allocation. The allocation is within the Cole River catchment which crosses authority boundaries. We would like to informally engage with you as you develop the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment ahead of your Regulation 19 consultation. We would also like to

discuss mitigation measures needed, making sure that cross-boundary consideration of the catchment is given, because there is potential for impacts of the increased allocation size to be felt.

The draft Swindon Local Plan 2043 mentions that it supports the delivery of a logistics partnership in conjunction with neighbouring authorities. The draft plan provides only topline details about this. We note that there is already collaboration through the existing Wiltshire and Swindon Freight Quality Partnership. We assume this doesn't impact on Vale, but it would be helpful if this can be confirmed informally.

The emerging plan's support for renewable energy projects is positive. We are concerned that there is no provision for community benefit, and we are also concerned that there is little scope for preventing cumulative over-development or wider impacts of large-scale individual proposals, which could result in significant landscape impacts, particularly in the countryside.

We support draft Policy SD9: Heritage Transport to safeguard the Wilts and Berks Canal - a positive aim that we share.

We welcome reference in Policy ST2: Improving Public Transport at paragraph 2(c) to a mobility hub or park and ride infrastructure for the A420 corridor. This is related to the NEV proposal. However, there is currently no related notion of this on the policies map. We understand it isn't included because the detail needs to be considered further. We welcome opportunities to engage further on this with you and Oxfordshire County Council. Our initial feedback is to ask you to consider whether land needs safeguarding to reinforce and protect the delivery of the required infrastructure.

At paragraph 3.12 the Plan acknowledges the current lack of east-west transport options, particularly for the New Eastern Villages. Without rapid improvement ahead of completion of the first phases of the NEV developments, this could generate significant impacts for parts of Vale. We would welcome Swindon Council, Vale of White Horse District Council and Oxfordshire County Council working together strategically to consider how improved bus, train and cycle infrastructure can be developed, and to ensure that Vale residents between Swindon and Oxford also benefit from any improved connectivity. For example, this could be through the creation of a Swindon Parkway station to complement our proposed new Grove station (See Oxfordshire County Councils September 2025 consultation on the Ox Rail 2040 Plan for Rail for more information [here](#)). We would also like to see ways for our residents to access locations such as Straiton Retail Park, central Swindon or major employment centres like Panattoni Park (formerly the Honda site) by bus and cycle. This can be addressed by providing improved connectivity of the Public Rights of Way network in the area. There are several PROW routes that are severed by the A420, so additional crossing points would be hugely valuable to those journeys. In addition, a route extension and bridge for walking and cycling could be considered, as well as improvements to the unsurfaced parts of the existing PROW toward the NEV allocation to make them accessible through the winter months.

Generally, we note that a significant amount of evidence is available to justify the draft policies within the Regulation 18 consultation plan which is welcomed.

Yours sincerely



**Planning Policy Team Leader**

**South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council**