

Statement of Common Ground

between

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils

and

West Oxfordshire District Council

In relation to the South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Joint Local Plan

March 2025



Listening Learning Leading



**WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared by South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council (“South and Vale”) for agreement by West Oxfordshire District Council (“West Oxfordshire DC”) hereafter referred to as “the parties”. It sets out matters that are agreed between the parties in relation to the Joint Local Plan, Pre-submission publication version (Regulation 19), South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils, October 2024.
- 1.2 This SoCG reflects and confirms the current position on matters agreed or not agreed by all parties, with regard to the Duty to Co-operate.
- 1.3 This statement is provided without prejudice to other matters of detail that West Oxfordshire District Council may wish to raise during the South and Vale JLP Examination.

2. Background and Governance arrangements

- 2.1 South and Vale and West Oxfordshire District Council have a long history of working effectively together and have been working closely together on a number of strategic cross-boundary matters in accordance with the Duty to Co-operate.
- 2.2 There have been various mechanisms for co-operation during the JLP’s preparation as set out in South and Vale’s CSD09.1. These included the Future Oxfordshire Partnership (FOP), and its supporting Executive Officers Group, which replaced the Oxfordshire Growth Board. A review of FOP is underway, with new terms of reference planned for January 2025. At the strategic level, the authorities collaborated on economic matters through the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP), which prepares the Strategic Economic Plan.

3. Matters on which the parties agree

Duty to Co-operate

- 3.1 South and Vale have proactively engaged with West Oxfordshire District Council through the preparation of the JLP on a number of cross-boundary issues.
- 3.2 The Duty to Co-operate activities between the parties are recorded in the following documents:
 - Joint Local Plan [Duty to Cooperate Scoping Document](#) (May 2022);
 - South and Vale [Interim Duty to Co-operate Statement Reg 18](#) (Jan 2024)

- 3.3 The parties agree that South and Vale and West Oxfordshire District Councils have engaged constructively, actively and on an on-going basis to secure effective cooperation on strategic cross boundary matters in relation to the preparation of their respective plans.
- 3.4 The relevant potential strategic cross boundary matters between the parties are as follows:
- Housing need and supply (including affordable housing, and the provision of sites for Gypsies and Travellers)
 - The supply of retail and employment land
 - The provision of infrastructure
 - Addressing climate change
 - Conserving and enhancing our natural and historic environments including nature recovery
 - Habitats Regulations Assessment
 - Joint Oxfordshire Gypsies, Travellers, Travelling Showpeople and Boat Dwellers Study

Housing need and supply

The parties agree that:

- 3.5 The Joint Local Plan identifies a housing requirement of 31,020 units (16,530 for South Oxfordshire and 14,490 for Vale of White Horse). South and Vale are proposing to bring forward a supply of 40,056 homes of the plan period 2021-2041 (20,457 in South Oxfordshire and 19,599 in Vale of White Horse, CSD01.1) which exceeds the identified housing requirement as stated in the Joint Local Plan.
- 3.6 The Joint Local Plan continues to make provision for an additional 4,950 homes (to be delivered between 2021 and 2035) in South Oxfordshire, and 1,830 homes (to be delivered between 2019 and 2031) in Vale of White Horse to meet the agreed proportion of the total unmet housing need for Oxford City as identified in the adopted Local Plans.
- 3.7 South and Vale will meet all of its identified housing needs and does not require West Oxfordshire to meet any of its housing needs.

Traveller Need and Supply

The parties agree that:

- 3.8 All of the Oxfordshire districts have been working together to understand the needs of Gypsies, Travellers, Travelling Showpeople and Boat dwellers in the County in an Oxfordshire-wide assessment which has been completed and signed off by all authorities.

The supply of retail and employment land

The parties agree that:

- 3.9 Retail is not a strategic matter between the authorities.
- 3.10 South and Vale does not require West Oxfordshire District to accommodate any of its employment needs over the plan period. West Oxfordshire District does not require South and Vale to accommodate any of its employment needs based on its adopted Local Plan.

The provision of infrastructure

The parties agree that:

- 3.11 The provision of infrastructure is predominantly a local issue, to be determined in co-operation with the relevant statutory agencies.
- 3.12 There are some aspects of infrastructure planning and delivery that are more strategic in nature and may have cross boundary implications. The parties will continue to work collaboratively on strategic infrastructure matters through established mechanisms, including through the preparation of the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy

Addressing Climate Change

The parties agree that:

- 3.13 There is a need to address the causes and mitigate the impacts of climate change in accordance with our climate and ecological emergency declarations.
- 3.14 The parties will continue to work collaboratively on plans and strategies that seek to reduce carbon emissions including a Local Area Energy Plan for the County and to mitigate the impacts of climate change, including the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Joint Evidence Base – Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

The parties agree that:

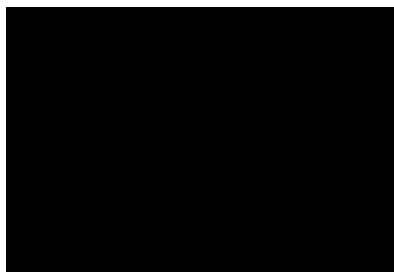
- 3.15 South and Vale shared a draft version of their HRA Appropriate Assessment with West Oxfordshire on 21 November 2024. This report was then revised prior to Submission, as a result of further discussions with Natural England regarding atmospheric pollution impacts on Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC) arising from planned development in Oxfordshire.
- 3.16 South and Vale will continue to engage with West Oxfordshire on HRA, in order to explore and agree with Natural England an appropriate methodology for the assessment of in-combination atmospheric pollution impacts, which in turn will help inform respective Local Plans.

4. Review and updating

- 4.1 This SoCG has been informed by ongoing engagement between the parties. It can be reviewed and updated through the JLP examination, informed by continued communication between the parties through meetings, changes to relevant circumstances through examination of the Plans and other electronic communications.
- 4.2 The parties therefore agree to:
- Keep a dialogue open on matters arising which are likely to have significant impacts and implications for the delivery of local plan policies;
 - To review and update this Statement in the light of any material change in circumstance; and
 - To maintain positive principles of cooperation.

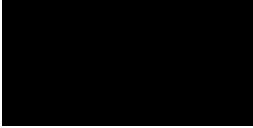
5. Signatories

Signed on behalf of West Oxfordshire District Council:



Andrew Thomson
Planning Policy Manager
Date: 20 March 2025

Signed on behalf of South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council:



Tim Oruye
Head of Policy and Programmes
Date: 21 March 2025