

Statement of Common Ground

Between

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils

And

Swindon Borough Council

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

December 2024



Listening Learning Leading



1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared jointly by South and Vale Councils and Swindon Borough Council (SBC).
- 1.2 The SoCG sets out the confirmed points of agreement between South and Vale and Swindon Borough Council (hereafter referred to as ‘the parties’) with regard to the Joint Local Plan (JLP) 2041 and supporting evidence base, which will assist examination of the JLP.

2 Background

- 2.1 Local Authorities are required through the Duty to Co-operate (the Duty) to engage constructively and actively on an on-going basis on planning matters that impact on more than one local planning area.
- 2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires Local Planning Authorities to work collaboratively with other bodies to make sure that these strategic priorities are properly coordinated across local boundaries and clearly reflected in individual Local Plans.
- 2.3 Local Planning authorities are expected to demonstrate evidence of having effectively co-operated to plan for issues with cross-boundary impacts, when their Local Plans are submitted for examination.

3 Duty to Cooperate

- 3.1 Swindon Borough Council is a Local Authority which shares a border to the west of Vale of White Horse District.
- 3.2 As set out in South and Vale JLP Duty to Co-operate Statement¹, South and Vale and Swindon Councils have co-operated constructively, actively and on an on-going basis during the JLPs production.
- 3.3 Records of engagements which relate to the JLP have been recorded in the South and Vale Duty to Co-operate Statement.

4 Agreed Matters

- 4.1 Based on the extent of the physical boundary that exists in the proximate areas of Swindon and Vale of White Horse, there are some limited relationships and links that exist like physical connections and inter-dependency of services and facilities.
- 4.2 The strategic matters to engage upon have been classified as *strategic issues* throughout South and Vales Duty to Co-operate Statement of Compliance.

¹ Joint Local [Duty to Cooperate Scoping Document](#) (May 2022); South and Vale [Interim Duty to Co-operate Statement Reg 18](#) (Jan 2024); South and Vale [Duty to Cooperate Statement Reg 19](#) (Oct 2024)

- 4.3 SBC did not submit a Regulation 19 response to the South and Vale Joint Local Plan. There are very few significant strategic issues that required comment from Swindon in the South and Vale plan.

5 Cross-boundary strategic matters

Meeting housing and employment land needs

- 5.1 Both authorities agree that they can meet their housing and employment needs for their respective plan periods within their own administrative areas. In relation to the strategic issue of housing need, the parties agree that there are no overlaps in terms of the Housing Market Assessments. Swindon has a separate housing market area. The parties acknowledge the need to continue to engage on the strategic matter of housing need as the JLP examination progresses, and as Swindon's Local Plan advances.
- 5.2 In relation to employment, whilst the extent of the authorities' Functional Economic Market Areas (FEMA) will differ and the parties lie within different FEMAs to one another, it is agreed that this does not significantly impact either area. The need arising is being adequately met within the defined boundaries and there is an engagement mechanism in place to discuss any specific matters generally related to employment. The parties acknowledge the need to continue to engage on the strategic matter of employment as the JLP examination progresses, and as Swindon's Local Plan advances.
- 5.3 The parties acknowledge that the JLP generates no unmet housing needs, employment need nor any other specialist housing need.

Strategic importance of key infrastructure

- 5.4 There are key road links for local connectivity including the A420, A419 and A34. The railway connectivity particularly between Swindon and Didcot Parkway and beyond is strategically important to all parties. The parties agree that there are no current infrastructure strategies or programs within the JLP that are significant cross-boundary strategic matters for the three authorities. The parties acknowledge the need to continue to engage on the strategic matter of infrastructure as the JLP examination progresses, and as Swindon's Local Plan advances, including the restoration of the canal between Swindon and the Vale.
- 5.5 SBC is satisfied that the requirements of the Duty to Co-operate have been met in relation to the JLP.
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6. Signatories

Signed:



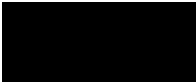
Date:

Tim Oruye

Head of Policy and Programmes

South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council

Signed:



Date: 6 Dec 24

Name: Cllr Kevin Small

Role: Cabinet Member responsible for the Local Plan

Swindon Borough Council