

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Joint Local Plan – Issues Consultation

Chiltern Society Response – 22 June 2022

Joint Local Plan: Issues Consultation

i) Are you responding as:

A community or interest group

ii) To help us understand the geographic spread of the responses we receive, please tell us your postcode in the box below.

HP5 1AG

A little bit about you (continued...)

iv) Please provide your name and email address (or postal address if you prefer), which will be recorded alongside your responses with your consent.

We would like to keep your details in our consultation database so we can stay in touch about the Joint Local Plan and other planning policy consultations. We will not use your details to contact you about anything else.

If you would like to join, please confirm below. You have the right to withdraw your consent at any time.

I confirm that I consent to my details being added to the consultation database

For further information about how we use your data below, please refer to our privacy policy, which also explains how to exercise your rights over your personal data.

If relevant, please provide the details of the organisation, business or council you're representing. If relevant, please also give the details of the client your business is representing (EG if you're a planning agent responding on behalf of another organisation).

Title	Mr
First name	Colin
Last name	Blundel
Town/village name	Chesham
Your business or organisation (if relevant)	Chiltern Society
Business or organisation you're representing (if relevant)	-
Email address	planning@chilternsociety.org.uk

Please select which documents you wish to comment on:

Local Plan Issues Consultation

This section of the survey is about the districts. Please visit our interactive website to find out more and to help you answer the questions below. The website will open in a new tab so once you're ready, you can close the tab down to return to this survey.

1. What three things do you value most about where you live?

- 1 Protection of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- 2 The biodiversity of the Chilterns
- 3 A high quality environment to live and work

2. In fewer than 50 words, if you could make one change to improve where you live, what would it be? Include the name of the town, village or area you're talking about.

To enhance the environment of the Chilterns by protecting the Chilterns AONB from development, contributing to nature recovery and addressing climate change.

This section of the survey is about how things are right now. Please visit our interactive website to find out more information and help you answer the questions below.

3. How much do you agree that these are the main issues that the Joint Local Plan should consider?

Agree

If you think there are other issues the Local Plan should consider, please let us know in this box:
Ancient woodlands and chalk grasslands are important habitats in the Chilterns and nationally and should be given strong protection through the Local Plan.

The Plan needs to contain clear policies in relation to development in the setting of the Chilterns AONB as well as within the AONB itself.

The Plan needs to address the needs of smaller rural settlements and not be too urban-centric in its approach. This is particularly important when planning local services and infrastructure, and the management of traffic and transport.

4. Which of these issues do you think is the most important?

Protecting our countryside

Our vision is for carbon neutral districts, for current and future generations.

For this to be a place where nature is thriving, and nature reserves are no longer isolated pockets. A place where history is still visible, where heritage and landscape character are safeguarded and valued, and the beauty and the distinctive local identity of our towns and villages have been enhanced.

A place where people can thrive. Where people have housing choices they can afford, where villages, market towns and garden communities are diverse and inclusive places where people of all ages and backgrounds can live together.

A place where local residents can reach the facilities they need for everyday living on foot, bicycle or by zero-emission and low carbon transport choices.

Where residents and visitors can live healthy lifestyles and access greenspace. Where people are safe from pollution, flooding, and the effects of climate change.

Where there are valuable and rewarding jobs, embracing clean technologies and growing the opportunities in Science Vale for the districts to contribute on a national and international scale to solving pressing global issues.

5. How much do you agree with this vision for the Joint Local Plan?

Strongly agree

If there is anything you disagree with in particular, or you have any other thoughts let us know here:

The Vision could also incorporate a healthy water environment, free from pollution and rich in wildlife.

This section of the survey is about reducing carbon emissions. Please visit our interactive website to find out more information about this topic and help you answer the questions below.

6. Please select the THREE opportunities that are most important to you.

Plan for a move away from fossil fuels and greenhouse gas emissions

Plan for new development in locations that enable sustainable lifestyles (20 minute neighbourhoods)

Encourage carbon sinks and increase tree cover

8. If you have any other thoughts on how we could use the Joint Local Plan to reduce carbon emissions, please write them here.

The Plan should have clear policies to encourage cycling and walking.

Policies should encourage working from home or hybrid working to reduce commuting by car.

Develop an interconnected, efficient and cost effective network of public transport to reduce the reliance on private transport, particularly in rural areas in South and Vale.

It needs to be recognised that trees are not the only carbon sinks and the conservation and enhancement of grassland habitats has a key role to play.

This section of the survey is about nature recovery and landscape. Please visit our interactive website to find out more information about this topic and help you answer the questions below.

9. Please select the THREE opportunities that are most important to you.

Respect landscape character, dark skies and the natural beauty of the countryside in development decisions

Require developments to generate a net gain in biodiversity

Minimise the use of greenfield land by increasing the density of developments

11. If you have any other thoughts on how we could use the Joint Local Plan to protect the natural environment, please write them here.

The Society strongly supports all of these issues as the Plan needs to protect the valued landscapes of the Chilterns AONB and address biodiversity decline.

The 'elephant in the room' here is the excessive housing target being required by the Government. It is only by reducing development in sensitive areas that the plan can truly start to address biodiversity and climate issues. There should be actions here relating to controlling housing numbers.

Where development does take place, it is crucial to get the design right and to maximise the opportunities for landscape enhancements and biodiversity net gain.

Development should concentrate on redeveloping brownfield sites and increasing the density within urban areas so as to protect the many small villages and valued landscapes in South Oxfordshire in particular.

This section of the survey is about protecting and enhancing local heritage. Please visit our interactive website to find out more information about this topic and help you answer the questions below.

12. Please select the THREE opportunities that are most important to you.

Protect heritage assets from harm or loss

Plan development at a scale appropriate to market towns and villages

Keep alive traditions of local building materials, palettes and building styles

14. If you have any other thoughts on how we could use the Joint Local Plan to protect and enhance local heritage please write them here.

The Plan could include a policy relating to following the Chilterns Design Guide for development within the AONB.

The Plan should seek to encourage good design for new developments, including the design of individual homes and the appearance of the development as a whole within the wider landscape. This is particularly important in protecting the landscape character in the setting of the AONB.

This section of the survey is about thriving inclusive communities. Please visit our interactive website to find out more information about this topic and help you answer the questions below.

15. Please select the THREE opportunities that are most important to you.

Plan for housing that is genuinely affordable for our communities

Continue to support neighbourhood plans so housing meets local needs

Require high quality, beautiful and sustainable design for new buildings and places

17. If you have any other thoughts on how we could use the Joint Local Plan to tackle housing inequality and affordability, please write them here.

The housing need in terms of numbers, tenure and house type need to be determined locally, rather than by numbers imposed by the Government and house types determined by developers. Neighbourhood Plans should remain an important tool in identifying local needs.

18. We'd like to hear your ideas for how we could adapt our town centres and high streets to meet our changing needs. Are there any improvements, new facilities or uses that you would like to see in the locations marked on the map?

Town centres should be considered for higher density housing schemes to provide the necessary homes whilst protecting the countryside.

This section of the survey is about transport and facilities. Please visit our interactive website to find out more information about this topic and help you answer the questions below.

19. Please select the THREE opportunities that are most important to you.

Focus new development in settlements where the facilities for everyday living are available within 20 minutes' walk or cycling distance

Plan a transition to sustainable transport modes by walking and cycling, shared transport, electric and alternative fuel cars, driverless cars, and plan for enhanced public transport including re-opening of the Cowley Branch line and a station at Grove

Plan for sustainable travel that is reliable, integrated and accessible

21. If you currently drive, what would encourage you to drive less and/or walk, cycle or take public transport more?

Better public and sustainable transport for rural areas to provide for work and leisure uses.

22. If you have any other thoughts on how we could use the Joint Local Plan to ensure people have easy access to the services they need to use on a day-to-day basis, please write them here.

The Plan could consider alternative options for leisure travel to the Chilterns to reduce car use. eg public, transport, cycle routes etc

This section of the survey is about healthy lifestyles and safe communities. Please visit our interactive website to find out more information about this topic and help you answer the questions below.

23. Please select the THREE opportunities that are most important to you.

Provide opportunities for active travel, exercise, social interaction and recreation

Enhance opportunities for exercise and enjoying high-quality open spaces and the countryside

Avoid inappropriate development in flood risk areas

This section of the survey is about jobs and opportunities for innovation. Please visit our interactive website to find out more information about this topic and help you answer the questions below.

27. Please select the THREE opportunities that are most important to you.

Support working from home and community based work hubs/ facilities

Support the 'circular economy' and businesses working towards a greener future

Support rural land-based businesses, the local food economy and rural tourism

31. Have we correctly summarised the issues, challenges and opportunities for the Joint Local Plan?

No

If you've said no, what do you think we've missed?

The main omission for the issues identified is any significant reference to housing numbers. As set out, the Plan is very strong on addressing environmental issues and addressing climate change, but omits any reference to housing targets. These targets have formed the basis for previous local plans and this is unlikely to change going forward.

In particular we would be concerned if the Councils were to base their projections on outdated 2014 figures, as is proposed in other local authority areas in the Chilterns. This could lead to a vastly inflated housing number that is well above the real need, thus threatening additional harm to the local environment.

In our view, the Districts should be seeking to reduce housing targets due to the high proportion of their areas that are covered by protected landscapes. The Plan must address any threats to the Chilterns AONB and its setting from housing and other developments.