



Compton Parish Council

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Response to South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Joint Local Plan 2045 Scoping Consultation

What are your top 3 priorities for the new Joint Local Plan 2045?

- 1) Protecting the distinctive landscape, heritage and environmental character of the area, including the National Landscape, biodiversity, chalk streams and other sensitive countryside settings.
- 2) Directing growth to the most sustainable locations and ensuring that development is accompanied by the infrastructure needed to make it viable, including transport, education, healthcare, welfare provision, drainage, foul water and digital connectivity. Development should also be accessible for all users, for example by retaining pavements on smaller residential streets wherever possible, so that visually impaired and wheelchair users are not forced to share the carriageway with vehicles.
- 3) Prioritising housing for local need, including affordable homes, rural exception sites and specialist housing, while avoiding unsustainable overdevelopment of smaller villages and other constrained settlements that lack suitable infrastructure.

Are there any particular topics you would like the Joint Local Plan 2045 to contain?

The Parish Council would like the Plan to contain policies on:

- landscape-led and locally distinctive design
- protection of heritage assets and historic settlement character
- affordable housing and homes for local people, including suitable rented accommodation
- infrastructure-first development, including foul water, surface water drainage, schools, and broadband, and ensuring adequate provision of healthcare, to be in place before dwellings can be occupied
- protection of the natural and historic environment, biodiversity net gain and chalk streams
- sustainable transport, footpaths, cycle links, parking standards, traffic management and accessibility for all, including inclusive pedestrian routes
- protection of existing community facilities, open space and public rights of way
- climate resilience, energy efficiency and water efficiency

- clear expectations for consultation and engagement with parish councils and local communities

Do you have any other comments on what the Joint Local Plan 2045 should contain?

The Plan should be positively worded, but it must also be realistic about the capacity of villages and rural settlements to absorb further growth. It should avoid dispersing development into constrained locations where infrastructure is already under pressure. In our view, the Plan should ensure that housing delivery supports mixed and balanced communities, including people with a strong local connection and older residents needing suitable accommodation. It should also take account of local government reorganisation and be capable of transferring into the future Ridgeway Council framework, so that evidence and policy direction remain consistent across the wider area.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed approach to engagement on the Joint Local Plan 2045, as outlined in the summary of the key elements of our emerging engagement strategy?

Agree

Do you have any comments on our proposed approach to engagement on the Joint Local Plan 2045?

The Parish Council supports the proposed commitment to early, open and accessible engagement, including the use of parish briefings, online information and consultation events. We would welcome clear summaries, accessible maps and plain-English evidence notes issued early in each stage, together with regular direct updates to parish councils and opportunities for officers to explain proposals at parish and district level meetings.

We would also ask that consultation timetables allow parish councils sufficient time to consider documents at formal meetings and agree informed responses. In practice, this means consultations should normally run for a minimum of six weeks wherever possible. The current timetable, running from 8 September to 29 September, does not allow many parish councils, which typically meet monthly, enough time to consider the matter properly before the deadline. Avoiding August and the Christmas/New Year period would also greatly improve participation.

Have there been barriers that previously prevented or restricted you from responding to local plan consultations?

Yes

Please let us know what barriers previously prevented or restricted you from taking part.

The main barrier has been timing. Parish councils usually meet only once a month, and if consultation periods fall during August or over the Christmas and New Year period, there is often not enough time for a formal meeting, consideration of the evidence and agreement of a response before the deadline. The volume and technical nature of consultation documents can also make it difficult to respond properly within a short timescale.

What can we do to reduce or remove the barriers that you have previously experienced when trying to take part in our local plan consultations?

Consultations should normally allow a minimum six-week response period wherever possible, to give parish councils and residents sufficient time to consider the documents properly.

Avoiding August and the Christmas/New Year period would also help. It would be beneficial to provide clear summaries, plain-English explanations, accessible maps and key evidence notes early in the process, together with direct notifications to parish councils and opportunities for officers to explain proposals at parish-level briefings or meetings.