

Examination of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2013 – 2033

Inspector: Mr. Paul Clark BA MA MRTPI

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Ms. Charlotte Stevens,
Planning Policy Manager,
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The Gateway
Gatehouse Road
Aylesbury, Bucks
HP19 8FF

By email only

Dear Ms. Stevens,

Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan

When the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan was submitted for examination its housing strategy was based upon the 2014-based projections published by the then Department for Communities and Local Government in July 2016. Following discussion at hearing sessions and subsequent correspondence, modifications have been proposed by the Council establishing a housing requirement (including imported unmet needs from other plan areas) of 28,600 homes for the plan period which, with a buffer of 5.7%, leads to allocations within the plan for 30,233 dwellings. The Office for National Statistics [ONS], having taken over responsibility for preparing the household projections, published 2016-based projections in September 2018. These showed the projected annual increase in households to rise from 1035 to 1153 for the period 2018-28 (not the plan period). ORS, the council's consultants, advised that the projected change was not of such a magnitude that it necessitated a reworking of the housing requirement of the plan for the plan period. The Inspector agreed.

As you will be aware, the ONS recently published their 2018-based household projections, on Monday 29 June 2020. These show the projected annual increase in households to be 1119 for the period 2018-28 (not the plan period), a figure in between the 2014 and 2016 projections.

Relevant guidance in the national Planning Practice Guidance [PPG] on Housing and economic needs assessment (Paragraph:016, Reference ID: 2a-016-20150227) advises that:

The government's official population and household projections are generally updated every 2 years to take account of the latest demographic trends. [...] Wherever possible, local needs assessments should be informed by the latest available information. The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that Local Plans should be kept up-to-date. A meaningful change in the housing situation should be considered in this context, but this does not automatically mean that housing assessments are rendered outdated every time new projections are issued.

On the basis that the council's consultants previously advised that a higher increase was not regarded as a meaningful change which would necessitate a reworking of the plan's housing requirements, the Inspector will presume, unless advised otherwise, that the lesser increase over the 2014 figures now implied by the 2018 projections is similarly not regarded as a meaningful change which would necessitate a reworking of the plan's housing requirements. He would be grateful for your comments on this and the reasons for your conclusions. When he has those he will advise on any further steps that may need to be taken.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Clark

Inspector