

Supplementary Papers



Listening Learning Leading

Contact Officer: Ron Schrieber, Democratic Services Officer
Tel: 01235 422524

FOR THE MEETING OF

Scrutiny Committee

held in the The Fountain Conference Centre, Howbery Park, Crowmarsh
Gifford

on Thursday 13 December 2018 at 6.30 pm

Open to the public including the press

- 1 **Local Plan Publication Version (2034)** (Pages 2 - 33)
Additional correspondence attached



Our Ref: PF/9320
(Please reply to Banbury office)

greg.mitchell@framptons-planning.com

11th December 2018

Adrian Duffield
Planning Head of Service
South Oxfordshire District Council
135 Eastern Avenue
Milton Park
Milton
Oxfordshire
OX14 4SB

Dear Mr Duffield

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE LOCAL PLAN PUBLICATION VERSION (2034)
REPORT TO SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 13TH DECEMBER 2018**

On behalf of Summix Ltd, Pye Homes Ltd and Bellway Homes Ltd, we write having reviewed, with Leading Counsel, the report to the Council's Scrutiny Committee for 13th December 2018, which has been issued with the purpose of outlining the contents of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan Publication Version (2034) (the Plan) and its associated documents listed in the Background Papers and appended to that report.

The report goes onto state that, subject to Council approval, it is proposed to commence consultation (under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning Regulations) on 7 January 2019, for a period of 6 weeks until 18 February 2019.

We are very concerned about the Plan being progressed on this basis.

Previous consultation versions of the Plan have sought to limit green belt releases. The current version of the Plan is founded on a new strategy that effectively seeks to maximise green belt releases on the periphery of Oxford. This is a completely new strategy resulting in a new Plan that has not been previously consulted upon.

Whilst it may be the case that the various green belt sites now proposed for allocation have been 'considered' separately in previous versions of the Plan, such consideration was undertaken in the context of seeking to limit green belt releases. The proposed combination of sites in the new Plan have never been consulted upon in the context of a strategy that seeks to focus development in the green belt.

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It appears that the Council is seeking to avoid a further Regulation 18 Consultation on the new strategy, which is clearly the appropriate and lawful way to proceed, and is trying to create the opportunity to proceed in a short form way by commencing consultation under Regulation 19. This is simply not appropriate or lawful.

It is not our intention to needlessly cause any difficulties for the Council, nor should our comments be perceived as any form of threat, but the consultation approach advocated in the Scrutiny report would, in our view, lead to an inevitable challenge to the lawfulness of the process in due course and possible intervention by the Secretary of State.

We invite you to take your own advice on this matter which we hope you will then share with us.

I would be grateful if you can make the members of Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet and Council aware of the above information so that it can be taken into consideration at their forthcoming meetings on 13th, 18th and 20th December respectively.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Mitchell".

Greg Mitchell

Cc: Councillor Mrs J Murphy Leader SODC
Mark Stone Chief Executive SODC
Holly Jones Planning Policy Manager SODC
Martin Kingston QC
Richard Brown (Summix Limited)
Graham Flint (Pye Homes)
Ashley Maltman (Pye Homes)
Fergus Thomas (Bellway Homes)
Jane Mulcahey (JAM Consult Limited)
Mitchell Barnes (Framptons)



SANDFORD ON THAMES PARISH COUNCIL

11th December 2018

To: Adrian Duffield,
Head of SODC Planning Service
By email: adrian.duffield@southandvale.gov.uk

Dear Mr Duffield,

Re the Draft Emerging Local Plan 2033

I am writing on behalf of Sandford-on-Thames Parish Council to object in the strongest possible terms to the inclusion of the Grenoble Road site in the updated draft SODC Emerging Local Plan published for consideration by the Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet and Full Council on December 13, 18 and 20 respectively. The proposal is in complete contradiction of national Green Belt policy by mandating urban sprawl, will have a devastating effect on character and rural nature of the village and will completely overwhelm the already severely strained local infrastructure. We are concerned that this site has been added to the Emerging Local Plan without public consultation. I should be grateful if you could ensure that this letter is read at the above meetings and that it is recorded in the minutes.

This proposal clearly contravenes both the NPPF Green Belt policies and SODC's own Green Belt policies as set out in the Emerging Plan

NPPF July 2018

The NPPF states that *"the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open"* and that *"the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence"*. It goes on to set out in para 134 the five purposes of the Green Belt as:

- a) *to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- b) *to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- c) *to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
- d) *to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
- e) *to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.*

It is self-evident that a major housing development at the Grenoble Road site is completely at odds with points a, c and d, in that it will of itself constitute urban sprawl and will encroach upon the countryside. A development of this size in the parish of Sandford-on-Thames will completely overwhelm the existing settlement of 548 dwellings (2011 Census), having a major impact on village life by destroying its rural nature, having a detrimental environmental impact in terms of wildlife and added pollution. It will also have a detrimental effect on the setting and special character of Oxford itself, by impacting on the rural nature of the area, an impact that the Green Belt is designed to avoid.

SODC Emerging Plan

I have extracted below some vision and policy statements from the Emerging Plan that are particularly relevant, and made some observations on them.

- **Vision:** *Through careful management of the Oxford Green Belt we will have made provision towards Oxford city's unmet housing needs whilst protecting the important setting of Oxford and also making appropriate provision for housing, business growth and urban and rural regeneration.*

This statement is at best misleading as 'careful management' should not mean wholesale removal of land from the Green Belt.

- **STRAT1(vi):** *Meeting unmet housing needs of Oxford City on strategic allocations adjacent to the boundary of Oxford near to where that need arises.*

Whilst this appears at first glance to be a logical argument, national Green Belt policy, as noted above, is specifically designed to prevent urban sprawl at the edge of towns. The need is not arising in this specific area and local infrastructure is already at breaking point (more on this below).

- **STRAT1(viii):** *Supporting smaller and other villages by allowing for limited amounts of housing and employment to help secure the provision and retention of services.*

Clearly a development of 3000 houses plus extension of the Science Park goes way beyond limited amounts of housing and employment.

- **STRAT1(ix):** *Protecting and enhancing the countryside and particularly those areas within the two AONBs and Oxford Green Belt by ensuring that outside towns and villages any change relates to very specific needs such as those of the agricultural industry or enhancement of the environment.*

The plan fails to set out which specific needs for change are being addressed by the proposed Grenoble Road allocation.

- **STRAT11:** *To ensure the Green Belt continues to serve its key functions, it will be protected from harmful development. Within its boundaries, development will be restricted to those limited types of development which are deemed appropriate by the NPPF, unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.*

Removing significant portions of land from the Green Belt fails to meet this policy.

Infrastructure

Apart from the Green Belt and character of the village considerations, Sandford-on-Thames residents are very concerned about the impact on the local infrastructure and the quality of the environment, with particular reference to air pollution. Although on the boundary of Oxford city, where one might assume there is adequate infrastructure, this is not the case. The local road network, including the A4074, is frequently gridlocked, there is a very limited bus service and no safe cycling routes. The A4074 is a main route into Oxford from the south east of the city, and traffic has increased significantly over recent years. It is also questionable whether a site bounded on one side by a major sewage works and the other by a major electricity sub-station and crossed by 400kV power lines is a suitable site for housing and the associated infrastructure required.

Conclusion

Whilst our main interest is Sandford-on-Thames, we note that six of the seven sites selected for strategic housing are in the Green Belt. In 2017 SODC ruled out Grenoble Road and other Green Belt sites for major housing development, stating that there were not exceptional circumstances to release these sites from the Green Belt. This judgement was based on a sustainability assessment. Nothing has changed: these Green Belt sites remain inappropriate for large development and exceptional circumstances still do not apply.

Overall, it is particularly disappointing that the Oxford Green Belt, the first to be established in the country, should be treated in such a cavalier way.

Your sincerely,

Hilda Bailey
Chair, Sandford-on-Thames Parish Council

Cc by email to:

- Ms Holly Jones - SODC Planning Policy Manager Email: holly.jones@southandvale.gov.uk
- Mrs Jane Murphy – SODC Leader Bus.
email: jane.murphy@southoxon.gov.uk; leader@southoxon.gov.uk
- Mr. Felix Bloomfield – SODC Cabinet Member for Planning, Bus.
email: felix.bloomfield@southoxon.gov.uk

Sent: 11 December 2018 18:06
To: Schrieber, Ron
Subject: Scrutiny Committee Meeting item.

Dear Mr Schrieber,

I am writing to express concern over the use of several patches of green belt land within SODC for new housing developments, specifically the proposed Wick Farm/Elsfield plan.

Historically the SODC has been a champion protecting Oxford's precious green belt. I am therefore saddened to see in various Scrutiny Committee papers moves to declassify several green belt areas for houses.

In doing so, SODC is making liberal use of the 'exceptional circumstances' clause in the NPPF - that allows housing to be built on green belt land if other land cannot be found for it.

In Oxfordshire in general, and Oxford City in particular, we have both a supply and demand problem. The supply is limited and Oxford City seems more concerned to devote limited building land for more jobs rather than more houses, thus exacerbating the problem. Future housing needs (the 'demand') are based on SHMA calculations which are now regarded as seriously flawed (they are in part based on future growth projections which are unrealistic). Oxford City's still unquantified 'unmet housing need' is forced upon your and other authorities to 'solve'.

I hope that SODC 'pushes back' on Government requirements to meet Oxford's unmet housing needs. In the meantime I attach a document based on your Scrutiny Committee papers and others that, I hope, shows you what members of the public will conclude from what appears to be you abandoning your historical stance against green belt developments.

In the attached, extracts from your own documents are in black. My comments are in red.

Justification for the use of the 'exceptional circumstances' clause in one case (development at Culham Science Centre) is contradicted by another (development at Elsfield/Wick Farm). (pages 1 and 2 in the attached)

We need to develop away from town centres because some of these are too polluted to live in (page 3)

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are also not exempt from the 'exceptional circumstances' clause, (page 3).

Your Core Strategy Policy of a minimum housing density of 25 houses per hectare is abandoned when it comes to green belt development at Elsfield/Wick Farm, where

the proposal is for a housing density of ONLY 9.6 houses per hectare. This is a profligate waste of a unique resource (pages 4 to 6).

Finally, promises made in 2012, that Barton Park residents would have local access to countryside, have now been abandoned. Barton Park will be more or less totally surrounded by the Wick farm/Elsfield proposal (pages 7 and 8).

The public of Oxfordshire deserve better than this. It is time for Councils to preserve what we have, rather than destroy what previous generations created with care and forethought.

Yours sincerely,

David Rogers

Unfortunately I am unable to attend the Scrutiny Committee meeting. I would be grateful if my document and email could be made available to the Committee.

David J. Rogers
Professor of Ecology (Retired)
Department of Zoology,
Oxford University, UK

Agenda Item 6 for Thursday 13th December 2018

What SODC says and what the Public concludes



P46

The Local Plan proposes to inset Culham Science Centre and land adjacent to it from the Green Belt. The site is at the outer edge of the Green Belt. This location is also at a distance from the special historic setting of the City of Oxford and does not make a significant contribution towards the purposes of including land in the Green Belt to check the unrestricted sprawl of Oxford City. The exceptional circumstances justifying a release of the Green Belt through the Local Plan in this area are:

- The additional land provides an opportunity to deliver housing adjacent to one of the major employers in southern Oxfordshire
 - Development in this location is at the heart of Science Vale and supports the delivery of much needed significant strategic infrastructure
- The Council supports delivery o

PUBLIC CONCLUSION. SODC IS PREPARED TO SACRIFICE GREEN BELT LAND 'at a distance from the special historic setting of the City of Oxford'

2

P58/73

Policy STRAT15: Land north of Bayswater Brook

Land north of Bayswater Brook directly adjoins the eastern boundary of Oxford City.

The site is entirely within the Oxford Green Belt. The Local Plan proposes to inset this site from the Green Belt. The exceptional circumstances for doing this are:

- The site is in a highly sustainable location adjoining a major urban area;
- The site's proximity to major employment locations and a wide range of services and facilities means that there is high potential to support travel by walking and cycling;
- The site is well positioned to connect with public transport provision in Oxford City; and
- The development of this site will help to provide for Oxford City's unmet housing need, including affordable housing need, close to where that need arises.

PUBLIC CONCLUSION. SODC IS PREPARED TO SACRIFICE GREEN BELT LAND AS CLOSE TO THE HISTORIC CENTRE OF THE CITY OF OXFORD AS IT IS POSSIBLE TO GET.

CONCLUDING QUESTION. IS ANY AREA OF SODC'S GREEN BELT SAFE FROM THE APPLICATION OF THE 'exceptional circumstances' CLAUSE IN THE NPPF THAT OTHERWISE PROTECTS GREEN BELT LAND?

P93/118

It is particularly important to retain residential accommodation in the town centres to maintain a balance between uses and to allow easy access to services. The Council will allow a change of use in the exceptional circumstances described in the policy. With regard to environmental factors, however, there will be few locations in the four South Oxfordshire towns where noise, fumes or other forms of nuisance will be such as to render premises unsuitable for living accommodation. The Local Planning Authority will be guided in this matter by advice from its environmental health department.

The amenity afforded by a private garden is often an important factor in keeping town centre flats and houses in residential use. The Council will, therefore, resist development that would destroy such gardens.

PUBLIC CONCLUSION. LOCAL COUNCILS HAVE ALLOWED INAPPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT OF TOWN CENTRES TO SUCH AN EXTENT THAT SOME OF THEM ARE NOW UNSAFE TO LIVE IN. COUNCILS ARE NOW LOOKING TO GREEN BELT LAND FOR NEW HOUSING. UNLESS THINGS CHANGE, SUCH LAND WILL SUFFER THE SAME FATE AS OUR TOWN CENTRES.

P138/175

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are of national importance. Development that is likely to have an adverse effect on a SSSI (either on its own or in combination with other developments) will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances, where it can be demonstrated that the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh any harm to the special interest features and the SSSI's contribution to the local ecological network. In such circumstances, measures should be provided (and secured through planning permissions or legal agreements) that would mitigate or, as a last resort, compensate for the adverse effects resulting from development.

PUBLIC CONCLUSION. THE 'exceptional circumstance' CLAUSE CAN BE APPLIED TO SSSIs AS WELL.



Listening Learning Leading



South Oxfordshire District Council

South Oxfordshire Local Plan

Sustainability Appraisal of the
Publication Version of the Local
Plan 2018

DRAFT REPORT FOR CONSULTATION – MAIN REPORT

The above documents states the following

p. 139

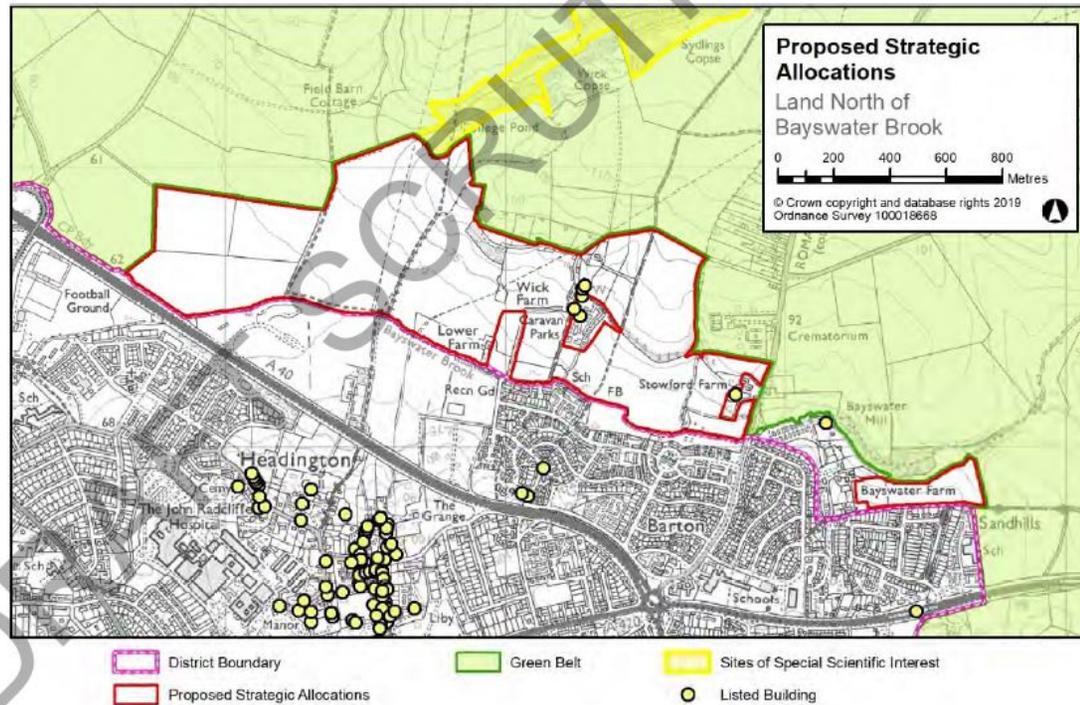
G: Raising Densities - Fitting in more growth on a smaller area of land by encouraging higher densities in new development. Core Strategy policy CSH2, sets a minimum of 25 dwellings per hectare, which is quite a low density. This was set to make sure that developments are planned sensitively to fit with their settings.

On its own this option is unlikely to deliver the number of additional homes that the Council are planning for but this can be a complementary option.

The Council will always seek to make the most efficient use of land and it is sensible given the onus on efficient use of land introduced in the NPPF 2018 for this to complement the spatial strategy for the District. The character or location of some sites will make them more suited to higher density development. A review of densities has been undertaken to support Local Plan policy updates on density to ensure this complementary element of the strategy is achieved. It is also important that the main advantage of Option G is that densities being increased means that the Council can demonstrate that it has exhausted options for development that are not within the Green Belt.

PUBLIC CONCLUSION. 25 dwellings per hectare is a minimum density for SODC's Core Strategy Policy. Applying this 'rule', and failing to meet housing targets because development land is deemed unavailable, SODC might be able to argue that it needs to use the 'exceptional circumstances' clause to justify building houses on Green Belt land (3rd column, above).

Below is the Wick Farm area on which SODC proposes to allow 1100 homes to be built.



The approximate total area of this land, to be removed from the green belt because of claimed ‘exceptional circumstances’, is 114 hectares, giving a housing density of 9.6 houses per hectare (hph), way below SODC’s own minimum target density. (The density of houses on the new Barton Park development is 23.3 houses per hectare).

PUBLIC CONCLUSION. SODC is prepared to sacrifice our Green Belt, in totally inefficient ways. This is a profligate waste of a precious resource, so close to the ‘special historic setting of the City of Oxford’ that SODC claims to want to protect? The same number of houses could be built on less than half the area at the minimum housing density SODC recommends (25hph).

This is the Barton Area Action plan of 2012



www.oxford.gov.uk

OXFORD
CITY
COUNCIL

Barton

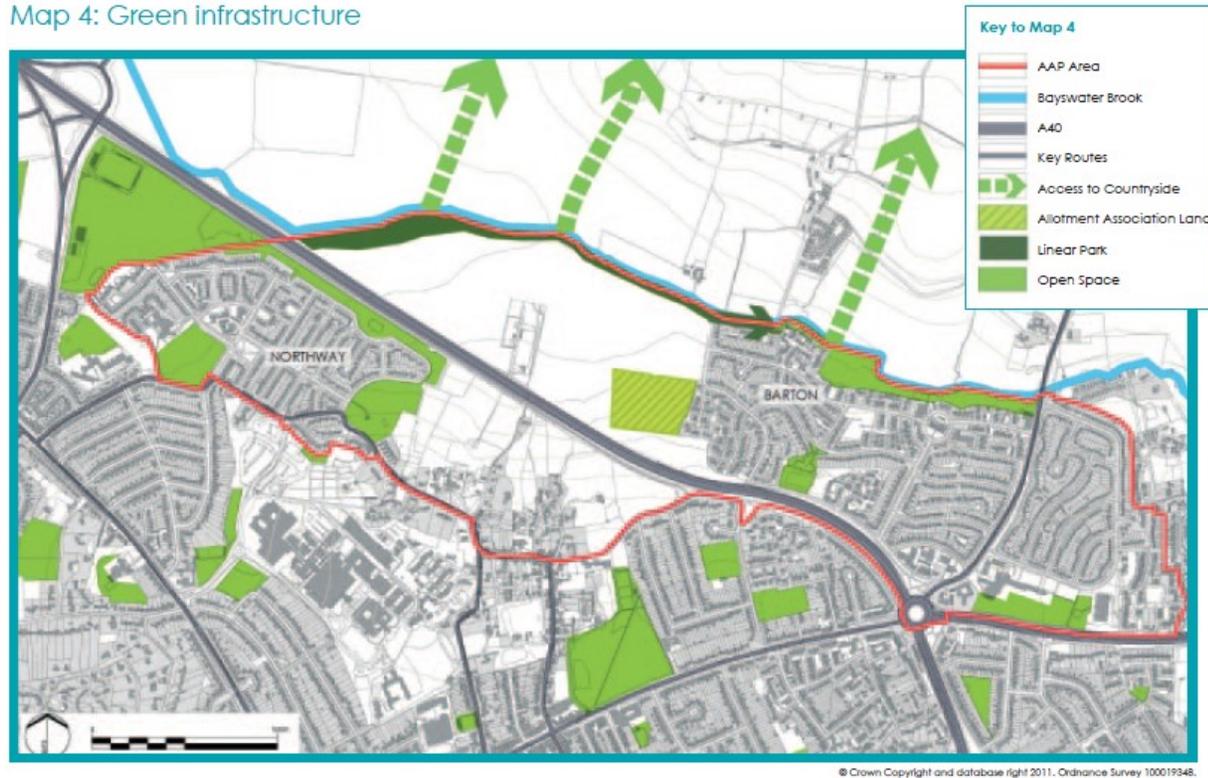
Area Action Plan

Adopted December 2012

Building a world-class city for everyone

Map 4 from the above document

Map 4: Green infrastructure



Notice the dashed green arrows 'Access to the Countryside'. 6 years later SODC plans to build houses on this countryside.

PUBLIC CONCLUSION. Promises to new home owners are worthless in the face of housing targets set by questionable methods (SHMA) that even the Office for National Statistics now criticises.

Professor David Rogers, MA, D.Phil. (Oxon)
david.rogers@zoo.ox.ac.uk

Agenda Item 6

Matthew Dovey
Garsington
Oxford, OX44

12 December 2018

To: Councillor David Turner
Chair, Scrutiny Committee
South Oxfordshire District Council

Cc: Councillor Will Hall, Vice-chair

Dear Cllr Turner,

I am writing to you in your capacity as chair of the Scrutiny Committee as regards a serious concern with the process in producing the current scrutiny version of the SODC Local Plan 2011 - 2033.

This version re-introduces a number of sites previously discounted in 2016 after the Public Consultation on Refined Options. Re-introducing these sites without re-running any of the Preferred Options consultations means that these sites have not been subject to the same level of public scrutiny and consultation (as outlined in the Local Development Scheme) compared to other aspects of the Local Plan and as a result denies sufficient public comment on SODC's reasoning behind ignoring its original grounds for discounting these sites, not least of all the results of the Refined Options consultation. This is against the spirit of localism implicit in the design of Local Plans and the purpose of the Local Development Scheme.

This is of especial concern as some of these sites require the permanent removal of significant areas from the Green Belt. According to the NPPF, such actions should only be undertaken for exceptional circumstances as it weakens the Green Belt's ability to meet its intended purpose and sets a dangerous precedent; if anything, this should require more public scrutiny than other aspects of the Local Plan, but certainly not less. As this has resulted from a very recent U-turn in SODC policy (and in contradiction to government policy) which had hitherto been to protect the green belt around Oxford city, the public will have had no opportunity to express their views via the traditional method of the ballot box as many of the district councillors would have been elected on a platform of protecting the Green Belt.

As such to accept these changes to this version of the Local Plan without making use of the full public consultation phases as described in the Local Development Scheme would undermine any democratic legitimacy and community acceptability of the Local Plan.

Yours sincerely,



Matthew Dovey

From: Haidrun Breith <haidrunbreith@bbowt.org.uk>

Sent: 12 December 2018 17:08

To: Turner, David; wahhall@gmail.com

Subject: Scrutiny committee_SODC Local Plan - Land of Bayswater Brook allocation

Dear Mr Turner and Mr Wahhall,

It has been brought to our attention that the scrutiny committee is going to discuss the inclusion of the Land North of Bayswater Brook in the Local Plan allocations tomorrow. We are surprised and extremely worried to hear that this is being proposed:

- The Council's own Sustainability Appraisal provided as part of the LP consultations in 2017 dismissed both Wick Farm and Elsfield allocations (now combined into one larger 'Land North of Bayswater Brook' allocation) on the basis that they are both in the Greenbelt, and they could cause significant adverse effects on biodiversity. It is unclear how and why this position has changed as no additional evidence has been made available and this site allocation is still against policy.
- The proposed allocations site directly adjoins the nationally important site of Sidlings Copse SSSI (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) and we believe that development of this scale (potentially even larger in the future) will significantly impact on the nature conservation interest and condition of the SSSI, especially in combination with the adjacent Barton development currently under construction.

Part of Sidlings Copse & College Pond SSSI is under BBOWT ownership, and a large proportion of the rest of the site is managed by BBOWT as a nature reserve through agreement with the landowners. We are extremely concerned that development of this scale immediately adjacent to the SSSI will lead to an increase in recreational pressure to the detriment of the site's condition.

The SSSI is a fragile site comprising very rare habitats of alkaline fen, lowland acid grassland, lowland calcareous grassland, heathland, mire, and deciduous woodland, which suffer under increased pressure from visitors. Of particular concerns are an increase in visitors allowing dogs off the leash, dog fouling, dogs worrying livestock, vandalism and an increased risk of 'anti-social' behaviour, all of which we are already experiencing at the site. BBOWT use grazing animals to manage the SSSI, which is essential to maintain these important habitats, however, there is a real risk that indirect recreational pressure might make the management of this site untenable over time, resulting in the decline of the site. In addition, there are other indirect impacts such as impacts on hydrology, air pollution and nutrient deposition (eg from car emissions) to consider, all of which adversely affect these fragile habitats and associated species. There are also other important designated sites, habitats and species in the vicinity which too might be indirectly affected by development on this site.

- National policy and best practice guidance require developments to deliver a net gain in biodiversity. We note that policy Strat15 aims to achieve such a net gain but as managers of the adjacent SSSI (and other designated sites) we do not believe that it will be possible to adequately mitigate and compensate for the impact on the rare habitats and species at Sidlings Copse - no amount of apparent 'Net Gain' in a new development will make up for the loss of biodiversity in an ancient site like Sidlings Copse. We therefore consider it important that the mitigation hierarchy of avoidance, mitigation and compensation (as required by policy) is followed and that impacts are avoided in the first place by choosing sites that will result in least ecological impacts.

BBOWT believes that this site allocation, especially in combination with the ongoing development at Barton, will have significant effects on biodiversity, and we therefore ask you not to include this site in the LP allocations. If additional housing capacity is indeed needed there are ecologically far less sensitive sites that should be considered first such as Land off Grenoble Road.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions.

Kind regards,

Haidrun

Haidrun Breith

Senior Biodiversity & Planning Officer (Oxfordshire)

Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust

Tel: 01865 775476

The Lodge, 1 Armstrong Road, Littlemore, Oxford, OX4 4XT

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From: Paul Smith <paulsmith66@btconnect.com>

Sent: 12 December 2018 17:08

To: Walsh, John; Turner, David; wahhall@gmail.com; anthony.dearlove@southoxon.gov.uk; Hornsby, Elaine; Matelot, Jeannette; Nimmo-Smith, David; an.snowdon@southoxon.gov.uk; White, Ian

Subject: Local Plan - Bayswater and Wick Farm

Dear Scrutiny Committee

I am writing to you as a resident of Bayswater Road (Greenacre, OX3 9RZ) to object about the proposal to include Bayswater and Wick Farm in the list of sites as "preferred options" in the redrafted local plan.

I wish to remind you that both sites were rejected by SODC and that 'exceptional circumstances do not exist for the release of this site from the Green Belt' as set out in the September 2017 document *South Oxfordshire Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal of the Publication Version of the Local Plan Final Report for Consultation*.

The same factors that determined the sites rejection exist some 14 months later and I fail to see what has changed in that time that could reverse the decision and I would ask you to exclude these sites from any revised list of preferred options for development.

Yours sincerely

Paul Smith

PRESCRIBING THE CHARACTERISTIC OF DEVELOPMENT ON STRATEGIC SITES

The emerging South Oxfordshire District Council Local Plan 2011-2034 proposes 3% Self Build and Custom Housing on all strategic sites and 50% affordable housing (17.5% social rented) on the fringe of Oxford's urban boundary.

The proposed allocation of 4,600 homes across three strategic Oxford fringe sites, would thus result in 138 self- and custom-build homes.

Policy H12 Self Build and Custom Housing expects these to be open market homes but encourages affordable delivery in 'certain circumstances'¹.

By not designating site-specific characteristic of self- and custom-build housing the homes are likely to be provided as single-dwelling plots provided at a premium and will not match the need that has been found in research and engagement across Oxfordshire (see Evidence section E1 below).

Sites on the fringe of Oxford constitute the special circumstance referred to under Policy H12 due to the lack of sub-market housing to meet demand found in the Oxfordshire SHLAA and reiterated by the Oxfordshire Growth Board, the Local Economic Partnership and others.

While we understand the need to avoid putting in place barriers to deliverability through being overly-prescriptive, the community-led housing sector offers approaches to delivering these strategic sites which would reduce risk to developers and landowners whilst meeting wider objectives. This is due to:

- Self- and custom-build models bringing the future residents of the housing scheme into the pre-development process and using these early-adopters to forward-fund elements of the scheme. Pre-selling homes reduces development risk and lowers the level of commercial development finance required.
- Government support for this sector, such as through the [Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015](#) and the [Community Housing Fund 2018](#) which offers pre-development, infrastructure and capital cost cover for affordable homes which are in addition to planning contributions.
- Community support for greater development-densities due to higher-levels of shared space and facilities on community-led schemes, reducing the need for redundant internal space in larger properties such as empty bedrooms, and support for low-car-use developments.

¹ p105 Scrutiny Meeting Agenda Item 6, '2018-11-29 SODC LP2034 Publication document_Plan' ([link](#))

Proposal

If these sites are to be allocated, we would recommend:

1. The self- and custom-build serviced plots on these strategic sites should be designated primarily as collective self-build plots. These plots could then access finance from the Community Housing Fund.
2. Reflecting demand on SODC's Self-build register, a higher designation of at least 5% should be made to match the requirement of other Local Authorities²³. This would assist in meeting SODC's density aspirations of 70 dwellings per hectare on some of these sites and avoid further-overheating of Oxford's housing market through single-dwelling self-build plots.
3. Prescribing a wider designation of 20% 'innovative housing models' on these sites, which is inclusive of the Self build and Custom Housing policy. This would be to meet the demand within the County from cohousing and co-operative housing groups and showcase the positive approach required to meet the characteristic of Oxford's affordability problem. There would be no cost to take this stance on quality as the innovation allocation would revert to traditional housing designations if lower demand is found using the mechanism proposed in [Policy H12 Paragraph 4](#).

Evidence

E1 – Evidenced demand in the Oxford Housing Market

In October 2017 Oxford City Council commissioned a report on how new collaborative delivery routes could contribute to unmet need in the Oxford Housing Market Area. This report primarily explores how socio-spatial practices could be mainstreamed from learnings found in the cohousing, co-operative and Community Land Trust (CLT) sectors. The findings of the feasibility section of the report demonstrated that the cost of rented and mortgaged housing could be up to 30% lower than equivalent developer-led schemes when utilising collaborative approaches, whilst also delivering myriad benefits to the environment, health and wellbeing. The report will be launched in January 2019 but a copy can be requested if required to aid decision-making.

Historic cities with similar characteristics like Freiburg, Tübingen and Strasbourg have been meeting these demands through new quarters of housing innovation since the early 1990s⁴.

E2 – Government support

In July 2016 the Government launched the £163m Community Housing Fund which supports pre-development and development capital costs as well as finance for local authorities to provide enabling roles similar to the support offered by innovative authorities in France, Germany and The Netherlands.

² Oxford City Council Local Plan 2036 Policy H7 (p.47)

³ Teignbridge District Council Local Plan Policy WE7 and Custom and Self Build Housing SPD July 2016 ([link](#))

⁴ <http://righttobuildtoolkit.org.uk/case-studies>

E3 – Benefits of community-led housing

Public Health

- **Reduced loneliness** and higher well-being in co-operative and community-led housing ([link](#))
- Community-led housing can create a living environment where people are in frequent contact and “look out for each other” (Older Women’s Co-Housing, <http://www.owch.org.uk>)
- **Greater social cohesion** and generation of social capital through co-operative and community-led models (Lang & Novy 2014)

Children’s Services

- **Greater levels of mutual support** between residents, including young children and their parents through mixed tenure housing arranged as cohousing.
- **Children get a better start in life** through a focus on planning and designing healthier housing. Cohousing has shown to offer a better physical environments for children to grow up. ([YouTube link](#))
- **Greater focus on affordable housing in perpetuity**, both for rent and ownership which is vital for families with young children ([e.g. LILAC in Leeds](#))

Adult social care

- **Responsive to the changing needs of older residents** and those living with disabilities (Coele 2014) particularly through cohousing models.
- Recent CLH schemes led by, and aimed specifically at, older people **offer support networks to those who may otherwise find themselves living alone** but do not want ‘paternalistic’ conventional housing for older people provided by Local Authorities or Charities (Scanlon and Arrigoitia 2015)
- Independent research shows that service provision statistics from community-led housing are generally as good as, if not better, than the best of other housing providers, **with high satisfaction rates** (Commission on Co-operative and Mutual Housing 2009)
- There is a growing demand for greater social and financial autonomy in later life which cohousing can offer. eg [a mutual care home in Stroud](#).
- Community led housing schemes focus on keeping people well, living healthy, happy lives in their own communities, rather than in need of expensive, institution-based treatment and care. (Powerful Communities, Strong Economies, Locality)
- Cohousing may reduce, or offset, the need for residential care due **to enabling active, independent ageing throughout life-stages**. Downsizers have the option of remaining in their existing homes (HAPPI 2009)
- Cohousing for older people has advantages, such as age-friendly living environments, that help people self-care for longer and therefore avoid traditional forms of care and support provision (Riseborough 2013)

The Environment

- CLH schemes have been shown to engage more readily with the low carbon agenda (Chatterton 2013) as residents are more invested to ensure energy bills are low on occupation
- CLH schemes typically have environmentally-friendly construction, improved air quality, wider environmental benefits.

The Local Economy

- CLTs slow gentrification (Choi et al. 2018) and enable a more genuinely sustainable economy because the model enables low income workers to remain local.
- CLTs retain the benefit of investment for the local community. They also avoid Right to Buy which enables such affordable homes to remain permanently so. In a recent case study by OCLT and OCH this was valued at £4.7m in rental savings to local people living there, some of which would directly reduce the local housing benefit bill (Oxford City Council: Routes to Delivery Report)
- CLH housing schemes can retain resources within the local economy. Public and private sector spending is retained in the area and the leakage of money is reduced. Wealth created locally is multiplied through the use of local supply chains and local labour. Underused resources – such as derelict land and people's skills and talents – are identified and used. Materials and products are reused, recycled and shared through refurbishment, libraries and the establishment of a sharing economy (The Money Trail New Economics Foundation 2002)
- CLH can bring empty homes back into use with efficient use of grant resources (Mullins and Sacranie 2015)
- benefits for individuals involved in developing and managing the housing - community - led approaches help many develop skills helping them into employment (Commission on Co-operative and Mutual Housing 2009)
- Community-led organisations tend to increase local employment and increase the business of local traders and services (*Leeds Empties: Social Impact and Social Value Evaluation Report for 2014-15*, Real-Improvement 2015, and Commission on Co-operative and Mutual Housing report 2009)
- Government acknowledges that self-build homes have high levels of quality and design compared to traditional housebuilding (Prisk, 2012; UK Cohousing Network, 2013a) and larger space-standards (Barlow et al., 2001).
- Collective Custom Build housing is more affordable than developer-led speculative housing (Roberts, 2012, p. 10)

Community Safety

Good housing design contributes to increased community cohesion and pride and reduced vandalism and crime

- In one report by Exeter University comparing housing schemes across England, CLH residents had 40% more trust in local people, 4x more feel they have influence on

decision, six times the number of friends and acquaintances, very little fear of crime and all reported higher levels of satisfaction with their local area (Clarke 2012).

- Cohousing communities are more engaged in society and form stronger bonds between neighbours (Wallace et al., 2013, p. 17, Schreurer et al., 2009)
- CLH groups around the world are more engaged in political processes (Berggren 2013, Stephen Hill 2016)
- Collective builders put down deep roots and move on average every 25 years compared to the national average of 6 years. ([The Guardian 2018](#))

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Dear Mr Duffield,
Concerning the scrutiny of the new draft SODC LOCAL Plan:

Could you please take this letter as a contribution from Stanton St John in relation to the SODC new Local Plan.

I consider the new SODC Local Plan to be *unsound* because The Growth Deal stipulates more houses than can reasonably be provided for without compromising the Oxford Green Belt. Tory policy is to protect the Green Belt. SODC is a Tory Council, and should therefore uphold this principle.

The circumstances and conditions of the Growth Deal are now changed. In response to this SODC has upped the projected housing numbers over and above what SODC's actual housing is, taking on Oxford's projected growth. Were these houses to be built, Oxford, as we know it, will cease to exist. It would become completely overloaded with people, cars, and ancillary development – all of which are inappropriate and detract. The pleasure of Oxford is its scale and relative accessibility. Just as residents and visitors appreciate its cultural centre and the openness of its setting, so too do outlying villages want to remain relatively rural.

Stop all large-scale housing developments in the Green Belt:

- Huge business growth in and around Oxford will not only ruin Oxford, but will necessitate increased workforce commuting daily into the centre. This level of growth is therefore unsustainable. Oxford is unsuited to large-scale business expansion.
- Houses in the Green Belt are inappropriate – there are no transport links into Oxford from most of the proposed SODC and Cherwell Green Belt sites. If Oxford met its own housing requirement needs, instead of forcing projected nonsense onto surrounding District Councils, building on Green Belt land would not be called into question.
- SODC should develop its own business sites, away from Oxford, so that the Oxford Green Belt is not compromised.
- Houses for Oxford? - NOT in the Green Belt.
- Oxford has no unmet housing need. It will have unmet housing need if it continues to develop every brownfield site into business use. SODC should take out Green Belt from the new Local Plan on the grounds that the Green Belt is what makes Oxford work. Building on the Green Belt is
- Oxford City Plan is deliberately opaque when it comes what it is using its land for: it should be forced to develop its own housing.
- Oxford will not survive as a university town if it becomes an international business hub. Its viability and key purpose as university town is dependent on it remaining contained and set in its historic landscape setting – not in a swathe of housing and traffic.
- South Oxfordshire should develop its own business centres, where housing does not compromise the Oxford Green Belt.

Wick Farm, Bayswater and Lower Elsfield.

I write in particular about the incremental damage and erosion of the Oxford Green Belt in relation to proposals for development at Wick Farm, Bayswater and Lower Elsfield.

Dec 2018: The new *draft* SODC Local Plan has been redrawn to include the above when it was previously agreed 2017 that these sites were in the Oxford Green Belt and therefore inappropriate for development.

These points should be considered:

- Oxford has no demographic housing need except for first time buyers and key worker housing.
- All new houses have a duty to fit in with the local district design guides, and provide adequate parking, landscape amenity and to protect and enhance our natural, and historical habits (Sidlings copse SSSI)
- Wick Farm has a listed holy well of historic importance, which would be lost within suburbanisation (amenity sports facilities and extended crematorium).
- Building on floodplains and water logged land will result in potentially damaging water levels both by Bayswater brook, with regular flooding downstream at Elsfield, and even further downstream toward Oxford itself. Christ Church is irresponsible in even considering this site for development.
- Footfall and encroachment on Sidlings Copse would ruin it - it is a national success story of conservation and restoration.
- Road access (behind Wick farm from above the crematorium) will divide communities, and result in loss of valuable edge of city amenity land for Barton and Sandhills. The gaps between settlements will be seriously eroded.
- Traffic will increase to such an extent that access to Green Road roundabout will become impossible for the outlying villages, north of the B4027. Stanton St John, Forest Hill, Beckley, Woodeaton, Noke, Horton cum Studley, Oakley. Worminghall and beyond.
- The Green Belt behind Parkway has a most exceptional Jacobean farmhouse sitting in its own pasture beside the river Cherwell. This land is historic water meadow.

- The Expressway, (or should one say Sprawlway?), should be scrapped in favour of less damaging transport links. We need railways, cycle tracks, and bus services that support rural villages and schools, so that our rural communities remain sustainable and democratically equal.

Nicola Mallows,
Gresswell Environment Trust, Stanton St John, Oxford OX33 1HE

From: Tudor <tudorhtaylor@hotmail.com>

Sent: 13 December 2018 11:07

To: Hallett, Debby; Turner, David; michael.badcock@abingdon.gov.uk; arhahome@aol.com; Lawson, Sue; Nimmo-Smith, David; Walsh, John; White, Ian; Duffield, Adrian

Cc: Bloomfield, Felix; Paul Harrison; Hall, Will; david@davidhpheasant.com; david.bartholomew@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Subject: Shiplake - Please consider the attached at this evening's meeting

Hi Debby and David

My apologies for writing to you directly at such notice but I'm aware that you are co-chairing the Scrutiny Panel this evening. I'm also aware that you have a lot of ground to cover.

However, we have just been made aware that the allocation of 99 houses for a development at Thames Farm in the settlement of Lower Shiplake is to be allocated to the housing numbers for Henley and Harpsden. The Thames Farm development is in the parish of Harpsden but adjacent to the village of Lower Shiplake. The parish boundary dissects the settlement pattern for Lower Shiplake. Both the village of Harpsden and the town of Henley are distant to this development and are separated by open space.

Shiplake Parish recognised that the development at Thames Farm would have a significant impact on our community and we put a lot of effort and money into legally challenging the applications for housing at this site.

When the Court of Appeal rejected the legal challenges, we sought advice from SODC as to the interpretation/impact of this development on our developing NDP.

We were advised by senior Planning Officers and the NDP team that settlement considerations override administrative boundaries. Holly Jones confirmed this in writing (letter attached) quote:

"The emerging Local Plan for South Oxfordshire directs development to market towns, larger villages and beyond through the settlement hierarchy according to its relative sustainability credentials. The focus is for development to take place at the identified settlement, regardless of boundary, which in this case (Thames Farm housing) is Shiplake".

This is eminently sensible it means that large towns and large villages should be looking to meet their housing requirements in the vicinity of their settlements and not seeking to benefit or receive benefit for building housing proximate to a small village well away from that housing need. As you and your colleagues are aware, from my numerous attendances at Planning Committee meetings, the village edge of Lower Shiplake is subject to considerable pressure from developers. We are anticipating other speculative developments including a further example at Wyevale (adjacent to Thames Farm). In the Wyevale example, the Planning Officer is recommending approval of residential housing well removed from the centre of Henley in the settlement area of Shiplake with housing credit (and therefore the incentive to support approval) going to Henley on Thames.

The letter attached from Ricardo Rias (attached) just received reverses the housing allocation and appears to conflict strongly with what we believe to have been a very sound policy in the existing Local Plan. He cited administrative reasons of census data and council tax records. We were fortunate to have Ricardo visit Shiplake yesterday evening to meet representatives of the Parish Council and our NDP Steering Group and I must admit I felt sorry for him as he was unable to provide adequate explanation for the "volte face". The arguments put forward were administrative and no sound planning policy reasons to refute Holly's viewpoint were provided. We believe this is open to challenge. It is clear that Thames Farm which is deemed to be windfall creates a precedent that now appears to be applied by officers to Wyevale and we fear will be used in other speculative applications. If the settlement policy is not strengthened in the new Local Plan it will be seen as an incentive for larger settlements to support or not fight speculative development away from their settlements if their or SODC's housing numbers at some future date are under pressure. It is also critical that Officers are given very clear guidance in the emerging Plan policies of the importance of the settlement hierarchy - otherwise over time Henley on Thames will merge with Shiplake.

Please could you review this policy and maintain the clarity shown in the Holly Jones paragraph and by doing so allocate houses to settlement and not create any form of potential bias by using administrative boundaries.

Thank you.

Regards

Tudor Taylor Chair Shiplake PC - with the unanimous support of all Shiplake parish councillors and the Shiplake NDP Steering Group.

PS - I wanted to email all Scrutinee Panel Committee members but not all were available on the SODC web-site - so apologies for this.

Planning

HEAD OF SERVICE: ADRIAN DUFFIELD



Listening Learning Leading

Kester George
Chairman
Harspden Parish Council

Contact officer:
Planning.policy@southoxon.gov.uk
Tel: 01235 422600

Textphone users add 18001 before you dial

Your reference:
Our reference:

BY EMAIL ONLY

24 April 2018

Dear Kester,

Thames Farm – Housing numbers

Thank you for your letter raising the issue of where the housing numbers at Thames Farm might appropriately be attributed. Your letter also raises the relationship of housing numbers with the Joint Henley and Harspden Neighbourhood Plan.

I would suggest that the two matters can be considered separately. The development at Thames Farm was neither a Local Plan nor Neighbourhood Plan proposal, and as such the houses would be regarded in broad terms as 'windfall'. I would suggest that they appropriately be counted or attributed to Shiplake.

The emerging Local Plan for South Oxfordshire directs development to market towns, larger villages and beyond through the settlement hierarchy according to its relative sustainability credentials. The focus is for development to take place at the identified settlement, regardless of boundary, which in this case would be at Shiplake.

I would also highlight that the housing land supply position for South Oxfordshire District is measured at the District level and whether one exists at a point in time is relevant at this level. With reference to this, I can advise that the next published update to the Council's land supply position will be made available on the South Oxfordshire website before the end of this month.

Any proposal to move Neighbourhood Plan boundaries is a matter for yourselves and relevant parishes and officers would be happy to support agreed changes.

If you would like to discuss this, or Neighbourhood Plan matters further, I am happy to set up a meeting at your convenience.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "H. Jones".

Holly Jones
Planning Policy Manager

Cc by email

John Howell, MP
Ricardo Rios
Ken Arlett
Janet Wheeler
Paul Harrison
David Bartholomew
Tudor Taylor
Paula Fox

From: Rios, Ricardo <Ricardo.Rios@southandvale.gov.uk>

Sent: 07 December 2018 17:21

To: Ken Arlett; kesterpippa@talktalk.net; Tudor

Cc: Cath Adams; Sue Mann; Baker, Emma

Subject: Thames Farm

Dear colleagues,

The council agreed to consider different approaches in relation to the attribution of dwelling numbers from the Thames Farm development.

The council previously took the approach that development at a settlement was attributed to that place, not necessarily the parish the development sat within. We have now reviewed this approach so that the housing numbers are attributed to the parish - this better aligns with Council tax records and the Census data we have used, which are based on parish boundaries.

Parishes producing joint neighbourhood plans will have the flexibility to agree how they attribute development within the neighbourhood area. We have counted the 95 dwellings from the Thames Farm development as a commitment for Henley in Table 5d: Provision of homes at market towns in the Local Plan Publication Version (2nd) 2034.

It should also be noted that Policy H8 on Housing in Smaller Villages has been amended - Smaller Villages no longer have to meet a 5% to 10% increase in housing requirement. This means the proposed reviewed approach will not adversely affect the parish of Shiplake.

We acknowledged that some parishes may still wish to proceed with preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan to achieve the protection afforded by allocating housing or they may have projects they want to deliver that could be funded by development or they would like to identify a specific type of housing bespoke to their village's needs.

The Council's strategy allows them to do so, provided that the levels of growth are commensurate to the size of the village.

The Local Plan Publication Version (2nd) 2034 can be found here: <http://democratic.southoxon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=124&MId=2275&Ver=4>

Councilors are expected to make a decision on the progress of the plan on 20 December 2018.

Thank you for your patience while we worked on this matter.

Kind regards

Ricardo Rios

Senior Planning Policy Officer (Neighbourhood)

Planning

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils

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To find out more about how the council holds, uses and stores your personal data, please click on the appropriate council's link [South link](#) [Vale link](#)