

Cholsey Neighbourhood Plan

c/o Cholsey Parish Office, The Pavilion, Station Road, Cholsey OX10 9PT

John Cotton - Leader of the Council

John.cotton@southoxon.gov.uk

Dear John

I am writing on behalf of the Cholsey Neighbourhood Plan steering group to urge the council to submit the South Oxfordshire Local Plan for examination at the earliest opportunity. Cholsey like many other communities in South Oxfordshire is under siege by developers making speculative proposals for further housing to the serious detriment of the environment, infrastructure provision and the wellbeing of local communities. Returning to planned growth as quickly as possible is essential to ensure that South Oxfordshire remains an attractive place for people to live and businesses to locate.

The emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan is a well-crafted document providing a multi-faceted and sustainable strategy for growth (not all of SODC's choosing). In particular it provides urban extensions in a variety of locations which will give homes in range of price options including lower cost market and affordable housing and appropriate levels of growth in existing towns and larger villages to support facilities and improve sustainability.

I understand that the deliverability of the Chalgrove option is a concern and that a delay to the plan is being considered to enable reserve sites on the edge of Oxford to be explored. Whilst the delivery of the plan does need to be secure, an undoubtedly controversial reserve plan proposing further sites in the Green Belt on the edge of already congested parts of Oxford seems to have its own risks and would complicate the plan's examination. In any event, work on alternatives can continue in parallel with the plan submission ready to be quickly slotted in if the Inspector raises a concern, this route would be likely to involve less delay and complexity and would give the plan added weight in the short term.

Whilst the overall focus of the emerging Local Plan's strategy is on growth related to Science Vale the total number of new homes in that area will be more than enough to meet the forecast economic growth there. Two further elements of the strategy are to use development to improve the sustainability of the rural areas and to support the needs of Oxford. The Chalgrove option does this well.

New homes in Chalgrove will be close to the large employment area in Chalgrove itself, and at only around 5 miles from Oxford, the Cowley employment area, Oxford hospitals and Oxford Science Park will also be readily accessible. Existing public transport services will undoubtedly become more frequent to serve a community of this size also benefitting other villages (Garsington, Chiselhampton, Stadhampton, Watlington and others) on the route. The significant education, health, road improvements and other community facilities to be provided will also benefit these rural communities.

The South Oxfordshire community has been waiting patiently for the new local plan to progress and provide a secure environment for growth. Please submit the plan for examination as soon as

Cholsey Neighbourhood Plan

c/o Cholsey Parish Office, The Pavilion, Station Road, Cholsey OX10 9PT

possible and do not delay with the consequent harm to existing communities that such a decision will involve.

Yours sincerely

Beryl Guiver

Cholsey Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

NB As I have retired from planning any views on planning matters expressed here are my personal views.