



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

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9th May 2018

Councillor Jane Murphy
Corner Cottage
High Street
South Moreton
Didcot
OX11 9AD

Dear Councillor Mrs Murphy,

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
REPORT TO CABINET 10TH MAY 2018
SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN 2033**

Further to the letter from my colleague, Charlotte Woods, dated 26th April, I am writing to you on behalf of the Harrington New Settlement Development Team, which includes national housebuilder Bellway Homes and Oxfordshire based housebuilder, Pye Homes.

As described within this previous letter, you may be aware we have been engaged with the Council on the various stages of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan and have been monitoring progress to date.

We have carefully reviewed the papers to Cabinet on 10th May 2018, wherein the original decision of Cabinet from 20th March has been referred back to Cabinet by Full Council

Given the importance of the decision that has to be made by Cabinet, I trust you will not mind if I respectfully point some inconsistencies within the Cabinet report which have bearing on the consideration of the Options. I have set these matters out below:

1. We understand and appreciate that one of the principal concerns of SODC, regarding the choice of option is to hit the deadline for submission of the Local Plan by 1st April 2019 and therefore not prejudice the Growth Deal (para 56).
2. However, under any Option, it is a huge assumption to make that the Homes England (HE) proposed Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) for Chalgrove would have any realistic prospects of success.
3. The position as stated by Martin Baker and their lawyers is very clear. They will resist the CPO on technical and strategic defence grounds. The company has very specific locational requirements as set out in the Gowling's letter. Martin Baker is not a footloose operation whereas housing provision is. There are alternative housing sites and therefore there is no overwhelming case in the public interest that would indicate that the CPO would succeed. Why seek to move a company when you do not need to?

4. Retention of Chalgrove under Options 2 or 3, is therefore a very high risk option and is unsound. Even under Option 3 the Council runs the risk of an Inspector making this finding prior to the start of an Examination requiring a further Regulation 19 Consultation, resulting in the 1st April 2019 deadline being missed.
5. As regards Option 2, the advice in Paragraph 62 of the Cabinet report is incorrect, because:
 - a. Option 2 would not require two further rounds of public consultation;
 - b. Paragraph 89 of the Cabinet report correctly describes the process whereby, *"if the additional or replacement site was one which has already been consulted up on, and it was being recommended, then the requirement would be for the plan to be updated, to go back through the democratic process (Cabinet, Scrutiny and Council) and then to go for a second Reg. 19 consultation"* i.e. one further round of consultation in addition to the Reg.19 consultation carried out in October 2017.
 - c. The timetable for Option 2 shown in paragraph 63 of the Cabinet report is therefore inaccurate if the additional or replacement site has already been subject to consultation.
 - d. As indicated in paragraphs 78-85, Harrington has already been consulted up on at three stages of plan preparation.
 - e. Therefore, replacing Chalgrove with Harrington would not delay the plan. The 1st April 2019 deadline would be met.
6. Chalgrove is a false premise in terms of a deliverable strategy. To retain Chalgrove in the Local Plan would not be sound and would result in a major threat to the Growth Deal.
7. Any risk in adopting Option 2, whereby Chalgrove is replaced by Harrington, pales into insignificance compared with Option 3, especially as Harrington has already been subject to consultation and would only require a further Reg.19 consultation as per the advice in paragraph 89 of the Cabinet Report.
8. We would request therefore that the Cabinet should choose Option 2 and replace Chalgrove with Harrington.
9. Harrington provides a better new settlement option for the current Local Plan period and for the longer term in the context of the Oxford Cambridge Arc.
10. Harrington new settlement could be expanded in the longer term. The Harrington new settlement avoids the legal difficulties, uncertainty and potential bad press of prejudicing the Growth Deal. As a long term option beyond the current plan period, Harrington new settlement avoids having to review the situation again when a 'sticking-plaster' option of green belt release is considered.

If you have any questions or need clarification in respect of the above, please contact me. We are currently in the process of liaising with your office with regards to a meeting but would be happy to discuss further with you in the interim.

Yours sincerely,

Greg Mitchell

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CC: Graham Flint
Richard Brown
Fergus Thomas
Bernie Foulkes
Justine Leach
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