

Planning

HEAD OF SERVICE: ADRIAN DUFFIELD



Listening Learning Leading

Contact officer: Holly Jones

holly.jones@southoxon.gov.uk

Tel: 01235 422600

SENT VIA EMAIL

Mr Jonathan Bore
Planning Inspector

Mr Nick Fagan
Planning Inspector

c/o Mr Ian Kemp
Email: ikemp@icloud.com

1 July 2019

Dear Mr Kemp

Re: Examination in Public of the Emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan (2034)

I am writing to update yourself and the appointed Planning Inspectors on matters relating to the emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan (2034). I would be grateful if you would share this letter with our two appointed Inspectors.

Update on the Emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan

Following the district council elections in May 2019, as with any new council administration, councillors at South Oxfordshire District Council have been considering key policies and projects, including the emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan. On Wednesday 19 June 2019, the South Oxfordshire Council's Scrutiny Committee considered a report entitled the South Oxfordshire Emerging Local Plan. A copy of this report is enclosed.

There are four options and associated risks set out within the report for the future of the Local Plan, which are briefly summarised as:

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- Option one – make no changes to the plan and allow it to continue to be examined by the government’s independent inspectors.
- Option two – allow the plan to continue to be examined by the government’s inspectors but recommend a series of main modifications that will be considered by the inspectors.
- Option three – withdraw the plan, revise it, and then resubmit the revised plan following an additional public consultation.
- Option four - withdraw the plan and start the whole plan-making process from the beginning.

The Council’s Scrutiny Committee adjourned the meeting and will reconvene to a further Scrutiny Committee which is due to be held on the 2nd July 2019. The role of Scrutiny Committee is to consider the report and make recommendations to the Council’s Cabinet, who in turn will make a recommendation to the full Council. Currently the Council’s next Cabinet meeting is programmed for the 10th July 2019, and the next Council meeting is scheduled for 18 July 2019.

Oxford City Council’s Local Plan

As the outstanding Local Plans in Oxfordshire to be submitted for examination, we welcome the appointment of Inspectors to examine both our Local Plan and the Oxford City Local Plan, and indeed whether there is merit in holding a number of joint hearing sessions for the Oxford City Council’s Local Plan and the South Oxfordshire Local Plan due to the joint housing and evidence based matters.

We note the contents of the Planning Inspectors’ initial questions and comments addressed to Oxford City Council of 29 May 2019 regarding their emerging Local Plan.

We note the contents of the 12 questions and we have a particular interest in questions 1 to 3 relating to the following matters:

1. Housing calculation
2. Timescales and wider planning
3. Ascertaining development capacity

This process and any interim conclusions reached by the Inspectors may have implications for the contents of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan in relation to this Council’s housing calculation including the issue of unmet housing need.

In light of the publication of these initial questions and the range of matters raised in relation to the Oxford City’s Local Plan, we would like to seek clarification on the below in order that we may advise our Councillors.

1. Depending on the content of the response that Oxford City Council provides to the Inspectors' initial questions and comments dated the 29 May 2019 and the Planning Inspectors' subsequent assessment of the responses provided from Oxford City Council, in particular the housing calculations, do the Planning Inspectors have any indication of when they may seek to hold the Examination in Public hearing sessions for Oxford City Council?
2. Could the Planning Inspectors' please clarify whether they intend to complete their examination of Oxford City's housing need and capacity prior to commencing the examination of South Oxfordshire's housing need.
3. Is there any an intention to provide interim conclusions on the examination of Oxford City's Local Plan? If so, I would be grateful to understand any indicative timetable for doing this.

We would welcome the Planning Inspectors' clarification to the matters raised as soon as possible. If you should require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact the Planning Policy Team.

I welcome your assistance in this matter and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



Holly Jones
Planning Policy Manager
South Oxfordshire District Council

Enc:

1. South Oxfordshire Council's Scrutiny Committee Report – 19/06/19