



Date: 8th October 2019

Cllr Susan Cooper
 Leader of the Council
 1 Lower End
 Benson Road
 Ewelme
 Wallingford
 OX10 6HB

Our Ref: 1259/JCE

Dear Councillor Mrs Cooper

Re: SODC Full Council meeting 10th October 2019 – Local Plan 2034

Further to my letter of 3rd October 2019 and following the Cabinet Meeting, when it was resolved to proceed with Option C, this is a supplemental letter on behalf of the Pyrton Manor, Shirburn Castle and Environs Alliance (PMSCEA). PMSCEA represents important Heritage assets at Shirburn Castle and Pyrton Manor to the north of Watlington, together with the Pyrton Parish Council and the Shirburn Parish Meeting.

PMSCEA are fully supportive of the Council's decision thus far to pause the emerging Local Plan process and proceed with Option C:

Option C) Withdraw the Local Plan from examination. The Council would commence work on a new Local Plan. This will allow the Council to prepare a significantly different plan (subject to compliance with the law, and national policies and guidance). The Council would need to undertake at least two rounds of public consultations. (Regulation 18 and 19) before submitting the new plan for examination.

PMSCEA have followed the progress of the Council in the intervening period, and have noted the Local Plan 2034; Options to progress Report to Cabinet (3rd October 2019) by the Head of Planning. We confirmed that PMSCEA would support the Council in selecting Option C above.

SOUNDNESS OF EMERGING LOCAL PLAN

We are aware that any decision to withdraw the emerging Local Plan must be made on sound planning principles which we believe will support the decision of your Cabinet for Option C, against Option A or Option B, for the reasons below.

OXFORD CITY COUNCIL UNMET HOUSING NEED

Consideration of the emerging Local Plan at this stage is being made prior to Oxford City Council's calculation of their Unmet Housing Need. The revised timetable for Local Plan as anticipated under Option C will enable this important housing number to be accurately calculated and then properly factored onto a new SODC Local Plan. It will enable consideration of the brownfield potential in particular within the City itself, and take advantage of the established employment opportunities afforded by sites close to or within Oxford.

EVIDENCE BASE

The report to Cabinet makes it clear that the emerging Local Plan is now being considered on historic evidence, some of which is shortly (November 2019) to be out of date. The report confirms that some of the evidence is over 5 years old and, in particular, the Transport Model will not be WebTag compliant after November 2019. Given the likely timetable for the examination of the emerging Local Plan by the Inspectors, their decision on the soundness of the Local Plan will have been made on a model(s) that are no longer compliant.

The general concern at the outdated and historical nature of much of the Evidence Base in the emerging Local Plan was, in part, evidenced by the defeat of the Motion to recommend Option A at the Scrutiny Committee of the 1st October 2019.

The benefit of a new suite of evidence based studies within Option C provides opportunities to work with neighbouring authorities in Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire and to have a sound base for any potential future legal challenge or assist in defending planning appeals as confirmed by the Report.

GROWTH DEAL & HOUSING INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

The risk to the Growth Deal and the Housing Infrastructure Funding has been set out in the Report to Cabinet, with appendices containing the correspondence with the MHCLG. Whilst a letter from the Director General, Decentralisation and Growth dated 20th September 2019 sets out that Option C "will not be without consequences", it does also confirm that MHCLG remain committed to working with partners to continue to deliver the ambitions of our partnership.

The underlying strategic, commercial, educational, medical, technological and cultural strengths, together with the important geographical location of Oxford/Oxfordshire and the five SODC resolutions made on the 18th July 2019, will make a compelling case for the retention of the Growth Deal and the HIF.

SELECTING OPTION C

When confirmed by Full Council, the decision by your Cabinet on Thursday 3rd October to select Option C will enable a new Local Plan to be considered on an updated and current evidence base, to take account and recognise the Climate Change Emergency, the Climate Change Act 2008 and the urgent need to make real progress on this statutory responsibility. It will also enable consideration of the actual Unmet Oxford City Housing Need and of working in collaboration with adjoining County and District Councils.

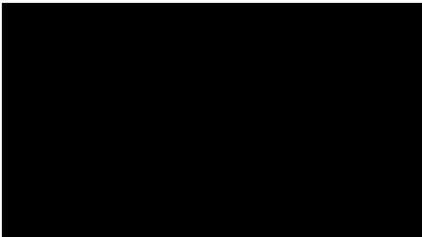
CONCLUSION

The Pyrton Manor, Shirburn Castle and Environs Alliance therefore sincerely thank Members for their support of Option C thus far, and strongly urge the SODC Full Council to adopt Option C at its meeting on Thursday.

This letter has been copied to all Members of the Council.

Kind regards.

Yours sincerely



Senior Partner

cc: All Members of SODC Full Council
All Members of SODC Cabinet
Adrian Duffield – Head of Planning, SODC

The Pyrton Manor, Shirburn Castle and Environs Alliance
Mark Stone – Chief Executive, SODC
Andrew Down – Acting Deputy Chief Executive, SODC

Margaret Reed – Head of Legal & Democratic Services, SODC
Democratic Services, SODC