

From: Ann Henman [REDACTED]
Sent: 06 December 2020 14:13
To: Cooper, Sue [REDACTED]
Subject: SODC Local Plan

Geoffrey Henman
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear Councillor,

In 2018, SODC under Tory control presented to the public three meetings about the Local Plan, to comply with statutory consultation requirements. Apart from one member of the public, no one from the floor spoke in favour of the Local Plan proposals, specifically the total number of houses to be built. Cllr Jane Murphy, the then Chair of SODC, was extremely discourteous to the public speakers and spent much of the time whispering and giggling to her neighbours. After the third meeting the Cabinet passed unanimously the motion to proceed with submitting the Local Plan for inspection. With local democracy being so obviously ignored in all these proceedings, it is little wonder that the opposition are now in control of SODC. I would like to point out that the Lib-Dems who now form the majority in SODC ran for office on a campaign to revise the housing figures in the Local Plan, and to reduce the threat to the Green Belt.

My wife and I followed the Inspector's consultation on the Local Plan. The Inspector appeared to listen without bias to all of the presentations, but took no notice whatsoever of the public's concerns over green belt development, and passed the proposals in full, including that to build 1100 houses on Land North of Bayswater Brook (LNBB, STRAT13). This proposal was put into the Local Plan at the last minute by the previous SODC. It wasn't necessary, because other land already in the Local Plan provided for more than enough space for the proposed housing figures.

LNBB/STRAT13 is only marginally viable commercially. New access roads would have to be built, and congestion on the already crowded local routes into Oxford could only be avoided by building an expensive link road to the A40 on the London side of the Headington roundabout (itself raising the risk of rat-runs through the LNBB development, by-passing that roundabout). The proposed LNBB development is not of a sufficient size to support public transport. All of these drawbacks appear to have been recognised by the Inspector who finally concluded that active transport (walking and cycling to work) would be the solution for all LNBB residents, obviating any need for any link road or congestion-reducing measures in the area. Following up this idea, the Inspector asked OCC if a bridge for pedestrians and cyclists will be built over the A40 ring road (the northern bypass) and was told that there were no plans to build one. Therefore, in spite of the fact that there will be no direct, safe cycling or walking access to Oxford City by the residents of LNBB, the Inspector approved the plans. The idea that all residents in any development on LNBB will completely forego the use of cars is, frankly, unbelievable, a fact that even the Inspector might have guessed.

Oxford City Council's projections for housing need are based on the out-of-date 2014 SHMA assessment, and should be reappraised in light of newer ONS projections of the increase in the UK population in future. The fall-out of Brexit will almost certainly mean that fewer Europeans will seek their future in the UK (more than half of the projected increase in the UK population is due to immigration). The Covid pandemic has accelerated the change to on-line purchases. Shops in Oxford are already going out of business, leaving many empty shops that could be re-purposed as accommodation for City residents (and much closer to their places of work).

The Government has two key agenda items; one is to Build, Build, Build and the other is to become more protective of our natural environment, heading for a greener, zero carbon economy before 2050 at the latest (for example the 25-year environment plan and the more recent 10-point plan). They cannot have it both ways and the choices that are made now will affect whether or not we avoid irreversible climate

change. LNBB will not enhance Oxford's needs. In fact it will be quicker from there to drive to High Wycombe than to get into Oxford at busy times. Developing LNBB will only make congestion worse in Barton and the Green Road Roundabout.

I again ask SODC councillors to reject the motion to pass the Local Plan and to call upon Government to think again about over-inflated housing targets and the destruction of green belt land.

Voters will not forget that if the Local Plan goes through now their votes for the Liberal Democratic and Green Parties were wasted during the last local elections. Can any newly elected Lib-Dem or Green Councillor tell us how the Local Plan to be voted on by Council on Tuesday is in any way different from the one that the previous Conservative administration would have produced?

Yours sincerely, Geoffrey Henman