

Planning

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Listening Learning Leading

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Dear Bev,

I am grateful to you and Ian Hudspeth for meeting with us and Homes England last week. I recognise that there remain concerns from Oxfordshire County Council in respect of bringing forward development at Chalgrove Airfield. Your particular concerns were raised through your representations made at the Regulation 19 stage of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan.

These concerns regarding development at Chalgrove Airfield are largely focussed on matters relating to highways; their delivery, timing and cost.

We consider from our meeting that the response of Homes England in relation to some of these matters was disappointing, but at this stage we will continue to work together to find a solution.

To this end, it would be helpful to get a more precise understanding of the specific concerns that the County has on infrastructure and what outstanding details are required for you to withdraw your objection.

Your representation indicates that until the cumulative impact of development for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse has been completed, then it is not possible to comment fully on the transport impacts. As you know this work is being finalised at present with support from your officers.

You raise another area of concern in respect of the strategic model insofar as the area around Chalgrove Airfield has in the past not been affected by significant levels of development and that additional or alternative transport infrastructure options to mitigate the effects of development at Chalgrove Airfield may need to be assessed in the ETI. As you will recall we worked with you to identify mitigation and included Watlington, Stadhampton and Benson bypasses and improvements to the A4074 at Golden Balls junction. Your representation indicates further work is needed to assess the suitability of these suggested mitigation schemes and their impacts, however no further mitigation testing has been requested by Oxfordshire County Council and I believe that we have met all outstanding requests in this matter.

The Evaluation of Transport Impacts currently uses the strategic model which may not be suitable to test certain smaller scale schemes such as traffic management measures which will need more detailed assessment through the planning application process. I suggest we need to understand and agree specifically at what point the information provided will be sufficient to allay your concerns, given that the level of information required to support a development plan is set at a different level to that to support a planning application. We need to be reasonable and proportionate in the asks at this stage in the development process, but are keen to work with you to ensure that the relevant work is completed.

With reference to off site highways work, the County Council would usually take on the responsibility of securing the land to enable such works to take place where this is required to mitigate development. This will be the case at Culham to assist in the delivery of the river crossing at Culham. In the case of development at Chalgrove Airfield, Homes England are prepared to undertake negotiations with third parties to secure the land, though I understand that they are yet to reach agreement with yourselves to the extent to such works and have not been clear on the phasing of their approach in relation to the wide scheme. I would like to understand how this dialogue is progressing and to offer any support I can to you.

We recognise that additional primary and secondary school capacity will be needed in the District to support the emerging Local Plan. The County Council has expressed a desire for a new secondary school on the Chalgrove Airfield site, which will involve relocating the existing Icknield Community College in Watlington, though I understand that the land take for such a facility has increased during the discussions to date.

I would be grateful to understand the area which is required to support such a facility and also the justification for this particular size. Once the existing Icknield Community College has been relocated to Chalgrove Airfield, what is the County's intention regarding the former college site? Whilst this site is not identified for redevelopment in the Watlington Neighbourhood Development Plan, it could make a future contribution to infrastructure delivery, such as the Watlington bypass. It would be helpful to have a full understanding of the education strategy for the area to help provide context for our Local Plan Examiner.

At the meeting you indicated that the County Council considered that Homes England would benefit by articulating Chalgrove within the wider context of their developments across Science Vale, and in identifying their infrastructure mitigation on that scale. I would be grateful to receive a copy of any response you have received from Homes England to this request.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely



Holly Jones
Planning Policy Manager