



Listening Learning Leading

135 Eastern Avenue
Milton Park

Milton
Oxfordshire
OX14 4SB

The Leader
Cllr Susan Brown
Oxford City Council
Town Hall
St Aldate's
Oxford
OX1 1BX

Dear Susan,

We are writing on behalf of South Oxfordshire District Council following our recent full council meeting on 18th July, where we resolved to address concerns about our own current emerging Local Plan 2034, including climate change issues and Oxford City's unmet housing need. We also passed a motion opposing the Oxford-Cambridge Expressway in any form.

We believe that the Expressway will have significant adverse impacts upon the environment and, therefore, is incompatible with our declaration of a Climate Emergency. Given your own commitments on these issues – including your pledge to work with partners to deliver widespread carbon reductions – we hope that you will be able to support us in this approach.

We have noticed a potential contradiction between the proposed total housing numbers for Oxford City, partly being provided for by neighbouring authorities' Local Plans, and your own recent motions on both the Climate Emergency and the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway. We would, therefore, like confirmation that the City Council's Local Plan is in line with its publicly adopted positions on these issues.

We noted that in Oxford's initial response to the Planning Inspector, frequent references were made to the future implications of the development of the Oxford-Cambridge Corridor as justification for deviating from the standard method for calculating housing need. This, however, seems to contradict the motion passed on 28 January 2019, where the City Council resolved to oppose the Expressway as it is currently proposed.

It would appear incongruous to use the future development of the Oxford-Cambridge Corridor – and by implication the Expressway – as a factor justifying a higher housing requirement, while at the same time stating publicly that you oppose the scheme?

At the same council meeting, the City declared a Climate Emergency and pledged to work with partners to deliver widespread carbon reductions, which we welcome. The

City Local Plan's presumptions for growth, if dependent on the future development of the Corridor and the delivery of up to one million homes, with the attendant additional carbon emissions and ecological impact, would appear to be incompatible with this motion. Has Oxford City Council undertaken a review of its Local Plan, and its impact on neighbouring authorities, in the light of its declared Climate Emergency?

It appears that your proposed housing numbers rely on a presumption that the development of the Oxford-Cambridge Corridor will create additional demand pressures in the City, which will in turn create pressure on other districts.

South Oxfordshire would, therefore, appreciate additional, detailed information regarding the basis for your calculations of Oxford's housing numbers with respect to the potential impact of the Expressway. What assumptions were made on its timing, location and effects?

As you know from discussions with us both, we are committed to providing genuinely affordable, environmentally sustainable housing for residents who need it – as evidenced by another motion passed at the same meeting on 18th July committing South Oxfordshire to explore use of its own landholdings for this purpose. We look forward to continuing collaborative work on that front.

Our concern is that, in a time of climate emergency acknowledged by both our councils (as well as many others), the implications of this are followed through at all policy levels, and this means challenging the "growth at all costs" approach of some of the Arc infrastructure proposals, especially the Expressway, which we are all committed to oppose.

Yours Sincerely,



Cllr Sue Cooper – Leader



Cllr Robin Bennett - (Expressway motion proposer)
Cabinet Member for Development and Regeneration

CC Cllr Tom Hayes
Cabinet Member for a Zero Carbon Oxford

CC Jonathan Bore
Nick Fagan
Mark Stone
Gordon Mitchell