

# SODC Position Statement on implementation of Strategic Housing Market Assessment findings



Listening Learning Leading

## **Background**

The local authorities in Oxfordshire have worked together on a new study to assess the total level of new housing needed in Oxfordshire. The report, called the Strategic Housing Market Assessment or 'SHMA', looks at the number of homes likely to be needed over the next 17 years. This need is generated by the changing demographics of the area, the need for new homes to match the new jobs planned for, and to deliver affordable homes for those whose needs are not met by the market. The Councils have worked together under the Duty to Co-operate required by government, and the research methods used follow best practice.

The report sets out the objectively assessed need for both market housing and affordable housing, for Oxfordshire and for each local authority area.

The next step is for each authority to use the information to translate the objectively assessed need into a policy requirement for new housing. The SHMA is part of the evidence base used for preparing land use plans. As such, it does not reset the housing requirement with immediate effect on publication. The new housing figure will be arrived at through a plan-making process with public consultation and will be tested by an independent planning inspector through the examination of our next plan. Our existing plan, the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy, was adopted in December 2012 and plans for housing to 2027. It sets out our overall housing and distribution strategy and allocates large new greenfield neighbourhoods where new homes will be built.

The Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is clear in the core planning principles that planning should be genuinely plan led and that:

'Plans should be kept up-to-date, and be based on joint working and co-operation to address larger than local issues.' In addition that:

'Each local planning authority should produce a Local Plan for its area. This can be reviewed in whole or in part to respond flexibly to changing circumstances.'

The preparation of the new SHMA is one such change in circumstances. We will set out how we intend to make provision to meet the new objectively assessed need for market and affordable housing in a review of the Local Plan. The timetable for this work is in our Local Development Scheme.

Whilst the new SHMA provides an overall assessment of housing need for the county and for South Oxfordshire, the Council needs to take a view about how much housing it can provide and where that housing will be focussed. The Council will assess the potential impacts of new housing and decide on the most appropriate scale and distribution of development for South Oxfordshire, consistent with the principles of sustainable development. This assessment will be made through a Local Plan review, so that we can canvas views through consultation and plan for the best way forward. In order to meet the requirements for sustainable development, proposals should not result in significantly adverse impacts on the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole. There are different priorities to balance; the NPPF indicates that planning should:

‘proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth.’<sup>1</sup>

In taking account of market signals The National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) suggests that suggests that they:

‘are affected by a number of economic factors, and plan makers should not attempt to estimate the precise impact of an increase in housing supply. Rather they should increase planned supply by an amount that, on reasonable assumptions and consistent with principles of sustainable development, could be expected to improve affordability, and monitor the response of the market over the plan period.’<sup>2</sup>

## **Current position on land supply**

In our work to monitor how much housing is being delivered and how much land for housing is available, we will continue to base our calculations on the requirements in the adopted South Oxfordshire Core Strategy, until such time as the new Local Plan is adopted. The five year housing land supply report is published on our website annually, see the link below.

We have two housing land supply areas in South Oxfordshire. The majority of the new housing is ring-fenced to Didcot so that this area, which is identified for growth and regeneration in the Core Strategy, can meet its potential. The remainder is planned across a larger area covering the rest of the District. Whilst there are some delivery problems at Didcot (which are being addressed), the rest of the district currently has more than a 5 year supply.

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<sup>1</sup> NPPF: Paragraph 17: Core planning principles.

<sup>2</sup> NPPG: Housing and economic development needs assessments. Paragraph 20: How should plan makers respond to market signals?

We aim to continue to maintain our land supply situation and are working with landowners and developers to make land available for development in the district and to overcome barriers to development.

**To find out more**

You can view the new Oxfordshire SHMA at [www.southoxon.gov.uk/evidence](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/evidence)

Our adopted Core Strategy is available at [www.southoxon.gov.uk/corestrategy](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/corestrategy)

Our Local Development Scheme set outs the timetable for preparing the new plan and is available here [www.southoxon.gov.uk/lds](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/lds)

Our 5 year housing land supply reports are available at <http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/monitoring>

And you can contact the planning policy team on 01491 823725, or by email to [planning.policy@southoxon.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@southoxon.gov.uk)