



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government



Listening Learning Leading

**Monthly Monitoring Meeting  
between MHCLG and SODC relating  
to the Secretary of State's Direction  
of March 2020 in relation to the  
South Oxfordshire Local Plan**

Meeting Date: 6 May 2020

In attendance:

## **MHCLG**

Lucy Wilkins, Deputy Director for Development Plans  
Benjamin Clayton, Deputy Director for Development Plans  
John Romanski, Head of Plan Delivery  
Eamon Mythen, Senior Planner

## **SODC**

Mark Stone, Chief Executive  
Suzanne Malcolm, Acting Deputy Chief Executive - Place  
Lucy Murfett, Planning Policy Manager  
Emma Baker, Planning Policy Team Leader  
Apologies: Adrian Duffield, Head of Planning

### **1. Timetable**

- Update from SODC of progress against Project Plan (see chart on page 4).  
Key tasks undertaken since Direction:
  - Responded to all three sets of Inspector's Questions on 9 April, and published on the [examination webpage](#)
  - Responses supported by 26 new [post-submission documents](#) including new topic papers on Education, Green Belt and Density despatched on 9 April.
  - 2 appendices to the Inspector's Questions (updated delivery trajectories and climate change annex) despatched 9 April
  - [Infrastructure Delivery Plan](#) update completed and sent to Inspector on 27 April then published on examination website
- Update (when received from PINS via Programme Officer) on arrangements for examination:
  - One Inspector taking forward the examination of the local plan (Inspector Jonathan Bore) rather than two
  - Options for virtual hearings being actively explored
  - The examination timetable will be set by the Inspector
- Update from SODC on partnership working (e.g. County Council):
  - Working closely with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) throughout March and April on transport, education and general infrastructure requirements for responses to Inspector's Questions.
  - Working closely with OCC on Didcot HIF
  - Working closely with all Oxfordshire authorities on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050, current focus on evidence base studies and scope of plan
- Update from SODC on evidence base updates from consultants:
  - Consultants Aspinall Verdi appointed in March to update the Local Plan and CIL Viability Assessment for the examination with latest information on infrastructure requirements and costings, report due end of May 2020

- MHCLG reviewed progress on the South Oxfordshire Local Plan and recognised that good progress has been made to date and that preparation for examination of the plan is on track

## 2. Resourcing

- Update from MHCLG on Covid-19
  - Some of MCHLG team has been temporarily re-deployed onto Covid-19 response work
  - MHCLG is developing advice on online consultations to keep local plan work moving forward.
- Update from SODC on staffing and dedicated officer resource for examination
  - The original timetable was based on the assumptions of there being no further limitations moving forward. Since then, Covid-19 has impacted on the UK and the Prime Minister has put certain measures in place to tackle this, including closing schools and childcare facilities and requiring work to take place from home. The Council has moved to 100% home working, and these measures and the direct impacts of Covid-19 have impacted on staff. However, officers have successfully worked to deadlines and continue to work towards them
  - SODC have a team of 3 officers ringfenced on the South Oxfordshire Local Plan plus support available from 9 policy planners across the wider teams
  - Contract of agency planners recently came to end so currently recruiting to vacant Senior Policy Officer post on permanent full-time basis
  - Annual 5 year housing land supply completions monitoring exercise in progress but some delays re: undertaking site visits because of Covid-19 restrictions. Site visits under review
  - Separate internal resource (within another service area) supporting Member engagement during local plan examination

## 3. Governance

- Update from SODC
  - New Cabinet Member for Planning, Cllr Anne-Marie Simpson
  - Next stage for Cabinet and Council decisions will be adoption of South Oxfordshire Local Plan

### Other matters

- Any other business
  - None

**ACTIONS:** None

**Date of next monthly monitoring meeting:** 3 June 2020

Gantt chart showing key weekly progress on examination workstreams

Week	March				April				May				June
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1
Direction													
Update to Cabinet and Council													
Update to Inspector													
Site promoter meetings for strategic sites													
Liaison with County Council on site delivery													
Responses to Inspectors' Questions					★✓	★✓							
Policy maps and inset map updates						★✓							
Schedule of modifications to Inspectors						★✓							
Infrastructure Delivery Plan						★		✓					
New/ updated topic papers					★	★✓						★	
Viability Assessment update												★	
Statements of Common Ground											★		
5 year housing land supply update													★
Arrangements for examination hearings													
Matters, Issues & Questions for the hearings													
Council prepares Statements on the Matters													
Hearings held													

Key:

Deadline ★

Achieved ✓

