

Listening Learning Leading

Nico Heslop

Contact officer: Mark Stone
Mark.stone@southoxon.gov.uk
Tel: 01235 422100

Textphone users add 18001 before you dial

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Dear Nico,

South Oxfordshire Local Plan

I write to further update you on the progress of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan and provide a summary of the current position since my letter of 24 May and to confirm our discussion last week.

Given the position with the Homes England owned Chalgrove site, officers have reassessed all sites capable of forming a strategic allocation. The progress of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan was considered at a meeting of Council on 15 May, to which I previously advised, where Council resolved to;

- a) subject to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government confirming that submission of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan in January 2020 would not significantly impact on the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal or the freedoms and flexibilities proposed as part of it, to ask officers to reassess all sites capable of forming a strategic allocation promoted through the Local Plan (to 2033) process up to the end of the Regulation 19 publication period (including all strategic sites proposed in the October 2017 Regulation 19 document) and to bring a draft Regulation 18/Regulation 19 document (as required) to Cabinet and Council to seek approval for publication for consultation; and
- b) in the event that such confirmation from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is not forthcoming to the satisfaction of the Head of Partnership and Insight and the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Leader of the council and the Cabinet members for planning and partnership and insight by no later than completion of the site filtering exercise (expected July 2018), to adopt Option 3, set out in the report of the Head of Planning to Cabinet on 10 May 2018, and to ask officers to bring the Regulation 19 (October 2017) document including proposed additional reserve site(s) to Cabinet and Council to seek approval for publication for consultation.

As discussed, the resolution refers to confirmation as to whether a submission of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan in January 2020 would significantly impact on the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal or the freedoms and flexibilities proposed as part of it?

To update you on progress, a methodology paper has been drafted to guide the site assessment process. The site assessment process will be an opportunity to review the possibility of an alternative(s) to Chalgrove airfield as well as undertake a review of all of the proposed Local Plan sites in the last version of the Plan from October 2017. This has ensured consistency and justification for the allocations which the Plan ultimately promotes. We are grateful to the support extended to us from the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) about the methodology and process of undergoing a site assessment process at this stage of the Local Plan development.

In June 2018, Intelligent Plans, commissioned by PAS provided officers with informal advice on the content of this methodology paper and helped to define the process of assessment. Also in June 2018 the Planning Inspectorate provided a visit and meeting to SODC, where the methodology proposed was discussed and revised. Officers are therefore confident that the methodology paper outlines a thorough site assessment process.

The process and principles employed has generated 15 sites which were then subject to a general appraisal. This work has now been completed and we have met with our Cabinet Members to update them in more detail on the outcomes of that general appraisal. The general appraisal has led to officer recommendations on whether sites should be discounted or taken forward to a more detailed appraisal and analysis. These are the sites which will now be subject to the evidence base updates needed to support any potential allocation in the Local Plan.

Notwithstanding this, all sites will continue to be potential sites until a decision is made by Council.

In light of the progress made and the officer recommendations, we expect to be able to submit the Local Plan within the timescales set out in the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal.

We recognise that the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework is imminent and may impact on the work that my planning team are undertaking and could necessitate additional work to support our Local Plan. If anything should change or impact upon our anticipated timetable, we may need to discuss any impact on the Housing and Growth Deal.

We continue to liaise closely with our partner authorities in Oxfordshire regarding the Growth Deal linked aspects of this matter. I attach correspondence between ourselves and the partner authorities in the Oxfordshire Growth Board.

We welcome the support you have provided to us and the shared commitment to delivering the Housing and Growth Deal for Oxfordshire. We will continue to update you on our progress and exchange views on the best way forward.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Stone
Chief Executive

Enc. Letter from Oxfordshire Growth Board to SODC
Response from SODC to Oxfordshire Growth Board