

## Planning and Strategic Housing



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WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Holly Jones  
Planning Policy Manager  
South Oxfordshire District Council  
135 Eastern Avenue  
Milton Park  
OX14 4SB

Your Ref :  
Our Ref :  
Date : 10 October 2019

Dear Holly

### South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2034

I am writing to you in relation to the potential withdrawal of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan.

As you will be aware from our formal response in February, West Oxfordshire District Council is very supportive of the positive approach that South Oxfordshire had taken in its submission draft plan in terms of housing numbers and distribution. This addressed a number of primary concerns that West Oxfordshire and the other Oxfordshire local authorities had previously expressed in 2017.

The positive progress made in South Oxfordshire helps to underpin the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal signed with Government which, as you aware commits the Oxfordshire local authorities to the delivery of 100,000 new homes by 2031.

It also supports the two Housing and Infrastructure Fund (HIF) bids that have been put forward to Government in relation to Didcot Garden Town and the A40.

The withdrawal of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan at this key stage places all of these initiatives at significant risk. It will also presumably place South Oxfordshire District under increased pressure from speculative development and the inevitable process of 'planning by appeal'.

The Oxfordshire authorities have worked extremely hard in accordance with the Duty to Co-Operate to reach a point at which we have a plan-led system. The Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and the associated planning freedoms and flexibilities attached to it, provide the opportunity to ensure this is carried forward, allowing for growth to be delivered in a positive manner supported by appropriate investment in place making and critical infrastructure.

We therefore have major concerns that any decision to withdraw the South Oxfordshire Local Plan would undermine the significant progress that has been made in recent years and place at risk not just South Oxfordshire but all of the Oxfordshire local authorities as we look to move forward in a positive, plan-led manner.

I note with interest the recent letter to South Oxfordshire from the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government which directs the Council not to take any step in connection with the adoption of the Local Plan and trust that this will help lead to a sensible outcome in the interest of Oxfordshire as a whole.

If you wish to discuss any of the issues outlined above, I would welcome a further discussion with you, so please feel free to get in touch.

Yours sincerely



Chris Hargraves  
Planning Policy Manager  
West Oxfordshire District Council