

Planning

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Dear Mr Ashcroft

Tetsworth Neighbourhood Development Plan – South Oxfordshire District Council response to Examiner’s Clarification Note of 30 July 2020

In your clarification note dated 30 July 2020 you asked the District Council to set out the current position with the emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 (SOLP).

On 3 March 2020 the Secretary of State issued South Oxfordshire District Council with a Direction under Section 27 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

This directs the Council to progress the SOLP through examination to be adopted by December 2020, and for senior council officers to report monthly to MHCLG officials on progress of the plan. Reports of monthly monitoring are available [here](#).

The SOLP is currently at examination. During the examination the Inspector wrote to the Council setting out questions and comments. In responding to the Inspector’s questions the Council proposed modifications to some policies in the submitted Local Plan. The Inspector’s questions and the Council’s responses can be found [here](#). In correspondence with the Council, IC3 and IC6 in particular, the Inspector indicated the proposed changes to policies which appeared acceptable and could be included in the draft schedule of main modifications. The current draft Schedule of Proposed Main Modification can be found in the examination library, link [here](#), this was last updated on 6 July 2020.

The Inspector held virtual hearing sessions in accordance with the programme available [here](#). The hearing sessions provisionally concluded on the 7 August 2020. The examination hearings looked at various aspects of the proposed Local Plan, including the ‘strategic sites’, areas which have been identified for potential development to help meet housing and employment needs.

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Other topics covered during the hearings included: housing requirement and supply; spatial strategy; Green Belt, infrastructure, climate change; and matters relating to the district's four towns. More details can be found in the Matters and Questions and Agendas available [here](#).

During the hearing sessions the Inspector invited the council to consider further modifications to policies in the SOLP. The council is currently working on the drafting of these modifications and will submit them in advance of the Inspector providing a preliminary note.

The examination remains open until the Inspector has completed his report into the soundness of the SOLP. Before making a recommendation and publishing his final report, the Inspector can: request more information; ask for more work to be carried out; or require further hearing sessions to take place. If the SOLP is found sound subject to modifications, Modifications consultation will need to take place for six weeks.

Whilst neighbourhood plans are tested against the adopted development plan, the evidence and reasoning of our emerging local plan is relevant to the consideration of whether a neighbourhood plan meets the basic conditions. Furthermore, Regulations linked to the Coronavirus Act 2020 postpones neighbourhood planning referendums until 6 May 2021. In this context, and having regard to the Direction issued by the Secretary of State, it is possible that the neighbourhood plan will come into effect after the SOLP is adopted.

National Planning Practice Guidance highlights the importance of minimising any conflicts between policies in neighbourhood plans and those in the emerging local plan (Paragraph 009 Reference ID: 41-009-20190509). Some of the proposed main modifications to the SOLP may be relevant to the examination of this Neighbourhood Plan. Within this context, we would draw the examiner's attention to proposed modifications to Policy H16 (Reference 36) in the draft Schedule of Proposed Main Modification available [here](#). At this stage, it is important to note that Policy H16 could be modified further.

We would be happy to keep you updated on the progress of the SOLP. Please contact us if you need further information.

Yours Sincerely,

Ricardo Rios
Planning Policy Team Leader (Neighbourhood)