



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Rt Hon Christopher Pincher MP
Minister of State for Housing

**Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local
Government**

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Cllr Sue Cooper
Leader
South Oxfordshire District Council
135 Eastern Ave Milton
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2nd December 2020

Dear Mr. Cooper,

I refer to the Secretary of State's letter of 3 March 2020 in which he gave a number of directions to your Council in relation to the Local Plan to ensure its progression through the examination and towards eventual adoption. I am now writing to reflect on the enormous progress made since that letter.

The Covid-19 outbreak has, of course, brought an unexpected challenge but I am delighted that South Oxfordshire has met that challenge. Your Council has worked positively with the Planning Inspectorate to put the logistics in place to pilot the first 'virtual' local plan examination which opened on July 14 and has now closed. I would like to thank everyone at the Council for working so hard to make this happen.

I would also like to thank Mark Stone and your planning policy team for engaging so constructively with my officials to report monthly on the progress of the Plan at examination. I am pleased to see the Inspector's conclusions and recommendation in his final report.

I must stress that having an up-to-date, sufficiently ambitious plan in place is not only a legal duty but is essential to planning for our housing requirements; providing the clarity that communities and developers deserve about where new homes should be built; and ensuring that development is planned rather than the result of speculative applications.

The progress you have made is going a long way to ensuring that South Oxfordshire is able to deliver the high-quality homes and infrastructure required to support jobs and growth in the local community. As the Secretary of State's letter of 3 March 2020 made clear, failing to progress the plan means failing local communities.

An up-to-date plan also plays an important part in ensuring that communities are not disadvantaged or exposed to uncertainty and speculative planning applications. It would be helpful if you could provide an update on your intended next steps and I look forward to your Council being in a position to adopt the Local Plan by the end of this year.

Yours Sincerely,
Christopher Pincher

RT HON CHRISTOPHER PINCHER MP