

Planning

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Dear Planning Policy at Buckinghamshire Council

South Oxfordshire District Council response to Buckinghamshire Council - Strategic Liaison – Draft Scoping Statement for Consultation

Thank you for giving South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) the opportunity to comment on the Strategic Liaison – Draft Scoping Statement. We welcome the opportunity for early engagement to better understand what are the joint strategic planning matters that cross our administrative boundaries.

The identification of joint strategic matters at an early stage in plan making process will help to ensure we engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis to maximise the effectiveness of Local Plans on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries in accordance with the Localism Act 2011.

The Council recognises that there are wider planning matters that may have a significant impact on work on preparing future Local Plans and engagement between our authorities including reforms to the planning system set out in Planning for the future - White Paper (Aug 2020) and proposals for the Oxford to Cambridge Arc.

As recognised in paragraph 1.3 of the statement the White Paper proposes to remove the duty to co-operate. However, no timetable had been published for the abolition and replacement of that duty therefore, the Council will continue to co-operate under the duty. If the duty is removed or replaced, we would like the opportunity to discuss further how our two authorities will engage in the future.

The Oxford to Cambridge Arc and proposals to develop a long-term strategic plan for this area which includes both authority areas is likely to have a significant impact on strategic planning matters. While proposals are still at an early stage both councils will need to engage with any proposals, recognising this will likely shape work on preparing future Local Plans and the strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries.

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The draft scoping statement under paragraph 1.5 has sought a response to four specific questions relating to future engagement between SODC and Buckinghamshire Council. A brief response has been provided under each question.

1. Has the Council correctly identified the strategic matters which could have a significant impact on at least two planning areas in the preparation of the Buckinghamshire Local Plan?

Yes

2. Has the Council correctly identified the relevant authorities and prescribed bodies that it needs to engage with to maximise the effectiveness of its planning policies in regards to each strategic matter?

Yes

3. Has the Council correctly identified the right strategic matters for liaison with your authority, if not what changes would you like us to agree?

Whilst we support the identification of the strategic matters for liaison already identified in Appendix 1 – Liaison Matrix, we consider there is the opportunity for further engagement on additional matters not directly highlighted in the Matrix, including:

‘Natural and Historic’ - This is because of shared issues regarding landscape, as both authorities share land designated within the Chilterns AONB, and also the potential impact on undesignated landscapes for example around Haddenham and Thame.

‘Nature Recovery’ - South Oxfordshire is keen to explore the opportunity for future engagement on the potential to join up nature recovery networks between Buckinghamshire and South Oxfordshire this may include along shared river catchments.

‘Pollution’ - Buckinghamshire has an Air Quality Management Area along the M40 and South Oxfordshire has an AQMA in Watlington both near our shared border. These area designations are linked to transport movement. As such we consider it appropriate to flag this issue as one for future engagement.

‘Other infrastructure’ - Leisure Facilities – Our Playing Pitch Strategy recognises that significant additional growth in the Aylesbury Vale area could lead to insufficient capacity at pitches in the North sub-area of South Oxfordshire as such we would like the opportunity to engage on playing pitch provision. This may be intended to be included under ‘other infrastructure’ as such we consider it appropriate to flag this issue as one for future engagement.

4. Do you support the Council’s intended approach and timetable for engaging with the identified local authorities and prescribed bodies?

Yes

We look forward to effective and on-going engagement on joint strategic matters moving forward, if you require further clarification of the matters raised in this response please do be in contact.

Regards

Ryan Hunt
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South Oxfordshire District Council