

## Policy and Programmes

HEAD OF SERVICE: HARRY BARRINGTON-MOUNTFORD



**Planning Policy**  
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Your reference: DTC October 2021

By email:

[REDACTED]  
[LPU@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:LPU@wokingham.gov.uk)

12 November 2021

Dear [REDACTED]

### **Wokingham Borough Council Duty to Co-operate Re-scoping Consultation**

Thank you for your email of 14 October 2021 and for the opportunity to reaffirm that the strategic matters and bodies identified in your Duty to Co-operate Rescoping Consultation continue to be the correct ones. Please find our response to each question raised set out below:

- a) Have all the strategic matters which could have a significant impact on at least two planning areas in the preparation of the new local plan been correctly identified in Table 1?**

We agree that the strategic matters raised in Table 1 are the correct ones.

- b) Have the relevant authorities and prescribed bodies that WBC needs to engage with to maximise the effectiveness of its planning policies been identified?**

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils suggest that the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Team are added to the 'relevant authorities and prescribed bodies' list, as their remit covers Planning Policy for all Oxfordshire districts.

- c) Have the right strategic matters for liaison with your authority / organisation been identified and is the scope correct?**  
and  
**d) If not, what matters would you like to add or remove and how would you change the scope?**

We note that Wokingham have highlighted additional matters for co-operation in Table 1, and for South Oxfordshire a new matter identified is Gypsy and Travellers / Travelling Show People: *'meeting needs for permanent pitches inc. consideration of any unmet needs; consideration of cross-boundary transit provision as appropriate'*.

South Oxfordshire District Council would be happy to cooperate on gypsies and travellers as an additional matter for discussion and working with Wokingham. The Council have a number of additional points and queries surrounding this topic:

- Wokingham Borough Council need to demonstrate that all options have been explored to locate travellers where the need is arising (including the delivery of pitches on residential and mixed-use allocations – as demonstrated in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035). In the first instance, provision should be met where the need arises. As highlighted in our letter of 20 March 2020, regarding Wokingham's Draft Local Plan:

'we consider that the draft Local Plan does not clearly identify a pitch target for gypsies and travellers as required by paragraph 9 of Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2015) (PPTS). It is therefore unclear whether the Plan meets parts (a) and (b) of paragraph 10 of the PPTS, that require a site or sites and/or broad locations to be identified to address years 1-10 set against your locally set targets. These sites or locations should be provided in the area where the need arises'.

- Please note that all sites (with the exception of Didcot North East) identified in South Oxfordshire's Delivery of Pitches report (2015) with potential and future potential for accommodating gypsies and travellers could not be taken forward for a variety of reasons, including sites being located in the Green Belt. As a result, the South Oxfordshire Local Plan provides for gypsy and traveller pitches on strategic sites at Didcot North East, Chalgrove and Culham. Wokingham Borough Council should explore providing pitches for gypsies and travellers on residential and mixed-use allocations as part of the emerging Local Plan.
- We would request that Wokingham demonstrate evidence of the Gypsy and Traveller route(s) from Wokingham into and across South Oxfordshire to aid discussions.
- Please note that as part of the plan-making process for the Oxfordshire Plan 2050, the Oxfordshire authorities are currently undertaking a new Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showperson Accommodation Assessment (GTAA). Therefore, an up to date need requirement for South Oxfordshire has not yet been identified.

We note that Landscape is not currently selected as a duty to cooperate topic for our councils. As Wokingham's northern boundary with South Oxfordshire is close to the Chilterns AONB in parts, we would wish to discuss any future housing or transport allocations that have the potential to impact on the AONB. We would therefore suggest that Landscape is selected in the South Oxfordshire section of Table 1.

Additionally, we would like to highlight our comments related to the Third Thames Crossing in our letter of 20 March 2020, regarding Wokingham's Draft Local Plan:

'South Oxfordshire District Council are keen to work with your Council to understand further and in more detail the specific locations and justification for any major cross-boundary or sub-regional infrastructure that will impact upon South Oxfordshire. The Duty to Cooperate requires Local Planning Authorities to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to maximise the effectiveness of Local Plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters'.

Given the recent Climate Emergencies declared by both our Councils we continue to encourage you to give greater consideration to more sustainable approaches for tackling road congestion, in particular demand management solutions, such as dedicated bus lane management to key facilities and employers and also the delivery of Park and Ride facilities.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely

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[Redacted]

**Planning Officer**