

Oxford Local Plan 2040

Examination

Initial Hearings

Statement by Oxfordshire County Council

Matter 1 - Procedural/legal requirements

Tuesday 11 June

Issue: Whether the Council has complied with relevant procedural and legal requirements.

Questions:

Plan preparation and scope

1. Has the preparation of the Local Plan been in accordance with the Local Development Scheme in terms of its form, scope and timing?
2. Have requirements been met in terms of the preparation of the Local Plan, notification, consultation and publication and submission of documents?
3. Has the preparation of the Local Plan complied with the Statement of Community Involvement?
4. How does the Local Plan relate to Neighbourhood Plans and how would they be affected by the adoption of the Local Plan?
5. What existing and proposed Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) are there? What is the intended relationship of SPDs with specific policies in the Local Plan and what purpose will they serve? Is this clear and appropriate?

Sustainability Appraisal

N.B. The merits of potential options for the scale and distribution of growth will be dealt with under other matters, including options for housing need and the housing requirement.

6. How has the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) informed and influenced the preparation of the Local Plan at each stage and how has it been recorded/reported?
7. How and when were options considered for:
 - a) The overall scale of housing and other growth

- b) The distribution of development
 - c) Potential site allocations
 - d) Policy approaches
8. Were all reasonable alternatives considered?
 9. Overall, has the methodology for the SA been appropriate?

Habitats Regulations Assessment

10. When and how was the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) for the Local Plan carried out and reported?
11. Was the methodology appropriate and robust, and is the evidence sufficiently clear to justify the conclusions?
12. What issues were raised by Natural England and how have these been addressed/resolved?
13. In terms of the approach to “in combination” effects, what is the current position of Natural England and the Council?
14. Is the Council’s position justified?
15. Given that the Council identifies a significant amount of unmet housing need, to be accommodated by other authorities, how has this been taken into account in the HRA? How does this affect the issue of “in combination” effects?
16. Are there any other concerns regarding the HRA and if so, how have these been resolved?

Other matters

17. Does the Local Plan include policies in relation to the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change? If so, which?
18. Has the Council had regard to the other relevant specific matters set out in S19 of the 2004 Act (as amended) and Regulation 10?
19. How have issues of equality been addressed in the Local Plan?

Response to all questions:

1. Oxfordshire County Council has no comment to make on the legal and procedural requirements. These are not matters that the County Council has focused its comments at the Regulation 18 and 19 stages on.
2. It is noted, in relation to Questions 10 to 16, that there was a joint commission with the County Council for transport evidence which resulted in an ‘HRA Screening Addendum – Air Quality’ dated November 2023. The effects of existing allocations outside of the City’s boundaries have been taken into account in evidence for the last District Local Plans, and any future additional allocations will need supporting evidence.