

**OXFORD LOCAL PLAN 2040 EXAMINATION
(PART 1)**

HEARING STATEMENT

On behalf of:

Friends of Iffley Village (FOIV)

and

Friends of the Fields Iffley (FOFI)

May 2024

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Hearing Statement has been prepared in response to the Part 1 Matters, Issues and Questions identified by the inspectors presiding over the Oxford Local Plan 2040 Examination. It is intended to assist the inspectors' consideration of the soundness of the Plan (and related matters such as whether it has been positively prepared with due cooperation between the City Council and relevant stakeholders) and it will form the basis of oral submissions at the Examination hearing sessions scheduled for 11-13 June 2024, should further elaboration on the points be required at that time.
- 1.2 The statement has been prepared jointly on behalf of Friends of Iffley Village (FOIV) with the support of Friends of the Fields Iffley (FOFI). FOIV has an express remit of protecting the Iffley Conservation Area (ICA) and the special attributes of Iffley Village: an area treasured by Oxford residents as a 'village within the city'. FOFI has a more targeted and specific remit of opposing the loss to development of the greenfield site within the Iffley Conservation Area known as Iffley Horse Fields (proposed allocation SPS13 'Land at Meadow Lane' in LP2040). Both organisations believe that carrying forward this demonstrably flawed allocation from LP2036 represents a failure on the part of the City Council to prepare the replacement Local Plan positively and in a sound, evidence-based manner. Accordingly, for the LP2040 to be rendered sound, this allocation should be deleted. A joint hearing statement has been prepared in the interests of assisting the examination and avoiding replication. FOIV and FOFI also intend to participate in the Part 1 hearings through a single representative.
- 1.3 FOIV and FOFI recognise that the specific merits and demerits of proposed site allocation SPS13 are not matters the Inspectors wish to receive specific submissions on in Part 1 of the Examination. They intend to make further written and oral submissions to Part 2 to this end. However, both are of the view that the flaws with that proposed allocation are symptomatic of overarching problems which do fall to be considered in Part 1 of the Examination, hence the decision to be involved at this stage.
- 1.4 While FOIV and FOFI have other concerns about the Local Plan, they do not advance a proposition that it is *fatally* flawed. Both believe that the flaws with the draft Local Plan can be remedied in order to make it sufficiently sound for adoption. Such remedies obviously include the deletion of the unsupportable proposed site allocation SPS13 (and cooperation between City and County to deliver its affordable housing component at the near-adjacent SPS14) but they are not limited to that. There are matters at a more strategic level that FOIV and FOFI believe also require attention to improve the Plan and it is these that this Part 1 Hearing Statement is focused on.

1.5 The inspectors are invited to read FOIV and FOI's representations at the Regulation 19 stage of the Local Plan (ref: 167 and 163 respectively in the Reg 19 Respondent index), such that they can appreciate that matters dealt with in this statement have been raised before, and indeed repeatedly. The inspectors are also invited to consider whether the City Council's comments on these and other submissions on SPS13, as set out in their March 2024 consultation statement, are indicative of an open- or closed-minded response to the emergence of major problems with the allocation of that site.

2 Scope and structure of statement

2.1 This statement responds to questions 7, 8, 9 and 17 under Matter 1, questions 7, 10 and 13 under Matter 2, and question 6 under Matter 3 as a focus for responding under that matter (housing need and how it is calculated) generally. Each is dealt with in turn below.

4 Matter 1 – Question 17

4.1 Question 17, under ‘Other Matters’ asks:

“Does the Local Plan include policies in relation to the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change? If so, which?”

4.2 In response to this question and to avoid replication, the inspectors’ attention is drawn to the responses given above under Question 9, and in particular points i), ii), iii), v), vi), vii), viii) and x).

7 Conclusions

- 7.1 Whilst FOIV and FOFI will reserve the main thrust of their submissions for Part 2 of the Examination, in anticipation of the merits or demerits of individual site allocations being examined at that stage, they hope that the inspectors will understand such concerns stem from systemic flaws in the process that are relevant to Part 1. We intend to have a representative at the hearings on June 11-13 and that individual will be available to further articulate and/or elaborate on the points made in this statement, as required. Overall, FOIV's and FOFI's joint position is that the LP2040 requires modification, including the deletion of allocation SPS13, in order for it to be rendered sound, positively prepared and for it to be considered a product of due cooperation with stakeholders, including (not least) the populace of this great city.