

OXFORD LOCAL PLAN 2040

HEARING STATEMENT FOR JUNE 2024 HEARING SESSIONS – MATTER 3

Organisation: Cherwell Development Watch Alliance (CDWA) – Responder Number 102

Email address: [REDACTED]

Date: 20 May 2024

CDWA submitted detailed representations to the Regulation 19 consultation. This brief hearing statement is in addition to those.

1. The City Council has, for several years and by differing arguments, consistently overestimated its housing requirement thereby creating a claimed ‘unmet need’ which it has pushed out to the surrounding districts. It is already clear that the results of this unsustainable approach will be large-scale incursions into the Green Belt, green spaces and biodiversity, with many peripheral car-based housing estates often with very low levels of social or genuinely affordable housing. The provision of infrastructure e.g. good public transport, sewerage and foul water services, provision for healthcare services (GPs & hospitals) has failed to keep up as growth levels increase.

Meanwhile Oxford City Council continues to fuel housing demand by maintaining its priority for employment-generating development over housing. The Housing and Economic Needs Assessment figures suggest that the City Council should increase its housing stock by almost 50%, the size of a medium sized New Town such as Bracknell, over 20 years. Yet the powers available to local authorities in Oxfordshire fall well short of those available historically to New Towns. This is simply not achievable in practice.

2. It has been evident to us for many years that the City Council has not sought properly to engage the public and its consultees in the local plan process. For instance, there has been a lack of feedback to representations made during the course of this (and previous) local plans. We support the three Oxfordshire district councils’ claims that Oxford City Council has not complied with its duty to co-operate and that this cannot be rectified in the current plan.