

## **Council**

**Monday 22 July 2019**

### **Agenda Item 8 (a), Written Questions**

**Question From: Councillor Mark Cherry**

**Question To: Leader of the Council, Councillor Barry Wood**

**Topic: Parking Enforcement**

#### **Question**

Currently, our district's parking enforcements are carried out by Thames Valley Police at some expense to the council. Using our newly created partnership with Oxfordshire County Council, is the leader going to push for decriminalisation of parking across the district and the county as advised by the former Thames Valley Chief Constable?

#### **Response**

Currently this Council, in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council, South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse, is exploring the possibility of introducing Civil Parking Enforcement.

The partnership is commissioning a feasibility study to fully explore all the implications and costs associated with introducing and operating Civil Parking Enforcement. The study will also outline the likely timelines for implementation, should the Council decide to proceed. A partnership meeting is happening tomorrow to commence the feasibility study and agree timescales for the study to be completed.

Once the study is completed, Members will receive a report with recommendations on whether to proceed with Civil Parking Enforcement.

In the meantime, this Council has agreed with Thames Valley Police to continue funding parking enforcement activities while Civil Parking Enforcement is explored.

**Question From: Councillor Hugo Brown**

**Question To: Leader of the Council, Councillor Barry Wood**

**Topic: Local Plan**

### **Question**

On 29th May, the Joint Planning Inspectors examining the Oxford Local Plan 2036 published their "Initial Questions and Comments". These suggest that Oxford is over-stating its need for houses (1,400 dpa vs 1,004 dpa as found by the Inspectors citing GL Hearn, 2018) and simultaneously under-stating its own capacity to accommodate them (8,620 to 2036 vs 10,000 to 2031 as found by the Oxon Housing and Growth Deal). The Joint Inspectors clearly have significant concerns about the "soundness" of Oxford's Local Plan especially as it is based on the 2014 SHMA figures which they themselves state "are now quite a few years old". They further make the point that the over-statement of housing need and the under-statement of the City's own ability to accommodate it "could have a bearing on the level of unmet need which would have to be accommodated by neighbouring local authorities". In light of these observations, should CDC not, at the very least, halt the Partial Review process until Oxford City's Local Plan has been adopted and in addition revisit the housing numbers for CDC as contained in Local Plan Part 1?

### **Response**

Officers have seen the questions put to the City Council and the Local Plan Inspector is aware of them. The Oxford Local Plan is at a relatively early stage in its Examination. The City Council has recently submitted its response further explaining its position

([https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20286/local\\_plan\\_examination/1312/oxford\\_local\\_plan\\_2016-2036\\_examination](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20286/local_plan_examination/1312/oxford_local_plan_2016-2036_examination)). Public hearings need to be held and it is likely to be some significant time before the outcome is known.

It will not be until Cherwell District Council Members have considered the Partial Review's Examination Report that the Plan's formal adoption would be considered. Nonetheless, it would not be helpful if the Partial Review process was delayed further while Oxford Local Plan is completed. This could lead to significant uncertainty and unplanned, speculative development proposals.

Furthermore, the implications of the completed Oxford Local Plan would subsequently need to be considered cooperatively by all the Oxfordshire Councils. This could occur through the on-going preparation of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 but will take time.

The Council continues to rely on its submitted evidence demonstrating the robustness of the Growth Board work, the agreed housing need assessment and how it was produced cooperatively by the Oxfordshire Councils. That work has been tested at local plan examinations and is considered to be compelling. The Examination Report for the Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 2 which was published on 26 June supports this view. The Vale Inspector's observations include:

*"...The examination of the Oxford City Local Plan has only recently commenced, but the OGB has overseen an objective and robust work programme to determine*

*both the quantum of this unmet need and its apportionment between the relevant districts...” (para. 25);*

*“The starting point for this work was the Oxfordshire SHMA and the Cundall report, a critical review of the housing potential of Oxford City. Together these enabled the OGB to agree a ‘working assumption’ that the housing needs of Oxford City which needed to be met in adjacent districts was 15,000 over the plan period. The Oxford Spatial Options Assessment, supported by a range of other evidence including a Green Belt study, was then undertaken to inform the apportionment of this figure between the districts. This work was necessarily high level and strategic in nature, only looking at large site options, but was only intended to provide district figures for subsequent local plans to take forward. The culmination of this work programme was agreement by the OGB in September 2016 as to how the 15,000 figure was to be apportioned...” (para. 26);*

*“Whilst criticised in representations, there is no relevant guidance in place and the process was both logical and comprehensive, considering an appropriate range of assessment criteria. The exercise was carried out jointly with full agreement between the Councils concerned and overseen by the OGB. There is no reason to depart from the conclusions of the OGB which provide a robust basis to prepare and adopt the LPP2 to provide additional housing land to meet the needs of Oxford as soon as possible as required by LPP1...” (para. 27);*

*“The figure of 2,200 dwellings [Vale’s apportionment] is therefore justified as the basis for meeting the housing needs of Oxford City in the LPP2. However, this figure has the status of a working assumption at this stage to be confirmed or adjusted through examination of the Oxford City Local Plan and then the preparation of the Oxfordshire Joint Spatial Strategy....” (para. 28);*

These conclusions of the Vale Inspector were reached notwithstanding the fact that the Oxford City Local Plan had been submitted and is being examined. The Cherwell Inspector’s Post-Hearing Advice Note was received on 13 July 2019. It is appended to the tabled information note and published on-line at <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/info/83/local-plans/515/local-plan-part-1-partial-review---examination/11>.

The Inspector observes, “...there can be no reasonable justification for suspending the examination to allow the Oxford examination to be advanced to its final stages.”

The Inspector also observes, “All in all, like my colleagues who examined Local Plans in West Oxfordshire, and the Vale of White Horse, I find nothing problematic in the Plan’s reliance on the figures produced and agreed through the OGB [Oxfordshire Growth Board]. I consider that the 4,400 figure provides a sound basis for the Plan.”

The Inspector expresses concerns about one of the proposed allocations in the Partial Review (site PR10 – land south east of Woodstock) and has invited the Council to propose Main Modifications to address this. These modifications will be presented to the Council for consideration and approval before they are submitted to the Inspector.

It is considered that there is no justification for delaying the Partial Review pending the outcome of the Oxford City Local Plan examination.