

South Oxfordshire Local Plan Examination

Submission by Caversham and District Residents' Association (CADRA)

With around 500 members, CADRA has focussed on the quality of life in and around Caversham for over 50 years. Its remit extends across the Reading / SODC boundary and it is a respected voice on planning issues in both authorities.

CADRA has commented at earlier consultation stages, most recently in January 2019. We wish to revisit that submission in the light of events since then, referring to questions posed in the Inspector's Matters and Issues.

Question 5b: Are the strategic allocations well-chosen and in the right locations?

Our previous submission applauded the omission of the three potential large housing sites on the Reading border, noting that the reasons included sewer and electricity capacity, congestion on the Thames bridges and impact on the AONB. We return to this topic for two reasons.

First, the impact of major nearby development on congestion of the Thames bridges has been exacerbated by the absence of any reference to this issue in Oxfordshire County Council's recent consultation on their Local Transport and Connectivity Plan. If OCC declines to consider any initiatives to reduce this problem, the case for limiting development on the Reading fringe is reinforced, as is the soundness of the Plan in this regard. This also reinforces the point made in our May 2017 submission about limiting growth in small villages in this area.

Secondly, we understand that another submission suggests that the Plan is unsound through its omission of development on the SODC portion of Reading Golf Club. We strongly disagree, for the reasons above. Further, the illustrations accompanying that submission show development in two east-west bands: as well as reigniting our concerns about overall numbers and impact, this form of development would impact particularly adversely on the AONB and on its setting, which is of high value throughout this SODC/Reading boundary area. The recent dismissal of a nearby appeal by Gladman at Emmer Green, which abuts this boundary, confirmed this as a prime policy issue.

CADRA therefore wishes to reaffirm its view that **the draft plan is sound** in regard to potential housing sites on the northern fringes of Reading and urges that this issue should not be re-opened.

Question 4a: Are the residential densities set out in Policy STRAT5 realistic, viable and implementable?

The Plan's rejection of housing sites on the Reading fringe is inconsistent with Policy STRAT 5 and its explanatory paragraph 4.54, which set a minimum density of 70 house per ha for the 'major centres and sustainable transport hubs' of Oxford, Didcot and Reading. As Reading is outside the Plan area, we assume that this can only refer to developments in SODC adjoining the Reading boundary. If so, this is wholly inconsistent with their rejection elsewhere in the Plan. In that regard, the changed circumstances outlined above in relation to 5b reinforce our view that **the Plan is unsound** in this limited respect, and we request amendment in the interests of clarity and consistency.