

Cllr Sue Cooper (Sent by email)
Leader of South Oxfordshire District Council
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Abingdon, OX14 4SB

Cllr Debby Hallett, Deputy Leader of the Council

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135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park, Oxon, OX14 4SB

Dear Sue,

9 August 2019

I'm replying to Holly Jones's letter dated 23 July regarding the progress of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan. I note that SODC considered options relating to your emerging Local Plan and determined to take time to explore the options available for your Councillors.

I welcome the decision not to withdraw the Plan at this stage, and instead to commit to working with Oxfordshire County Council, Homes England and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to protect the HIF funding and to understand what options there are to protect HIF that could arise in the event that the Council decide at a later date to withdraw or make changes to your emerging Local Plan.

The Vale of White Horse Local Plan has been prepared in two parts. Local Plan Part 1 was adopted in December 2016, whilst Local Plan Part 2 has been found sound by our Planning Inspector and a report on its adoption will be considered by Council in the next few weeks.

I am sure you are aware of the significant need for infrastructure to support the existing and planned development for our District. LPP1 and LPP2 both rely upon the Oxfordshire Growth Deal and Housing and Infrastructure Funding to relieve traffic congestion and provide much needed infrastructure. The award of £218m grant funding to Oxfordshire benefits both our Councils, and our partner authorities agreed the prioritisation of Didcot for this investment.

I am conscious that your endeavours are seeking to minimise putting HIF at risk, and I wish to draw your and your Councillors' attention to the related impact that the loss of HIF funding would have on our District. If we were to lose HIF, our Council would immediately be placed into a position of not being able to demonstrate a five year housing land supply. This would place our council and our residents in a difficult position and I'm grateful for your efforts in minimising this risk, recognising the Duty to Co-operate between Councils.

I do, of course, understand and respect that ultimately you and other elected Members will need to weigh up these factors and ensure that your final decision will be in the best interests of South Oxfordshire residents.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Debby Hallett
Deputy Leader, Vale of White Horse District Council

Cc – Holly Jones