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Member of Parliament for Henley
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Andrew Down
Acting Deputy Chief Executive - Partnerships

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19 March 2021

Dear Mr Howell,

Withdrawal of the three-year land supply flexibility - w.e.f. 31/3/21

One of the key milestones of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal (the Deal) is the preparation of a Joint Statutory Spatial Plan for Oxfordshire - the OxPlan 2050.

It was recognised that whilst Oxfordshire develops the OxPlan 2050 there was an increased risk to the county of speculative or unplanned development. Consequently, as part of the Deal, Government agreed certain time limited planning flexibilities to address the risk of such development.

Amongst the planning flexibilities agreed was an exemption from national land supply requirements – allowing for the duration of the development of the OxPlan 2050 a reduced 3-year land supply as opposed to the national 5-year land supply requirement.

This flexibility was predicated upon the completion to an agreed timetable that would have seen submission of the OxPlan 2050 by the Spring of 2021 and adoption later that year- subject to Examination.

This timetable, which was agreed at the outset by both parties to be ambitious, has proved to be impossible to meet - particularly during a pandemic. Accordingly, MHCLG have agreed with Oxfordshire to a revised timetable that requires submission of the OxPlan 2050 by the summer of 2023 and Examination later that year.

In agreeing to this timetable however MHCLG have advised that Government are not minded to also extend the land supply flexibility beyond the original deadline and accordingly this flexibility will come to an end by the originally agreed deadline for submission of the OxPlan 2050 - 31 March 2021.

Oxfordshire are disappointed that this flexibility has not been extended but recognise Government's reasons for not wishing to agree to part of an extension to the OxPlan 2050 timetable.

The process of bringing the 3-year land supply flexibility for Oxfordshire to an end is a short written Ministerial Statement in Parliament which MHCLG advise has been drafted and will be submitted to Parliament later this month.

Yours sincerely



Andrew Down
Acting Deputy Chief Executive – Partnerships

Cc. Sue Cooper, Leader of South Oxfordshire District Council
Emily Smith, Leader of Vale of White Horse District Council
Mark Stone, Chief Executive for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils