

**Planning**  
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Date: 25 August 2021

Dear Planning Policy Team,

### **Oxford City Early Stage Issues consultation and Duty to Cooperate**

Thank you for inviting South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils to comment on the early stage issues consultation and Duty to Cooperate scoping.

#### Duty to Cooperate Scoping Strategy

We agree that South and Vale Councils will engage on a statement of common ground.

We confirm that the issues identified in Table 4 are the correct issues.

Housing affordability could fall within the definition of the '*Homes needed in the area*' strategic issue. Housing need is identified in the scoping strategy, although affordable housing is not explicitly stated in the strategy, therefore we would welcome that addition.

#### Issues

It is pleasing to see issues raised that also align with the priorities of South and Vale Councils, such as addressing the climate emergency. It is noted that in March 2021 that the City Council set out its first Action Plan for bringing about a net zero carbon city by 2040, or earlier, ten years ahead of the Government's national legal target. We share these ambitions to lead the way in responding to the climate emergency.

However we would urge more importance is placed on the critical issue of housing affordability. The Scoping Report at paragraph 1.1.4 recognises that Oxford is one of the most unaffordable places to live. At Table 3.2 of the scoping report, *housing need and supply* scores 'very negative' in terms of the current situation and likely future without a plan, the only SA topic to score this way. Yet housing affordability is not one of the current 'what's important' issues scoped for the Plan. Affordable housing also does not feature in your proposed vision.

We make no comments at this stage on the topic papers that you have produced and we look forward to engaging with the City Council on the next stage in the development of your Local Plan.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours Sincerely

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**South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils**

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