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Via email

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Dear Caroline

Oxford Local Plan 2040: Formal request to assist with Oxford unmet housing need

I write to respond to your formal request from 22 December 2023. It was surprising to receive this request at such a late stage in the process of the preparation of your Local Plan 2040.

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils submitted formal representations to your Regulation 19 stage Local Plan 2040 consultation on 21 December 2023. You may not have been aware of this at the time of your letter.

These were submitted in the context of us having previously submitted individual responses to your March 2023 Housing Need consultation and your November 2022 Preferred Options consultation, at the Regulation 18 stages.

Our recent representations to your Regulation 19 stage Local Plan 2040 reiterate our earlier responses to state that, as matters stand at present, your emerging Local Plan 2040 fails the legal duty to cooperate. We have also identified several soundness issues, and set out our long-standing concerns relating to the flaws in your evidence base on housing need and housing capacity, which inform your Regulation 19 local plan.

You are aware of these concerns because we have responded at your formal plan consultation stages (Regulation 18 and 19) and we have also engaged in officer meetings about your Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA) and Oxford Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment.

Considering this context and a lack of progress in resolving these matters, neither South Oxfordshire District Council nor Vale of White Horse District Council can currently agree to meet any unmet housing need that exists for the period after 2036 i.e. new unmet housing need that has not previously been accommodated, as we are not persuaded by your evidence base (given its deficiencies).

We would ask you to reflect carefully on your current intentions to submit your Regulation 19 local plan, as presently formulated, for independent examination and would ask that instead, you engage with us on a more appropriate and productive way forward. However, we will in any event engage with you regarding any content that may be appropriate for a Statement of Common Ground.

Yours sincerely



Mark Stone
Chief Executive