

SODC ward councillor's report – 11th November 2019

General Election

Following the decision of Parliament for a General Election on 12th December 2019, the rules of political "Purdah" apply. This means that most decisions or discussions of SODC will be deferred until after 12th December.

The Emerging Local Plan 2034

The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Govt. Robert Jenrick MP's holding direction over South Oxfordshire District Council's Local Plan (eLP2034) has been left in place during the General Election. Legal advice and limited discussion with civil servants at MHCLG continue. This is very much a political matter. After the news broke the Oxford Mail ran the headline "**Death of local democracy**".

What price democracy? Politicians in Oxford who support a very strong growth agenda – supporting the Expressway, appearing to want it to come south of Oxford and who appear to support the idea of something like 1 million extra new homes across the Ox-Cam "arc" have declared themselves very pleased with the holding direction. Indeed it may very well be that they encouraged and orchestrated it!

It should be noted that prior to becoming Secretary of State at MHCLG, Robert Jenrick MP was Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury – working on and supporting the Ox-Cam Expressway!

Meanwhile the eLP cannot progress through examination nor can it be amended nor can work to replace it proceed.

The eLP2034 provides for a supply of **32.6k** homes.

The UK Government's standard method formula would have required 14.5k plus any unmet housing need from Oxford City.

The Oxfordshire Growth Deal was based on the 2014 SHMA (Strategic Housing Market Assessment) and proposed 100k new homes for Oxfordshire – including 17.8k for SODC. It also proposed 28k for Oxford City and after Oxford's own supply of 13k it was suggested that the other 15k be shared between the other surrounding LPAs and that South Oxfordshire took 5k of those. This implied a total supply of **22.8k** new homes by SODC.

The new administration has been prepared to supply 22.8k homes, but wished to correct the eLP for some serious policy errors – including mix and density – to improve policy on Climate Change and the environment and to review sites. The new administration supports the Didcot infrastructure and would supply the overall housing numbers on related sites from the 22.8k to comply with the "HIF bid". **Clearly the proposed 32.6k of supply in the eLP exceeds the 22.8k by some 10k.** This despite the fact that the 22.8k figure was far above the level required by UK Government's own formulas. Those formulas would have given 14.5k for South Oxfordshire itself plus perhaps 2k for unmet Oxford City need – totalling perhaps 16.5k; **so 22.8k itself would have provided more than 6k of exceptional growth!**

It should be noted that over 5 years, a New Plan would save £1m against the status quo and would be £1.6m cheaper than a regulation 19 revision. The housing land supply will remain strong.

Housing delivery vehicle

SODC officers are to be asked to consider options for setting up a housing development company – perhaps in conjunction with others. This would aim to offer extra means of housing delivery, scope to bring forward certain sites and scope to secure extra affordable and social housing for the district's needs.

Civil Parking Enforcement

SODC officers are progressing work with a view to taking on civil parking enforcement. These would be licensed or transferred powers from the police for pursuing illegal parking on yellow lines. Feasibility is being reviewed and necessary digitisation of OCC's legal parking orders – which give legal force to yellow-lined and parking restricted areas.

Councillor grants

Councillor grants are available and need to be claimed. The joint value for Shiplake could be £2,400 for an appropriate project. (Clearly the parish could top this up!) I have circulated details for claiming.

Leigh Rawlins

District Councillor