

Scrutiny Committee

Report of Head of Head of Planning

REPORT NO:

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To: Scrutiny Committee

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Local Plan 2031 Part 2 – options for adoption

Recommendations

That Scrutiny Committee is invited to:

- (a) note the conclusions of the independent Inspector who was appointed to examine the Local Plan 2031 Part 2
- (b) note the options in relation to the Local Plan 2031 Part 2, and
- (c) recommend to Cabinet to accept the Inspector's report and recommendation and adopt the Local Plan 2031 Part 2.

Purpose of Report

1. To provide Scrutiny Committee with the latest position regarding the Local Plan 2031 Part 2.
2. To inform, review and consider the implications of any changes to the progress of the Local Plan 2031 Part 2.

Corporate Objectives

3. The Local Plan is central to the achievement of the 2016-2020 Corporate Plan's objectives for:

- A strong local economy
- Housing for people who need it

Background

4. The Local Plan 2031 Part 1: Strategic Sites and Policies was adopted in December 2016. Part 1 deals with the larger 'strategic' sites and the associated policies. Local Plan 2031 Part 2: Detailed Policies and Additional Sites was submitted for Examination on 23 February 2018. Local Plan 2031 Part 2 (LPP2) sets out the strategic policies and locations for the agreed quantum of housing to meet Oxford City's unmet housing need within the district. It also contains policies for the part of Didcot Garden Town that lies within the district as well as detailed development management policies to complement the Local Plan Part 1, replacing the saved policies of the Local Plan 2011, and allocating additional development sites for housing and other uses.
5. The Inspector held an Examination which comprised a series of hearing sessions over the summer of 2018 and identified a number of proposed Main Modifications to the Plan to make it sound. In accordance with the Planning Inspectorate's Procedural Practice, a public consultation on the proposed Main Modifications was undertaken in early 2019, closing on 1 April. In preparing LPP2, the Council has undertaken consultations in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations (2012).
6. Following the conclusion of the Main Modifications consultation, the Council collated the 105 representations that it received and sent these to the Inspector for his consideration, in accordance with the process. Prior to the Inspector issuing his final Report setting out his recommendations, there was a quality assurance check (peer review) by the Planning Inspectorate and a fact check of the draft Report by the Council, feeding back any fact changes to the Inspector.
7. The Inspector issued his final report to the Council on 25 June 2019 and this has been published on the Council website. The report concludes that, with the recommended Main Modifications, LPP2 satisfies the requirements of Section 20(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and meets the tests of 'soundness' as set out in National Planning Policy Framework 2012.
8. Formal adoption is the final stage in the process of producing a local plan. At this stage in the process, government guidance on plan-making is clear on the expectation of the Council, noting;

*'While the local planning authority is not legally required to adopt its local plan following examination, it will have been through a significant process locally to engage communities and other interests in discussions about the future of the area, and it is to be expected that the authority will proceed quickly with adopting a plan that has been found sound.'*¹

¹ Paragraph 058 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-making>

Options

9. The choices available to the Council at this stage are restricted to a binary option of adopting LPP2 (with the Main Modifications) or not adopting LPP2 (either through resolution to withdraw it or by resolution to not adopt). The Council, as a matter of law, is not entitled, nor has any power, at this stage in the Local Plan process to make material or Main Modifications to the LPP2.
10. Since the option (and therefore any decision) to not adopt LPP2 can be taken in one of two ways, it is presented as two separate options in this report. While the grounds for both will overlap in many cases, the subtle differences between the two are set out under each option.
11. The options, in summary, available are as follows;

Option 1)	Withdraw LPP2
Option 2)	Do not adopt LPP2
Option 3)	Adopt LPP2

12. Under each option, officers have sought to identify the key advantages and risks, as well as the timescales for progression of the next plan. Officers have, under each option, made a recommendation as to whether to proceed with that option.

OPTION ONE: WITHDRAW LPP2

To withdraw the Local Plan Part 2 at this stage, a sound planning reason(s) and a rationale should be provided as a basis for such a decision. While not the case for the examination of LPP2, examples of potential planning reasons could include how the Inspector failed to follow procedure in relation to LPP2, e.g. not keeping the Council informed, not giving opportunities to respond to his queries, modifications which the Council did not accept, etc.

13. Withdrawing LPP2 would signify that it was not going to form part of the development plan for the Council and so no weight could be attached to LPP2. Any documents associated with LPP2 made available by the council would need to be removed, recognising that these documents are already in the public domain and would continue to be available from other sources than the council.

OPTION ONE: BENEFITS

14. The withdrawal, and then review/preparation of a new Local Plan will enable Councillors of the new administration (May 2019) to establish their key priorities for planning in the district. The Council, to act as a place shaper for local communities, should set out its long-term vision through a Local Plan. As such it should respond to the latest challenges set out by government and reflect the aspirations of the Council.

With the introduction of the Standard Methodology for calculating housing need, starting again by withdrawing LPP2 would provide an opportunity to revisit the housing numbers amongst other matters that were identified by the Council. .

OPTION ONE: RISKS

15. Where the decision taken is to withdraw LPP2, there would be a period between withdrawal and a new Local Plan being in place during which time there would be significant implications for planning decisions as set out below.

An uncertain planning environment

16. A risk to this approach is the absence of an up to date Local Plan. The position would default to reliance upon the Adopted 2011 Local Plan for Development Management policies for decision taking on planning applications. While LPP1 continues to be in place, there would however be a policy vacuum left at the local level with the withdrawal of LPP2.

Lack of Five-Year Housing Land Supply

17. A further risk is that the withdrawal of LPP2 would leave the Council vulnerable to challenges to the lack of a five-year housing supply, and the potential for ad hoc development, planning by appeal and associated costs. See Appendix 1 for projections of 5-year housing land supply scenarios.

Didcot Garden Town status

18. A decision to withdraw LPP2 might also undermine the Garden Town status for Didcot (DGT) should we no longer be able to demonstrate our contribution to the achievement of 15,000 homes by 2031. Although no sites relating to DGT are allocated in LPP2, annual grant funding, including to support the development plan, could be put at risk.

Potential negative impact on infrastructure

19. The lack of a plan led approach and supporting Infrastructure Delivery Plan may also give rise to a lack of planned infrastructure. There is a potential loss of section 106 contributions necessary for infrastructure including education, highway, healthcare and green infrastructure.
20. The 'tilted balance' and NPPF provisions means that benefits of the delivery of housing has prime importance in considering applications for residential development and there is potential for permission to be granted even if the infrastructure which the Councils seeks to secure is not delivered as part of the scheme.

Government intervention

21. There could be the potential for intervention from government. This intervention would seek to instruct the Council to follow a course of action set by the Secretary of State in the form of a Direction.

Neighbourhood Plans

22. There is a risk that Neighbourhood Plans will become non-compliant with the New Plan. Additional housing could be brought forward in Neighbourhood Plan Areas which was not anticipated since LPP2 sites are no longer allocations.

23. Additional work would also be required in relation to neighbourhood plan areas, as the NPPF2019 requires, as part of strategic plans, to set out a housing requirement figure for neighbourhood areas.

OPTION ONE: TIMETABLE

24. The Council would need to identify the sound planning reason(s) and rationale for withdrawal and then notify the Planning Inspectorate of this intention.

25. The Council remains under a duty to prepare and set out a planning framework for the whole of our district. As such, if the Council withdraws LPP2, the Council will be required to start work on preparing a new Local Plan immediately.

26. An estimated timetable for progressing a new Local Plan is set out below.

October 2019	Withdraw LPP2
November 2019 – April 2021	Draft Reg 18 Local Plan production
April 2022	Consultation on Reg 19 Local Plan (six weeks)
²October 2022 – April 2023	Submission and Examination in Public
June 2023	Inspector's report
July 2023	Adoption

OPTION ONE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

27. To progress Option 1, the reasons for and against the decision as well as risks of withdrawing LPP2 need to be set out clearly as the decision is likely to be challenged by interested parties through the High Court.

28. It is not considered that the benefits of this option outweigh the risks and it is not recommended to be taken forward.

OPTION TWO: DO NOT ADOPT LPP2

29. Under the 2004 Act, there is no statutory requirement for a local planning authority to adopt a Local Plan that has been found 'sound'. As the Inspector's final Report has been received, it can be considered for adoption by the Council under section 23(5) of the 2004 Act. There is no statutory timeframe within which the decision to adopt or withdraw a plan must be made, however, the Council cannot delay reaching a decision indefinitely.

30. However, under section 21(1)(a) the Secretary of State has the power to intervene and issue a holding direction to prevent the Council from doing anything further in relation

² Once the Plan is submitted for Examination the timetable for the examination is set by the Inspector and may be longer than that indicated

to the Local Plan Part 2 before it is adopted by the Council. Further, under section 21(4) of the 2004 Act the Secretary of State may require that the plan is submitted to him for approval, thus taking the decision out of the Council's hand. The Secretary of State also has powers under section 27(5)(b) to direct the Council to consider adoption of the plan.

31. Under this option, the Council can either take an active decision not to adopt LPP2 or make no decision on whether or not to adopt LPP2. As per Option 1, sound planning reasons and a rationale for not adopting LPP2 will need to be provided.
32. Further, preparation of a new Local Plan will be commenced from the start (Regulation 18) immediately after the decision is made to not adopt LPP2.

OPTION TWO: BENEFITS

33. The non-adoption of LPP2 and the preparation of a new Local Plan will enable Councillors to establish their key priorities for planning in the district. The Council, to act as a place shaper for local communities, should set out its long-term vision through a Local Plan. As such, the new Local Plan should respond to the latest challenges set out by government and reflect the aspirations of the Council. With the introduction of the Standard Methodology for calculating housing need, starting again without adopting LPP2 would provide an opportunity for the new Local Plan to revisit the housing numbers and the underpinning supporting evidence base; that the re-use or redevelopment of previously developed land or brownfield land to meet housing needs is maximised or to retain land in the Green Belt.
34. The new plan would need to reflect the provisions on the revised NPPF, published February 2019. While there will be implications in relation to housing and employment land requirements, the revised NPPF places a higher bar on meeting the exceptional circumstances for taking land out of the Green Belt.

OPTION TWO: RISKS

Government intervention

35. The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government has substantial powers to intervene to suspend, prepare or otherwise control the plan making process.³
36. There is a material risk that if LPP2 is not adopted then the Secretary of State may intervene. While historically the powers of intervention have been rarely used, it is now understood that intervention is a distinct possibility where the Secretary of State considers there to be undue or unexplained delay in the preparation or progress towards the adoption of the Local Plan.⁴

Preparing a new local plan, with the associated time and costs

37. At this stage it is not possible to estimate the financial costs of not adopting LPP2 and developing a new plan, but potentially these costs might be substantial. Costs will include:

³ Housing and Planning Act 2016 amends provisions of the 2004 Act.

⁴ The Secretary of State intervened by writing to 15 local authorities for failing to progress their local plans. In one case it invited the County Council to lead the preparation of the Local Plan.

- Defending potential judicial review
- Costs of appeals – this only becomes an issue if major planning applications are appealed against for refusal or non-determination
- Developing a new plan – including staffing resources, costs of studies and evidence gathering for a new plan at Regulation 18 stage, additional consultation and examination costs. The Council could expect costs to be in the region of £3m, based on previous experience.

Legal challenge

38. Aggrieved land owners/developers who may have an interest in bringing forward development in conformity with LPP2 may challenge the grounds for the decision through judicial review.
39. If a judicial review was successful against the Council, the Court could make a Quashing Order resulting in the Council having to make a new decision as the original decision to not adopt LPP2 would no longer stand.

OPTION TWO: TIMETABLE

40. The timetable for preparing a new local plan, where the decision taken is to not adopt it is similar to the timetable for Option 1, since the starting point would be the same, i.e. starting from a Regulation 18 stage.

October 2019	Decision to not adopt LPP2
November 2019 – April 2021	Draft Reg 18 Local Plan production
April 2022	Consultation on Reg 19 Local Plan (six weeks)
⁵October 2022 – April 2023	Submission and Examination in Public
June 2023	Inspector's report
July 2023	Adoption

OPTION TWO: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

41. Clearly, a decision to not adopt LPP2 would mean the benefits of adopting LPP2 outlined under Option Three would not be realised.
42. If the Council does not adopt LPP2, it will have to rely on a dated Local Plan and would face speculative planning applications, which are difficult to resist. The Council would then find it difficult to defend planning appeals, particularly in terms of demonstrating

⁵ Once the Plan is submitted for Examination the timetable for the examination is set by the Inspector and may be longer than that indicated.

that it has a five-year, or three-year housing land supply.⁶ On current projections this would not be possible beyond this current financial year.

43. It is not considered that the benefits of this option outweigh the risks and it is not recommended to be taken forward.

OPTION THREE: ADOPT LPP2

44. Once LPP2 is adopted, it will form part of the development plan and carry full weight in the determination of planning applications. Adopting LPP2 would also formally replace a number of existing Local Plan 2011 Policies.
45. On the basis that LPP2 has undergone significant scrutiny and has been found to be sound, a decision to adopt is the logical outcome and there would need to be good reasons for not doing so.

OPTION THREE: BENEFITS

46. The following benefits are over and above those set out in the preceding paragraphs.

Development certainty

47. Having an adopted Local Plan in place provides greater certainty to all interested parties, including local communities and businesses, as to where new development will take place. By the same token it gives the Council greater control over where development will take place, reducing the prospect for planning by appeal. Planning Appeals take direct control of planning decisions away from the Council due to the fact that planning appeals are determined directly by the Planning Inspectorate. Planning Appeals can be expensive for Councils in that they require additional in-house and external resources together with the fact that the developers may also choose to submit an application for costs. This option is likely to be the quickest way of adopting a new Local Plan, provides greater control to the Council, provides certainty and potentially reduces the number of future speculative planning applications and planning appeals.
48. Progressing with LPP2 provides strength and certainty on the requirement for neighbourhood plans, allowing them to progress and shape development in their area, avoid need for early review and allow them to contribute to the delivery of housing need.

Partner support

49. An advantage of this option is that the emerging Local Plan is widely supported by adjoining Councils which helps meet the legislative requirement of the Duty to Cooperate. This is set out in a set of Statements of Common Ground included in LPP2 evidence base. Having a plan in place addresses questions of the County's development needs as a whole and helps reduce planning risk to our partners. These Statements of Common Ground support the evidence that the duty to cooperate has been discharged.

⁶ A freedom granted by the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal allows the authorities to only demonstrate a housing land supply for three years while the Oxfordshire Plan is being prepared.

Up to date basis for planning application decision making

50. The NPPF (paragraph 11) states that policies which are most relevant for determining planning applications are considered out-of-date for applications involving housing where the Council cannot demonstrate:

- A five-year housing land supply, or
- A Housing Delivery Test indicates that the delivery of housing was substantially below (less than 75% of) the housing requirement over the past three years.⁷

51. LPP2, if adopted, would ensure that the Council has a rolling five-year housing land supply for the next three years.⁸ A flexibility and freedom granted to the participating authorities in the development of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 is that only a 3-year housing supply needs to be demonstrated. In this regard, policies that are most important for determining planning applications will not be considered out of date and the presumption in favour of sustainable development would not apply. This in turn would have the (immediate) effect of:

- Reducing the likelihood of alternative speculative development sites coming forward;
- increasing the Council's ability to refuse and its chances of success in defending appeals for inappropriate applications successfully.

52. While this is particularly relevant for housing development, having a local plan with a suite of up-to-date development management policies will lead to good, consistent decision making.

Drawdown of secured funding

53. Where the HIF is signed and in place, it enables County Council's draw down of HIF monies, as well as Growth Deal freedoms and flexibilities as set out in the section on Other Relevant Factors in this report.

OPTION THREE: RISKS

Policies may not reflect new Council's priorities

54. LPP2 was prepared and submitted for examination under the previous Council administration to reflect that priorities of that Council and therefore in areas it is not reflective of the present Council's emerging priorities.

Potentially delivering higher number of houses should Oxford unmet need change/reduce/increase

55. With Oxford City Council yet to have its exact unmet housing need figure tested, there is a risk that in adopting LPP2, provision is made for housing for which the need has not been identified. Should the Examination of the Oxford City Plan find the unmet

⁷ Transitional arrangements apply whereby in November 2018 and 2019, NPPF para 11 will apply where delivery was below 25% and 45% respectively. The threshold of 75% would apply from November 2020.

⁸ The 5-year housing land supply includes sites which are linked to/dependent upon Housing Infrastructure Fund and/or Oxford Growth Deal. If decisions taken external to the Council impact on these in a negative way, it could impact on the 5-year housing land supply.

need to be lower than the working assumption basis for allocating housing need, the allocations in LPP2 may turn out to be not necessary to meet the requirement.

Legal challenge

56. Interested parties aggrieved by the decision to adopt LPP2 may seek to challenge the grounds for the decision through judicial review. Further details are set out in paragraph 67.
57. If a judicial review was successful against the Council, the Court would make a Quashing Order resulting in the Council having to make a new decision as the original decision to adopt LPP2 would no longer stand.

OPTION THREE: TIMETABLE

58. It is a statutory requirement that a plan is reviewed at least every 5 years and should be reviewed as necessary to take into account changing circumstances affecting the area. As the starting point for the new local plan would be that of a recently adopted plan, it is not anticipated that a Regulation 18 stage will be necessary to undertake. However, if material changes are proposed and the development of new policies with supporting evidence, then a Regulation 18 consultation would be required. The timetable for preparing the new plan to include a Regulation 18 stage would be as set out under the options for not adopting or withdrawing LPP2. Notwithstanding this, and therefore just undertaking a Regulation 19 publication, the timetable for preparing a new local plan once LPP2 is adopted is indicated as being shorter, as the new local plan would commence from a Regulation 19 stage.
59. The indicative timetable for preparing a new plan under this option is as:

October 2019	Decision to adopt LPP2 (returning to Reg 19)
November 2019 – November 2020	Draft Reg 19 Local Plan production
Spring 2021	Consultation on Reg 19 Local Plan (six weeks)
⁹ April 2021	Submission and Examination in Public
June 2021	Inspector's report
July 2021	Adoption

OPTION THREE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

60. Adoption of LPP2, which meets the criteria for soundness, would provide the Council with the opportunity to focus development in areas that meet the wider strategic objectives.

⁹ Once the Plan is submitted for Examination the timetable for the examination is set by the Inspector and may be longer than that indicated

61. LPP2 provides a coherent approach to meeting future development needs and allocates sites to accommodate sustainable development in the district to 2031. In adopting LPP2, the additional sites and detailed policies will become part of the Council's development plan and carry full weight in the determination of planning applications.
62. Where the Council resolves to adopt LPP2, a 6-week period will begin to run during which any person aggrieved by the decision may bring an application for statutory review of the decision in the High Court. Such a challenge can only be brought on the basis that there is material error of law in the Council's decision to adopt LPP2. In such circumstances the Council would robustly defend the plan and its validity.

Financial Implications

63. There are no immediate implications flowing from the adoption of the Local Plan 2031 Part 2.
64. Where the decision taken is to either not adopt the Local Plan 2031 Part 2 or to withdraw it, then paragraph 37 of this report identifies some of the potential financial implications.

Legal Implications

65. On adoption, the Council must consider all relevant planning applications against the policies in the Local Plan 2031 Part 2. It should be noted that, whilst the risk is low, there is a short window for a aggrieved party to challenge the decision to adopt LPP2 once a decision to adopt is taken. Should this occur, officers will communicate with Members as appropriate. Looking to the future the Council must review the Local Plan within 5 years of adoption. Options for the timing of such a review have been set out under each of the options above in this report.

Risks

66. The risks to taking a decision on either of the options are set out under the relevant sections of each option.

Other implications

67. The Local Plan 2031 Part 2 will have implications for all sectors of society and all wards and parishes of the local authority area. The Sustainability Appraisal systematically ensures that all potential implications – based on socio-economic and environmental criteria - are taken into account when preparing a Local Plan.

LPP2: Other relevant factors

Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal (the Deal)

68. In March 2018, the Council and the other authorities in Oxfordshire signed the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal. This committed the Councils to delivering 100,000 new homes across Oxfordshire between 2011 and 2031. In return, Government provided £215m of funding; £150m for infrastructure projects, £60m for affordable housing, and £5m for the preparation of an Oxfordshire wide plan to 2050

and the administration of the Deal. The Deal committed the Oxfordshire authorities to submitting their local plans for examination by 1 April 2019.

69. The Deal also provided a three-year housing land supply test for the purposes of decision taking while the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 is under preparation. The Deal also introduces a bespoke Housing Delivery Test for Oxfordshire to apply after 2020, in the first three years following adoption of the Joint Statutory Spatial Plan. The Housing Delivery Test is an annual measurement of housing delivery in each Council area. There are consequences, such as a presumption in favour of sustainable development, for not meeting the Housing Delivery Test.

Housing and Infrastructure Fund (HIF)

70. In addition to the infrastructure funding received through the Deal, Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) has been successful in securing £218 million of funding from the Government's Housing and Infrastructure Fund (HIF). This will contribute toward providing new infrastructure costing £234 million across the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire districts. OCC are finalising an agreement before they will be in receipt of any funding from Government. The infrastructure projects that will be delivered by HIF are:

- a Didcot Science Bridge on the A4130 – going over the railway line and Didcot A Power Station site and join the A4130 Northern Perimeter Road;
- improvements to the A4130 from the Milton Interchange by making it a dual carriageway;
- a new river crossing at Culham; and,
- a bypass at Clifton Hampden.

71. These HIF schemes are identified in both district Councils' emerging Local Plans to enable and support delivery of growth across Southern Oxfordshire. They are inextricably linked to some of the committed and planned development in the Didcot and Science Vale area. The HIF and the Deal's transport infrastructure schemes are intrinsically interlinked as they form a package of improvements to the Didcot area. Both funding streams are essential to a wider highway strategy to deliver growth but to also to mitigate the impact of permitted developments.

72. Oxford's Local Plan and unmet housing needs

73. Oxford City Council submitted their Local Plan 2016 to 2036 for examination on 22 March 2019. Their plan is being examined by the same Inspectors as the South Oxfordshire Plan. Oxford's plan contains a housing need of 1,400 homes per annum, with a capacity-based housing requirement of 8,620 homes. Their plan is based on the rural districts accommodating unmet need, stating that Vale of White Horse district is accommodating 2,200 homes.

74. The 2,200 homes figure is based on a Memorandum of Cooperation (Appendix 2), prepared by the Oxfordshire Growth Board in September 2016. The LPP2 has been progressed to plan for this unmet housing need and the Inspector concluded that this approach was 'sound.' This Council has agreed, through a Statement of Common

Ground (Appendix 3), to accommodate 2,200 homes of unmet housing need from Oxford City Council.

75. This unmet need from Oxford City would include housing that would contribute towards some of the 100,000 houses committed in the Deal. In other words, the unmet need from Oxford City is based on the Deal commitments, and not from their “standard method” housing need.

76. On 29 May 2019 and 15 July 2019, the Inspectors for the Oxford City Local Plan published a set of questions and comments (Appendix 4 and 4a). These comments are directed to the Oxford City Local Plan but could be relevant to consider when making a decision on LPP2. Councillors should bear in mind that they do not represent conclusions. They state the following:

a) Housing calculation: The Inspectors state that the Deal can be used as a justification for uplifting housing need. They recognise that the Deal’s housing targets are based on the SHMA 2014. However, they draw attention to the Deal’s delivery plan, which states this must be supported by an appropriate update to support plans through an examination (under the new NPPF). They also state that the SHMA figures, on which the Deal is based, are “now quite a few years old”.

The Inspectors also highlight some concerns with Oxford City’s Objectively Assessed Need Update (2018). This document attempted to provide a SHMA update just for Oxford, to validate the housing figures in the original SHMA, and hence the Deal. They identify that the document could show the housing needs of Oxford are falling below the 1,400 homes per annum in their plan. They state this could have a bearing on the level of unmet need for each neighbouring authority to accommodate.

b) City’s housing capacity: The Inspectors have asked the City to confirm the capacity of Oxford to meet their housing need. They state the Deal identified a capacity of 10,000 homes, yet the plan indicates a capacity of 8,620 homes.

c) Site capacities: The Inspectors are critical of Oxford’s assessment of each of their proposed sites’ housing capacity (how many homes can be built on each site).

Other matters: The Inspectors have identified questions regarding: whether the plan has been positively prepared; the effectiveness of the plan; affordable housing provision; policies making distinctions on the basis of the nature of the applicant; car parking; academic facilities and student accommodation; employment sites; local employment; and sustainable design and construction.

Conclusion

77. The process of preparing the Local Plan has been lengthy, costly, and resource intensive. Local Plan Part 1 (adopted in 2016) and LPP2 have included substantial community and stakeholder engagement in conjunction with their preparation. The Inspector has now issued his final report on LPP2, and the examination process is now formally complete.

78. The Inspector concludes at paragraph 130 of his report, that with recommended main modifications, LPP2 is sound and capable of adoption. It is noteworthy, that LPP2, with the Inspector's main modifications, would largely be consistent with the Council's submission to the Secretary of State.
79. As outlined in this report, the Council's options are limited to those set out in this report – either adopt LPP2 with the Inspector's modifications or not adopt/withdraw LPP2. A decision to adopt would enable LPP2 to become part of the Council's development plan and carry full weight in the determination of planning applications. It will also provide a framework for development in the district to ensure that growth is sustainable and meets the needs of the existing and future populations.

Background Papers

1. Vale of White Horse Housing LPP2 Housing Land Supply Note July 2019