

South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2034

Page 3: Part A - contact details

Q1. Are you responding as an:

Individual

Page 4: Individual contact details

Q2. Due to the plan-making process including an independent examination, a name and means of contact is required for your comments to be considered:

Title	Mr
Full name	E Reily Collins
Business / Organisation name (if relevant)	-
Job title (if relevant)	-
Address line 1	██████████
Address line 2	██████
Address line 3	-
Postal town	██████████
Postcode	██████████
Telephone number	██████████
Email address	████████████████████

Page 7: Part B - your comments

Q5. For comments on the Local Plan, please provide the paragraph or policy to which your comments relates. You can view a list of policies here. If you wish to comment on one of the evidence documents or the policies maps, please state the document title as well as the paragraph or policy reference.

Document / Policy / Paragraph: STRAT 9

Q6. Do you consider the Local Plan and supporting documents:

	Yes	No	Don't know	Not answered (OPTION HIDDEN FROM LIVE SURVEY)
are legally compliant?		X		
are sound?		X		
comply with the Duty to Co-operate?		X		

Q7. Please provide further information in relation to the previous question. e.g. why you do or do not consider the Local Plan to be legally compliant or sound.

Ref: STRAT 9

6th February 2019
South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2034
Reference to STRAT 9

The 2034 Local Plan is not legally compliant, not sound and doesn't comply with the Duty to Co-operate.

There is NO justification to build on Green Belt land and in particular Green Field Land which is contrary to the explicit statements by the Prime Minister, The Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Housing Minister.

At a drop-in session last Friday 1st February at Culham Village School we met representatives from the SODC Planning Department and I put to them 'What are the exceptional circumstances to justify building on Green Belt Land when on the SODC Local Plan Publication version Green Belt 4.58, the Planners state the five purposes of the Green Belt are:

- Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.
- Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.
- Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.
- Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.

Assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

I stated that I could not see any exceptional circumstances to build a town of 3,500 houses in Culham, especially as the Council has failed to examine the many brownfield sites in Oxfordshire. The real reason for destroying this wonderful rural part of Oxfordshire was that the Council, would not be able to partake of the Government's bribe of "You build the houses and we will give you some money towards a Thames River crossing and road infrastructure" unless they produced this large number of houses. This river crossing and additional infrastructure would certainly not be needed if the Council was not hell bent on building houses for commuters to travel from Didcot to Paddington, not, as they mistakenly believe, to work at Culham Science Centre (CSC) (more about the provision of jobs as CSC later). The current local population would have to put up with years of unremitting traffic chaos adding to the already beleaguered road problems before the bridge and additional roads were built.

I was told by two of the Planning Department members that the exceptional circumstances were:

- The need to dual the railway line between Oxford and Didcot.
- The need to provide houses to accommodate the hundreds of extra staff that will be needed to take up all the supposed extra jobs to be created at CSC.

The need to dual the railway line.

If this were possible and many experts think not because of the listed structures along the track and other difficulties. This expansion would not be in place until at least 2044 because of other more necessary projects. This completion would be years after the supposed completion of the 3,500 houses. Grand idea but impractical and delivery too late.

The need to provide houses for staff at CSC.

This statement was subject to wide public criticism in speeches at Council meetings and in many written submissions and there was also concern with the SODC and its many advisers. Even the former Leader of SODC voted against the plan.

CSC is being used as a political tool to justify the complete destruction of this Green Belt Land for unnecessary housing and limited commercial development.

Why has the Council suddenly given such an important Political decision to the JET Project which is in a precarious position with the uncertainty of Brexit?

It is worth noting that the UK Government has pledged money for JET, (the largest single employer on the CSC site) only until 2020 at which point JET is more than likely to close.

CSC benefits from approx. 60m Euros p.a. for JET because of its participation in Euratom, which with the current Brexit negotiations will certainly exclude the UK's continued participation. This uncertainty has already resulted in top-level JET staff departing. I think they have a better understanding of the situation than laymen on the Council.

Fusion Research and ITER (TOKAMAK) cannot realistically be cited as a source of major employment in Culham.

The UK National Fusion Programme at Culham has never demonstrated Nuclear Fusion Reactions even after 58 years of experimentation and approx. one billion pounds of investment since 1960 and provides absolutely no basis for CSC being held up as a beacon of exceptional circumstances. The construction of 3,500 houses on green fields to house staff simply won't be required when decommissioning starts on the site. Some specialist staff will be needed for approx. ten years to complete the decommissioning but by no means the hundreds being stated by the Council.

The possible closure of JET will have a negative impact on CSC in terms of political importance and employment.

The current number of people working at CSC is approx.

2400. Contract work for ITER and other projects on site are expected to add approx. 700 in the long term. Set against this there will be a loss of 700 if JET closes in 2020 or possibly sooner in 2019 if Brexit negotiations break down.

SODC's 'Exceptional Circumstances' stating that the additional Green Belt Land development provides an opportunity to deliver housing adjacent to one of the major employers in Southern Oxfordshire is entirely unsound and unproven. It is simply plucked from the air in an attempt to get a grant to build their grandiose river crossing.

The opportunity here, apart from receiving the Government funds, is for SODC to join the towns of Abingdon and Didcot and in so doing destroy our cherished Green Belt for all future generations and turn Culham into the 'parish of Paddington'.

I ask the Inspector to challenge the supposed importance of CSC creating enough employment to satisfy the need for 3,500 houses, let alone 1,800 in the first phase.

May I suggest that the Planners look at their figures and cost them out accurately to avoid wasting our valuable tax payer's Council Tax. The previously discredited previous plan has already wasted £100,000.00 of our money and this would add up to £millions more.

I travel often in the South West and they tell me they would love to be in receipt of some of these £millions from Government and Developers to bolster their economy and create jobs and improve their road network.

OXFORDSHIRE HAS THE LOWEST UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE COUNTRY. Should these Government funds be used instead to create employment in the South West and other less advantaged areas of the County?

Are we not being incredibly selfish? Even the NAO in their recent report state "The flawed method for assessing housing needs meant home-building was concentrated on London and the South East. For poorer regions, this could hamper their plans to regenerate and stimulate economic growth."

How can we ever build houses at a sensible cost in STRAT 9 when the developers are going to be paying the landowners over £1 million per acre.

In conclusion, THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES TO SUPPORT STRAT 9.

Q8. Please set out any modifications you consider necessary to make the Local Plan legally compliant or sound, having regard to your comments above. (NB - any non-compliance with the duty to co-operate is incapable of modification at examination). It will be helpful if you could put forward your suggested wording of any policy or text as precisely as possible.

STRAT 9 should be removed from the local plan entirely as it is neither necessary nor sustainable. Green Belt cannot be used for a housing/buffer. Green Belt should not be sacrificed to fund a new river crossing or for housing in excess of need

Q10. Would you like to participate at the oral part of the examination, which takes place as part of the examination process?

No

Q11. Would you like to comment on another policy or paragraph?

No

Page 106: Future contact preferences

Q354. As explained in our data protection statement, in line with statutory regulations you will be contacted by the programme officer (and where necessary the council) with relevant updates on the Local Plan. South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils have a shared planning policy database. If you would like to be added to our database to receive updates on other planning policy consultations, please tick the relevant district box(es) below:

I would like to be added to the database to receive planning policy updates for South Oxfordshire

I would like to be added to the database to receive planning policy updates for Vale of White Horse