



Re: South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2034: Policy STRAT9: Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a resident of [REDACTED] Culham and have lived here for 6 years, having moved from North Abingdon. I am writing to express my concern and register my rejection to **STRAT9: Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre** and the proposal to remove 220 hectares from designated Green Belt land which includes the proposal for 3,500 houses.

I strongly believe that the Local Plan is **not legally compliant** and I **strongly question the soundness** of the overall plan. This plan, in conjunction with planning proposals in Abingdon, via the Vale of White Horse DC, puts huge pressure on local infrastructure, will certainly increase traffic density through Culham (which is already at maximum capacity during morning and evening rush-hours every day) and the local area and removes Green Belt land for reasons which do not comply with National Policy.

The current plan uses the 2014 Strategic Housing Market Assessment, which the leader of the council has stated is based on out of date and incorrect data. The Council is also planning for a surplus on top of figures, which are known to exceed the current need. This point alone highlights how unsound the Local Plan is and poses issues for legal compliance.

As a daily cyclist and parent to young children, I am extremely concerned by the prospect of move traffic on the roads, particularly given the impatience I see from drivers who are delayed, or restricted by slow moving traffic. With the prospect of 5000 more cars on the road, just due to STRAT9, traffic will certainly be even more congested every day, causing **daily gridlock**, leading to localised **air pollution**, **delays** for **emergency vehicles** and immense frustration for local residents attempting to make short journeys into town and back.

Removal of Green Belt Land and subsequent building of houses

My belief that the Local Plan, particularly relating to STRAT9, is not legally compliant stems from the proposal to remove designated Green Belt land which does not comply to Central Government national policy. According to the policy, Green Belt land should only be removed if there are **exceptional circumstances** that warrants the repurposing of the land. I see **no exceptional circumstances**, and this has also been reiterated by our MP (Rt Hon John Howell and Councillor Sue Lawson). The July 2018 revision of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), emphasis in Section 13 that Green Belts should assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

Should development occur in this designated Green Belt area, it will **effectively join** Clifton Hampden and Culham via a "ribbon development", which is what the Green Belt policy was meant to prevent.

The land in question for STRAT9 is **not suburban** in any way and is currently serving all of the purposes of Green Belt designated land, preventing urban sprawl from Abingdon to Didcot.

The NPPF goes on to state in Section 13, paragraph 137 that the strategic policy-making authority should be able to demonstrate that it has examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development. With other sites available in the county, STRAT 9 should be removed from the plan, avoiding the need to remove land from the green belt.

The plan is certainly not sound and even contradicts itself, with references to the “rural nature of our District and the importance of our rural settlements in contributing to what makes South Oxfordshire such a beautiful and prosperous place to live”. The removal of Green Belt land and subsequent development goes completely against this statement from Policy 1, which emphasises how un-sound the Local Plan is.

Although I understand the requirement for moving housing in the South East of England, I strongly believe that planning should be proposed in a legal and sound manner, which I do not see from STRAT9. I’m equally concerned by the increasing housing density in other parts of the county, as I don’t see any substantial plans to improve local infrastructure and even a small traffic increase will cause gridlock across many of our local towns, particularly Tollgate Road in Culham.

Yours sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Michael Cooper.

Michael Cooper