

From: Canavan, Peter <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 30 October 2020 10:33
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Planning Policy South; [REDACTED]
Subject: SODC Local Plan Main Modifications [CJ-WORKSITE.FID361496]
Attachments: SODC LP Main Mods_ CEG.pdf; SODC LP Main Mods_ UKAEA.pdf

Good Morning [REDACTED],

Please find attached herewith the responses to the Main Modifications from CEG and UKAEA. You will note some similarities between the two.

On reflection, we consider that the text for STRAT4 and DES11 requires some review, because as proposed there is the potential for unintended consequences and there is a lack of balance. Other than this matter, the 'gateway' area of the Science Centre remains a concern and there are one or two other detailed matters.

We have commented in the following areas:

MM7:

Additions to Policy STRAT4 which refer to promoting low carbon development and renewable energy on all strategic site allocations in the Local Plan, the principle of which are supported but are untenable when the plan is read as a whole.

MM11:

Amendments and additions to Policy STRAT8; the site-specific policy for Culham Science Centre. The policy text is amended to reflect discussions prior to, and at, the examination and also, cross refers to changes made to STRAT4.

MM11 (Appendix C – Appendix 4, Amendment to Culham Science Centre Green Belt Inset Map).

The Green Belt boundary has been amended (and is reflected in the site concept plan) to remove the 'gateway area' from the Green Belt. This is something which UKAEA sought through the examination, but the final drawing does not reflect the most appropriate boundary line.

MM12:

Amendments and additions to Policy STRAT9; the site-specific policy for Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre (Culham Science Village). The policy text is amended to reflect discussions prior to, and at, the examination and also, cross refers to changes made to STRAT4. The modifications are generally supported with some suggested amendments.

MM12 (Amendment to concept plan).

The Concept plan has been amended and specifically entitled "indicative" as was discussed with the Council after the hearing sessions.

MapMod6.

The safeguarding areas for the Didcot River Crossing and the Clifton Hampden Bypass have been updated to reflect the County Council's latest plans.

MM71:

The introduction of a new policy requiring carbon reduction in new development. Like STRAT4, the principle of this policy is supported but CEG and UKAEA believe it is unsound as written and requires a small amendment.

If I can be of any further assistance then please let me know.

Kind regards

Peter

PeterCanavanMRTPI

Associate Partner

Carter Jonas

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30th October 2020

Dear Mr Bore,

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE LOCAL PLAN: MAIN MODIFICATIONS

As you know, Carter Jonas LLP is instructed by CEG in relation to the Examination in Public of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2034 (“the Plan”). Accordingly, we set out below the CEGs response to your proposed Main Modifications to the Plan. We note that these have been agreed between you and South Oxfordshire District Council (“the Council”). In general, CEG supports the suggested modifications. However, the company remains of the view that there is no justification for Gypsy and Traveller pitches to be provided as part of the STRAT 9 allocation.

Hereunder, we respond to five main modifications that are most relevant to CEG and land adjacent to Culham Science Centre, a.k.a. Culham Science Village. These are, in plan order:

1. **MM7:** Additions to Policy STRAT4 which refer to promoting low carbon development and renewable energy on all strategic site allocations in the Local Plan, the principle of which are supported but are untenable when the plan is read as a whole.
2. **MM12:** Amendments and additions to Policy STRAT9; the site-specific policy for Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre (Culham Science Village). The policy text is amended to reflect discussions prior to, and at, the examination and also, cross refers to changes made to STRAT4.
3. **MM12 (Amendment to concept plan).** The Concept plan has been amended and specifically entitled “indicative” as was discussed with the Council after the hearing sessions.
4. **MapMod6.** The safeguarding areas for the Didcot River Crossing and the Clifton Hampden Bypass have been updated to reflect the County Council’s latest plans.
5. **MM71:** The introduction of a new policy requiring carbon reduction in new development. Like STRAT4, the principle of this policy is supported but CEG believes it is unsound as written and requires a small amendment.

CEG notes also your letter to the council (document reference IC11) where you state:

...that the [Culham Science Centre] site entrance within the safeguarding line should be included in the [Green Belt] inset area because the land is part of the science centre, a very important employment site...

CEG supports this modification, particularly as it would aid in the timely delivery of the Clifton Hampden bypass, and given that the entrance forms a natural part of the wider Science Centre and Science Village area.

MM7: POLICY STRAT 4: STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT

CEG supports the two new criteria that are proposed to be included in this policy, both of which are directed at low carbon development and renewable energy generation. However, it is not clear how much rigorous analysis the Council has applied to this policy, and whether the new “requirements” are feasible and viable in every case. This is especially important as the policy is proposed to apply for all major development proposals, even those not allocated at present.

Moreover, the suggested criteria fail to recognise the balance, which is required when the Plan is read as a whole. CEG is also concerned that the inclusion of renewable energy production in a scheme might have unintended consequences. For example, PV cells, or wind turbines might have a harmful effect on landscape, or heritage; or ground source heating might require more land than is available in a scheme.

A more appropriate approach is likely to be one which considers the opportunities and feasibility for low carbon construction and renewable energy and secures its delivery where it is viable.

The grammar of the policy should also be reviewed.

Therefore, CEG suggests that the following policy wording is more appropriate:

“...Proposals to deliver strategic development need to be supported by:

ix) a statement ~~of how it is intended to achieve~~ setting out how low carbon emissions might be achieved and facilitate renewable energy generation where feasible

...Each development will be expected, where feasible and viable, to provide:

ix) Low carbon ~~development~~ construction techniques using appropriate materials and renewable energy”

CEG is fully aware that low carbon solutions are required over the life cycle of development projects and these could also include, on parts of the Culham Science Village site, innovative new construction methods which offer a great opportunity to create jobs and improve skills. CEG is ready to positively engage and to assist in the delivery of carbon reductions where possible but would wish to ensure that the Council’s is fully aware of viability impacts of its policies.

CEG embraces sustainability not just for the sake of compliance but as a core principle, which is embedded in its business culture, processes and everyday interactions. CEG is confident that its approach to development, design, and construction is sustainable and can rise to the challenges of climate change and carbon reduction.

CEG is considering its ‘principles’ for the development of Culham Science Village. Greater detail was provided on this during the examination, in response to the Inspector’s Matter 12. However, of most relevant to this issue are as follows:

- Working closely with the Council in reducing emissions across the site.
- Realising benefits in enabling a combustion free site through promoting the use of electric vehicles.
- Promoting circular economy principles throughout construction and operation (i.e. modern methods of construction, design for manufacture and assembly, low embodied carbon material use)

MM12: POLICY STRAT 9: LAND ADJACENT TO CULHAM SCIENCE CENTRE

CEG has reviewed the site-specific policy for the Culham Science Village as proposed to be modified. It is noted that changes have been made in 8 main areas of the policy:

1. The number of homes expected to be delivered in the plan period has been increased to 2,100. CEG supports this change and expects the site to deliver at least this number of homes in the plan period. CEG also supports the inclusion of “*at least*” before employment allocation of 7.3Ha.
2. The transport infrastructure requirements have been updated to properly refer to named items such as the Didcot River Crossing, and ‘public’ transport has been changed to ‘sustainable’ transport. CEG is content to support these changes as overall, the requirements remain unchanged.
3. An expectation for low carbon development has been introduced. This reflects the changes introduced through MM7 at policy STRAT4. As above, CEG supports these changes, with the caveat regarding feasibility and viability.
4. The density requirements have been amended to reflect a more design led approach with higher density areas rather than a uniform expectation across the site. CEG believes that this is a more appropriate approach to managing density across the site and has worked with the Council to understand how this will be delivered in practice.
5. Historic England has sought the introduction of the setting of Oxford, in the Green Belt considerations. This is something which CEG questioned at the examination. There is no legislation which defines ‘setting’ of landscapes or settlements, and such matters cannot be definitively mapped or identified. CEG therefore continues to object to the inclusion of the additional wording to paragraph 4(iv) proposed as part of MM12 on the basis that it introduces uncertainty into this aspect of Policy STRAT 9. Notwithstanding this fact, CEG is of the view that the setting of Oxford will not be affected by the allocation given the distance between the site and the City.
6. Pedestrian, and cycle routes within the site and public transport infrastructure through have been referred to in the policy. These are matters that CEG has begun to accommodate in its early site masterplans and as such supports the modification.
7. Biodiversity net gain is also referred to as an expectation. The introduction of a requirement for a net gain in biodiversity into the policy reflects what will soon be a statutory requirement of planning consent. This is something that CEG is working to achieve across the Science Village site, as part of its comprehensive vision. As such, this policy change is supported.
8. The existence of a minerals safeguarding area relating to part of the STRAT 9 site is also referenced in the policy with developers encouraged to extract minerals prior to non-mineral development taking place where such extraction is “*practical and environmentally feasible.*” CEG accepts this modified wording.

CEG remains of the view that there is no justification for the following requirement of policy STRAT9:

“...3 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers and supporting services and facilities.”

The justification for the allocation of pitches on Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre is reported at paragraph 5.80 of the Local Plan:

“...The remaining six pitches will be delivered at our strategic sites at Chalgrove and Culham. Allocating pitches at strategic sites allows us to consider the needs of Travellers at the outset of the design process and properly integrate the pitches into the design of the development.”

No evidence has been provided in support of the Local Plan or as part of the examination process to demonstrate why Culham and Chalgrove have been selected as the appropriate strategic sites to

accommodate the six pitches referred to in this paragraph. All of the strategic sites identified in the Local Plan will need to be comprehensively masterplanned in accordance with Policy STRAT 4. Therefore, all of the strategic sites offer an opportunity for pitches to be integrated into development design, and such matters do not provide a particular justification for delivery of pitches at Chalgrove or Culham. Indeed, other strategic sites may offer better outcomes or preferable locations for Travellers.

Now that there are other allocated “strategic sites” available for the Council to consider, CEG suggests that the Council should reappraise the opportunities available to it for allocating Gypsy and Traveller pitches and properly justifies its site selections. In the absence of such work being undertaken, this element of policy STRAT 9 (and the corresponding requirement of Policy H14) is not justified by reference to a proportionate or robust evidence base.

MM12 (AMENDMENT TO CONCEPT PLAN).

As you directed, CEG discussed with the Council (after the hearing sessions had ended), changes which are proposed to the ‘concept plans’ presented in the Local Plan. Chief amongst the changes is the explicit use of the word “indicative” in the title. This titular change is something which CEG sought through the examination given the requirement for the strategic sites to be comprehensively masterplanned pursuant to policy STRAT 4, and is therefore supported.

Other changes to the concept plan reflect work undertaken by CEG and will aid in achieving its development vision for the Science Village in accordance with policy STRAT 9. These changes are therefore also supported.

MAPMOD6: ROAD ROUTE SAFEGUARDING AREAS.

The maps in the Local Plan that show areas which will be safeguarded from development and which would preclude the delivery of the Didcot River Crossing and Clifton Hampden Bypass have both been updated to show the County Council’s latest plans. These updated plans also have a greater level of detail about access points to the Science Village (and the Science Centre).

These plans are much as CEG expected them to be and show the intersection of the bridge with the A415 (and the likely access to the Science Village) some way west of the railway line. These proposed changes are supported by CEG.

MM71: POLICY DES11: CARBON REDUCTION

CEG notes that you accepted the proposed introduction of this policy in your note of 27th May 2020 (Document reference IC06). However, the same observations are made here as for the suggested changes to policy STRAT4: the principle of carbon reduction is supported – and is expected to be absorbed into building regulations in due course – but the policy as written, fails to understand the necessity of reading the Plan as a whole. Neither is the proposed policy ‘positively written’ and as such it cannot be considered to be ‘sound.’

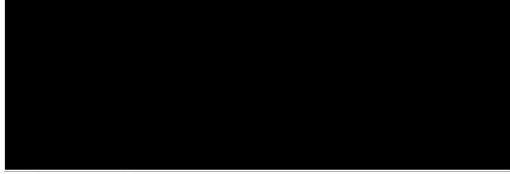
Therefore, CEG suggests that the following policy wording is more appropriate:

Planning permission will ~~only~~ be granted where development proposals for...

Concluding Comments

CEG is pleased to have had the opportunity to be involved in the examination of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan, and to comment on these proposed Main Modifications. The majority of the modifications are understood and supported. I trust that these comments are useful, and the final report for the plan is awaited with interest.

Yours sincerely



Steven Sensecall
Partner

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30th October 2020

Dear Mr Bore,

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE LOCAL PLAN: MAIN MODIFICATIONS

As you know, Carter Jonas LLP is instructed by the UK Atomic Energy Authority (“UKAEA”) in relation to the Examination in Public of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2034 (“the Plan”). Accordingly, we set out below the UKAEA’s response to your proposed Main Modifications to the Plan. We note that these have been agreed between you and South Oxfordshire District Council (“the Council”). In general, the UKAEA supports the principle of the suggested plan modifications. There is however one change in respect of which the UKAEA does have a concern, which is the precise boundary and extent of the land to be released from the Green Belt at the ‘gateway’ to Culham Science Centre.

Hereunder, we respond to four main modifications that are most relevant to UKAEA and Culham Science Centre (CSC). These are, in plan order:

1. **MM7:** Additions to Policy STRAT4 which refer to promoting low carbon development and renewable energy on all strategic site allocations in the Local Plan, the principle of which are supported but are untenable when the plan is read as a whole.
2. **MM11:** Amendments and additions to Policy STRAT8; the site-specific policy for Culham Science Centre. The policy text is amended to reflect discussions prior to, and at, the examination and also, cross refers to changes made to STRAT4.
3. **MM11 (Appendix C – Appendix 4, Amendment to Culham Science Centre Green Belt Inset Map).** The Green Belt boundary has been amended (and is reflected in the site concept plan) to remove the ‘gateway area’ from the Green Belt. This is something which UKAEA sought through the examination, but the final drawing does not reflect the most appropriate boundary line.
4. **MM71:** The introduction of a new policy requiring carbon reduction in new development. Like STRAT4, the principle of this policy is supported but UKAEA believes it is unsound as written and requires a small amendment.

MM7: POLICY STRAT 4: STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT

UKAEA supports the principle of the two new criteria that are proposed to be included in this policy, both of which are directed at low carbon development and renewable energy generation. However, it is not clear how much rigorous analysis the Council has applied to this policy, and whether the new “requirements” are feasible and viable in every case. This is especially important as the policy is proposed to apply for all major development proposals, even those not allocated at present.

Moreover, the suggested criteria fail to recognise the balance which is required when the Plan is read as a whole. The UKAEA is also concerned that the inclusion of renewable energy production in a scheme might have unintended consequences. For example, PV cells, or wind turbines might have a harmful effect on landscape, or heritage; or ground source heating might require more land than is available in a scheme.

A more appropriate approach is likely to be one which considers the opportunities, and feasibility for low carbon construction and renewable energy and secures its delivery where it is viable.

The grammar of the policy should also be reviewed.

Therefore, the UKAEA suggests that the following policy wording is more appropriate:

“...Proposals to deliver strategic development need to be supported by:

ix) a statement of how it is intended to achieve setting out how low carbon emissions might be achieved and facilitate renewable energy generation where feasible

...Each development will be expected, where feasible and viable, to provide:

ix) Low carbon ~~development~~ construction techniques using appropriate materials and renewable energy”

UKAEA is working towards both of these aims in its vision for the CSC. This vision was shared at the Local Plan examination in the UKAEA written response to Matter 12. Both the vision for the CSC and the Plan will be complimentary in their aims for low carbon and renewable energy.

Specifically relating to low carbon energy and associated infrastructure, CSC is at the forefront on this technology and the realisation of power generation – through nuclear fusion – that will aid in meeting the challenges of climate change.

Nuclear fusion

Fusion is the process that takes place in the heart of stars and provides the power that drives the universe. When light nuclei fuse to form a heavier nucleus, they release bursts of energy. This is the opposite of nuclear fission – the reaction that is used in nuclear power stations today – in which energy is released when a nucleus splits apart to form smaller nuclei.

To produce energy from fusion here on Earth, a combination of hydrogen gases – deuterium and tritium – are heated to very high temperatures (over 100 million degrees Celsius). The gas becomes a plasma and the nuclei combine to form a helium nucleus and a neutron, with a tiny fraction of the mass converted into ‘fusion’ energy. A plasma with millions of these reactions every second can provide a huge amount of energy from very small amounts of fuel.

One way to control the intensely hot plasma is to use powerful magnets. The most advanced device for this is the ‘tokamak’, a Russian word for a ring-shaped magnetic chamber. JET at CSC is a variant on a tokamak.

With increasing concerns over climate change and finite supplies of fossil fuels, we need new, better ways to meet our growing demand for energy. The benefits of fusion power make it an extremely attractive option:

- **No carbon emissions.** The only by-products of fusion reactions are small amounts of helium, an inert gas which can be safely released without harming the environment.
- **Abundant fuels.** Deuterium can be extracted from water and tritium will be produced inside the power station from lithium, an element abundant in the earth's crust and seawater. Even with widespread adoption of fusion power stations, these fuel supplies would last for many thousands of years.
- **Energy efficiency.** One kilogram of fusion fuel could provide the same amount of energy as 10 million kilograms of fossil fuel. A 1-Gigawatt fusion power station will need less than one tonne of fuel during a year's operation.
- **Less radioactive waste than fission.** There is no radioactive waste by product from the fusion reaction. Only reactor components become radioactive; the level of activity depends on the structural materials used. Research is being carried out on suitable materials to minimise decay times as much as possible.
- **Safety.** A large-scale nuclear accident is not possible in a fusion reactor. The amounts of fuel used in fusion devices are very small (about the weight of a postage stamp at any one time). Furthermore, as the fusion process is difficult to start and keep going, there is no risk of a runaway reaction which could lead to a meltdown.
- **Reliable power.** Fusion power plants will be designed to produce a continuous supply of large amounts of electricity. Once established in the market, costs are predicted to be broadly similar to other energy sources

Turning to sustainable construction, the UKAEA can confirm that its current review of, and intention for, the building stock on CSC is as follows:

Current position

Historic building stock inefficient, inflexible and low performance. Recent buildings BREEAM Very Good and with greater flexibility. Emphasis on car access / movement / parking throughout the campus remains diluting its placemaking qualities.

Short to medium term

Develop masterplan with improved placemaking strategy that ensures each 'project' delivers building and placemaking elements. BREEAM Excellent as a minimum for all new relevant buildings from 2020 and target net-zero operational carbon buildings from, around, 2030. Examine sustainable potential of re-purposing existing buildings.

Longer term

All new, remodelled and existing buildings have inherent flexibility to support a people based campus that is organised into a series of flexible and coherent placemaking elements and contribute to a 'zero carbon campus' delivered through individual building performance and on / off site infrastructure changes.

MM11: POLICY STRAT8: CULHAM SCIENCE CENTRE

UKAEA has reviewed the site-specific policy for the CSC as proposed to be modified. It is noted that the site area has been changed to reflect the inclusion of the gateway into the allocation site (and its exclusion from the Green Belt). Whilst UKAEA supports the principle of the change to the Green Belt, the area is, in its view, not correctly drawn. Therefore, this proposed modification is likely to be incorrect. Further detail is provided on this below.

The reference to the 'openness of the surrounding Green Belt' has been removed and replaced with a reference to character. This is a change which UKAEA requested, as surrounding character is more

appropriate to consider in these circumstances than the openness of the Green Belt, once the CSC has been removed from that designation. The UKAEA therefore supports this modification.

The reference to heritage assets and their setting is required by Historic England and pertains to the registered park of Nuneham House. UKAEA notes that the requirement would be met through other policies, and specifically ENV6 as listed in the proposed modification. Therefore, generic reference to heritage assets and their setting in policy STRAT8 is a 'signpost' or reminder rather than a new requirement. The UKAEA accepts this change but questions its necessity as it appears to be a repetition of policies elsewhere in the development plan.

The introduction of a requirement for a net gain in biodiversity into the policy reflects what is now a mandatory requirement of planning consent. This is something that the UKAEA is working to achieve across the site, as part of its comprehensive vision for the CSC. As such, this policy change is supported.

And finally, a cross reference to STRAT 4, and low carbon development / renewable energy is included. This is something which the UKAEA supports as it is a reflection of national policy change and an issue discussed at length through the examination. As outlined above, the UKAEA vision for the CSC is in line with these aspirations.

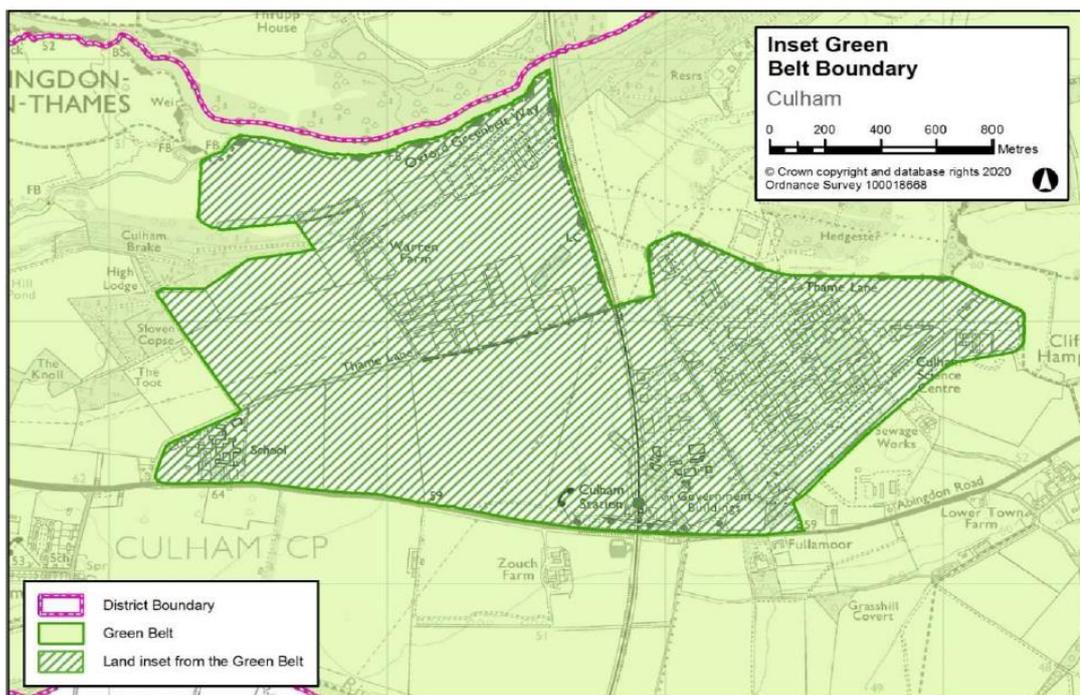
MM11 (APPENDIX C – APPENDIX 4, AMENDMENT TO CULHAM SCIENCE CENTRE GREEN BELT INSET MAP).

UKAEA is pleased to note comments in your letter to the council (document reference IC11):

...that the site entrance within the safeguarding line should be included in the [Green Belt] inset area because the land is part of the science centre, a very important employment site...

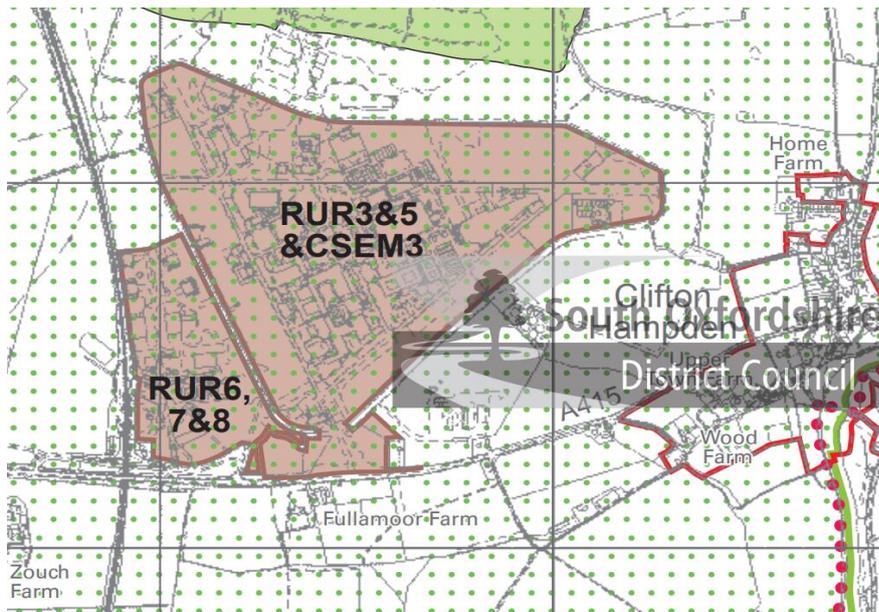
The Council has included a plan in its schedule of Main Modifications which shows the following Green Belt boundary for the CSC (regretfully, this was not shared with the UKAEA before publication):

Amended Culham Science Centre Green Belt Inset Map (as will appear in Plan following adoption):

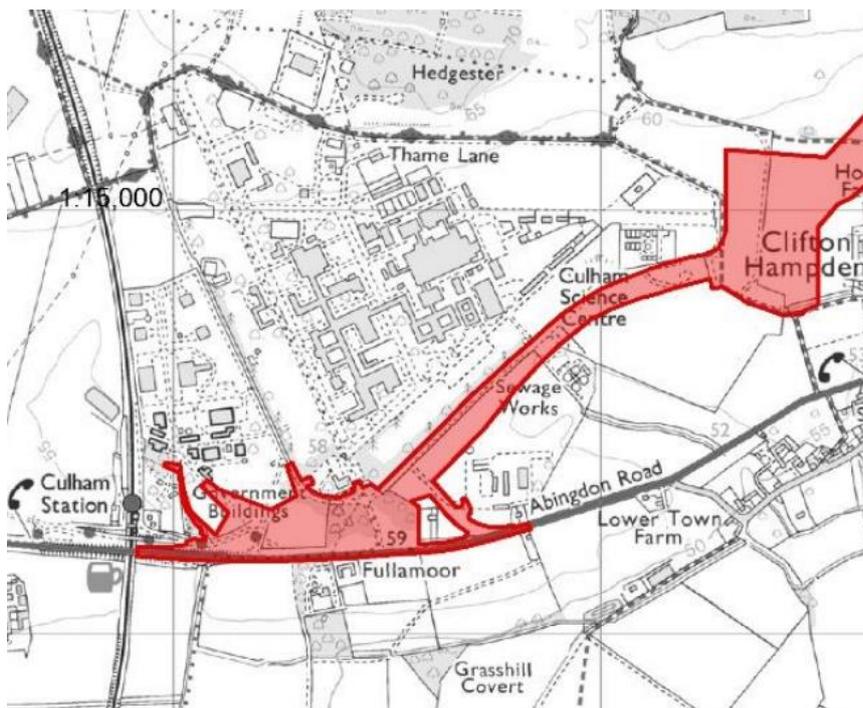


The gateway area (between the No.1 site, the A415 road, and the Science Centre entrance road) is proposed to be 'inset' or excluded from the Green Belt. However, the UKAEA respectfully submits that this does not follow the description as set out in IC11, and especially since the 'safeguarding area' for the Clifton Hampden By-pass and new junction arrangement has also been proposed to change, in the Main Modifications. The 'gateway' inset should be amended to reflect the boundary of the "Major Development in the Green Belt" of the SODC Local Plan 2011 and adopted policies map.

Below is an excerpt from the Council's extant Local Plan policies map:



On the above excerpt from the extant policies map the 'gateway' area extends to the east of the access road to the CSC. This area of land constitutes the entrance land owned by the UKAEA and is also "within the safeguarding line" for the Clifton Hampden by-pass, as proposed to be modified by MapMod6:



Considering the forgoing, the UKAEA suggests that the most appropriate line to draw for the Green Belt boundary is shown on the plan below:



The change represents an addition 2Ha being released from the Green Belt which would mean that MM11 would require a further amendment as follows:

Site area: 73 ~~77~~ 79 hectares

MM71: POLICY DES11: CARBON REDUCTION

The UKAEA notes that you accepted the proposed introduction of this policy in your note of 27th May 2020 (Document reference IC06). However, the same observations are made here as for the suggested changes to policy STRAT4: the principle of carbon reduction is supported – and is expected to be absorbed into building regulations in due course – but the policy as written, fails to understand the necessity of reading the Plan as a whole. Neither is the proposed policy ‘positively written’ and as such it cannot be considered to be ‘sound.’

Therefore, the UKAEA suggests that the following policy wording is more appropriate:

Planning permission will ~~only~~ be granted where development proposals for...

Concluding Comments

The UKAEA is pleased to have had the opportunity to be involved in the examination of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan, and to comment on these proposed Main Modification. The majority of the modifications are understood and supported. It is only the detail of the Green Belt Boundary for the entrance area of the CSC which is questioned. I trust that these comments are useful, and the final report for the plan is awaited with interest.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted signature]

Steven Sensecall
Partner

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