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Ms Adrianna Partridge  
Deputy Chief Executive – Corporate and Communities  
South Oxfordshire District Council & Vale of White Horse  
Council

31 October 2025

SENT VIA EMAIL

Dear Adrianna

### **Oxford Local Plan 2045: Formal request to assist with Oxford unmet housing need**

I write to you regarding the Oxford Local Plan 2045 and in particular the challenge Oxford faces in meeting its housing needs. I want to ensure that our approach to addressing unmet housing need is clearly understood and that you have the fullest opportunity to engage with us throughout the plan making process.

You will be aware that Oxford City Council, this Summer, published its Regulation 18 stage of the Local Plan 2045<sup>0</sup>, which considers how to manage the competing challenges facing the city in terms of housing, the economy, the environment and infrastructure. A fundamental challenge in this is that the housing need for Oxford far exceeds the capacity of the city: this is a long-standing issue and has been discussed for many years with the Oxfordshire local planning authorities through various collective forums and collaborative working initiatives both at officer and member levels. The inspector's report on our withdrawn Local Plan 2040 also found that given the constrained nature of the City, there would still be a significant shortfall in capacity.

We all worked collectively to address the unmet need identified in our current Local Plan 2036, through the (then) Oxfordshire Growth Board forums, and ultimately this culminated in an apportionment of the unmet need for each district. Subsequently, each district incorporated their apportionment into the current round of Local Plans and included site allocations accordingly. It is a very positive step that many of the identified sites related to Oxford unmet need are already now under construction, and several more are in the planning process.

#### *Oxford's Local Plan period*

Following advice and emerging practice from the Planning Inspectorate, we have made the decision to amend the plan period of our Local Plan to cover 2025-2045 in order to ensure we comfortably have fifteen years post-adoption. This minor change now will help mitigate any risk of timetable slippage after we submit the plan for examination which would be beyond our control.

As the Oxford Local Plan 2045 looks further ahead than our adopted Local Plan, to 2045, the evidence needs to revisit the housing need for Oxford and the subsequent level of need that cannot be accommodated within the city boundaries.

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<sup>0</sup> Please note: when published, the Regulation 18 document was entitled the Local Plan 2042



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### Oxford's approach to maximising housing capacity and delivery

Before looking to ask others to accommodate our unmet need, a thorough review of the policy approaches of the Oxford Local Plan 2045 has been undertaken, including a green belt and grey belt review. This has ensured that a large number of policies designed to maximise housing capacity and delivery within the city boundary are proposed in order to minimise the level of unmet need, these include:

- Site allocations for residential development, including minimum housing numbers where appropriate;
- Minimum housing numbers and capacity assumptions being based on highest appropriate density assumptions;
- Including assumptions for windfall housing developments within the capacity assessment;
- Allowing housing on all employment sites;
- Assessing all greenfield sites for their intrinsic value and allowing development on some (where surplus or can be replaced, in compliance with NPPF approach);
- Not allowing loss of dwellings, including a policy preventing the loss of existing homes; and
- Allowing uses other than new homes, only in city and district centres and where already established as a lawful use and not allocating new sites outside those areas for other uses, thus prioritising housing.

### Oxford's housing need

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024) states the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes and stresses the importance of bringing forward a sufficient amount and variety of land where needed. At paragraph 62 the NPPF sets out that to determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing needs assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance. The Oxford Local Plan 2045 uses the Standard Method for calculating Oxford's housing need.

The Government Standard Method calculates a housing need in Oxford of 1,087 dwellings per annum to 2045; totalling 21,740 homes over the plan period.

### Oxford's housing capacity

To support the Regulation 18 consultation for the 2045 Plan, emerging work on our Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) was published to provide transparency on which sites had been assessed and to enable respondents to help identify any additional sites which should be included. The evidence was not complete enough at that stage to publish a draft capacity calculation, so the previous published capacity figure of 9,851 from the HELAA Addendum (published in March 2024 on submission of the 2040 Local Plan) was included as an indicative figure instead. Since that HELAA was published, work has commenced on Local Plan 2045, and work has been carried out to update the capacity figure. As had been shared with your officers in conversations during this work, the new capacity figure now is a little lower than the previous HELAA had been.

The updated evidence on capacity is provided by our SHLAA. We have been working to refine this with the best available up to date information. This has included ongoing monitoring of site completions and planning permissions, an updated windfall assumption (to incorporate 2024/25 completions), and work on 2045 Plan site allocations and updated landowner intentions. We discussed these outputs at our most recent SHLAA workshop on 11<sup>th</sup> September with your officers. Our current estimates in the SHLAA conclude that Oxford's total housing capacity over the plan period is 8,202 homes.



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### Oxford's housing requirement and unmet housing need

Based on the above calculations, the housing requirement proposed for the Local Plan 2045 is therefore 410 dwellings per annum, which equals the total capacity of 8,202. This results in an unmet need of 13,538 homes over the plan period. These calculations are summarised in the table below:

Oxford's total housing need (SM) 2025-2045	21,740 (1,087 dwellings per year)
Oxford's total housing capacity (SHLAA) 2025-2045	8,202
Unmet need 2025-2045	13,538

### Additional measures Oxford has taken to maximising housing delivery

Delivery of housing, particularly affordable housing, is a key priority of the City Council, and there are further measures from across the council more widely to increase the supply of housing in Oxford, including the establishment of our housing company OX Place to deliver over 2,000 homes over 10 years, including on sites that would not be considered commercially viable. OX Place has already delivered 8 built out schemes in the city, delivering 173 homes so far, and has also secured permission for a further 234 homes.

We are pleased that the government has recognised the challenges Oxford faces and are delighted to be working closely with the Oxford Growth Commission in seeking help to tackle barriers to development needed to support economic and housing growth additional ways to unlock and accelerate delivery.

However, despite the City Council taking a very positive approach to delivering housing in Oxford, the highly constrained nature of the city and the lack of land for expansion of the city means there is a limited supply of new sites and not enough to meet identified needs. The tightly drawn boundary around the city and lack of available land means that that there is simply no way that a greater number of homes can be delivered within the city boundary in a sustainable manner.

### Oxford's formal request for help

A substantial amount of work has been undertaken between respective authorities to address the Duty to Co-operate in recent years. As part of this process, officers from our Planning Policy Team have been liaising with officers from your authority throughout the preparation of the Oxford Local Plan 2045 through various channels including through the Heads of Planning, the Oxfordshire Planning Policy Officers group and the more recently established Oxfordshire Duty to Co-operate Forum.

We appreciate that districts in Oxfordshire are at different plan-making stages. We also understand the very real pressure you have in meeting your own needs. However, under the 2011 Localism Act and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), I am writing to you now to formally ask whether your authority would be able to meet any of Oxford's unmet housing need?

We acknowledge that your authority has previously made provisions for Oxford's unmet needs identified in our current local plan, however, these agreements and commitments stem from a different round of plan making with a different evidence base and deal with a different time period. We now need to discuss the unmet need arising from the Oxford Local Plan 2025-2045. There will need to be further conversations around how and where that need might be provided, and it may be the case that existing provisions are ultimately found to be enough to meet need. However, in the first instance, we want to establish as a principle that unmet need is



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generated from the Oxford Local Plan 2025-2045, and that you will work with us to provide for this unmet need.

I look forward to hearing from you on this important issue and would be grateful for a response by 20<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

Yours sincerely



**Caroline Green**  
**Chief Executive**



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