

Public Question to CEB 3 July

Re: Item 6. Oxford Growth – Grenoble Road Development

“In the light of the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), which proposes a need of 28,000 houses in Oxford over the next 17 years, why is the City Council not reviewing its Core Strategy to enable it to allocate additional sites for housing; and why hasn't the Council suspended the consultation into the Northern Gateway AAP, which will essentially provide commercial development, with a view to allocating the site for housing rather than development, since any allocation for development will make the jobs housing balance in the City worse than it is already.”

Helen Marshall, Protect Rural Oxfordshire

Officer's response

The City Council has an up-to-date Core Strategy that was adopted in 2011 which the Government Inspector found sound on the basis that it promotes balanced growth within the City, taking into account the need for long-term social, economic and environmental sustainability.

It will always be the case that as circumstances change or new information becomes available, such as the SHMA, local plans will need to be reviewed. The City Council has appointed independent consultants to review the capacity of Oxford to accommodate additional housing growth within the City. The City Council will then consider whether an early review of the Core Strategy is justified. It is very unlikely that the capacity review will find that there is significant additional capacity in the city boundaries to deliver a further 24,000 and 32,000 homes which are required.

It would be inappropriate to adopt a policy which simply seeks to re-assign essential employment sites for housing. The Northern Gateway is the only undeveloped strategic employment-led allocation in the city. The site is critical to the delivery of the City Deal and the wider Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan, produced by the Oxfordshire Local Economic Partnership. An employment-led development on the Northern Gateway remains necessary and entirely appropriate and sustainable, as required by NPPF. Through the AAP process, the City Council has been clear that it will seek to provide a significant level of housing as part of the development to benefit the City as a whole, and go some way towards helping the city meet its housing need. The Northern Gateway AAP Options Document specified that the City Council's preferred option is to deliver around 500 homes (compared with 200 homes allocated in the Core Strategy).

David Edwards,
Executive Director of City Regeneration & Housing

This page is intentionally left blank