

## **OXFORD CITY FULL COUNCIL MEETING**

**20 July 2015**

### **AGENDA ITEM 6:**

#### **Response from Councillor Hollingsworth to the address by John Sempleurging the council not to adopt the Northern Gateway Area Action Plan.**

The Inspector explicitly considered the issue of air quality both in the context of impact upon the natural environment and in the context of impact upon human health.

On the former she accepted that there can be no certainty as to how rapidly vehicle emissions will reduce, or about the potential proportions of different types of vehicles being driven in the area, but the AQA has taken a precautionary approach by taking a mid-point of 2020 for its modelling. Natural England is satisfied with this approach and with how the assessment was carried out. She concluded that the development in the AAP is unlikely to affect air quality in a manner which would be detrimental to the integrity of the Oxford Meadows SAC. She also explicitly recorded her satisfaction that the evidence made available to her provided a satisfactory level of detail. There is nothing in the address dated 14 July 2015 that would undermine the approach of the Council, the Inspector and Natural England.

On the latter she concluded that it had not been shown that the air quality at the NG would amount to a contra-indication for residential development and that no conflict between the AAP and the Oxfordshire Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2012-2016 had been established.

Monitoring undertaken to assess baseline levels of nitrogen dioxide indicated two breaches of the annual mean objective in locations that are not representative of relevant public exposure. The modelling of future levels of pollutants undertaken as part of the air quality assessment indicates no breaches of relevant objectives for NO<sub>2</sub> or particulate matter, either PM<sub>10</sub> or PM<sub>2.5</sub>, either with or without development. The modelling does show a minor increase in pollutant levels, but no breaches of legal objectives.

There is no prohibition upon taking account of projected improvements in car technology. The Preliminary Air Quality Assessment explained how future emissions had been predicted using DEFRA's Emissions Factor Toolkit which utilises NO<sub>x</sub> emission factors taken from the European Environment Agency COPERT 4 emission tool. That Assessment proceeded to explain how uncertainties regarding how rapidly vehicle emissions would reduce in the future had been accommodated by using 2020 emission factors and background concentrations rather than 2026 figures. DEFRA's Emissions Factor Toolkit remains relevant and, as at 16 July 2015, is available for download from DEFRA's website. The Assessment was carried out to using a recognised model, methodology and data sets.

The claims regarding levels do not accord with the evidence available to the Council. Air quality evidence was introduced at the Inquiry, but it transpired that that material could not be relied upon. The person providing the evidence conceded that it was only illustrative, and this seems to be the data that the Inspector is alleged to have disregarded. It is a matter of record that the Inspector did not disregard it but addressed it and took account of its limitations.

The other criticisms of the Inspector appear to be simple disagreements with the Inspector's conclusions.

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