

Growth Board 26th April 2018

Agenda item – Growth Deal Planning Flexibilities and Freedoms

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REPORT TO OXFORDSHIRE GROWTH BOARD GROWTH DEAL PLANNING FLEXIBILITIES AND FREEDOMS – INTRODUCTION OF THREE YEAR HOUSING LAND SUPPLY FOR OXFORDSHIRE

REPORT PURPOSE

1. The Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal contained a commitment from Government to explore the options for time limited planning flexibilities, subject to consultation where appropriate. Following discussion with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) a package of proposed freedoms and flexibilities has been developed. This report sets a consultation paper on one part of this proposed package and provides an update on progress of discussions with MHCLG.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. That the Growth Board approves the publication for public consultation of the attached paper on the proposed Oxfordshire planning freedoms and flexibilities specifically the introduction of a three year housing land supply requirement.

BACKGROUND

2. The Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal Delivery Plan, signed in March 2018, identifies two specific time limited planning flexibilities and freedoms: a three year housing land supply requirement for Oxfordshire, and agreement on a bespoke Oxfordshire Housing Delivery Test (HDT) % to apply from November 2020.
3. In many parts of the County unplanned speculative development in relatively unsustainable locations is raising significant community concerns, contributing relatively little to infrastructure, and diverting planning resources away from the delivery of planned strategic sites. A framework of planning freedoms and flexibilities will allow the Councils to focus on plan preparation and proactive action on housing delivery, and provide confidence to the community that the growth of Oxfordshire is being effectively managed.
4. The proposed Joint Statutory Spatial Plan for Oxfordshire will investigate long term growth options. The proposed planning freedoms and flexibilities will allow the Councils to focus on the preparation of this Joint Plan and on the associated individual Local Plans.
5. The milestones attached to the work on the Joint Statutory Spatial Plan are contingent on securing the planning flexibilities.

6. The proposed flexibilities need to be subject to consultation. The housing delivery test is dependent on the Government's proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Policy Guidance which are still out to consultation, with final versions anticipated in July.
7. Officers have been in discussion with MHCLG officials over the Oxfordshire bespoke HDT level but these talks remain to be concluded. At this stage, because of the need to start work on the JSSP it is important to proceed with the consultation on the three year housing land supply flexibility, whilst discussions continue on the HDT issue in parallel. Officers expect to have concluded these discussions in coming weeks, in time to report to the June Growth Board. A further round of consultation will need to be undertaken on the HDT proposition but because of when it would take effect (November 2020); this is slightly less time critical and more important to ensure that all implications of the bespoke level across Oxfordshire have been considered first.
8. Consultation on the three year land supply flexibility needs to start in May in order to enable the housing land supply planning flexibilities and freedoms to be able to be implemented in July, subject to the finalisation of the National Planning Policy Framework changes, and Ministerial approval through a Written Ministerial Statement.
9. The Consultation will run for six weeks and will be open to everyone. Responses will be accepted on line or by post.

APPENDIX 1 - PROPOSED PLANNING FLEXIBILITIES CONSULTATION PAPER

Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal

Planning Freedoms and Flexibilities

Consultation

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal contained a commitment from Government to explore the options for time limited planning flexibilities, subject to consultation where appropriate. This consultation seeks views from any interested parties on a proposal. A package of freedoms and flexibilities is being developed to help the Oxfordshire Councils put in place an effective plan led approach for delivering the housing needs of Oxfordshire.
- 1.2 This consultation seeks views from any interested parties on the proposed flexibility to housing land supply agreed to under the Deal.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Oxfordshire authorities are committed to planning to meet the 100,000 housing requirement for Oxfordshire set out by the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) by 2031. Local Plans are taking shape with adopted Local Plans in place in Cherwell and for Vale of White Horse which are being followed by partial reviews to address unmet housing need, a recently examined Plan in the case of West Oxfordshire, and new Local Plans underway for Oxford City and South Oxfordshire. This has led to a substantial release of land for new housing and employment. As a consequence, housing delivery in the last 3 years across the County has been more than double the delivery in the previous three-year period.
- 2.2 However, there is a need to look beyond the 2031/36 timescales of the adopted and emerging Local Plans in order to maximise the local, regional, national and global economic benefits which flow from the development of the Oxford– Milton Keynes – Cambridge Corridor and to secure longer term investment in strategic infrastructure to support growth. There is also a need to continue to raise housing delivery rates and bring forward the delivery of a portfolio of new strategic sites which will be undertaken through a Joint Statutory Spatial Plan and future Local Plan reviews.
- 2.3 In many parts of the County unplanned speculative development in relatively unsustainable locations is raising significant community concerns, contributing relatively little to infrastructure, and diverting planning resources away from the delivery of planned strategic sites. A framework of planning freedoms and flexibilities

will allow the Councils to focus on plan preparation and proactive action on housing delivery, and provide confidence to the community that the growth of Oxfordshire is being effectively managed.

3. Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal Delivery Plan

3.1 The Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal Delivery Plan, signed in March 2018, outlined the following proposed freedoms and flexibilities, which are the subject of the current consultation:

- Land supply requirements – for the duration of the development (from commencement of s 28 process to adoption) of the Joint Statutory Spatial Plan a 3-year land supply would apply in Oxfordshire.
- Bespoke Housing Delivery Test measures for Oxfordshire would apply for 3 years following submission of the Joint Statutory Spatial Plan. The rates for November 2018 and November 2019, which are 25% and 45%, and which trigger the presumption in favour of sustainable development would remain as set nationally, but the figure from November 2020 would be a bespoke Oxfordshire figure subject to the submission of the Joint Statutory Spatial Plan by March 2020.

3.2 These arrangements are dependent on the Government’s proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Policy Guidance in order to secure the flexibilities set out above. These proposed changes are currently the subject of public consultation which closes on the 10th May 2018. Para 213 of the draft text for the National Planning Policy Guidance states that the Government will continue to explore with individual areas the potential for planning freedoms and flexibilities, for example where this would facilitate an increase in the amount of housing that can be delivered.

3.3 The proposed Joint Statutory Spatial Plan for Oxfordshire will investigate long term growth options. The proposed planning freedoms and flexibilities will allow the Councils to focus on the preparation of this Joint Plan and on the associated individual Local Plans.

3.4 The milestones attached to the work on the Joint Statutory Spatial Plan are contingent on securing the planning flexibilities.

3.5 The Government supports the completion of the current suite of Oxfordshire Local Plans, and the deal includes a requirement for the outstanding Local Plans to be submitted by 1st April 2019.

3.6 Detailed proposals for a bespoke Housing Delivery Test to apply from November 2020 are being developed and will be subject to a further consultation.

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4. Consultation Proposal

- 1) A 3-year land supply to be applied in Oxfordshire for the duration of the development (from commencement of s 28 process to adoption) of the Joint Statutory Spatial Plan.

4.1 This measure would be assessed on an individual District basis. It is dependent upon the Government's proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Policy Guidance. The measure would be delivered through a Ministerial Statement following the finalisation of the revised National Planning Policy Framework.

5. Consultation Arrangements

5.1 The consultation will open on the xx May and close on the xx June at 23:45 pm. This consultation is open to everyone. We are keen to hear from a wide range of interested parties from across the public and private sectors, as well as from the general public.

5.2 For any enquiries about the consultation please contact: xxxxx@xxx.gov.uk

5.3 Consultation responses should be submitted by online survey: www.xxxxxxx/xxx/xxx

5.4 Or sent to: Growth Board Programme Manager, Town Hall, St Aldate's, Oxford, OX1 1BX

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