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**Director for Planning and Place
– Susan Halliwell**

9 October 2018

Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan Committee
By email: wnpchairman@gmail.com

Copy: planning.policy@southoxon.gov.uk
Attn: John Fox, Chairman
johnfinbarrfox@gmail.com

Dear John Fox

Wheatley – questions on development of draft neighbourhood plan

Further to our response on your draft neighbourhood plan in June 2017, I understand that you have been further considering your draft. We had a meeting on 19 January 2018 specifically concerning transport matters. I refer to your email of 21 September 2018 on which asks a number of questions. Our responses are below.

Oxford Brookes University application P17/S4254/O

Q1: Why was modelling of two extra junctions considered **essential** to part of the highways impact assessment plan? WNP is asking for further clarity.

A1: In the Transport comments in response to the application we asked for further modelling of the two junctions where the Old London Road and London Road meet, as this was missed out in the first round of modelling. We considered these to be important through routes for people and therefore we wanted them modelled to ensure a robust assessment of the highway impacts. The resultant capacity modelling which we have received informally from the applicant shows that these junctions will operate within capacity. We therefore expect that details of this additional modelling will be reported in an amended application.

Q2: Why has OCC proposed construction of a pedestrian bridge to the west of the flyover at the Holton Turn. (Walking and Cycling para 1)? WNP is asking for further clarity.

A2: In the Transport comments in response to the application we requested such a pedestrian bridge as we considered it a reasonable request that would promote connectivity. However, there have since been meetings and discussions with the applicant and we are now of the view that we would accept proposals which provide for improvements to the Holton Bridge. Such improvements would include widening of the footways and advisory cycle lanes and a new zebra crossing in the vicinity. We expect to review an amended application showing these proposed improvements.

Q3: It has to be assumed that there will be occasions when residents will want to walk to ASDA. Therefore, WNP supports recommendations made by OCC within “Walking and Cycling” paras

13 – 16. Whereas WNP supports recommendations made by OCC within “Walking and Cycling” paras 17 – 18 to improve connectivity from the site to the village centre WNP requests that OCC gives consideration to a pedestrian bridge across the A40 from the southern perimeter of the site to a landing site within Fairfax Gate on the south side of the A40. This pedestrian bridge would reduce significantly the walking time to the village centre, still provide a walking route for primary school children and be able to link with the proposed “green route” through the village. WNP recognises that such a bridge could be considered as unnecessary and expensive however WNP requests that OCC considers offsetting these costs by not implementing the OCC proposal for a pedestrian bridge to the west of the flyover as identified in para 2 above, especially as it appears that this alternative bridge proposal would satisfy the same functionality and yet deliver more benefits in terms of village connectivity.

A3: We have considered all potential bridge options. We do not think we can justify asking for a pedestrian bridge from the middle of the site. Having looked at the desire lines of pedestrians getting to the Primary School, to the village centre and also to the Asda end of the village, we consider that access via the two entrances, as long as they are improved for pedestrians, are sufficient to allow safe walking routes. The point at which a pedestrian bridge in the middle of the site would terminate on the south side of the A40, has deliverability issues. We would also need enough land to construct a ramp down from the bridge, and we do not consider such a request is necessary and may not be considered reasonable. Instead we expect to review an amended application showing a range of improved walking routes from the eastern and western entrances.

Additional Allocations in Wheatley

Q4: As part of the WNP there is a proposal for village enhancement that would involve relocation of some light industry from the Littleworth Industrial Estate (and selected other businesses) to the east end of the village on land released from Green Belt. As part of this proposal there would be an allocation of approximately 90 houses. This allocation would be in addition to that allocated for STRAT10 (approximately 300 homes). Would OCC foresee any issues if indeed there was a total allocation of 390 homes as part of the WNP and the LP?

A4: Oxfordshire County Council does foresee issues.

In respect of Education, our concern is about total numbers of additional houses. Our initial policy view was that 300 additional houses in Wheatley could be accommodated, but cautioned against any allowance for more. When we received the current application for Wheatley Oxford Brookes for 500 homes (P17/S4254/O), we looked into the matter further and advised in February 2018 that we would not raise an Education objection. The detailed forecasts are available in our public response – the principal concern is with the primary school and although it does not have the forecast capacity to cope with 500 additional homes, there is spare capacity in nearby schools.

Given our position on that application, it is apparent that if the total amount of additional development in Wheatley was 390 homes, we would not have an Education objection (as it is less than 500).

However, given that there is an application lodged for 500 homes, it could be that if that is approved, the effect of the additional allocations you describe would be to provide for 590 homes. As is clear from our response on the Oxford Brookes University application, this level of development would create primary school capacity issues. I have recently

confirmed with our Pupil Place Planning Manager that the situation has not improved. I am therefore inclined to the view that we would challenge such new draft allocations. As the Local Plan is only proposing to remove Green Belt, the challenge would instead be on the Neighbourhood Plan proposing to allocate sites for housing.

We might also be concerned that even more than 590 homes might result. It could be that the envisioned relocation of employment does not result, and that instead employment is reduced and applications for housing are made on all the available land as national policy is quite supportive of housing on employment land.

In respect of other matters, such as transport, the issues we might have will be specific to the location so we would need to know more about the particular sites that are proposed for allocation.

Air Quality

Q6: Has OCC considered investigating the Old London Road as an AQMA?

A6: As advised in our neighbourhood plan response in June 2017, South Oxfordshire District Council is the relevant authority. We note that at this stage no AQMA is proposed and a general downward trend in NO₂ levels (albeit incremental) is observed from 2011 onwards.

South Oxfordshire District Council has advised that it currently undertakes nitrogen dioxide monitoring in Wheatley by means of a diffusion tube located at 50 High Street. In 2017, recorded nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) levels recorded at this site showed concentrations below the limit indicated by both European and National legislation, an annual mean of NO₂ 40µg/m³. Measurements taken at this site, located 600m away from Old London Road, also show nitrogen dioxide levels have decreased progressively in the area in the last five years.

Site	NO ₂ Annual Mean Concentration (µg/m ³)				
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Wheatley – 50 High Street	29.6	28	23.8	26.8	25.82

Since the national objective of 40µg NO₂/m³ is being met and is likely to be met in the future, SODC is not considering declaring an AQMA as a measure to improve air quality in Wheatley for the time being. However, there are currently a number of actions in place that aim to reduce the emissions of pollutants and address local air quality across the district, following the AQ Action Plan (2014) and Low Emission Strategy (2017).

The district council is committed to carrying out effective air quality monitoring to allow assessment of air quality in the district accurately. The locations of monitoring sites will be reviewed later this year, with additional tubes added to increase the coverage throughout the district. If you have any suggested monitoring locations in addition to Old London Road, please advise the District Council.

More information on the actions designed to improve air quality in the district or further monitoring data, is available on the Oxfordshire Air Quality Website at <https://oxfordshire.air-quality.info/local-air-quality-management/south-oxfordshire>.

Meeting

As previously advised, in accordance with our Neighbourhood Plan Toolkit, necessary meetings with neighbourhood plan groups will be charged for. I think that we have addressed your questions in this letter and therefore that a meeting is not necessary. Further, I understand that you met with District Council officers recently and it may be that meeting with them is the appropriate way to continue engagement; and I expect that the forthcoming amendments to the Wheatley Brookes University application will help to clarify the situation.

Yours sincerely

L Hughes

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Senior Planner

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