

**OXFORD CORE STRATEGY**  
**RESUMPTION OF HEARING SESSIONS**  
**INSPECTORS' BACKGROUND NOTE**

**1. Purpose of the resumed hearing sessions**

- 1.1. The purpose of the resumed hearings is to complete the examination of the Oxford Core Strategy, following the earlier suspension of the examination due to legal challenges to the South of Oxford Strategic Development Area proposal included in the former South-East Plan Regional Spatial Strategy (SEPRSS).
- 1.2. The resumed hearings will concentrate on matters and issues that have arisen since the suspension of the examination last September 2009.
- 1.3. The hearings will concentrate on three main aspects:
  - The Council's Further Proposed Changes to the Core Strategy following the Procedural Meeting held in February 2010;
  - The implications of the revocation of the South-East Plan Regional Spatial Strategy, announced by the Secretary of State on 6 July 2010, including:
    - Housing and employment land provision figures
    - Homes:jobs balance in Oxford
    - South of Oxford Strategic Development Area
    - Northern Gateway proposed development area
    - Sub-regional strategy for Oxford
    - Other relevant issues
  - Any other relevant developments/matters relating to the soundness of the Core Strategy that have arisen since the close of the previous hearings
- 1.4. The Council will also be asked to provide an update on the latest position on housing and employment land supply
- 1.5. The information and evidence available at these hearing sessions will include:
  - the Council's documents and papers relating to the Further Proposed Changes to the Core Strategy and the implications of revoking the South-East Plan RSS, including Housing Background Paper (CD1/3; CD7/27-28; CD10/13; CD15/19; CD15/20; CD15/21; CD15/22; CD16/71; CD16/72; CD16/73; CD16/74)
  - Representations on the Council's Further Proposed Changes to the Core Strategy and statements from participants on the implications of revoking the SEPRSS
- 1.6. The purpose of this resumed hearing session is not to go over or repeat points made at the previous hearing sessions
  - ***Matters and points already made during the earlier hearing sessions should not be repeated, and participants should concentrate on new issues arising from the current circumstances relevant to the soundness of the Core Strategy included in their representations on the Council's Further Proposed Changes and in statements made to the resumed hearing sessions on the implications of the revocation of the South-East Plan RSS.***
- 1.7. An agenda has already been circulated, outlining the matters and topics to be discussed at this resumed hearing session (attached – note minor changes to order of agenda items and list of participants)

## **2. Procedure at the resumed hearing sessions**

- 2.1. The procedure and format of these hearing sessions will be similar to the previous hearings, in that the discussion will be led by the inspectors, who will ask the participants questions and invite their comments on relevant matters raised in the discussion
- 2.2. The hearing sessions will commence at 14 September 2010 at 10.00am each day and finish by 5.00pm, with a lunch break around 1.00-2.00pm and a mid-morning and mid-afternoon break if necessary and convenient
- 2.3. The hearings are scheduled to take place during the next four days, closing on Friday afternoon (17 September 2010) at the latest.
- 2.4. All participants have nameplates, and are asked to place your nameplate in a vertical position if you have something to say at a particular time on a matter raised – be patient, everyone will have the opportunity to make their comments
- 2.5. No further statements are needed; participants should rely on their representations to the Council's Further Proposed Changes to the Core Strategy and statements submitted relating to the implications of revoking the SEPRSS
- 2.6. If participants cannot attend for the whole period of the hearing sessions, they should notify the Programme Officer and the inspectors will do their best to hear the relevant points from those parties when they are present

## **3. Background to the Core Strategy**

- 3.1 Key dates in the publication, submission and examination of the Oxford Core Strategy are:
  - Core Strategy published: September 2008
  - Submitted to the Secretary of State: 21 November 2008
  - Exploratory Meeting: 20 January 2009
  - Proposed Changes to Core Strategy: April 2009
    - Consultation period finished 15 May 2009
  - Pre-Hearing Meeting: 2 June 2009
  - Hearing sessions: 14-29 July & 10-11 September 2009
  - Inspector's report due to be submitted to the Council by end of October 2009
  - 14 October 2009 – Inspector Fenton decided to suspend the examination into the Oxford Core Strategy until legal challenges to the SEPRSS relating to the South of Oxford Strategic Development Area (SOSDA) were concluded
  - 20 October 2009 – Planning Inspectorate confirmed that Inspector Fenton had retired and Inspector Pratt had been appointed to complete the examination
  - 2 November 2009 – Inspector wrote to Oxford City Council asking:
    - whether any progress could be made with the examination, pending resolution of the legal challenges to the SEPRSS
    - what were the implications for the Core Strategy if the SOSDA was deleted or did not come forward within the plan period
    - what alterations would be needed to the Core Strategy to deal with this possibility
  - 19 November 2009 – Oxford City Council responded to the inspector's questions
  - 9 February 2010 – Procedural Meeting held (originally scheduled for 11 January 2010) to:

- Outline the current position with the examination of the Oxford Core Strategy;
- Outline the current position on the High Court challenges to the SEPRSS relating to the SOSDA;
- Discuss whether any progress can be made in completing the examination of the Core Strategy pending resolution of these legal challenges;
- Discuss the extent and nature of any further amendments to the Core Strategy, and the arrangements for consultation and resumption of the hearing sessions;
- 19 February & 3 March 2010 – Oxford City Council responded to the inspector’s questions and outlined how it intended to proceed
- 3 March 2010 – Inspector’s response to the Council’s letter, setting out the necessary work and arrangements for consultation on the Council’s Further Proposed Changes, confirming that he would review the position once the legal challenges to the SOSDA were resolved and setting out a broad timetable for the future progress of the examination
- 9 April 2010 – Oxford City Council published Further Proposed Changes to the Core Strategy and invited representations (until 21 May 2010)
- 12 May 2010 – Planning Inspectorate confirmed that Inspector Fenton had been re-engaged to assist Inspector Pratt with the examination and drafting the joint report
- 8 June 2010 – Oxford City Council prepared a summary of the representations to the Further Proposed Changes
- 11 June 2010 – Inspectors confirmed that a decision on resuming the hearings would not be made until further statements/clarification was available about the new Government’s intention<sup>1</sup> to revoke the Regional Strategies (including the SEPRSS)
- 12 July 2010 – Inspectors confirmed that, following a further Government statement formally revoking the Regional Strategies (including the SEPRSS)<sup>2</sup>, the hearings could be resumed, and invited responses from the Council and other interested parties on the implications of revoking the SEPRSS; this letter also gave formal notice that the hearings would resume on 14 September 2010 unless circumstances dictated otherwise and sought the Council’s confirmation that they wished the examination of the Core Strategy to be completed
- 24 July 2010 – Inspectors requested a background paper on housing provision following the revocation of the SEPRSS; and Programme Officer outlined the matters likely to be discussed at the resumed hearing sessions (26 July 2010)
- 20 August 2010 – deadline for submission of further statements to the examination relating to the revocation of the SEPRSS
- 23 August 2010 – Oxford City Council responded to the Inspectors’ previous letters, confirming that they wished the examination to be concluded, and included a Housing Background Paper
- 3 September 2010 – Programme Officer confirmed that the hearings will resume on 14 September 2010 and circulated an initial agenda for the hearing sessions; the Council also prepared a “Combined Changes” document to show all proposed changes to the Core Strategy since it was submitted, to assist participants in the examination

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP (Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government) to all local authorities [dated 27 May 2010; DCLG]

<sup>2</sup> Parliamentary statement by Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP (Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government) [dated 6 July 2010]



4. Agenda for the resumed hearing sessions

**PARTICIPANTS AT RESUMED HEARING SESSIONS**  
**COMMENCING TUESDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2010**

Oxford City Council	Oxfordshire CC
South Oxfordshire DC	Northern Gateway Consortium
CPRE (Oxfordshire/Oxford District)	Oxfordshire Green Party
ENGAGE	Mark Pitt
Horspath PC	Highways Agency
Rosemary Harris	Councillor John Goddard
Councillor Mike Gotch	British Rail Body (Residuary) Ltd
Mr Rodrigo	Silke Schaeper
Nicola Blackwood MP	Oxford Green Belt Network
Councillor Jean Fooks	Councillor McCready
Councillor Nuala Young	Wolvercote Commoners' Committee
Headington & St Clements Group of Residents' Associations	Merton College
Oxfordshire City & County Archaeological Forum/ Oxfordshire Architectural and Historical Society	Natural England
BBOWT	Oxford Preservation Trust
Oxford Bus Users	Sean Feeney

**AGENDA FOR EXAMINATION**  
**AT RESUMED HEARING SESSIONS**  
**TUESDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2010 – FRIDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2010**

1. Inspectors' introduction
2. **PROCEDURAL MATTERS**
  - 2.1 Confirmation from Oxford City Council that they wish the examination of the Oxford Core Strategy to proceed to a completion, and any matters arising.
3. **UPDATE SINCE THE PREVIOUS HEARINGS CLOSED**
  - 3.1 Any significant/material developments since the previous hearings closed in September 2009 that might affect the submitted Core Strategy (as amended).
    - a. **Housing land supply:**
      - i. The latest position in terms of housing land supply, including 5, 10 & 15-year housing land supply, and any updated work on housing land supply, including any work on the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.
    - b. **Employment land supply:**
      - i. The latest position in terms of employment land supply, and any updated work on employment land supply, including any work on the Employment Land Study or other employment/economic assessments.
  - 3.2 Do any of the following proposals/events have any significance for the soundness of the submitted Core Strategy (as amended):
    - a. Chiltern Railways' proposal for a rail link from Bicester-Oxford, including a Park & Ride station near the Northern Gateway;
    - b. Other designations of specific areas of land;
    - c. Any other specific proposals, developments or relevant new matters.

#### **4. FURTHER PROPOSED CHANGES TO CORE STRATEGY**

- 4.1 Council's summary of Further Proposed Changes to Core Strategy (as amended) and issues arising from the representations made.

#### **5. MAIN MATTERS TO BE DISCUSSED DURING THE HEARINGS**

*This part of the hearing session will cover issues raised in the Council's Further Proposed Changes and the implications of the Secretary of State's recent statements<sup>3</sup> confirming that the Regional Strategies (including the South-East Plan Regional Spatial Strategy) are now revoked*

##### **5.1 Housing land supply:**

- a. the basis and justification for the current housing land provision figure (8,000 dwellings; 2006-2026)), following the revocation of the SEPRSS;
- b. the implications of the ministerial statement<sup>4</sup> changing the status of private residential gardens in terms of previously developed land (PPS3; Annex B) and abolishing the minimum density requirement for new residential development (PPS3; ¶ 47) on future housing land supply in Oxford.

##### **5.2 Employment land supply:**

- a. the basis and justification for the current employment land provision figure, following the revocation of the SEPRSS.

##### **5.3 The homes:jobs balance in Oxford:**

- a. the basis and justification for the latest analysis of housing and employment growth and implications for the Core Strategy.

##### **5.4 South of Oxford Strategic Development Area:**

- a. the implications of the loss of the South of Oxford Strategic Development Area, in terms of the Further Proposed Changes, following the revocation of the SEPRSS;
- b. the implications of the loss of the South of Oxford Strategic Development Area on the regeneration and development of Blackbird Leys and Cowley centres.

##### **5.5 Northern Gateway proposed development area:**

- a. the basis and justification for the revised proposals for the Northern Gateway set out in the Further Proposed Changes, including the scale, nature, mix, extent, phasing and impact of land-uses;
- b. the implications of the revocation of the SEPRSS for the Northern Gateway proposed development area.

##### **5.6 Does the revocation of the South-East Plan RSS have any implications for the soundness of the Core Strategy in terms of:**

- a. Sub-regional strategy for the Oxford area;
- b. Green Belt;
- c. Highways, traffic and transport;
- d. hierarchy of centres, including town, local and other shopping centres;
- e. Other regional policies, eg. natural environment, flooding, climate change, etc;
- f. Cross-boundary and sub-regional issues;
- g. Flexibility and contingency arrangements in the longer term.

#### **6. ANY OTHER MATTERS**

- 6.1 Any other relevant/outstanding matters.
- 6.2 Council's closing remarks
- 6.3 Inspectors' closing remarks

SJP/DF/HW 08.09.10

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<sup>3</sup> Parliamentary statement by Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP (Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government) [dated 6 July 2010]; following Letter from Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP (Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government) to all local authorities [dated 27 May 2010; DCLG]

<sup>4</sup> Statement of Greg Clark MP (Minister of State for Decentralisation) [dated 9 June 2010; DCLG];