

# OXFORD LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

## CORE STRATEGY EXAMINATION

**Mrs Helen Wilson BA(Hons)**  
**Programme Officer**  
**Tel/fax: 01527 65741**  
**Mobile: 07879 443035**  
**Email: [progofficer@aol.com](mailto:progofficer@aol.com)**

**32 Pennyford Close**  
**Brockhill**  
**Redditch**  
**Worcestershire**  
**B97 6TW**

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Dear Sir/Madam,

### **PROCEDURAL MEETING - MONDAY 11 JANUARY 2010**

As you may know, Inspector Stephen J Pratt BA(Hons) MRTPI has taken over the examination of the Oxford Core Strategy, following the retirement of the previous Inspector, David Fenton. On 14 October 2009, Mr Fenton wrote to Oxford City Council indicating that the South East Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) has been subject to legal challenge on the basis that the Sustainability Appraisal had failed to take into account reasonable alternatives to the green belt reviews for the South of Oxford and North East of Guildford. Since the Oxford Core Strategy was drawn up in the light of the RSS's approach to Oxford, particularly its dependency on the identification of the South of Oxford Strategic Development Area, he decided to suspend the Examination into the Core Strategy until the legal challenges are concluded. Letters from the previous Inspector about suspending the Examination and from the Planning Inspectorate about the change of Inspector are on the City Council's web-site at [http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decP/Examination\\_occw.htm](http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decP/Examination_occw.htm) (Please note the new website address)

The Inspector is now assessing the current position and bringing himself up-to-date with the key issues relevant to this Examination. He is keen to see whether there might be a positive way forward of progressing the examination of the Oxford Core Strategy whilst the legal challenges are proceeding. He has now been briefed by the previous Inspector and is considering what further information he may need from the City Council and other participants and representors involved in the Examination.

The Inspector has asked the City Council's officers for their views about the implications of this legal challenge and whether any progress could be made with the Examination pending its resolution. He has also asked what amendments and contingency arrangements would need to be included in the strategy, policies, text, Key Diagram and Proposals Map of the Core Strategy, to address the implications of the deletion of the South of Oxford Strategic Development Area, or its failure to come forward within the current plan period. In addition, he asked whether there would be any implications for the housing:employment balance in the Core Strategy. He also asked for notes of any meetings with key stakeholders (eg. GO-SE, South Oxfordshire District Council, developers and landowners etc) to be forwarded. A copy of the Inspector's request is enclosed.

The City Council has now responded to the Inspector's questions. The City Council is firmly of the opinion that progress can be made with the Core Strategy Examination, whilst the legal challenges relating to the Strategic Development Area are proceeding. The City Council believes that the deletion of the Strategic Development Area would have only limited implications for the Core Strategy, including the overall strategy, housing provision, housing:employment balance, and Northern Gateway proposal. The City Council has also highlighted the minimum alterations

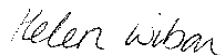
required to the text of the Core Strategy as already amended and has forwarded notes of recent meetings with GO-SE and other stakeholders. A copy of the City Council's response is enclosed.

The Inspector now invites brief written responses (**maximum 1,000 words**) on these issues from all those who made representations to the published Core Strategy and/or its amendments. Responses should address the implications of the legal challenges to the South of Oxford Strategic Development Area for the Oxford Core Strategy and whether any progress can be made with the examination of the Core Strategy pending resolution of these challenges, including the views of the City Council. Responses should be sent to me at the above address, and if possible by email, by no later than Wednesday 6 January 2010.

The Inspector has arranged for these issues to be discussed at a Procedural Meeting to be held at 2.00pm on Monday 11 January at Oxford Town Hall, to which you are invited. The Meeting will concentrate on discussing whether any progress can be made with the examination of the Core Strategy pending resolution of the legal challenges to the South of Oxford Strategic Development Area, rather than discussing the merits, evidence or detailed implications for the Core Strategy. If a positive way forward can be found, the Inspector will consider resuming the hearing sessions to discuss the detailed implications for the Core Strategy.

If you need hard copies of any of the papers, please let me know. It would also be helpful if you could let me know whether you intend to attend the Procedural Meeting.

Yours faithfully



Helen Wilson  
**Programme Officer**  
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