Hearing Statement CPRE Oxfordshire

Hearing day 5 24 November 2026

Matter 5 -Site Allocations

The Local Plan is intended to set out a proposed vision for the Local Authority's area and proposed measurable outcomes. Two of the largest Brownfield sites in central Oxford are at Osney Mead (SPCW9) (17.8 ha) and Oxpens (SPCW11) (6.3 ha). Although both sites have planning permission for development there is currently no sign that any actual development will take place. The current situation is little changed from that when the Oxford Local Plan 2036 was prepared ten years ago. There is no obvious reason why real development has not taken place and it would be helpful to hear from the Council why this stalled situation has arisen, particularly when out of town development such as that at Oxford North has progressed to construction.

What is the vision for these two sites and how does the Council seek to achieve this. If the current designation as employment land means that no development is likely to take place in the next 5 years should these sites be removed from the list of designated employment sites. What purpose is achieved in them remaining in that category.

Issue 3 Matter 10 Climate Change R.5 Water Resources and Quality

General

The financial position of Thames Water has deteriorated further since CPRE's Reg 19 Response and is now a critical threat to all major developments within the City.

The Local Plan must provide safeguards to protect residents from the effects of Thames Water being unable to meet its statutory obligations. Policy R5 should reflect this with changes as suggested in CPRE's responses.

To stay in business Thames Water is currently seeking a loan of £3.3 billion to be paid over the next 5 years to avert special administration. This loan would be at a staggering 9.75% interest to allow it to continue in business. Without this loan, Thames Water is set to run out of cash within a number of months.

The upgrade works at Sandford-upon-Thames sewage treatment works to a state where the discharge from the works is within current requirements are estimated by Thames Water to cost in the region of £435 million. If this loan does not materialise, which is likely, then these works will simply not happen unless the Government steps in. This currently they seem reluctant to do in view of the huge costs involved. The Sandford

treatment works are assessed currently by Windrush against Sewage Pollution (WASP) to be the 8th worst in the Thames Water region and one of the most prolific spillers in that region with an illegality rate of between 27 and 55% which means it is amongst the most urgent (and expensive) needing improvement. These uncertainties need to be reflected in Policy R 5.

Question 1.

If the Council considers that reducing the levels of pollution in the rivers and streams in the City as any sort of priority the Policy R5 does not achieve this. Greater restriction on development is needed until such time as the sewage treatment facilities are upgraded.