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Examination of the Oxford Local Plan 2045

Inspectors' Matters, Issues and Questions for Examination – Stage 2

Hearing Statement – November 2026

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Matter 5 – Site Allocations

Issues – Marston Road and Old Road Area of Focus

Policies: MROROAF – Site SPE9: Marston Paddock Extension

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Introduction

My client (Lucy Developments Limited) has made representations to Oxford Local Plan 2045 consultations at both the Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 stages.

Lucy Developments Limited controls (through an Option agreement with the landowner) the site subject of the draft allocation contained within Policy SPE9 – Marston Paddock Extension.

My client intends to bring the site forward for residential development through the preparation and submission of a detailed planning application in 2027.

The principle of the site's allocation for *a minimum of 20 homes* is supported by my client.

The most recent submission that my client made to the Regulation 19 Local Plan consultation in March 2026 set out a number of detailed comments in relation to the draft allocation SPE9. Those comments should be read alongside this Hearing Statement.

My client has been in active discussions with Policy Officers at Oxford City Council regarding matters associated with the draft allocation. The City Council have agreed to prepare a Statement of Common Ground that will be submitted to the Inspectors in advance of the 25th November Hearing Sessions.

Question 1 – What is the site boundary based on and is it justified?

The question regarding what the site boundary is based on is for the City Council to answer.

My client has, since their March 2025 'Call for Site's submission, requested that the red line of the allocated area is no smaller than the area show on the attached Illustrative Concept Framework (SK02) shown at Appendix 1. This contains both previously developed and undeveloped land (see Figure 1 below).

Lucy Developments do not consider that the site boundary is justified in order to deliver the requirements of Policy SPE9 and a minimum of 20 homes for the reasons set out in response to Question 2 (see below).

Question 2 – Can all the requirements of Policy SPE9 be achieved within the red line boundary? Is the policy effective?

Policy SPE9 requires the site to be developed taking into account the following 'fundamental' masterplanning principles:

- A minimum number of 20 homes;
- At least 50% of the new homes should be affordable housing;
- Green amenity space with rich planting to maintain green links;
- The retention of hedge/tree planting on the northern and southern boundaries (note there is no hedge/tree planting on the eastern boundary);
- Consideration of the Old Marston Conservation Area;
- Sufficient buffering and screening along the northern boundary;
- Development set back from Butts Lane;
- Public realm should retain a green and rural character with a feeling of openness;
- Low density and low height-built form.

Following the completion of feasibility work, Lucy Developments do not consider that the following requirements of Policy SPE9 can be delivered within the red line boundary currently shown within the draft allocation to deliver a minimum of 20 dwellings. These are:

1. Sufficient high-quality green amenity space that creates a feeling of openness – this includes green areas of public realm;
2. Sufficient areas for biodiversity net gain on site (a minimum of 10%) which will also ensure the site retains an element of its 'rural character';
3. The retention of sufficient hedge/tree planting on the northern boundary to retain sufficient buffering and screening;
4. The retention of sufficient hedge/tree planting on the southern boundary;
5. The provision of new high-quality hedge/tree planting on the eastern boundary;
6. The required turning and manoeuvring areas for vehicles;

7. Areas for SuDs;

8. An appropriate density of development within the Conservation Area.

The Google Maps aerial photo of the site shown at Figure 1 below helps to highlight the above points – particularly those in relation to existing and proposed hedge/tree planting. This image has been marked up to show the existing building line to the east of Little Acreage and that the paddock further east will be kept free from the allocation and any form of built development – even with the extension to the red line as requested by my client.



Figure 1 – Butts Lane Marston Google Maps Aerial Image

In order to deliver a minimum of 20 new homes on the site, my client requests that the red line area of the allocation within Policy SPE9 is amended to that shown at Appendix 1.

My client is agreeable to consider limited parts of an amended/extended red line area to be shown as being kept free of 'built development'. The extent of these areas can be discussed further and agreed with Oxford City Council through the Statement of Common Ground.

The extended red line area that my client requests does not contain any significant planning constraints (other than being within the Green Belt) that would prevent this extension.

A full Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of this area has been undertaken and has been submitted to the City Council. This confirms the requirement for a number of protected specifies surveys but there are no fundamental ecological constraints to development in this extended area. The site overall is assessed as having low ecological importance. This PEA can be provided to the Examination if required.

My client considers that the site boundary of the allocated area within Policy SPE9 is not justified because a minimum of 20 new homes cannot be delivered if all of the requirements of the policy are to be delivered. A pragmatic, and simple approach to resolve this matter is through a modification to Policy SPE9 to show the red line allocation area as set out at Appendix 1. The extended red line area is required by my client to ensure certainty for the future planning application process and to deliver a high quality development in line with the requirements of Policy SPE9. Following this modification, the requirements of Policy SPE9 can be delivered <u>in full</u>.

Lucy Developments will work proactively with Oxford City Council Officers regarding this modification.

<u>Question 3 – Do the exceptional circumstances exist to justify amending the Green Belt boundary in this location?</u>

This is predominately for the City Council to answer, and it is understood this was discussed at the Matter 1 sessions in relation to Issue 3 – Green Belt Review. My client considers this site is in a highly sustainable location and is partly previously developed land (the whole of the area currently allocated in policy SPE9 is previously developed land and therefore Grey Belt).

My client wishes to take part in the Hearing Session regarding Matter 5 – Site Allocations on Wednesday 25th November at 9.30am.

APPENDIX 1 - Illustrative Concept Framework (SK02)