

Reference:

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Via email

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30th January 2024

Dear Planning Policy Team,

**Re: Reading Local Plan Partial Update Consultation on Scope and Content
(Regulation 18)**

Thank you for your email on 27th November 2023 advising us of this consultation start. We met virtually on 2nd November 2023 regarding this Local Plan partial update. This was a helpful meeting to discuss a variety of matters.

A number of the matters within the Local Plan Partial Update consultation are a matter for the district councils to comment on and some such as Education, development allocations, flood risk, transport, historic environment and climate change are of particular interest to the County Council in relation to our statutory functions.

Spatial Strategy

If the proposed updated spatial strategy further changes as a result of this consultation, to include areas of land nearer the Oxfordshire boundary, please do update us directly on this.

Transport matters

Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) adopted our fifth Local Transport Plan, called the [Local Transport and Connectivity Plan](#) (LTCP) in July 2022. The LTCP outlines our vision to deliver a net-zero transport system, reduce car trips and make walking, cycling, public and shared transport the natural first choice. These principles will guide our partnership working on cross-boundary transport matters moving forward.

With regards to a third Thames crossing, we would like to reiterate that the motion approved by Oxfordshire County Council on 10th September 2019 remains our position on a third Thames crossing:

- Should a new bridge be built it should be restricted to public transport, cyclists and pedestrians.
- The bridge and necessary mitigation measures must not be considered as two separate projects, but as one project.

We would also like to highlight that OCC do not have any funding for a third Thames crossing and the majority of any river crossing would be within Oxfordshire's (and South

Oxfordshire District Council's) boundary. Likewise, planning consent for any bridge would be entirely out of RBC's control and would require planning applications to OCC and/or South Oxfordshire District Council and Wokingham Borough Council.

We support the inclusion of a more holistic approach to cross-Thames travel and fundamental review of options to enhance sustainable travel choices. We ask that OCC continue to be engaged with on any future work.

Please see our recent response to Reading Borough Council's Local Transport Plan 4, dated 20th December 2023 for further details of our view on transport matters. Within this response we note general support for the vision, objectives and policy approach within the Reading Transport Strategy 2040, but we have significant concerns about the proposed schemes and measures for cross boundary travel included in the strategy and therefore oppose the plan on these grounds.

Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan

The partial review states that "*only infrastructure needed to support sustainable growth has been identified within the following schedule*" and provides a table of Infrastructure Delivery Plan schemes. The list includes the Cross Thames Travel scheme which is wholly outside of your local authority boundary, and as such should not be considered as a fundamental infrastructure requirement to deliver RBC's growth.

Given our response to the Reading Borough Council's Local Transport Plan 4, dated 20th December 2023, which raised serious concerns about proposed schemes and measures for cross boundary travel, it is further concerning that a third Thames Crossing is listed within the draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan. We would take this opportunity to further repeat our significant concerns around proposed schemes and measures for cross boundary travel.

Climate Change

We welcome to the intention update the Local Plan vision, objectives and spatial strategy to reflect the target of net zero carbon Reading by 2030.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Steere-Smith

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Principal Strategic Planner

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