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| Subject: Local Plan Consultation – Statement of Common Ground MOU | |
| Author: Nigel Tipple Tel: 01865 261433 Email: ChiefExec@oxfordshirelep.com | Directors Board Meeting Meeting No. 14 6th March 2018 Agenda Item no: 5 |
| Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership Ltd: Business Centre, Jericho Building, City of Oxford College Campus, Oxpens Road, Oxford OX1 1SA | |

1.) Summary

We have received two requests to enter into respective Statement of Common Ground MOU's from Vale of the White Horse and South Oxfordshire District Councils. We have historically not made any general statements or responses to Local Plans due to the scale of resource needed to undertake this effectively and because of the potential conflict of interest of our respective Board Directors. That said we have engaged in site specific responses where they impact upon our programmes of activity such as Enterprise Zones or policy initiatives such as community Employment Plans.

Having discussed the complexity of our Board position with Planning Officers, noting all 6 Local Authority Leaders are represented and the fact that in each case objections had been raised by neighbouring Local Planning or Transport Authorities historically we have declined to enter into the agreements at this stage.

The Board are asked to consider the requests as drafted and consider whether they are content to enter into the respective MOU's if appropriately amended.

2.) Recommendation

That the Board:

- **Note the report and,**
- **In considering the South Oxfordshire District Council MOU**
 - **Advise the Executive whether they support the recommendation not to enter into the South Oxfordshire MOU as currently drafted given partner Local Authority Objections**

- However, subject to the amendment of the MOU to reflect the Article 19 consultation response as detailed at paragraph 3 below then to agree to signing the document.
- In considering Vale of the White Horse District Council MOU
 - Advise the executive whether they support the recommendation not to enter into the VoTH MOU as currently drafted
 - However, subject to the amendment of the MOU to reflect our Part 1 comments only as detailed at paragraph 4 below then to agree to sign the document.

3.) South Oxon District Council – Statement of Common Ground MOU

South Oxon Officers have drafted the attached MOU at annex 1 on the basis of our specific comments submitted to the Reg 19 consultation covering the use of community Employment Plans. They wish to use this MOU as a way to inform the Inspector of the matters that are in agreement or not if that is the case. However, the current draft goes on to use the following statement:

- ***The council has consulted OxLEP on the submission plan and OxLEP has no objections to the Local Plan 2033.***

We would not be in a position to enter into the MOU with this statement as drafted. We have advised Officers that should they amend the MOU to reflect solely the Article 19 consultation response in respect of the Community Employment Plan then we could support that. To be clear, there is no expectation or agreement that we will make any further representation and is intended simply to reiterate our support for the specific policy.

South Oxon Planning Officers have been requested to redraft the MOU to reflect specifically the Article 19 Response only and remove the reference to having “no objections to the Local Plan 2033.

4.) Vale of the White Horse District Council - Statement of Common Ground MOU

Vale Planning Officers have drafted the attached MOU at annex 2, this again is drafted to reflect specifically our consultation response in respect of the Housing and Employment allocation at Harwell Science and Innovation Campus. Again, VoWH Officers wish to use this MOU to inform the inspector of our support for the matters in agreement.

Overall the statement sets out the process to date but then goes on to state the following specifically:

- ***The parties agree that VoWH has discharged its duty to cooperate for Local Plan 2031 Part 2.***
- ***OxLEP strongly supports the proposed additional housing allocation located at Harwell Campus. A separate SoCG has been prepared between the parties and Harwell Science and Innovation Campus Limited Partnership in relation to this proposed allocation.***
- ***The Council has consulted OxLEP on the submission plan and they have no objections to the policies and proposed site allocations outlined in the Local Plan 2031 Part 2.***

The Board will want to consider whether they are content to enter into an MOU on the basis of the current drafting.

To be clear, we have not undertaken any analysis in respect of whether the VoWH have discharged their duty to co-operate, our view is that we would need independent advice on this matter before we considered signing the MOU as drafted.

In our response to the VoWH Local Plan Part 1 we made representations in respect of the impact Housing would have on the Enterprise Zone allocated land at Harwell. We did not indicate strong support for the additional housing allocation at Harwell specifically under Part 2, but we did welcome the agreement reached between VoWH and Harwell Science and Innovation Campus in respect of Housing being located within the existing footprint and that which falls outside of the EZ Boundary. Again, we would want the wording to be amended to reflect our response to Part 1 if we were to sign the MOU.

Finally, the statement in the conclusion is drafted on the basis that we have no objections to the VoWH Local Plan Part 2 and not the specific items for which we had previously commented. We cannot therefore sign this MOU as currently drafted.