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working locally and nationally to  
protect and enhance a beautiful,  
thriving countryside for everyone to  
value and enjoy

The Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP,  
Secretary of State Housing, Communities  
and Local Government  
Ministry of Housing, Communities and  
Local Government  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

By email to: [robert.jenrick@communities.gov.uk](mailto:robert.jenrick@communities.gov.uk)  
Cc John Howell MP [howelljm@parliament.uk](mailto:howelljm@parliament.uk)  
David Johnston MP [david.johnston.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:david.johnston.mp@parliament.uk)

Dear Mr Jenrick

**How do you equate your intervention in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan process with local democracy?**

CPRE Oxfordshire would like to express our deep concern over your prevention of South Oxfordshire District Council from revising and updating their Local Plan. We believe that your actions preventing South Oxfordshire District Council from withdrawing the current draft plan and beginning work on a new plan is an affront to local democracy.

In the May 2019 District elections, the Liberal Democrats, Greens and many Independents campaigned strongly against the excessive housing growth figures contained in the draft Local Plan (LP34). The result was a radical overturning of the ruling party's majority (who previously held 33 out of 36 seats), reducing the Conservative Councillors to nine. This was a direct result of the anger felt by many about the plans for the overdevelopment of District. This anger remains. At a public meeting on 25 January over 250 residents turned out on a cold Saturday afternoon to discuss and protest over the issue.

In these circumstances, we cannot see that intervention is justified or democratic. In addition, we are aware that it is raising concerns amongst people across Oxfordshire about the precedent that might be set for future intervention. The development of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050, the joint strategic spatial plan for the county, is at a crucial stage. CPRE Oxfordshire has strongly supported the development of such a plan, but it would be hard for both us and others to continue in confidence if it was felt that outside intervention might in due course seek to frustrate the wishes of local residents.

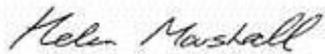
We share the public's concern that LP34 is not fit for purpose. The numbers on which it is based are excessive; over 9,000 beyond the Government's own calculation of housing need in South Oxfordshire and even further in excess of the historical and projected household growth figures for the District (as calculated by the Office of National Statistics). LP34 also has no recognition of the Climate Emergency facing the country, in contrast to declarations made by both the District Council and the UK Government. It has no targets for emission reduction and no plans on how to protect and enhance

the natural environment. The planned settlement pattern around Oxford would severely damage the Oxford Green Belt, so damaging the setting and green lungs of the City.

Crucially, South Oxfordshire has a perfectly valid Plan in place - that is the 2012-27 Core Strategy - which has ten years' housing supply, and has been declared sound by the Council's officers at least to cover the time a new Plan to replace the discredited 2034 Plan is prepared.

We urge you to allow the Council to fulfil its democratic mandate, withdraw LP34 and begin urgently the development of a new plan which addresses the challenges and meets the aspirations of local people.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Helen Marshall".

Helen Marshall  
Director, CPRE Oxfordshire