

## **Response to questions from Cllr P Jones**

### **Question**

1. In a letter dated 7th May 2020, the inspectors examining the proposed Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan have stated (paragraph 32) that "there is a strong likelihood that the only option will be for the Council to withdraw the plan". This is because of the supposed failure to consult with Slough over that Council's wish to have some of its required housing needs built in the area of the former South Bucks DC. The inspectors also (paragraph 25) state that "the Green Belt has therefore not precluded land from being identified for development in the submitted plan". Put another way, they seem to be saying that we cannot use the Green Belt status of land in the south of Buckinghamshire as a reason for denying space to Slough, when at the same time the Chiltern and South Bucks Plan proposes significant changes to the Green Belt for residential and office development elsewhere. To counter the threat from Slough, would it not make sense to withdraw immediately the self-imposed threat to the Green Belt around Chesham, Beaconsfield and elsewhere?

### **Response**

I'd like to thank Cllr Jones for his question.

You will be aware that each local authority has to produce a local plan for its area or face the risk of the government intervening and preparing one for them.

Each plan also has to demonstrate how it will accommodate the level of development required. The Chiltern and South Bucks plan has done that and it will be the subject of the examination if the inspector agrees that the plan can continue.

The Inspectors letter on the Duty to Cooperate, in my view, takes a bizarre and unconventional approach to the release of further green belt land in South Bucks to accommodate Slough's future growth.

Therefore, I do not believe that changing allocations in the Chiltern and South Bucks plan would strengthen the case against Slough.

Buckinghamshire has to accommodate its own growth and Slough should do the same. We have taken barristers advice, and are making that point as strongly as possible to the Inspector, in particular, asking for a hearing to make our case.

### **Question:**

2. For various good environmental, economic and social-distancing-to-counter-the-coronavirus reasons, other areas in Britain and around the world are proposing wider footpaths /pavements, wider and more cycle lanes, and help for commuters to afford and use electric and regular bicycles. Will the Cabinet please ask for an urgent report on what can be done in Buckinghamshire, particularly around the main employment areas such as High Wycombe, Aylesbury and Amersham / Chesham? "

**Response:**

I'd like to thank Cllr Jones for his question. I am pleased to report that Officers have been working to identify the possible measures that the Council could introduce to ensure that social distancing can occur on public transport, and on our streets and in town centres, as people return to work, and as our children return to school. Buckinghamshire Council has already re-introduced a scheme that provides discounts to staff to purchase bicycles. I have asked for a report to be provided to Cabinet as a matter of urgency, given the tight timescales set out by DfT to introduce temporary measures.