

Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 2

RESPONSE FROM THE OXFORD GREEN BELT NETWORK

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Our comments are confined to issues relating directly to the Oxford Green Belt.

We are broadly in sympathy with Core Policy 13a, Oxford Green Belt, although we would have preferred the whole of Oxford's unmet housing need to have been met outside the Green Belt. But if space for 1,200 dwellings (of the 2,200) has to be found in the Green Belt we are agreed that the Dalton Barracks site is preferable to choosing a series of smaller sites on the edges of the Green Belt villages like those that were identified for possible development in Part 1 of the Local Plan and subsequently rejected by the inspector.

We have noted that the precise boundary of the Green Belt at Dalton Barracks (Core Policy 8b) is yet to be determined, especially in the west, and we would hope that development on the Barracks site will be limited to the proposed 1,200 dwellings and not be allowed to grow further despite your reference to its 'longer term potential'. We have a particular concern for the village of Shippon and recommend that the Green Belt continues to wash over this settlement in order to help protect its character and the open spaces within it. We have also noted Development Policy 28, which deals with settlement character and gaps, and we suggest that this policy should apply in the case of Shippon which should not be allowed to become absorbed into the proposed garden village on the Barracks site.

We have real concerns over Core Policy 12a which safeguards land for what are described as highway improvements. We recognize that highway matters are a County responsibility and that you might be under some obligation to safeguard sites in the way proposed, but we wish to make clear our opposition to the park and ride sites at Lodge Hill and at Cumnor, both of them in the Green Belt. The choice of these sites will encourage, rather than discourage, commuting by car since people will have to travel to them from their homes. We have always argued that the starting point for travel to Oxford should be closer to where people actually live, in the larger settlements where they can be served by good public transport services into Oxford. The County's choice of sites defeats this object and is based on an outdated approach to travel to work which, by encouraging continuing private car use, simply adds to traffic congestion on the main roads, adding to pollution levels, and discouraging the provision of bus services.

We believe that neither Lodge Hill nor Cumnor should be chosen as park and ride sites. In the case of Lodge Hill, a better choice for park and ride facilities would be at either Milton or Marcham interchanges. We are strongly opposed to the idea of the associated lorry park (Development Policy 18) suggested at Lodge Hill which would be a huge and intrusive development within the Green Belt and one which would be bound to lead to pressure for other forms of development in and around the village of Sunningwell. The Cumnor site would, for the reasons stated above, simply encourage more car journeys along the A420 and should also be rejected.