

The Planning Policy Manager  
Planning and Development Services  
Cherwell District Council  
Bodicote House  
Bodicote  
Banbury OX15 4AA

Dear Mr Evans,

2<sup>nd</sup> July 2007

**Bicester and Central Oxfordshire Site Allocations Development Plan Document-  
Issues and Options Paper**

Thank you for inviting the Oxford Green Belt Network (OGBN) to comment on the above Site Allocations Issues and Options Paper. Our comments are set out below and we should be grateful if they could be noted by the Planning Policy Team

OGBN's concern, as you will appreciate, is with the Oxford Green Belt and we have confined our attention to those sites that are within the Green Belt. We have identified 32 of these, excluding those within the parts of Kidlington and Yarnton that are not in the Green Belt. These 32 Green Belt sites – Begbroke BE-1&2, Bletchington BT.1, Gosford and Water Eaton GO.1-5, Horton-cum-Studley HC.1&2, Islip IS.1-3, Kidlington KI.1-4,9-10,12-14,16-17, Shipton-on-Cherwell SC.1, Weston-on-the-Green WG.2/2, and Yarnton YA.1, 3-6 – amount to 458 hectares in total. In addition there are sites that border the Green Belt, notably at Weston-on-the-Green, that would raise issues of visibility when viewed from the Green Belt.

OGBN would like to record its objection to development on any of the sites noted above on the grounds that it would be contrary to the aims of Green Belt policy set out in PPG.2. We are particularly concerned over the large areas of potential development that have been identified in the gap between Oxford and Kidlington (Gosford and Water Eaton Parish) and in the open spaces between Kidlington, Yarnton and Begbroke. One of the fundamental aims of Green Belt policy is to protect the gaps that separate settlements in order to preserve their identity and development in these areas would significantly reduce, even eliminate, these important gaps, negating that aim.

We have noted that a high proportion of the sites, including all the large ones (with the exception of KI.9 put forward by the University of Oxford) are “sites considered in the preparation of the non-statutory Cherwell Local Plan”. Presumably these were suggested to the District Council at the time that this Plan was in preparation and are carried forward for that reason, but we would be anxious if we felt that the District Council was interested in seeing these sites developed at some time in the future. Much depends, of course, on the outcome of the EIP into the South East Plan and what the inspectors recommend, in particular whether there is to be a review of the Green Belt or not. In our evidence to the EIP, we expressed the hope that development in Central Oxfordshire would be on brownfield sites but where it was necessary to build on greenfield sites these would be outside the Oxford Green Belt. It follows that in the case of Cherwell District Council's portion of Central Oxfordshire we would

favour development taking place in Bicester (Issue 19). Where it is necessary to develop sites closer to Oxford we would favour those that you have identified in Kidlington and Yarnton that are not in the Green Belt.

You seek views on the Shipton Quarry site and we have expressed our opinions to the County Council on recent applications there. We acknowledge the aesthetic gain to be achieved by removing the derelict cement works buildings but have serious misgivings about the degree of development currently being proposed and about the sustainability of any future housing development in this location if the void is filled. Ideally we would favour informal recreation combined with protection of wildlife areas and of the geological exposures, but we recognize that this is hardly likely to commend itself to owners hoping to benefit financially from the site.

We are grateful to Planning and Policy Services for keeping us informed of the stages reached in the preparation of the Council's Local Development Framework and we look forwards to hearing what follows from the current consultation.

Yours sincerely,

D.I.Scargill