

Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 2

Response of the Oxford Green Belt Network

The response of the Oxford Green Belt Network (OGBN) is confined to those policies which bear directly on the Oxford Green Belt.

Core Policy 4a - Meeting our Housing Needs

OGBN objects to this policy which we regard as unsound since the housing totals on which it is based are derived from the SHMA which itself has been proven unsound and is being superseded by a new method of calculating housing need. Figures relating to housing need should therefore be recalculated based on the new official method of deriving Objective Assessed Need (OAN), and the same applies to those relating to “Oxford’s unmet housing need”.

Core Policy 8a - Additional Site Allocations for Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area

OGBN objects to this policy which we consider unsound on the grounds that, since the Plan overstates housing requirements, the housing allocated for the Dalton Barracks site could be accommodated without removing the Dalton Barracks site from the Green Belt.

Core Policy 8b - Dalton Barracks Comprehensive Development Framework

OGBN objects to this policy which we consider unsound for the reason stated above and because it is Government policy to preserve the openness of the Green Belt and because no very special circumstances have been found for removing the site from the Green Belt.

Core Policy 12a - Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Highway Improvements within Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area

OGBN objects to this policy which we consider unsound on the grounds that the proposed Cumnor and Lodge Hill park and ride sites will not discourage car use and that a new generation of park and ride sites to serve Oxford should be located closer to the place of origin of the greatest likely number of commuters to Oxford. We further object on the grounds that the developments proposed would reduce the openness of the Green Belt, contrary to Government policy, and would be harmful to the landscape in the vicinity of Cumnor and Sunningwell and to the visual and other amenities currently enjoyed by the residents of these villages. We believe that both sites chosen for park and ride should be deleted from the Plan and an alternative park and ride site, with its associated transport hub should be created at the Marcham junction of the A34 with the A415.

We further object to the policy of safeguarding public transport and cycle connections between the Dalton Barracks site and the proposed park and ride at Lodge Hill on the grounds that they would be highly intrusive in the local landscape and that they would carve up the local countryside and, by doing so, would inevitably invite further development around them contrary to the purpose of the Green Belt in protecting the countryside from encroachment and preserving its openness.

Core Policy 13a - Oxford Green Belt

OGBN objects to, and finds unsound, this policy as it relates to Dalton Barracks for the reasons stated above.

We appreciate that Dalton Barracks is a largely brownfield site and that, if incursions into the Green Belt were to take place at all, this could be considered to be a least worse option and certainly better than the various speculative proposals on the edge of Green Belt villages proposed in the Local Plan Part 1 which were dismissed by the inspector. But, for the reasons set out above, our objection is to the release of any Green Belt land as unnecessary and unjustified.

The Oxford Green Belt Network wishes to reserve the right to appear at the Examination in Public of this Part 2 of the Vale's Local Plan.

Dr D.I.Scargill
for Oxford Green Belt Network