

Vale of White Horse LPP2 Examination
Statement from Wootton Parish Council
Respondent Reference Number: 730294
8th June 2018
Matter 5: Dalton Barracks

This Statement is submitted by the Wootton Parish Council to develop and reinforce our previous Representations on LPP2.

Wootton Parish Council recognises the need to increase housing provision in the Vale of the White Horse and supports development at Dalton Barracks / Abingdon Airfield once the MoD vacate the site as it reduces development pressure on the Green Belt elsewhere in our local area. However, we are concerned that the proposed development, as present envisaged by the Vale, will result in increased congestion on our narrow local roads, reduce local amenities and damage local wildlife.

This statement concentrates on three questions (5.3, 5.4 and 5.6) as these relate particularly to our parish.

We respond to these questions in turn.

~~5.3. Is the housing allocation at Dalton Barracks appropriate when considered at the appropriate basis for preparation of a Supplementary Planning Document for the site?~~

1. The allocation of 1,200 houses on the Dalton Barracks site in the first phase is appropriate provided a) proper consideration is given to the effect that the development will have on roads in Wootton Parish, and b) the half-hourly bus service along Whitecross is maintained.

The parish is bisected by the B4017 which is already heavily congested, especially during the rush hour. The congestion increases whenever there is a problem on the A34 around Oxford and motorists use the road to escape the traffic jam. There are three particular pinch points - the roundabout on the outskirts of north Abingdon (not in the parish), Waterworks Crossing and Wootton Village. At present cars travelling south down White Cross in the morning rush hour can spend 10 minutes accessing the north Abingdon roundabout. Equally, cars descending Fox Hill from Oxford in the evening can wait 10 to 15 minutes to access Water Works crossing. The Dalton Barracks development, along with the new estate to the north of the Dunmore Road, will greatly increase the amount of traffic along the B4017 at peak times and the consequent congestion.

The Vale presently proposes a northern exit from the development onto Whitecross just to the south of the junction with Fox Hill. This is also likely to add to the congestion and a better alternative would be an exit onto Honeybottom Lane that follows the present runway.

The increased congestion will add to the dangers cyclists already face in travelling along a narrow and busy road. The Parish Council fears that at best children in the parish attending secondary school in Abingdon will be deterred in the future from cycling to school, as many do now, or at worst there will be fatalities. There has been a serious discussion about constructing a cycle lane between Wootton and Abingdon for more than thirty years and this would be an opportunity to realise the amenity.

The Parish Council is also concerned by the increased heavy goods traffic that will be generated on the B4017 during the building of the new development unless strict measures are taken to prevent site lorries using the road as a short cut to and from the A420.

2. The allocation of upwards of 4,000 dwellings to the Dalton Barracks site in the longer term is inappropriate in its present undeveloped formulation given the effect it will have on traffic congestion and the rural character of the parish. Wootton Parish Council endorses the comments in this regard made in the statement to the Examination

by Wootton and St Helen Without Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (Respondent Reference Number: 1095853). Even if road improvements are made at the pinch points on the B4017 to accommodate the increased traffic arising from the first phase of the development, these will be insufficient to cope with the huge amount of traffic generated by the creation of a neighbouring community several times larger than the present population of the parish. The B4017 would not be able to cope. There is little scope for widening the carriage way except on Lamborough Hill and there would be a knock-on effect clogging other roads in the parish.

Suggested modifications

Policy 8 B to be modified to include the words:

‘ Developments proposals will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the development is in accordance with the requirements of a travel plan for the whole site and the community within the surrounding area. The development will make the necessary reasonable contributions in order to implement sustainable transport initiatives, including minimising car usage and increasing the use of public transport, walking and cycling and other sustainable initiatives. The travel plan will amongst other things not only minimise the impact of the development upon transport by making suitable road alterations at known pinch points in the local area but will maintain and seek to improve existing bus provision and provide cycle lanes where these have been under serious consideration.’

5.4. How would the proposals for Dalton Barracks relate to the existing community and is this realistic? Is the proposal viable? Would it comprise sustainable development?

Wootton Parish Council endorses the comments under this head made in the statement to the Examination by Wootton and St Helen Without Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (Respondent Reference Number: 1095853).

5.6 Are the proposals to safeguard land for bus/cycle links between Dalton Barracks and the Lodge Hill Park and Ride site justified? Would there be any adverse impacts?

5.6. These proposals are not justified.

- It does not make sense to spend limited resources on new roads when the money could be better spent improving the pinch points on the B4017 (see above 5.3).
- The planned bus/cycle lane crosses Green Belt land which is the habitat and nesting ground of a large colony of skylarks. Skylarks are resident in all the fields between Whitecross and Lodge Hill. Skylarks are a fully protected species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. The skylarks are one of the glories of Wootton and Sunningwell parishes. They are sensitive birds and the envisaged links are likely to lead to their vacating site to the detriment of the local environment.
 - It is proposed that the northern spur of the bus/cycle lane initially follows the bridle path that exits Whitecross between Nos. 97 and 99. The bridle path is much used by walkers and equestrians and its loss would have an adverse effect on the parish’s amenities. The width of the bridle path where it passes between Nos. 97 and 99 is 12 feet (about 3.6 meters). This is not a wide enough space for a combined cycle and bus lane. A safe space that maintained an acceptable distance between the lane and the houses on either side would require the demolition of Nos 95 and 97 (two semi-detached houses) and No. 99 (a bungalow).
 - There is a perfectly feasible alternative with no infrastructure costs. A bus service taking people from the new development to the Park and Ride at Lodge Hill could be run on the existing road system via Dunmore Road. This would have the additional advantage of allowing the service to be used by the people living on the existing and new estates adjacent to Dunmore Road.

Suggested modifications: Delete proposal.

The Parish Council also supports the suggestion in the Wootton and St Helen Without Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group statement that the Vale examines whether the Marcham Interchange would be a better location than Lodge Hill for the proposed Park and Ride. This could be easily linked by bus with Dalton Barracks.