

Submission by Radley Parish Council: August 2015

Matter 3 – Spatial Strategy and Housing Supply Ring Fence

3.1 Is the proposed distribution of new housing and employment land (policies CP4 and CP6) soundly based? In particular:

(a) Does the proposed distribution of housing set out in policy CP4 appropriately reflect the settlement hierarchy (policy CP3) and the core planning principle of the NPPF (para 17) to actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable?

Radley Parish Council considers that policy on the distribution of new housing land in CP4 is not soundly based. While not inconsistent with the settlement hierarchy set out in CP3, that policy is itself flawed. Further, the distribution proposed in CP4 does not adequately take account of some of the core planning principles in the NPPF (para 17). Specifically:

- i. The settlement hierarchy in policy CP3 **fails to deal with the question of the scale of development appropriate for larger villages**. This is crucial. Development on a modest scale around these villages could make sense in planning terms provided there was adequate infrastructure provision. But large-scale development that will overwhelm and destroy the existing character of the villages certainly does not. The policy is completely silent on the question of scale relative to the size of the existing community. The numbers proposed for Radley Parish more than double its current size². Far from safeguarding the village character, this could in our view destroy it.
- ii. The settlement hierarchy in policy CP3 is also inadequate in that it **fails to address the question of separation of communities**. Land around Radley Village has been protected from development for decades by the planning authority and Planning Inspectors alike on the grounds that it is crucial to the continued separation of our community from Abingdon and from Kennington. CP4 envisages the development of large parcels of land which have been protected on these grounds over many decades. CP3 is again silent on this issue, providing no explanation or rationale for overturning the long-standing policy to protect communities from coalescence.
- iii. Whilst the proposals in CP4 are consistent with some of the 12 core planning principles in NPPF (para 17), including the requirement to make full use of public transport, they are inconsistent with others. In particular, the proposals **fail to reflect the NPPF requirement to take account of the different roles of different areas, including protecting the Green Belt around urban areas, supporting thriving rural communities and promoting the development and diversification of agriculture**. The housing proposals for the Abingdon and Oxford fringe area will destroy the character of some local communities, take out swathes of existing Green Belt and seriously weaken the local farming industry.

² CP4 proposes a total of 1,100 new homes in Radley parish: 240 homes at the North West Radley strategic site; 390 homes in the Radley Parish area of the North Abingdon site; 270 homes in the South Kennington site; and around 200 homes at the South Radley site removed from the Green Belt and identified as suitable for Part 2 allocations. The village currently comprises some 650 homes in the main settlement and a further 250-300 mobile homes within the parish boundaries to the south of Kennington.