

Oxford Green Belt

In 2013 the Vale of the White Horse District Council stated in Draft Local Plan 2026: **The Green Belt around the north side of Abingdon will be protected from development.**

(This has been the Council's policy throughout the 40 years I have lived in Abingdon).

This Draft Local Plan 2026 also showed that the Council proposed 1500 new homes to the south west of Abingdon together with land allocated for an employment site. It was to have been serviced by a new road linking the (B4017) Drayton Road to the (A415) Marcham Road giving it southern access to the A34. When the SHMA targets were introduced I believe that the Council should first have re-examined the proposed south western development. It has given no explanation for not doing so in spite of the knowledge that 70% of the jobs identified in the new Draft local Plan 2031 (4. Spatial Strategy, page 35, fig.4.2 Planned Economic Growth Areas: Harwell, Milton & Didcot) are associated with the Science Vale to the south of Abingdon. In my opinion this option of building to the south should have gone to public consultation.

Since the public consultation meeting held on 11th March 2014 to discuss the Draft Local Plan 2031, the District Council has increased the number of dwellings from 610 to 800 by adding a **new site** in the Abingdon Green Belt to the east of the A4183 (Appendix A page 9). There was no public announcement of this serious change to the Draft Plan. At the public meeting held on 19th November, which was held after the adoption of the Draft Local Plan by the District Council on 15th October, the public had no opportunity to make any objections to this further change to the Green Belt. In fact, a number of people living in that area were not aware of the additional loss of Green Belt until they attended the meeting. I must stress that this is not merely increasing the numbers on the existing north site but is creating a completely new site within the Green Belt.

No mention has been made in the Plan that the North Abingdon development (Appendix A) will be on **rising ground** to the top of Lodge Hill and that this development will dominate the view from Abingdon towards the north completely changing the rural character of this area.

The rural nature of the Vale to the south of Oxford has historically been due to the Green Belt which was planned to avoid urban sprawl between Abingdon and Oxford. The effect of Local Draft Plan 2031 will be the urbanisation of the countryside which will include the villages of Kennington, Radley and the Green Belt north of Abingdon. In the Government Press Release updated on the 6th October 2014 Eric Pickles said *"the Government has been very clear that when planning for new buildings, protecting our precious Green Belt must be paramount. Local people don't want to lose their countryside to urban sprawl or see the vital green lungs around their towns and cities lost to unnecessary development."*

