

## Comment

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Address	62 Alexander Close Abingdon OX14 1XB
Event Name	Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part One - Publication
Comment by	T Lever
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Consultation Point	Core Policy 8: Spatial Strategy for Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area ( <a href="#">View</a> )
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**Q1 Do you consider the Local Plan is Legally Compliant?** Yes

**Q2 Do you consider the Local Plan is Sound (positively prepared, effective and Justified)** No

**If your comment(s) relate to a specific site within a core policy please select this from the drop down list.** N/A

If you think your comment relates to the DtC, this is about how we have worked with the Duty to Cooperate bodies (such as neighbouring planning authorities)

**Q3 Do you consider the Local Plan complies with the Duty to Co-operate?** Yes

**Q4 Please give details of why you consider the Local Plan is not legally compliant or is unsound or fails to comply with the duty to co-operate. Please be as precise as possible. If you wish to support the legal compliance or soundness of the Local Plan or its compliance with the duty to co-operate, please also use this box to set out your comments.**

The North Abingdon Local Plan group does not believe that the North Abingdon-on-Thames site should be released from the Green Belt. Developing this site would result in loss of Green Belt habitat for wild life including sky larks and Red Kites in addition to countryside amenity enjoyed by residents of North

Abingdon. The Ancient Woodland of Blake's Oak adjoins the site and it is likely that this will be seriously impacted by the proposed housing development on the site. The proposed release of this land from Green Belt and the identification for housing will lead to a loss of biodiversity contrary to Core Policy 46 of the draft Plan. The Council has failed to recognise the existence of Blake's Oak Ancient woodland and therefore no protection has been suggested by the Council. Any housing development bordering this will lead to possible destruction or damage to this Ancient Woodland. Ancient Woodlands are irreplaceable features of our landscape since they take hundreds of years to develop and below ground there is a mycelium structure with filaments that as a single organism would extend under every single tree and out into the fields at their margins. Thus the part of the site adjoining this Ancient Woodland has an important role in conserving and enhancing the biodiversity the Council wishes to conserve, restore and enhance. The Council have not identified that the site is within close proximity of Sugworth Site of Special Scientific Interest. Natural England have informed NALPG that because of the close proximity of Sugworth SSSI they would expect to be consulted on any planning application.

**Q5 Please set out what modification(s) you consider necessary to make the Local Plan legally compliant or sound, having regard to the test you have identified above where this relates to soundness. (NB Please note that any non-compliance with the duty to co-operate is incapable of modification at examination). You will need to say why this modification will make the Local Plan legally compliant or sound. It will be helpful if you are able to put forward your suggested revised wording of any policy or text. Please be as precise as possible.**

NALPG believes that by developing this site there will be loss of habitat for wildlife and consequent loss of habitat restoration and biodiversity. Additionally there will be a loss of countryside amenity and ambiance enjoyed by many residents of North Abingdon. We are concerned about the impact of any development of the site on the Blake's Oak Ancient Woodland. The construction of housing in the immediate vicinity with all its associated groundwork and over paving will totally change the nature and biodiversity contribution of this Ancient Woodland. This woodland is currently inaccessible but if housing is allowed then irreplaceable damage to its habitat will result contrary to Core Policy 46 of the draft Plan. The development of this site for housing and urban uses is likely to result in a net loss of biodiversity, contrary to Core Policy 46. Further details are set out in the accompanying Topic Paper on Green Belt.

**Please note** your representation should cover succinctly all the information, evidence and supporting information necessary to support/justify the representation and the suggested modification, as there will not normally be a subsequent opportunity to make further representations based on the original representation at publication stage.

**After this stage, further submissions will be only at the request of the Inspector, based on the matters and issues he/she identifies for examination.**

**Q6 If your representation is seeking a modification, do you consider it necessary to participate at the oral part of the examination?** Yes - I wish to participate at the oral examination

**Please note** the Inspector will determine the most appropriate procedure to adopt to hear those who have indicated that they wish to participate at the oral part of the examination.

**Q7 If you wish to participate at the oral part of the examination, please outline why you consider this to be necessary:**

I am a member of the North Abingdon Local Plan Group and have researched the details of this proposed site and written the paper on the Green Belt implications. We have consulted widely in North Abingdon, including delivering 3000 leaflets and publicised the proposal since many residents have been unaware of the inclusion of this site. We have also held drop in sessions to offer informal advice in helping people submit their representations. I have lived in North Abingdon for thirty years and know the site well. Following on from my research and contacting relevant agencies, in addition to talking to residents, and speaking at a public meeting, I consider that I could best represent the views of the North Abingdon Local Plan Group concerning the planning implications of releasing the land from the Green Belt.