

Mr & Mrs J Oliver
33 Selwyn Crescent
Radley
OX14 3AL

2 April 2014

Dear Sir/Madam

LOCAL PLAN 2031 PROPOSALS FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT SITES IN RADLEY

I object to the Vale of White Horse District Council's development sites proposal to allow 20,560 new homes to be built within the Vale. My objections and concerns are as follows:

The Council is responding to the housing figures produced by the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment. This was a piece of research commissioned by all five Oxfordshire District Councils and the County Council to look at housing requirements.

I object that the housing numbers are based not just on the needs of existing Oxfordshire residents or even on Office of National Statistics predictions of growth for the county. Instead they are strongly influenced by the ambitions of the Oxfordshire Local Economic Partnership (LEP), an unelected body driven by business interests, which is seeking a significant growth in the local economy, with a knock-on 'policy led' increase in the County's population. Although the LEP proposals are outlined in the draft Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan, there appears to be no intention to open this up to full public consultation. Setting such ambitious targets for rapid growth in housing numbers also leads to concerns that a failure to deliver will lead us right back to where we are now - with speculative applications based on where developers want to build rather than where the houses are required.

1,720 of the proposed new homes will be located in the Oxford Green Belt in the villages of Cumnor, Kennington and Radley. This proposal will represent an unprecedented attack on the Green Belt and character of the rural Vale. Local planning authorities should only alter Green Belt boundaries in exceptional circumstances so that they should be capable of enduring beyond the plan period. The green belt areas should be protected against new housing development as mentioned in NPPF guidance on Green Belt paras 79-92 and PPG2 Green Belt document.

If VWHDC reduce the proposed housing figures by 1,720 this will remove the need to build any new houses in the Green Belt.

The following comments/objections mainly relate to proposals for Site 7, North West Radley:

I moved to Radley in 2006, my house backs onto fields in White's Lane, in 2006 I was assured by VWHDC Planning Policy that the land behind my property was and would remain in the Green Belt and would not be developed in the future. Therefore I object to proposal to build 240 houses on this land and do not want the views and peaceful tranquility spoilt and

destroyed by the Council. I also object to the additional noise levels and street lighting issues which will be created if the field is developed for housing.

The field behind my house is well maintained, owned by Radley College and rented to Peachcroft Farm for growing crops barley etc. The proposed development site includes a field, small wooded area and a deep disused gravel pit where there is an abundance of important wildlife living including: owls, red kites, sparrow hawks, jays, deer, pheasants, newts, frogs, door mice. This site also includes a bat colony, a protected species, living and feeding in this area. The biodiversity of this area would be lost and destroyed for ever if the land is developed for housing.

Did the consultants prepare an Ecological Impact Assessment before identifying this site for possible housing development?

Radley is a small village of approx 913 houses and certainly does not have enough facilities and infrastructure to accommodate another 720 new homes, this will increase the size of the village by 80% which would be entirely inappropriate. The primary school is currently full and has no room for expansion. The community village shop is run purely by volunteers and the Post Office closed last summer. Surely large housing developments would be better located in towns where there are adequate shops, schools and sports facilities rather than destroying the visual impact of a small village. Radley already has a parking problem caused by train commuters clogging up village streets parking near the station and in St James Road rather than paying to use the station car park, this problem would increase if more houses are built in the village.

The current free-for-all situation has occurred because the WWHDC allowed the 2011 Local Plan to lapse instead of starting to produce a new Local Plan during the last 3-4 years.

White's Lane is already a busy road, has no pedestrian footpath, no street lighting and is therefore not suitable for carrying the huge increase and volume of traffic required for the extra housing development. St James Road will become a rat run for traffic taking a short cut making it dangerous for elderly residents and children living in that part of Radley.

White's Lane is not a suitable location for such a large scale housing development because the land is outside the village confines. New residents will be cut off from the main village and there is no land available to create a pedestrian link through to the centre of the village.

Any large scale housing development in White's Lane would adversely affect the character and setting of Radley College which has statutory Listed Buildings. This site is an independent boarding school for 690 boys, set on a beautiful 800-acre estate. It was founded in 1847 by the Reverend William Sewell, fellow of Exeter College, Oxford.

Have WWHDC investigated using the existing 'brown field' site at the former coal yard in Thrupp Lane which is currently for sale and stands empty? This particular large site needs to be redeveloped and would improve the appearance of that part of Radley.

Yours faithfully

Mr and Mrs J Oliver