

## Comment

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Event Name	Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part One - Publication
Comment by	Mrs Hilary Prior
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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.** North West of Abingdon-on-Thames

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?** No

**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.**

My comments relate to the **village of Cumnor** , where five areas are earmarked for removal from the Green Belt.

- 1 There has been inadequate notice of these proposals. Most people have found out only by word of mouth.
- 2 The proposals are in clear violation of Government policy on the Green Belt, where as recently as March 2014 the Minister for Planning stated that "Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances" and that unmet housing needs do not constitute the special circumstances required for change. He stressed the Government's determination to ensure robust safeguards are not undermined when unmet housing need is assessed.
- 3 The proposals breach at least four of the five purposes of the Green Belt as laid out in the National Planning Policy Framework of March 2012.
- 4 Earlier plans for building on four of the Green Belt areas around Cumnor have been dropped on grounds that the development would be inappropriate, unsuitable, in a conservation area, and in a village whose layout cannot support the required improvements to infrastructure. It is contradictory to learn, only a short time later, of plans to remove the Green Belt status entirely.
- 5 Without Green Belt protection, the village will be open to any kind of development, however inappropriate. A conservative estimate suggests the order of 600 new homes, which would more than double the size of the community. As already acknowledged by the Vale, the facilities and infrastructure of the village cannot support such an increase and the layout of the roads prevents more than a minimal improvement.
- 6 The loss of the Green Belt would almost certainly lead to destruction of the character of the village. The core (separated from Cumnor Hill by the A420) forms a small community, with historic buildings and narrow roads. It would be difficult for this to be preserved. There is no suggestion in the plans that special measures would be put in place for amenities like the popular football ground and cricket pitch. No consideration has been given to loss of the immensely varied and prolific flora and fauna in the areas under threat.
- 1 If Green belt status is removed from Cumnor and nearby villages, as proposed, it will open the way for widespread development and unrestricted sprawl of Oxford into the surrounding countryside.
- 2 The nature of our historic villages, like Cumnor, will be changed forever.
- 3 Urban regeneration through the use of derelict and brown belt land has not been given sufficiently high priority .

**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.**

A proper public consultation on the Green Belt is urgently needed. Residents need to be properly informed (many are still unaware of these proposals).

A convincing assessment needs to be undertaken to prove that removal of green belt status is the only viable way of releasing land to meet future housing needs.

A sound case needs to be made as to why the plans meet the Government's guidelines on the Green Belt according to the NPPF 2012.

**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?** No - I do not wish to participate at the oral examination