

[REDACTED]

15 March 2019
Planning Policy Team,
VWHDC
135 Eastern Ave,
Milton Park,
Abingdon,
OX14 4SB

Dear Sir/Madam,

Local Plan Part 2 (LPP2) Main Modifications Public Consultation.

I first wrote with reference to the public consultation in April 2018 as I was very concerned that the VWHDC planned to take the historic village of Shippon out of the Green Belt (GB) as part of its plans to develop land on what was Abingdon Airfield and is now part of Dalton Barracks. (DB)

I have attended a number of public meetings where the plans for the building of 1200 dwellings on DB have been discussed. At those meetings the majority view of the people of Shippon towards the development was one of support. I realise that the availability of the land at DB represents an ideal site for housing development and helps the VWHDC to meet its obligation to take some of the Oxford unmet need. At the same time the infrastructure to support this development must be built in tandem with the housing development as all the roads around the site are minor, country roads and already at or beyond full capacity at peak times.

It is imperative that Shippon should be protected for the increase in traffic that will come from the DB development; not only 1200 homes by 2031 but the further development on the site going forward from that date.

My fear for the future of this historic village leads me to strongly Object to the proposal that the smaller village of Shippon should be removed in the Green Belt.

In his letter to the VWHDC on 30th October 2018 the Inspector questioned the soundness of LPP2 saying there was a lack of unambiguous data to support a large development of up to 4,500 dwellings at Dalton Barracks. He stated that soundness could be achieved by limiting the development to 1,200 dwellings with Green Belt designation deleted from the site(s) concerned and no more. That statement inferred that Shippon, which is not part of the development site, would remain in the Green Belt.

What I do not understand is why a couple of months later he went back on this and also indicated that not only should Shippon come out of the GB but it should also be joined to the new development on DB as part of “ an integrated and continuous settlement” and then it seems he tries to reassure residents by saying, “albeit protecting as far as possible the existing character of Shippon”. I find this a weak and somewhat insulting copout, if he genuinely wants to protect Shippon then leave it in the GB where it can benefit from all the protection that brings as laid down quite clearly in the National Planning Policy Framework. (NPPF)

I am aware that Shippon is designated as a smaller village in the VWHDC’s own settlement hierarchy in LPP1 and currently continues to be referred to as a smaller village in LPP2. I am aware that LPP2 cannot contradict LPP1 as LPP1 is the prime document. If Shippon continues to enjoy the protection of being washed over by the Green Belt then new development is restricted to limited infill only. As 1,200 new dwellings cannot be described as limited infill then that number of dwellings cannot be built as a continuous settlement with Shippon. LPP2 is inconsistent on this point and unsound.

The NPPF sets out critical test before any GB boundary can be changed and also critical tests before any development can take place within the GB. One such requirement is that the VWHDC should look at all other options available to meet its housing needs before the GB boundary is altered and development takes place. They have not done so in this case as there is ample land available on the DB site to meet all their needs, not only to 2031 but beyond that date. Therefore, there is no need to lift Shippon out of the GB which , I believe, makes LPP2 unsound.

The whole DB site covers some 290 hectares. The Army operational area is 90 hectares and the proposed country park on the site has been reduced to 30 hectares. This leaves 170 hectares for possible future development and that amount of land is more than enough for 1200 dwellings required by 2031. Even after potentially a further 4000 plus dwellings beyond this date, there is sufficient land available at DB to meet the VWHDC’s identified need.

The other thing the majority of residents wish to see is open space between Shippon and the new development, not linked together but some sort of buffer zone so the character and setting of Shippon is protected. Again, the GB offers that protection which is a very strong reason for remaining in the GB. This view is supported as the new development has always

been described as following Garden Village Principles, those principles state that any new development should be stand alone and no encroachment or coalescence with an existing settlement. This is not what is being said in LPP2 which makes it inconsistent with planning regulations and unsound.

In summary and what I believe is the key point is that it is entirely possible for the VWHDC to meet their ongoing housing needs to 2031 (and beyond) at the Dalton Barracks site as there is more than enough available land. At the same time, they can meet the well documented and evidenced wishes of the local residents and keep Shippon in the Green Belt.

Yours faithfully,

Janet Churchouse.