

Comment

Consultee	T Lever (874119)
Address	62 Alexander Close Abingdon OX14 1XB
Event Name	Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part One - Publication
Comment by	T Lever
Comment ID	LPPub3383
Response Date	22/01/15 11:17
Consultation Point	Core Policy 8: Spatial Strategy for Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area (View)
Status	Submitted
Submission Type	Email
Version	0.2
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. The Council have not demonstrated the 'exceptional circumstances' required for releasing the site from the Green Belt. The Council in paragraph 6.82 states that protecting

the environment is an important theme of the plan, but The North Abingdon Local Plan group does not consider that the releasing of the site from the Green Belt and proposing housing on the site is protecting the environment. The site is on prominent rising land and any housing would be unduly intrusive in the landscape. We are also concerned about the traffic and air quality implications of developing this site and these issues are considered in different Topic Papers by NALPG but should be taken into account when examining the protection of the environment. Additionally the site makes an important contribution to the attractiveness of the landscape including the rolling sweep to the north of the site nearest Lodge Hill. Dunmore Road and Twelve Acre Drive form a clear boundary to the north of Abingdon. Paragraph 6.111 refers to the core planning principle of the NPPF and states that planning should contribute and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes. The site makes an important contribution to the visual enjoyment and recreational use of many residents of North Abingdon and is a valued landscape. The importance of this valued landscape has been recognised and endorsed by a previous Local Plan Planning Inspector and this is detailed in the attached Topic paper. The Council has failed to identify Blake's Oak Ancient Woodland immediately bordering the site and therefore neither this important feature, nor its protection, has not been taken into account when considering releasing this land from the Green Belt. How can we feel confident in the Council's analysis of the environmental contribution of this Green Belt site when important considerations have been overlooked? No detailed survey has been undertaken to determine the exact quality of the farmland. We have been informed that some of it is 'best and most versatile' by Natural England. These issues are covered in more detail in the attached Topic Paper on the Green Belt.

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.

We believe that the site makes a valued contribution to the landscape of Abingdon and if released from the Green Belt and allowed for housing, then this will result in a very large intrusive development sprawling in open countryside, which because of the slope of the land will be unduly prominent. The biodiversity and currently undisturbed habitat of Blake's Oak Ancient Woodland will be lost forever. We consider that the site should remain in the Green Belt. The Government has been very clear that when planning for new buildings, protecting our precious green belt must be paramount. The Government have also stated that the National Planning Policy Framework should be read as a whole and that need alone is not the only factor to be considered when drawing up a Local Plan. The Council appear so determined to meet the housing figures that any other planning consideration, including Government advice, is overridden. The Council's case for building in the Green Belt is not sound.

Officer comments

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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.