

Cypress Lodge Lamborough Hill Wootton Abingdon Oxon OX13 6BY



Vale of White Horse District Council
Abbey House
Abbey Close
Abingdon OX14 3JE

30 March 2014

Dear Sirs

Local Plan 2031

I am writing to register my objection to the proposals in your Local Plan 2031 to amend the Green Belt boundaries and in particular to permit the construction of 200 houses in East Wootton.

General comment

The document 'Housing Delivery Update' refers to the exercise you are carrying out, as a consultation; but this is a misnomer in that you are seeking comments on a strategy that you are proposing to implement. In a genuine consultation we would have the option of expressing a preference from a list of alternative strategies. Nowhere is there any mention of other options. This is a relevant comment because elsewhere in the document you say that you looked at a number of small and readily deliverable sites rather than relying on larger sites that take longer to deliver. Where are these larger sites? Why the hurry? We are talking about a plan going up to 2031 so the need for urgency is not apparent. One is left with the impression that you have gone for the easiest and most expedient solution.

Changes to the Green Belt

Building houses at seven sites in the Green Belt will establish a dangerous precedent that will make it easier to construct more houses at other sites at some later time and we will end up with creeping continuous development between Cumnor and Whitecross, as well as on the Eastern fringes between Kennington and Radley. You say that the government policy requires you to consider favourably large speculative planning applications. The seven sites will yield 1720 houses. I find it hard to believe that there aren't any suitable sites that could accommodate a development of this size. Abingdon airfield occupies a large area of land and is seriously under-used. Why cannot land on the fringes of the airfield be developed for housing?

To sum up, I am completely opposed to your proposal for housing development on the seven sites within the Green Belt.

East Wootton proposal

I am objecting to the proposal to build 200 houses on Lamborough Hill on the grounds of environmental impact, traffic density and traffic noise.

In the section on East Wootton in Appendix A of the Local Plan, under the heading 'Urban Design Principles' it states that the development will be of high quality design. The most recent large housing development in Wootton has been at Deerhurst Park on the former business park and this is a disgrace. The housing density is too high and the provision for parking is grossly inadequate. The only point in its favour is that the awfulness is hidden from public view. That such a development was approved by the Vale, doesn't give me any confidence that the Lamborough Hill development, which would be exposed to full public view, would be any different from that at Deerhurst Park.

In the section 'Landscape Considerations' it states that it will be ensured that the development does not result in harm to the open character and openness of the Green Belt. This is a nonsense. By no stretch of the imagination can it be claimed that supplanting half-a-dozen horses in 8ha of fields, by an estate of 200 houses, is not going to harm the open character of the landscape. It is also claimed that the development will be designed to allow views of Boars Hill from Lamborough Hill; elsewhere it says that tree planting will be carried out to soften the roadside edge with Lamborough Hill. How will this tree planting be compatible with allowing views of Boars Hill from Lamborough Hill? How will the views of Boars Hill be maintained? My calculations indicate that this will not be possible. Have you done any calculations?

Under 'Environmental Health' it says that noise mitigation measures may be required. Who will make the decision on whether measures are required; what will be the criteria; what measures can be adopted?

One aspect that is not discussed, is the traffic that will be generated by the development; the only comment is that the exit from the estate will connect with Lamborough Hill. At the morning and evening rush hours there is already considerable traffic on the B4017, both North and Southbound, and it is often not easy for the few residents on the Western side of Lamborough Hill to get out of their drives. The greater volume of traffic that will be generated by the estate is going to create a traffic hazard, in particular for drivers wishing to travel Northwards.

My general conclusion is that this proposal has not been properly thought out and that in the event, many of the assurances that have been made will not be delivered. Once these houses have been built they will be there to stay; the damage to the landscape cannot be erased. Development on this site should not be contemplated.

Yours faithfully

J A Perkins