

## **Cllr Chris Brant, Cherwell District Council & Banbury Town Council**

I stand before you today as both a District and Town Councillor and as a local resident.

The short film we have all just watched clearly demonstrates the significant concerns raised by both residents and experts.

This site is not allocated in the current Local Plan, nor is it in the emerging Local Plan, and disregarding the spatial policies of the Local Plan would lead to piecemeal development of the countryside.

This planning application has been objectively assessed and found not to conform to the Local Plan. Therefore, the refusal should be upheld to respect the Local Plan, which accurately reflects the current wishes and needs of the residents of Cherwell.

Anything other than a refusal would, in my opinion, prejudice the integrity of the current Local Plan, which does not designate this area as a housing site.

The proposed development is considered to erode the open arable landscape that provides clear separation between Banbury and Hanwell. This landscape is integral to the setting of the Hanwell Conservation Area, St. Peter's Church (Grade I Listed Building), and Hanwell Castle (Grade II\* Listed Building). The development would be detrimental, causing less than substantial harm to the setting of these designated heritage assets, contrary to policy ESD15 of the CLP 2031 Part 1.

The proposed location sits on fertile agricultural land graded as Grade 2 and 3, featuring a flat plateau with exceptional drainage, optimal for cultivating crops. These fields represent the final remaining expanses of level terrain before the landscape transitions to rolling slopes.

The proposed development site lies within the unspoiled countryside and isn't designated for urban expansion. Its strategic placement, visually striking, threatens to disrupt Banbury's contained environmental context. This poses a tangible risk of merging Banbury and Hanwell, introducing unwelcome visual encroachment into the rural expanse. Such an alteration would starkly contrast with the untouched nature of the open arable lands, imposing an urban footprint incongruent with the area's distinctive charm. This shift could erode the rural landscape's character and dilute Hanwell village's unique identity.

This appeal must be dismissed.