

## Lynne Baldwin

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**From:** dc.support@cherwell-dc.gov.uk  
**Sent:** 17 February 2022 17:30  
**To:** DC Support  
**Subject:** New comments for application 22/00385/SO

New comments have been received for application 22/00385/SO at site address: Os Parcel 7921 South Of Huscote Farm And North West Of County Boundary Daventry Road Banbury

from Allan & Lisa Phipps [REDACTED]

**Address:**  
Foxdale, Blacklocks Hill, Nethercote, Banbury, OX17 2BL

**Comment type:**  
Comment

**Comments:**

Huscote is a beautiful, unspoilt area of Banbury countryside. It contains remnants of the agricultural heritage of the Banbury area and the biodiversity supports an abundance of wildlife. At a time of climate crisis, when Government is working hard on Nature Recovery Strategies, it seems abhorrent that any consideration would be given to destroy what we already have in this area

As part of Cherwell District Council Local Plan Review 2040 Call For Sites, speculative proposals were submitted for the areas of both Nethercote (LPR-A-185) and land north of the A422 (Huscote) (LPR-A-034 and LPR-A-168) these proposals would in effect see both areas concreted over and turned into Industrial Estates. Neither of these areas are currently within the Local Plan and therefore not earmarked or assessed for development. Our understanding from the published process is that following the close of the consultation in November 2021, that Cherwell District Council are currently reviewing the proposals submitted in the Call For Sites and giving due consideration to consultation responses. Stakeholders are currently awaiting to learn whether either proposal will be supported for inclusion into the next stage of Local Plan Review 2040 and this is not expected to be published until later this year.

This screening opinion application seems premature, given that Cherwell District Council have not had ample opportunity to consider whether the Huscote site will be considered for development as part of the Local Plan Review 2040. Not allowing due process to be followed puts pressure on the council departments and that can lead to important issues being inadvertently overlooked. Only this month we are reading reports concerning housing on a Banbury housing estate having emergency reconstruction after foundations were found to be failing less than a decade. It is reported that the houses may have been built on unsuitable land.

It is our strong opinion that neither of these sites are suitable for inclusion in the Local Plan for development on this scale. Developing the areas would have a hugely negative impact on our countryside; increase traffic and place further pressure on the M40 roundabout which is already insufficient for the volume; increase noise from alarms and machinery; remove the natural habitat for wildlife and birds; increase flooding risks by removing permeable surfaces to mention a few.

Turning specifically to the screening opinion application, the proposal does not respect the character of the countryside or the history of Banbury held in this area. Nor does it represent sustainable development as it fails to meet environmental objectives which include improving biodiversity and enhancing the natural environment. The area is an established, natural habitat for much wildlife, such as Muntjac deer, foxes, badgers, bats, hedgehogs, birds of prey, including owls, rare birds such as woodpeckers, insects and bees along with many species of small mammals. The area with its proximity to the M40, A361 and the A422 gives the wildlife an unusual protection from human interference or disturbance.

The area provides much opportunity for Government Nature Recovery Schemes. Development of this area will destroy nature and runs counter to the Government goals for nature recovery through their 25-year environmental plan. The site contains areas of species rich grassland of which Banbury is lacking in general & therefore, given the global climate crisis, it would be more logical to expand the areas we have locally rather than destroy them.

Flood risk is a huge concern. development of the area would create an increase in flooding by removing permeable surfaces, nearby areas have required much work against natural flooding and the lower grazing land is already prone to flooding. Lying on the lower levels, the area will absorb groundwater running from the surrounding higher ground, with permeable surfaces removed from both the slopes and lower land, this water will need to go somewhere. Nearby Nethercote lies on lower land and already suffers water logged fields at times. On the other side of the A422 to Huscote, in Nethercote there is a string of underwater springs, there is little knowledge of what lies beneath the ground at Huscote.

The fields in the site are medieval ridge and furrow landform. The ridge and furrow is well-preserved and therefore it is unlikely that the ground has been disturbed significantly since the medieval times, making it impossible to have any detailed knowledge of what lies beneath or what the land may have been previously used for.

Such large-scale commercial development gives no consideration for residents in nearby areas and would bring unreasonable disturbances from units such as alarms and machinery. Regularly alarms can be heard sounding at Central M40 site on the other side of M40, these are distant enough, masked by traffic hum to not disturb, but it is noted that caretakers of the units rarely attend to address the noise, with alarms regularly left ringing for whole weekends and holiday periods such as Christmas.

The boundaries of the medieval ridge and furrow fields are marked by hedgerows which have not been surveyed. These hedgerows are irreplaceable pieces of living history as well as providing quality habitat for wildlife. The older a hedgerow, the more it can support the greatest diversity of plants and is more valuable for ecology due to the maturity, not only of the hedgerow but the soil and fungi too. Ripping out these hedgerows cannot be offset in any meaningful way. New planting throughout a developed site will not improve the biodiversity of the area in any relevant way.

As the biggest plants on the planet, trees give us oxygen, store carbon, stabilise the soil and give life to the world's wildlife. Not only are trees essential for life, but as the longest living species on earth, they give us a link between the past, present and future. There is an abundance of mature trees across the site, trees of a significant age, the benefit to the environment of which cannot be offset in any valid way. Around 35 of these trees have TPOs placed on them by Cherwell District Council, however this has not been reviewed in over 30 years so is unlikely to reflect the significance of the trees standing currently in this area.

The current infrastructure capacity is insufficient at the M40 roundabout and further development would have an unacceptable impact on local roads. Since the building of the M40, J11 is a bottle neck for traffic trying to reach Banbury from areas of Northamptonshire such as Middleton Cheney & other numerous villages, Brackley, Towcester, Daventry, Northampton as well as anyone travelling South or North on the M40. All of this traffic must come across J11 roundabout and this is already incredibly problematic. The recently consented Frontier Park has only exasperated the problems with congestion. Before any further development is considered, it would be prudent to resolve the issue of the current infrastructure.

The area of Huscote Farm is significant to Banbury and nearby South Northamptonshire, it is the first thing that visitors see when leaving or passing over the M40. It is currently rural, open countryside containing remnants of Banbury's agricultural past. To replace this with concrete and industrial units would be devastating for the environment and would significantly deteriorate the landscape view in this fundamental area. We would like to believe that Cherwell District Council would not give any consideration to such a proposal. The proposal does meet the criteria for requiring an Environmental Impact Assessment and given the significant impacts that development would have, we would hope that any application for consideration by the authority should be required to be accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment. We would urge the Local Authority to notify the applicant that an EIA would be required, as once our countryside is gone, it is gone forever.

Case Officer:  
Samantha Taylor

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