

## Comment from John Webley on application 22/01715/OUT

Based on the Planning Statement, Blenheim's case for this proposal is totally dependent on their contention that it is *sustainable development* and that there should, in consequence, be a presumption in favour of development. If the contrary is true, the application should clearly be refused and the purpose of this comment is to demonstrate that this should be the outcome.

It is noteworthy that all the content provided in respect of *sustainability* refers to the standard themes of type of design, construction, traffic management etc. but the fundamental flaw in the arguments put forward is that the impact on Woodstock itself is totally ignored.

Irrespective of the fact that the land is sited in Cherwell, it would be a Woodstock development and it is the impact on Woodstock itself that has to be considered above all else when considering sustainability. The Planning Statement is therefore deficient.

Reference is made to the West Oxfordshire Local Plan's comment that:-

*Woodstock is suitable for a reasonable scale of development whilst protecting its important historic character and the setting of Blenheim Palace, in order to deliver affordable housing, enhance local services and reinforce its role as a service centre.*

and this is the only argument put forward to support the development as part of Woodstock.

A reasonable scale of development is a matter of judgment but an unreasonable level becomes quite obvious. The current development proposals that Blenheim is progressing in Woodstock will introduce 730 additional homes which represents a housing increase of well over 40%. Woodstock, even before this additional planned development, is virtually at breaking point. The town is simply not designed to be able to deal with this scale of development and the additional strains that will be put on the basic services and infrastructure. The surgery is at breaking point and the town is already unable to deal with the traffic flows and parking. To suggest that a further 500 homes can be accommodated is complete nonsense and it should be borne in mind that the West Oxfordshire Local Plan referred to Woodstock development that would *enhance local services and reinforce its role as a service centre*. This latest development proposal from Blenheim would clearly result in completely the opposite result and, for this reason, is totally unsustainable and should be categorically refused. The Local Plan envisaged 600 additional homes as *reasonable*, not 1,230.

One could add that taking productive agricultural land out of production given the current situation which is likely to be long-term is also not an example of sustainability. Blenheim, having acquired Pye Homes, is now a housebuilder and is acting as any housebuilder would in order to seek a return on their investment.