

22/01715/OUT (Land South of Perdiswell Farm, Shipton Road, Shipton on Cherwell)

As a former Woodstock resident of 50 years and former Town Councillor and Mayor, I am registering a strong objection to application 22/01715/OUT. My husband and I moved in 2018 because of the overdevelopment of what was once a much sought after and beautiful small Cotswold market town.

I am in fact at a loss to understand why this application is in front of the Cherwell Planning Authority. Even the developer acknowledges that the Inspector for the recently agreed Local Plan removed this site from the proposals and yet continues to attempt to fly a kite to gain permission.

Although it sits outside the Woodstock parish boundary, the site is termed as “Woodstock” in recognition of the fact that it abuts the new development on the field to the east and that residents of the latest proposal will inevitably look to Woodstock as their centre.

It is significant that West Oxon DC has repeatedly objected to development on this particular site – as the relevant District and Planning Authority, WODC is well aware of the problems that this additional development will create.

It is also significant that the Inspector for the current and recently agreed West Oxfordshire Local Plan included three sites in the West Oxon plan within the Woodstock boundary only in recognition that *“There is an identified need for 15,950 new dwellings in the district (including in respect of Oxford City’s unmet needs). Although it would be possible to provide for this without any new housing at Woodstock, the town is an identified Rural Service Centre with a good range of local facilities and excellent public transport links with Oxford. In my judgement the benefit of **providing for around 600 dwellings** (less than 4% of the plan’s overall housing requirement) in this sustainable location represents clear and convincing justification for the proposed housing development, bearing in mind the importance of the nearby heritage assets and the level of harm which would be likely to be caused to them.”*

That Inspector assessed that because and only because there was a determined “need” for nearly 16,000 dwellings, Woodstock needed to be included. He did however recognise the importance of the nearby heritage assets and sought to minimise the level of harm determining that 600 was (just about) acceptable. In fact, Vanbrugh Trust – the developer for all sites in Woodstock including the current proposal for the additional site in Cherwell has sought to increase that 600 to 750 and now adds this proposal for an additional **500!** Should Vanbrugh Trust get its way there would be new build of 1250 (!!!) homes - way, way more than the small market town and its extremely limited facilities can accommodate.

In addition, the Inspector for the Cherwell Local Plan viewed the allocation of the site as unsound stating that:

- *Development of the site for housing would represent an incongruous extension into the countryside that would cause significant harm to the setting of Woodstock, and the character and appearance of the area;*
- *The travel distance to Oxford is likely to tempt residents away from more sustainable travel choices, including public transport or cycling, notwithstanding the proximity of the site to a proposed Park & Ride facility (not sure if this is still a plan!)*
- *The impact of the site would cause harm to both the setting and significance of the nearby Blenheim World Heritage Site.*

So, no less than 2 different Inspectors within recent years have ruled against development on this site.

What was the point of two expensive Public Examinations if such recent decisions were to be overruled?

The context of the proposal of course is that Cherwell District Council sought 4,400 additional dwellings close to Oxford to address what was claimed to be an unmet need for Oxford. This site - Land Southeast of Park View (formerly referred to as PR10 in the part Local Plan) - was one of those considered. When the Inspector rejected it as an option, the houses were reallocated elsewhere but between Oxford and Woodstock. To now accept a 500 dwelling proposal for this site would increase those numbers to 4,900. It beggars belief that the road network will be able to cope with the 4,400 (plus 600-750 allocated to Woodstock through West Oxfordshire) let alone this expanded number of 4,900.

How has this application come about? Is it because the developer believes that the “tilted balance” comes into play – that Cherwell District Council does not have a five-year housing supply? Surely the whole point of going through the Local Plan process is to address such an issue? Furthermore, the NPPF does not blindly accept that development HAS to be accepted if there are strong reasons against it. I contend that two Inspectors rejecting a site is good enough.

The Planning legislation currently passing through Parliament will address this nonsense.

Cherwell planners MUST reject this application.

Yours

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