

Yarnton Parish Council

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Cherwell District Council
Planning Department

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COMMENTS ON PR8 OUTLINE PLANING APPLICATION 0 23/02098/OUT

OVERVIEW

Yarnton Parish Council (YPC) has welcomed Oxford University Development's (OUD) thorough consultation with local residents with material made available both online and at in-person events.

While YPC understands the development forms part of Cherwell District Council's Local Plan, it ***continues to object*** to the development of green space (previously greenbelt land), especially in an area prone to flooding; and to the proposed closure of Sandy Lane to vehicular traffic. We also object to the naming of the development as "Begbroke" when the largest proportion of the development lies within the parish of Yarnton. These points are covered below along with additional factors that the Parish Council believes should be considered.

FLOODING AND LAND DRAINAGE

Chapter 14 - Agricultural Land and Soil Resources

The report talks about the protection and improving soils to meet demand for food to combat the effects of climate change. However we were unable to find specific details as to how that will be achieved with the significant loss of agricultural land to developed areas.

The report states that the Best Most Valuable soils will be used or retained in permanent storage on site, but there is no information as to where it will be stored or to where the displaced water will be moved - compensation storage. Soil stored in areas known to flood should have an equivalent

volume of water storage compensation elsewhere onsite or offsite. The building footprints are proposed at 300 mm above ground level but there is no mention of where the displaced water currently in those areas will be stored.

The report plans don't show all areas at risk of flash or groundwater flooding. In particular the area abutting the railway line which was flooded winter 2022.

The railway track cuts across the natural flow lines of the topography. It seems plausible that the railway company excavated a cut-off ditch on the west toe of their embankment. Has this been explored with Network Rail as a cause of the standing water on the development site?

The report states that there is no feasible mitigation on-site for loss of cumulative BMV agricultural soils, the effect of which is stated as very large. What are the alternative off-site proposals to make good loss of local food production?

Chapter 15 - Ground Conditions and Contamination

There was no geotechnical lining of the old land-fill site found, or upper encapsulation of pollutants within the fill. The report describes the fill as inert but the site description does not seem to support this view. A rise in groundwater levels could mobilise pollutants in the fill, carry them via the groundwater to the open pond within the Broad Field Rd recreation area. The ground levels in the Broad Field Road development seem significantly lower than the northern part of the development site. Water displaced from the new higher proposed developed areas could increase risk to the more recent new development south of Sandy Lane.

A change in groundwater levels can potentially alter ground water depth in Rushy Meadow (SSSI). Any development carries a risk of change above or below the site. But this seems to have been deemed out of scope.

The shallow groundwater levels have been identified as having the ability to destabilize banks undermining the proposed water retention measures leading to increase rates of flow off site, coming into the village, in conjunction with elevated rates of soil erosion on the site.

Chapter 16 - Water Resources and Flood Risk

The report talks about managing surface water so that the existing flood risk is not compromised. But it doesn't seem to mention reduction of the existing flooding on the site. The target still seem to be the Qbar figure agreed with the LLFA.

The report states there will be no connectivity to the Cherwell or Evenlode. But it makes no mention of back-flows into the main rivers from the Thames floodplain or into the existing attenuation ponds in Yarnton. The capacity to accept flash flows from the village and proposed development areas in the wider catchment will depend upon the standing water levels in the local main rivers and culverts, but this is not discussed. There is no information about the proposed Oxford flood relief scheme and whether there are proposals to use enhanced storage upstream (heightened floodplain levels) of Oxford.

The flood risk strategy continues to focus on limiting flows off-site to those agreed with the LLFA and gives little regard to the impact of the confluence of the culvert and the south ditch just outside the limits of the Hallam site. The culvert delivers the majority of the flow off PR9 and could have a significant impact on existing flows and therefore flooding in both the existing village, the Hallam development and future upstream.

The foul sewer strategy shows new connections to the already overburdened village system. It seems to us that an entirely new foul sewer connecting to the Oxford tunnel in the old sewage works, running through the length of PR8 and also serving PR9 would bypass entirely the risk of worsening the current flooding in the village.

SANDY LANE

The development master plan shows safeguarded land for a new bridge over the existing rail line. But there seems to be no direct replacement for the existing well used link to Kidlington. Its intention seems principally to provide a link to land that can be developed at PR7.6. It is unclear how Sandy Lane, or the stub of it after closure, will link up with the rest of the development; is there no connection?

YPC continues to advocate to keep vehicular access between Yarnton and Kidlington via Sandy Lane, or an alternative across the PR8 site. The Council represents the views of its residents which are summarized in our [2021 survey report](#). The loss of this connection will be to the significant detriment of existing residents as the current Sandy Lane provides a vital link to shops, healthcare, recreation, and family and friends. The proposed alternatives would add c.4 miles to round-trips: increasing traffic on the already busy A44 traffic; increasing costs for locals and adding to the CO2. The addition of 2,000 houses in the area, the expansion to Begbroke science park, the airport expansion, the Campsfield House development, the North Oxford development and proposed OUFC stadium amplifies the argument that Sandy Lane should remain open to local vehicular traffic to minimize the traffic burden on the A44. Additionally, there is no direct bus

route between Yarnton and Kidlington, nor is one proposed. It is not realistic to expect residents to walk over 2 miles between Yarnton to Kidlington to carry shopping, or for busy families juggling work and school runs to carve out the necessary time. The [2021 Insight report](#) states that the percentage of elderly people in Yarnton (23.1%) is higher than the English average (18.4%) and expecting this demographic to cycle is again unrealistic.

HIGHWAYS

We welcome:

- the implementation of an overall 20mph speed limit throughout the whole site to ensure safety for pedestrians and cyclists. This will bring speed limits in line with the rest of Yarnton once new 20mph are introduced in the village;
- that the Oxfordshire County Council 'Decide and Provide' transport policy is being implemented; and
- the enablement of alternatives to delivery vans (such as street robots to travel the last couple of miles to deliver parcels and goods) as for example used in Milton Keynes. These innovative technologies are to be welcomed to alleviate through traffic. Again these are imperative if traffic is to be kept at a minimum and reduce air pollution.

We have concerns:

- The road layout on the site is unclear - for example how close will cars be able to get to their houses, if at all. It is stated that it won't be possible to drive through the PR8 site from top to bottom; only buses and service vehicles will be allowed to do that. It is unclear where the barrier/bus gate will come but probably between the OUD bit and the Hallam Land bit, and that would mean that people living in the southern part of the OUD site and wanting to drive south would have to drive a long way north first to get onto the A44.
- The **Traffic Simulations** appear to argue that the effects are at worst minimal in nearly all cases (even closing Sandy lane!). And whatever adverse effects there may be will be diminished if/when OCC achieves its traffic reduction strategy (mode shift). Local residents will not believe this prediction and developers and planners must take responsibility for ensuring that residents and businesses are not adversely affected by worsening traffic conditions. It is pretty much admitted that things are going to be made difficult for the car; and there is a traffic management plan for residents that they will have to sign up to!! *(ES Vol 1, Chapter 9, Para 9.8.12 As set out in Section 8 of the TA, the cumulative assessment is forecast to result in changes to average delay of between +7 to +63 seconds per vehicle across the whole network during the network peak periods. Therefore, whilst there may be some localised changes (increases and decreases) in journey time on certain*

roads, across the study area as a whole the effect on driver delay would be minor adverse, which is not significant.)

There is one exception, it is predicted that the traffic going south approaching the Turnpike roundabout will back up quite badly at morning peak hours, but it will be acceptable because it will be of short duration. **Recent experience would suggest this is a gross underestimate** of the impact of the new development. In recent months we know that people (even the Begbroke Science Park shuttle bus) have been rat-running down Rutten Lane - this is not acceptable.

- The traffic documents are very difficult to comprehend, but can it really be correct that the morning peak hour traffic coming out of PR8 is less (at 250) than that going in (700+)? That seems to be the prediction.

COMMUNITY

As mentioned in the Sandy Lane section, the Sandy Lane vehicular link to Kidlington is an important and vital connection for both business and social purposes.

With the proposed closure of Sandy Lane there does not appear to be sufficient consideration to public transport provision between Begbroke, Yarnton and Kidlington. The new bus route proposal is for the S3 times to be altered to 4 times an hour but will not go through the existing village of Yarnton, cutting these residents off from easy travel to Oxford.

The community bus is suggested to connect the villages on a regular basis throughout the day between Yarnton-Begbroke-Kidlington-Woodstock-Gosford-Parkway Railway Station. The route hasn't been finalised yet but is something which **MUST** happen to retain connectivity. All the villages will need to be involved to provide the best route for all residents throughout the area.

The inclusion of a mobility hub for residents is welcomed (cycles, EV charges, hire of EV cars, etc) as the hire of electric bikes, cargo bikes and tricycles will encourage others to try out alternative types of transport. We hope that this would be extended to existing Yarnton residents.

We also welcome the addition of a Community Development Worker (for 2.5 years) and would appreciate them liaising with the Parish Councils as early as possible to help integrate all residents.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

YPC welcomes the nature-sensitive designs through the built environment and for the proposal of 29.2ha of local nature reserve, though notes that

some of this land includes the proposed new allotments next to Begbroke. YPC supports BBOWT's request for a detailed Biodiversity Improvement and Management Plan, and care and consideration should be given to existing space such as Rushy Meadows during and post development.

It is also welcome that OUD intends to keep management of maintenance of wildlife areas, green arteries, sports facilities and traffic control. It would be appreciated that they could assist the Parish Councils (if requested) in keeping the transition between the villages and the new development as smooth as possible.

All green spaces should be protected 'in perpetuity' and prevented from future development and build.

BUILDING ENVIRONMENT

Under the Local Plan Partial Review the allocation of houses to the PR8 site was 1,950. This application for c. 1,800 houses combined with the Hallam Land proposals for 300 houses on the southern part of the PR8 site amounts to c. 2,100 houses and that exceeds the Approved allocation.

Building heights are to be 25m for the R&D buildings – the new science block is already 22m including the plant on top of the building. How will this affect the new houses/flats etc and the skyline from Kidlington and Begbroke, Yarnton. There is some confusion as to how much of the maturing hedge/trees around the current science block are to be kept. At present they provide useful screening of the new science buildings and nearby residential housing. They also provide sheltered and cool pathways in hot summers for dog walkers, runners and ramblers. They are also a wildlife haven.

RECREATIONAL

Yarnton Parish Council are pleased to note that Sport and Play are a part of the OUD plans for the PR8 development as mentioned in 5.2.1, 5.6.3+4 and 5.8.15 and we look forward to working closely with OUD to ensure that the plans are of benefit to the existing residents and residents of the future alike.

We are extremely proud of our Volunteers who organize and coach our sports teams in Yarnton which are hugely popular and well supported.

We strongly advocate for the inclusion of play, activity and sport provision to foster mental and physical health and we have given a lot of consideration into our current situation to enable us to work with you to plan for the future of Sport and Play to accommodate the increased number of residents in our locality. In summary:

Play

We have a large Playground in the Rutten Lane Park that is very popular and is in an ideal location, as it is almost directly opposite the William Fletcher Primary School and the Pre School building. The Playground equipment is, mostly, unfortunately, almost 30 years old. We are currently working on raising funds to upgrade the equipment, we have raised around a third of the funds to carry this out. There are several small play areas around the village, but, we have found that these areas are seldom used, as, the children and young adults want to be amongst their friends to play and socialise, so tend to congregate in the largest Playground.

Netball

We have just one Netball/Muga at the Rutten Lane Park, with floodlighting, this also is a very old facility. Our Netball Club has over 100 members, of which the largest percentage are young adults and we are now in a position where due to the lack of facilities we have to restrict the growth of the club. Our membership comes from, not just Yarnton, but from Kidlington and the surrounding villages as well, some from as far as Bicester, Middle Barton and Witney. To allow for growth in the community another Muga, (to also allow other sport as well) with flood lights and facilities would be necessary.

Yarnton Blues Football Club (Boys and Girls)

We currently have over 100 players, but are missing some age groups as we are restricted by space and facilities, the Rutten Lane Pavilion was built, by some residents, in the 70s and isn't now fit for purpose. The club could easily double in numbers currently if space and facilities allowed. Due to the shortage of space and facilities the Yarnton Blues are sharing the facilities at the Little Marsh Football ground with the Men's Football Club. To allow for growth in the future at least one more football pitch would be required for Yarnton Blues with the necessary facilities.

Yarnton Mens Football Club

We currently have 4 Men's Football teams, although two of these teams play their 'home games' on a rented pitch in another village as we have only one full size football pitch in the Little Marsh football ground. Again our members are from within Yarnton, but also from surrounding villages. To allow for growth currently and in the future there is a need for at least one full size pitch now and others in the future.

Youth Provision

In addition to Yarnton Blues, Yarnton youngsters are supported by local Scouts and Brownies, with the Scouts hut in a dilapidated state. There are no other clubs and facilities available for the youth and we feel that this could cause a significant impact on the behaviour and development of the youth of

the community. Indeed, with the proposed closure of Sandy Lane to vehicular traffic, parents may feel more reluctant to make use of facilities in Kidlington and it may not be appropriate to encourage children to cycle for evening activities during winter months. We strongly advocate for the provision of facilities in PR8 to support youth activities and to make these available to existing residents.

The development plans

We are very pleased to see that the PR8 plans include Sport and Play and as above we look forward to working with you on this. At present we are concerned at whether existing residents will have access to the new PR8 facilities; and how PR8 provision will be integrated with current facilities so that we make best use of our overall space, avoid traffic congestion and allow our local clubs to expand and support all residents (existing and new). We are also very pleased that indoor sports are planned, as we currently do not have any indoor sports facilities available in Yarnton, and again we hope existing residents can make use of these. Especially, we look forward to discussing how new provision can support and nurture our youth.

GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The developed area will see Yarnton expand to four times its current size. The addition of (original number - 1,950) present number 2,400 houses will create a very large village population. YPC is pleased to see a Local Community Liaison Group will be established and would hope that Begbroke, Kidlington and Yarnton parishes will be represented on this group.

With the concept of the development being a new neighbourhood, YPC seeks ***clarification as to what this will mean in terms of local authority governance***. What is the role of YPC as a representative for the new residents living within the Parish boundaries? What roles would YPC be responsible for? For example, the Council is currently responsible for some grass and verge maintenance, local parks, the burial ground, community speedwatch, and public bins. We play an important role liaising with Cherwell District Council – raising issues for residents, developing local emergency plans, etc. There are many questions that will arise, for example - would the new residents be eligible to use our burial ground – will it be large enough over time?

NOMENCLATURE

Given the vast proportion of the development lies within the parish of Yarnton, YPC objects to the naming of the site as Begbroke. Greater attention should be given to referencing this development as within Yarnton Parish. It could be confusing for the existing residential areas to the east of the A44 which lie outside the new development if they are considered part of Yarnton, while the new development does not.

DURING CONSTRUCTION

At peak construction, it is estimated that the construction stage will produce approximately 370 two-way HGV trips and 2,100 two-way worker movements per day on average.

We need more detail on the construction traffic and how it will affect existing residents - noise, dust, traffic congestion and safety for all path and road users. We need reassurance that steps have been put in place to mitigate the impact of construction especially where it coincides with construction traffic on other development sites.

We would expect that the hours of construction be restricted at weekends and bank holidays. At present, with all the various construction it will be noisy and unpleasant, so keeping construction hours to a minimum will be needed.

Construction sites can look messy, unsightly and block pathways. YPC needs reassurance that these will be addressed and any concerns are dealt with quickly.

Lynne Whitley

Clerk to Yarnton Parish Council