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**Sent:** Thursday, October 12, 2023 5:48 PM

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**Subject:** Planning application 21/03522/OUT Land East of the A44 allocation (Policy PR8)

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For the attention of the Principle Planning Manager, Cherwell DC, Bodicote House

We wish to register our ongoing concerns about the way in which both the District Planning Authority and the Lead Local Flood Authority are continuing to conduct the planning of the large development zone abutting three sides of the existing village of Yarnton in the absence of an over-arching drainage strategy for the area.

The existing village is set on the southeast facing slope of the natural drainage watershed comparing a perched water-table on Spring Hill with both surface-water and groundwater flowing in an easterly direction towards areas identified for development in the local plan - PR9 and PR8. The PR9 site already has a significant impact upon previous development in the village. The existing village drainage relies upon a system of private and highway culverts which is planned to be used to drain about 70% of PR9 on completion. This is a system which we have now learned regularly surcharges leading to surface flows and ponding in residential streets and gardens.

The PR8 development area in its current state has less direct impact upon the existing village than does PR9 due to its location in the watershed and lower elevation. The watershed being part of the flood plain attached to the Rowel Brook system of open drainage channels on the east side of the village. We remain concerned that the surface and ground water we have regularly witnessed ponding in parts of the PR8 site will require the elevation of building footprints, roads and immediately surrounding areas to achieve the 1 in 100 flood risk protection required on all new developments, causing the loss of water storage volumes on the site which will be displaced to the southern areas of PR8 and down into the existing village. There do not appear to be any proposals for on-site compensation storage other than that identified for the proposed school site. While Hallam Land Management, the developers of the southern part of the PR8 site seem to be content to elevate the proposed building footprints further above estimated flood levels in order to ensure the 1 in 100 year flood risk is met, it is simply not possible to raise existing floor levels in the village to mitigate the effect of an increase in water displaced downstream.

The existing highway culvert serving PR9, the A44 and areas of the village are also of grave concern as surcharging and surface flooding is already a regular documented occurrence. The surcharged culvert discharges into the stream serving PR8 and running through Yarnton village with its confluence just west of the A44. While an option might be to increase the size and capacity of the culvert to relieve the flooding upstream, that however, may simply serve to increase flooding in southern parts of the village in combination with that from PR8. The culvert and the existing village is outside the development zone and the developers have shown little interest in investigating the current drainage patterns outside of their red line development areas beyond measures to show that, in accordance with government guidelines, flood risk is not likely to be increased by their individual development.

It is our opinion that more should have been done prior to the approval of the development brief to investigate the nature of flooding identified in the Cherwell district flood risk assessment, by clearly identifying the current nature and pattern of surface-water and groundwater drainage flows in the watershed (PR8, PR9 and the existing village). A drainage strategy could then have been developed which would provide for both the combined development areas and at the same time secured the long-term future of the existing village of Yarnton.

The development of Yarnton, it seems has reached a critical point. It has gradually crept north from its historic core. In that process, little thought has been given to the impact on the natural watershed. It is obvious to us that the current development proposals will use up what remaining agricultural land there is surrounding the village, locking in existing exceedance flow routes through the village itself – flow routes at the moment have a frequent return period.

We therefore call upon Cherwell District Council to put a Grampian style condition on planning approvals in the development zone to the effect that an agreed zone wide drainage strategy must be in place in advance of work commencing.

We look forward to your response.

Best regards,

Dave, Steve Colin, Matt and the associate members of YFD



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