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To: Planning <Planning@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk>
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I object to this planning application for the reasons given below

1) This is classic Green Belt. It is agricultural land, leading to further fields, the Cherwell floodplain meadows, the Community Woodland, the River Cherwell and further countryside beyond. There is not a building in sight before the small villages of Hampton Poyle and Thrupp. Nor are there any roads or other structures.

The Government states that it “attaches great importance to Green Belts” and that “the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence”. This land has never been developed and has always been open countryside without man-made intrusions. The applicant claims that it is “Grey Belt” but it is hard to see that this is what the Government intended when it talked of “previously developed land.

2) The site is important for nature conservation. The fields comprising the site are themselves relatively small and bounded by hedges and trees which support a variety of wildlife, particularly birds. Beyond further small fields, meadows and woodland run along the River Cherwell and are designated as a Conservation Target Area. The site is also close to the St Mary’s Fields Nature Reserve. Clearly any development on the proposed site would bring urban uses closer to these nature conservation areas and would be damaging to nature.

3) The land is important for people’s health and well-being. This land provides one of the last remaining areas of unspoilt tranquil and open countryside on the doorstep of Kidlington which is hugely valued and used for recreation and relaxation by its residents. There are two public rights of way that cross or run along the edge of the site. These are much used by local residents (and others) for recreation and relaxation. There are also many informal paths around most of the field boundaries which have been extensively used for many years. The importance of access to peaceful open space for people’s physical and mental health is widely recognised.

4) 5,000 houses and other developments are already in the pipeline for the Kidlington area. 4,400 houses were allocated on Green Belt land around Kidlington as recently as 2021. None have yet been built, but planning applications are well advanced and the eventual total is likely to be more than 5,000. Most of these homes will be available for people from Kidlington. It is absurd to suggest that somehow these don’t count towards local need because they do not fall within the historic boundaries of Kidlington parish.

5) Infrastructure will already be stretched to, and possibly beyond, the limit by the already planned developments. The 4,400+ houses, and other development that is

included in Cherwell's Plan (adopted in 2021) will have a major impact on a transport network which currently often operates at or over capacity. Congestion adversely affects both individual residents and businesses. The improvements included as part of Cherwell's Plan do not provide major increases in capacity and there seems to be an optimistic over-reliance on people shifting to public transport, cycling and walking. This further, unplanned for and speculative, development behind the Moors will only exacerbate pressures on the transport network without making any contribution to addressing them.

6) There are well publicised problems with sewerage and water supply capacity in the Oxford area. Absolutely essential upgrades to Thames Water's sewage processing capacity will only be complete by 2031, with an interim solution by 2027 allowing planned developments to go ahead. Will this solution also cope with a further unplanned development?

7) Flooding. The east end of the site is regularly under water in winter as it lies only one metre above the normal level of the River Cherwell. We have understood that this is caused by groundwater (water table) flooding though this does not seem to be recognised in the consultants' reports. There is also regular flooding elsewhere on the land. The development would create significant runoff and it appears that only a portion of this would be dealt with through the existing piped drainage system in Kidlington. We are concerned that the drainage ponds and swales proposed on site to deal with the rainwater draining from the proposed development would not be able to cope, resulting in periodic flooding to neighbouring properties. This is a problem which will only get worse with more frequent rainfall as the climate continues to change

8) There would be an adverse impact on the Local Road Network. It is proposed that the development will have two road accesses onto the Moors. The Moors is a relatively narrow residential road. It has already experienced traffic problems as can be seen by the traffic calming measures (road humps) that are in place.

One of the accesses will be opposite Benmead Road which would undoubtedly experience an increase in traffic. The planning application argues that there are sufficient visibility splays at this junction but for local residents it is notorious for lack of vision and over-parking. Benmead Road itself has awkward bends near the entrance to Kidlington North Primary school which would become less safe. Traffic would also increase on High Street and Mill Lane both of which are local residential roads.

All of the sites already allocated as part of Cherwell's plan for 4,400+ homes have access directly onto major roads such as the A44, or the Banbury/Oxford and Bicester Roads. It is unacceptable to us that the proposed development only has access onto and via minor residential roads which already experience traffic problems.

9) We have long proposed, with public and parish council support, that the site should be designated as a **Local Green Space (LGS)**. This is a positive proposal that KDW has made regularly to Cherwell Council since 2021 in response to its Local Plan consultations. These have had the full support of Kidlington Parish Council and build on

its own proposal for a “Green Ring” around Kidlington. There were a large number of responses from the public in support of our proposals. Cherwell Council supported the “Green Ring” concept in an early stage of consultation and has assessed our Local Green Space proposal but has not, as yet, taken it up.

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