

Planning Application no: 25/01346/OUT

Application for development of a site to the north of The Moors, Kidlington

The proposed development of 340 houses should be rejected for the following reasons:

1 New housing in Kidlington

CDC has on record that, after the agreement to permit 4,400 new dwellings to be built in Kidlington, no further land would be released for development. The 340 houses that are the subject of this application are over and above the 4,400 already to be built. This in itself constitutes grounds for rejecting the application.

With this enormous expansion of the village, the wild green space behind The Moors, readily accessible not only from Church Street but also from more than one point on The Moors, is already very well used by walkers and its preservation more vital than ever to the health and well-being of the local population. The proposed development behind The Moors is on Green Belt land, close to a nature reserve, and the encroachment of a built-up area on the fields would be highly detrimental to a unique amenity of landscape, varied wildlife, and flora, that provides a much needed contrast to the undistinguished urban sprawl of the village.

2 Amenities and infrastructure

The infrastructure of the village is already under extreme pressure:

- The doctor's surgeries, pharmacy, dentists, public transport, shops, and schools cannot absorb an increase of around 1,000 people as a result of the development.
- The drainage and sewage system in the area of The Moors is precarious: (a) during heavy rain in September 2024 the system could not sustain the volume of surface water running into it and flooded the street and at least one low-lying property nearby the proposed new development. More land under concrete will increase volumes of surface water in the area during heavy rain, episodes of which are increasing with climate change. (b) Thames Water has carried out works in The Moors several times in recent years; evidently the infrastructure is creaking. It is necessary to pump out the drains daily in St Mary's Close, which is noisy, malodorous, and plainly not a permanent remedy for a sewage system that is already inadequate to the houses it serves in this area. 340 additional dwellings will put the sewage system under even greater strain.
- The car parks in the High Street area (behind Tesco and the K Centre; and behind the Co-Op) are already often full to capacity; there is no capacity for more cars to park in the area.

3 Flooding

It is incomprehensible that the application claims there is no risk of flooding on the land to be developed, and no increase in the risk of flood elsewhere as a result of the new development. The fields and paths behind The Moors are often under water for weeks at a time in winter and often waterlogged in other seasons.

The land to be developed, especially the pond at the bottom of Benmead Road, currently absorbs surface water and plays its part in the natural control of flooding from the Cherwell. The development, covering nearly 22 hectares, will be lost to concrete will cease to hold excess water in wet periods.

4 Traffic

The flow of traffic through Kidlington is already congested, not only in rush hour but at all times of day. The Moors and Benmead Road are both short cuts – The Moors to High Street and Bicester Road, Benmead Road to the main Banbury Road. A large increase in the number of cars and car journeys in this part of the village cannot be absorbed.

Access into and out of existing houses is already difficult at almost every time of day; on-street parking in both roads already seriously obstructs the flow of traffic, and at the upper end of Benmead Road in the area of the school makes visibility very difficult (with consequent dangers not only to motorists but also pedestrians). Neither road can readily be widened to take increased traffic.

There are no speed bumps in Benmead Road and on the straight stretch speeding motorists already cause a dangerous nuisance.

5 The area of the church

The position of St Mary's Church is rare in being secluded from the main part of the village surrounded by fields. The proposed development would entirely destroy the spectacular character of this location, radically change the setting of the Grade 1 listed building, and seriously affect the atmosphere of the church and the surrounding area. The idea of creating a cricket ground with a pavilion, which would no doubt be hired out for events, in the immediate vicinity of the church is grotesque.