

13 February 2015

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By email - [tracey.morrissey@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:tracey.morrissey@cherwell-dc.gov.uk)

Dear Ms Morrissey

**RE: Planning Application 14/02004/HYBRID - land south of Perdiswell Farm  
Shipton Road Shipton On Cherwell**

CPRE Bicester & CPRE West Oxfordshire Districts are writing jointly to object to this proposal on the following grounds:

1. This proposal is on a massive scale and is both premature and surplus to need. Housing on this scale constitutes a strategic development. This area was not selected for strategic development within the West Oxfordshire or the Cherwell Local Plans.  
  
The current Cherwell Local Plan submission document has identified sufficient land to meet housing targets. The Local Plan does not identify a need to more than double the housing in the Woodstock area. While we await the Inspector's conclusions, it seems clear that the outcome should not be pre-empted by determining this individual application in isolation. The Inspector will either:
  - a. Agree that the local plan is appropriate, in which case this application should also be viewed as inappropriate; or
  - b. Suggest changes to the local plan that will require further consultation.
2. The development is of a disproportionate and unsustainable scale. It would more than double the size of Woodstock (from ~1300 homes to ~2800). It offers no compensating infrastructure improvements nor demonstrated employment benefits to the existing town.
3. The character and setting of the Woodstock town conservation area will be irreparably damaged both by the development on its outskirts and the resultant traffic and pressure on parking.

4. The development is designed to be largely self-sufficient and will not have good links into Woodstock. The effect will be to create a separate 'satellite town' on the outskirts. This, coupled with the inclusion of a medium sized new supermarket, will be detrimental to the existing town centre.
5. The development borders the Green Belt on Upper Campsfield Road and would result in the creation of a ribbon of urbanisation linking Woodstock, via Oxford Airport and the Langford Lane business area toward Kidlington and Begbroke. The physical separation between the town of Woodstock and the village of Bladon will be compromised. This will inevitably have many adverse consequences for the Green Belt and landscape in the area.
6. The development will clearly generate an unsustainable level of traffic. It will increase the already severe congestion on the A44 / Shipton road, A4095 and A34. The impact on traffic will be further increased by the applicants' parallel housing development application for Hanborough and the proposed Oxford Northern Gateway. We endorse the view of Woodstock Town Council's appraisal note (document 07845125) that the applicants' traffic impact assessment is flawed. The information provided is not adequate to understand the full potential impact of the proposed development on the highway. Traffic surveys were undertaken in the last full week before public schools broke up in July 2014 and outwith the Oxford Universities' terms.
7. The knock on effects will increase pressure on minor roads and lanes in the area that will discourage cycling and other leisure use.
8. There will be an unsustainable increase in traffic using train stations in the vicinity. Long Hanborough and Combe stations are already at capacity both in terms of parking and space on the trains themselves. Traffic toward Bicester and Kidlington stations will similarly stress the road network. The Kidlington 'Sainsbury' roundabout is already at capacity for commuter traffic.
9. The proposed mitigation measures (new bus links and minor highway changes) are inadequate.
10. The site is at a strategic and sensitive historic and rural location at the SE entrance to Woodstock town facing the main entrance to Blenheim Palace. It will be overlooked by the palace grounds. This will detract from the character, appearance and setting of this World Heritage Site. We note that both English Heritage and the UK National Committee of ICOMOS (which advises UNESCO on cultural World Heritage Sites) have registered objections on this point. ICOMOS-UK considers that the application has given inadequate consideration to the overall impact of the development and that the visual impact assessment that has been performed is inadequate.
11. The proposed development will cause irreparable harm to highly valued agricultural land as well as the character of a locally prized landscape. The loss of a large tranche of farmland cannot be mitigated with respect to sustainability.
12. Several public footpaths cross the site. The urbanisation will result in a significant loss of public amenity and enjoyment. The proposed mitigation via 'creation of green corridors' and 'recreational access' are inadequate compensation for causing the deterioration of existing amenities.

13. A development of this size will have significant ecological effects on a wide number of native species. The proposed mitigation measures rely heavily on the creation of Plantings scheme includes 6.54 ha of newly created woodland composed of a native species mix. It is difficult to see how this can be reconciled with the constraints imposed by the proximity to the airport.
14. The applicants are citing the need to raise money to pay for repairs to Blenheim Palace as special circumstances to justify the development. The Planning Committee are not permitted to take the identity or needs of an applicant into any account.
15. We note that Woodstock residents and Town Council have registered an overwhelming majority in opposition to the proposal. The applicants' claim to have engaged and consulted with residents should be rejected as inadequate.
16. Given that the proposed site is within both West Oxfordshire and Cherwell Districts, it is likely to create difficulties in cross-border administration. If it would require a proposal to alter boundaries, then we believe this should be considered upfront with appropriate consultation with local residents.
17. Notwithstanding these objections, the application is for outline approval for 1,500 homes and full approval for a phase 1 development which will erect 29 residential homes in the SW corner of the site. This approach is being marketed as having the advantage of:
  - a. providing substantial infrastructure that would not be forthcoming from a smaller uncoordinated development plan;
  - b. providing 40% affordable housing; and
  - c. being implemented gradually in several phases over 15 year time span, as market forces permit and to minimise the immediate impact.

It is not at all clear how these conflicting assurances can be reconciled or what guarantees or measures will be put in place to ensure delivery of the promised public ancillary facilities and associated infrastructure. We note that the outline proposal reserves all matters relating except for means of access to the development.

Furthermore, development on unallocated land should comprise at least 50% affordable housing. The Council should insist that the affordable housing and infrastructure be delivered during the first and second phase.

The focus of attention and objection is naturally drawn to the complete unsustainability of large scale strategic development on this site. We wish also to register our objections to the proposed Phase 1 (29 home development). This lies at a supremely sensitive location facing Blenheim Palace. We understand that a much smaller housing development on a part of this site was refused ten years ago. In the interim Woodstock has accommodated a significant increase in housing stock. We therefore consider the application should be refused.

Yours sincerely

Helen Marshall,  
Director, CPRE Oxfordshire

On behalf of  
Bruce Tremayne  
Chairman, CPRE Bicester District

And

Justine Garbutt  
Chairman (Acting), CPRE West Oxfordshire District