



Campaign to Protect
Rural England
OXFORDSHIRE

Comment by South Oxfordshire CPRE Districts on Policy CSH1 and paragraphs 7.19, 7.20

1. In view of the Council's robust response to the proposal for development in the Oxford Green Belt south of Grenoble Road, CPRE find it curious to create a difficulty in respect of housing at Berinsfield and Wheatley.
2. Both villages are strongly opposed to the proposal for review, seeing no necessity or need sufficient for it to be considered.
3. Not only would local difficulties arise for acceptance of the proposed incursions of development into the Green Belt, but if the proposed local review succeeded the whole basis of many decades of national policy in this field would be eroded, since the whole of Berinsfield together with an undefined area lying outside the current bounds of the village and an undefined area adjacent to Wheatley would be removed from the Green Belt. PPG2 is firm on the necessity for continuing protection of Green Belt land, and the present administration has confirmed its determination to uphold this protection ('Planning and the environment'. Statement of 30 July 2010.)
4. The terms 'exceptional circumstances' and 'very special circumstances' are frequently used in the PPG in this connection. It can hardly be said that omission of this element of the draft core strategy would, to adopt a phrase from the 1996 Regulatory Impact Assessment, significantly prejudice the implementation of the development plan's policies. To the extent that that the two settlements are only a small part of the total of 12 larger villages to which a particular number of dwellings are being assigned in the draft strategy, we find the concept of removing land from the Green Belt at Berinsfield and Wheatley provocative and gratuitous.
5. At Berinsfield, the Green Belt washes over the whole village. A valuable feature in terms of visual amenity and informal recreation is the green in the centre of the village. If the local review proposed were to succeed, it is clear that the arguments against development of the green in the centre of the village would be much weakened.
6. At Wheatley, albeit that there has been some development allowed contrary to Green Belt controls on the land proposed to be reviewed, it includes valuable green fields which delineate the boundary of the village. The aim of the review is understood to be to remove from the Green Belt most of the land alongside London Road to the east of Wheatley village, which would be likely to result in an intensification of the commercial businesses already operating there, and threaten creeping development into the Green Belt on the northern side of the road.
7. The draft strategy includes references, as at para 13.7, to respect for AsONB and the Green Belt and the maintenance of 'the general balance between the market towns and the villages'. However the number of larger villages is essentially arbitrary. A more liberal basis for identifying large villages would reduce the pressure on the

Strategy's 12 and hence to the two villages in or close to the Green Belt. It cannot be right to allow such arbitrary figuring to dominate the location of new development.
8. CPRE recommends that the Council delete the proposals for development in the Green Belt at the two villages.

A J Grayson *for* CPRE Districts in South Oxfordshire
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