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working locally and nationally to
protect and enhance a beautiful,
thriving countryside for everyone to
value and enjoy

The Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP,
Secretary of State for Housing, Communities
and Local Government
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF
E: robert.jenrick@communities.gov.uk

Cc Luke Stephens, Head of Ministerial Correspondence

4 June 2020

Dear Mr Jenrick,

The Oxford Green Belt - gap between commitment and reality
Your Ref: 7185377

My thanks for your response of 11 May, provided by Mr Stephens, to our letter of 1 May, outlining our concerns between the difference in stated Government commitments to Green Belt protection and the reality of what is happening on the ground here in Oxfordshire.

As you say, we agree with the principle of a Plan-led system that makes efficient use of urban and brownfield land, protecting the Green Belt and designated landscapes, in conjunction with a sustainable approach to looking after the non-designated but immensely valuable 'ordinary' countryside.

However, as you will see from the attached graphic, the cumulative impacts of the various Local Plan findings on the Oxford Green Belt will be significant. I am sure you will be aware that these entail five different local planning authorities' plans being scrutinized by several different planning inspectors without there being any overarching statutory strategic plan that has been subject to the democratic process. This means that the public and bodies such as CPRE have no means - other than addressing you - of obtaining a clear picture of whether at any stage of plans being approved individually the overall cumulative effects on the Green Belt area and its purposes have ever been fully considered. In the absence of any overarching planning authority the overall responsibility for protecting the Oxford Green Belt rests with you.

Apart from the heritage significance of the City and its setting (protection of which is one of the key purposes of the designation), Oxford's Green Belt contains a high density of Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Areas of Conservation, Ramsar sites, red data book species, ancient woodland and other unspoilt countryside.

We would be grateful if you could provide the documents which your department has considered which demonstrate that, as part of your commitment to protect the Oxford Green Belt, you have ensured that the cumulative environmental effects on the Green Belt and its purposes have been considered in the planning policy process and the formal requirements under the Duty to Co-operate. Given the nature of our enquiry, I would be grateful if you would consider this as a request under the Environmental Information Regulations.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Peter Collins". The signature is written in a cursive style with a clear, legible font.

Dr Peter Collins,
Chairman, CPRE Oxfordshire

Encl. Graphic - Over 19,000 houses planned for Oxford Green Belt



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