

16 June 2017

To Cherwell District Council Executive Members,

Dear Councillor,

RE: Executive Meeting, 19 June - Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Review - Green Belt allocations

CPRE Oxfordshire does not believe that the case has been made to justify the major intrusion into the Oxford Green Belt proposed in the Cherwell Local Plan Part One Review.

We ask you to reconsider, taking into proper account the views of local residents, Government policy, the sustainable development of other areas of Cherwell district and the vitally important and long-term role of the Oxford Green Belt.

Without your support NOW, we will be losing an environmental resource FOREVER.

1. Local residents wish the Green Belt to remain protected. An [opinion poll](#) across all of Oxfordshire commissioned by CPRE in April 2015, found that three quarters of us, wherever we lived, whether we owned houses or not, believed that the Green Belt should not be built on, despite acknowledging the need for housing.
2. Your own briefing suggests that there were other fully sustainable sites outside the Green Belt which were rejected only because they would be unacceptable in terms of the current adopted plan, which hardly seems an exceptional circumstance for building in the Green Belt. Which were they and why would they be unacceptable?
3. Going forward, the housing figures are likely to be adjusted. The newly re-elected Government is likely to progress the Housing White Paper and particularly the findings of the Local Plan Expert Group (LPEG) on Objectively Assessed Need (OAN), which might impact within the five year plan period and (on LPEG rules) require a re-working of plan numbers. Whilst the Council may consider that the revised OAN calculation would result in higher numbers, the Chairman of the LPEG working party has stated that the greater likelihood is for lower figures, particularly as the double counting of jobs growth implicit in the SHMA would be removed.
4. Not only may the notional Oxford unmet need allocated to Cherwell be substantially reduced by the LPEG recommendations, as Oxford "need" is especially likely to be inflated by double counting; but also Oxford has to date declined to review its own Local Plan in the light of the original 2014 SHMA forecasts, and it therefore cannot be known to what extent the City would be able to meet its needs internally. It is only now beginning a planning process, the outcome of which could at best be conjecture. This is confirmed in the City's proposed Preferred Options document which states that the 'agreed unmet need calculation, used as a working basis for current local plans in Oxfordshire will be updated when the Oxford Local Plan is completed'.
5. If Oxford City is so desperately in need of housing then the question needs to be asked as to why they would plan to exacerbate their problem by adding more employment in the city instead of

the, according to them, desperately needed housing on the available sites within the city? Adding more employment within the City means more transport issues. If the employment is placed in Bicester then the much vaunted railway from Oxford to Bicester can be used to get them to work; the railway goes both ways and not just into the city!

In Bicester the opportunity for the high technology employment that was promised is at risk of being damaged in favour of low technology and increased traffic issues of 1 million sq feet of warehousing with more to come.

Supporting Oxford's expansion is this way therefore risks undermining the sustainable development strategy in other parts of Cherwell District.

Oxford Green Belt vital in preserving character of the county

The Oxford Green Belt is vital in preserving the character of the County, including protection for both the historic city of Oxford and surrounding villages. In Cherwell, it plays a key role in maintaining the distinctiveness of Kidlington from Oxford, and Begbroke and Yarnton from Kidlington.

We urge you to reject the proposed strategic allocations of housing in the Oxford Green Belt in the Local Plan Part One Review - for the benefit of current and future Oxfordshire residents.

Yours sincerely

Helen Marshall
Director, CPRE Oxfordshire