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Cherwell District Council – Full Council – 26 February 2018

Presentation made by John Broad, Acting Chairman, CPRE Cherwell

**Cherwell Local Plan 2011-31 Part 1 Review Proposed Submission Plan**

Before you vote tonight, I want you to be aware of the some of the fallacies that the Cherwell Plan is based upon.

The description of Oxford’s unmet need is the **first fallacy**.

Oxford City has a draft Local Plan that has yet to be found ‘sound’ by a government Planning Inspector.

The allocation to Cherwell of 4,400 houses for Oxford was based on a gross unmet need of 15,000, but that agreement itself notes that this is ‘subject to testing through the Oxford Local Plan Review’. [[1]](#footnote-1)

The 2016 SHMA says the gross housing need for Oxford is around 28,000 houses[[2]](#footnote-2).

In our submission[[3]](#footnote-3), we show that Oxford could potentially build **35,000** houses if it used proper densities and used land for housing, not jobs to ratchet up housing need. That would be a surplus of approximately 7,000 houses over the SHMA and completely remove its so-called ‘unmet need’.

Now the Governments new Objectively Assessed Need methodology virtually halves the Oxford numbers from the SHMA from 28,000 to 15,000 so the unmet need disappears anyway.

**The second fallacy** is that the government inspector ordered Cherwell District Council to plan to meet Oxford’s unmet need immediately.

In approving Cherwell’s Local Plan Part 1, the government Planning Inspector made it very clear that the ‘duty to cooperate’ with Oxford City is only required when, and IF Oxford City’s housing is “fully and accurately defined”, which is nowhere near the case today.

The Adopted Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 clearly states that it will work to accommodate Oxford’s unmet need ‘**if** Oxford is unable to accommodate the whole of its new housing requirement for the 2011-2031 period within its administrative boundary’. Oxford City cannot prove this until a government Inspector has assessed their Plan.

Councillors, you are told in your brief that Oxford's unmet need and Cherwell's share IS fully defined. However, the key issue is that it is NOT defined by Oxford itself and is therefore invalid.

**'The third fallacy** is that this is simply a 'justified nibble' from the Green Belt.  
  
Actually, by declaring that proximity to Oxford itself is an exceptional reason to build on the Green Belt which surrounds the City, this approach attacks the core principles on which all Green Belts depend and risks opening up the whole of the Oxford Green Belt to development.    
  
Government policy requires development in the Green Belt to be the very last resort, only to be considered if there is no alternative. In its Partial Review, Cherwell has stood that Policy on its head by making building in the Green Belt its very first choice.'

We respectfully request you to reject this plan as not proven to be required and in total contradiction to the requirements of the NPPF.

1. https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/communityandliving/partnerships/GrowthBoard/MemorandumofCooperation.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. It gives a range - 24,000-32,000 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. http://www.cpreoxon.org.uk/news/item/2636-oxford-local-plan-see-cpre-s-consultation-response?highlight=WyJveGZvcmQiLCJveGZvcmQncyIsIidveGZvcmQiLCJveGZvcmQnIiwibG9jYWwiLCInbG9jYWwiLCJwbGFuIiwiJ3BsYW4iLCJwbGFuJyIsInBsYW4ncyIsInBsYW4nLiIsIm94Zm9yZCBsb2NhbCIsIm94Zm9yZCBsb2NhbCBwbGFuIiwibG9jYWwgcGxhbiJd [↑](#footnote-ref-3)