

Oxford Local Plan 2036: Preferred Options Consultation

Response from Kidlington Development Watch

I am responding on behalf of Kidlington Development Watch in response to the current Oxford Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation. Kidlington Development Watch (KDW) is an informal community group that monitors and raises public awareness of proposed planning development in Kidlington that threaten the character of the village and its surroundings and the quality of life of its residents.

We regard the imposition by Cherwell District Council on Kidlington and neighbouring villages of 4,400 houses to fulfil its obligation to meet Oxford's 'unmet housing need' as posing just such a threat. We oppose Oxford's proposed option of development of its surrounding Green Belt and its application in particular to Kidlington and surrounding areas in Cherwell's current Partial Review of its own **Local Plan 2011-2013 (Part 1): Oxford's Unmet Housing Need**.

The strength of our community's concern was manifested in the public response to Cherwell's earlier (2016-17) Public Consultation on the partial review of its Local Plan, where the overwhelming majority of respondents objected to such large-scale development and queried both its justification and the obligation of Oxford's neighbours to meet the City's own housing need.

KDW speaks for the huge number of residents who have expressed their continuing concern and opposition to Oxford's plans to waive the protection of the Green Belt to allow massive development that will transform our village and profoundly affect the quality of life of its residents.

KDW challenges the accuracy of the growth figures that underpin Oxford's overspill housing target and do not accept that they represent 'exceptional need' that justifies development of the Green Belt. Oxford chooses to prioritise commercial over housing land-use within the City, while raising demand for housing through the promotion of inward employment at developments like the Northern Gateway and the new Westgate. Half of all the houses in the proposed development are promised to be affordable, yet Oxford itself cannot meet its own affordable-housing target on developments like Templar Square, and properties on the new Barton Park development are already predicted to be unaffordable for first-time buyers.

The damaging effects of meeting Oxford's 'unmet housing need' for Kidlington and its neighbouring villages will be:

- The coalescence of Kidlington with Oxford and neighbouring villages in one vast urban sprawl.
- Loss of countryside, landscapes, walks and wildlife habitats, and damage to the natural environment.
- Massive increases in traffic, congestion, and air pollution.
- Unsustainable demand on already struggling public services like health and education.

KDW believes that the calculation on which Oxford's forecast of its future housing need is based is unsound, and that its proposed option of large-scale development of the Green Belt to meet this unproven need is unjustifiable. It not only contravenes the principles of the Green Belt, but would impose on our community a substantially diminished quality of life that Oxford would consider unacceptable for its own residents and visitors.

KDW supports and endorses the detailed objection to development of the Green Belt submitted to this Consultation by the CPRE.

Kidlington Development Watch, 25 August 2017