

## **Cherwell Partial Review Examination, Harbord Road Area Residents' Association.**

### **Statement on Matter 4 page 1 of 3**

#### **Matter 4 – North Oxford and Policies PR6a, PR6b and PR6c**

1 For the reasons stated previously and also under Matters 2 and 3 we do not accept that 4,400 homes is the correct apportionment and we do not accept that the strategy is soundly based.

#### **2 PR6a & PR6b - Oxford University**

2.1 As demonstrated in Matter 3 the University and Colleges have clear intentions to retain substantial percentages of homes for their own staff. Yet there is no mention of this in Policies PR6a and PR6b. The Submission document therefore fails to reflect the actual intentions of the landowners, and it is unsound both in failing to address the acceptability of their intended use expressly and because such 'tied' use may render the delivery of general market and affordable housing in the allocated quantum undeliverable.

#### **3 PR6b – The North Oxford Golf Club**

3.1 2012NPPF para 74 states:

Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- i) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
- ii) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- iii) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.

3.2 Despite the statements to the contrary made by Savills on behalf of the 3 Colleges, the Golf Club is a well-used and much-valued facility for both golf and other recreational activities. The population in the vicinity of this site is already set to increase very significantly so the golf club's recreational value will only increase.

3.3 None of the above conditions for building on the site in 3.1 above have been fulfilled so it should not be developed.

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3.4 The Council has put forward site PR6c (Frieze Farm) as an alternative site for a golf course. However, this is not deliverable for the following reasons:

1. The land owner (Exeter College) has stated that it is not prepared to allow the site to be developed as a golf course<sup>1</sup>.
2. The land is unsuitable for a golf course.
3. No money is available to allow for the building of a replacement golf course.

3.5 The policies in respect of PR6b and PR6c are therefore unsound and should be removed from the Submission Plan.

3.6 If these policies are not removed from the plan Policy PR6b should be re-drafted to state that the land will only be released from the Green Belt and planning permission will only be granted once a new golf club, providing equivalent facilities to the existing one is built. These facilities must cater for all the current recreational activities for which the golf club is currently used.

#### **4 PR6a & PR6b - The Kidlington Gap**

4.1 The Kidlington Gap has been the subject of planning battles over the last 50 years. Our earlier submission demonstrated this by appending the 32 page booklet published by Oxford Preservation Trust - the aptly titled 'The Battle of Kidlington Gap'.

4.2 Sites PR6a and PR6b effectively form the last remaining part of this important gap (once Oxford North, formerly Northern Gateway is developed. Outline planning permission has been sought). The Kidlington Gap is an important Strategic Gap which prevents the coalescence of the very large village of Kidlington and the historic City of Oxford.

4.3 Earlier submissions and various verbal comments made at the Preliminary Hearing quoted decisions indicated to be supportive of development in gaps (e.g. Birmingham) but these are not relevant because they do not consider development in a Strategic Gap or development that would affect the integrity or permanence of the Green Belt.

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<sup>1</sup> "Turnberry on behalf of Exeter College - The allocation of site PR6c for the potential construction of a golf course, should this be required as a result of the development of Land to the West of Oxford Road under Policy PR6b, is not justified by the evidence base and is an inefficient use of a sustainably-located parcel of land, which is well-related to Oxford. The site has the capacity to provide for 800 new homes." Proposed Submission Local Plan (July 2017 to October 2017): Part 3 of the Statement of Consultation, p.55  
(<http://modgov.cherwell.gov.uk/documents/s37568/Appendix%204%20-%20e%20Statement%20of%20Consultation%20February%202018.pdf>).

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4.4 The Submission Plan contradicts the Adopted Local Plan 2011 – 2031<sup>2</sup> which sought to minimise impact on the Green Belt and rightly stressed the importance of it, and especially the Kidlington Gap as follows:

4.5 Para B.260 of the Adopted Local Plan 2011 – 2031 states: “It is essential that the impact on the Green Belt is minimised, therefore priority will be given to locations that lie adjacent to existing development, avoid the coalescence of settlements, **protect the vulnerable Kidlington Gap** and otherwise have the least impact possible on the Green Belt.”

4.6 Para B256 is emphatic that, “Green Belt was designated to restrain development pressures which could damage the character of Oxford City and its heritage through increased activity, traffic and the outward sprawl of the urban area” and that “**the character of Oxford in a rural setting cannot be maintained without the protection of the spatial relationship of Oxford with nearby settlements and the maintenance of the character of the intervening countryside**”.

4.7 Sites PR6a and PR6b are effectively the last remaining part of the Strategic Kidlington Gap and fulfil the purposes of the Green Belt and should be preserved – as should other sites in the Green Belt which has an overarching purpose to protect the character of the historic city of Oxford. Alternatives which are not in the Green Belt do exist for any development that may be needed.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/downloads/download/45/adopted-cherwell-local-plan-2011-2031-part-1-incorporating-policy-bicester-13-re-adopted-on-19-december-2016>