

27th March 2018

For the attention of Beryl Guiver, Cholsey Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

and

John Cotton, Leader, South Oxfordshire District Council

Please include in Agenda Item 5 for the Council Meeting, 27th March 2018

Dear Ms. Guiver,

Reference your undated letter to Cllr. John Cotton in support of the Local Plan, I would like to point out some factual inaccuracies.

The concerns over the deliverability of Chalgrove are manifest, and include a highly critical statement of the viability of the site from Oxfordshire County Council; a letter from the Managing Director of Martin-Baker stating their absolute opposition to any approach from Homes England, and their commitment to fight in the courts any attempt at Compulsory Purchase, and a significant funding gap between the proposals from Homes England and the requirements of Oxfordshire County Council for the necessary road infrastructure.

You have also commented on the use of the strategy to improve the sustainability of the rural area. Chalgrove is already a large village, and supports a variety of shops and businesses, and is highly sustainable as it stands. Adding houses to the point where the village effectively quadruples in size significantly affects the sustainability of the area, primarily due to the lack of road infrastructure and public transport options. For example, Homes England plans include creating rat-runs through single track lanes in the existing village.

The biggest error in your letter, however, is in regards to the way this development may support Oxford. The fact that you believe that Chalgrove is only five miles from Oxford shows how ill-informed your letter is.

Chalgrove is nine miles from the Eastern Bypass, nine and a half miles from Cowley, and fourteen and a half miles from the John Radcliffe hospital.

We may well differ also on the supposed benefits. What we know is that the proposals for public transport systems have been significantly downgraded by Homes England from a comprehensive Guided Bus Lane to a slightly more frequent bus service that will terminate at Cowley. The education benefit will be the closure of Icknield secondary school, and the relocation of their pupils to Chalgrove. The health benefit will be the closure of the Brook Surgery, relocating it over a mile away from the elderly and infirm of the existing village. The road improvements will be a couple of bypasses for neighbouring villages, the removal of our existing bypass, and no improvement whatsoever to the existing village roads.

We all heartily support the Local Plan because we need it to succeed in order to prevent speculative development. This is the main reason why we are objecting to the Chalgrove allocation; it is not deliverable, it is not sustainable, and it risks increasing the flood threat to the existing village. With Chalgrove in the Local Plan, the chances of the entire Plan being rejected are significant, and the risk of loss of control of the Plan are also significant. The selection of an alternative site would give SODC many more opportunities to actually deliver the Local Plan.

The rush to meet an arbitrary deadline brings huge risk to all communities in South Oxfordshire. We need a Plan that works for the Council AND the local residents, and it is imperative that the Plan is sound or it will fail.

Paul Boone
Chair, Chalgrove Airfield Action Group.