

Dear Cllr Murphy

RE Local Plan proposed developments at Lower Elsfield and Wick Farm

Please can you see that this is distributed to members of the Cabinet.

These two sites in particular concern me greatly as a local person but even more as someone very concerned with wildlife and the increasing loss of biodiversity are Wick Farm and Lower Elsfield.

The fields in Lower Elsfield, despite being so close to Oxford are surprisingly rich in wildlife. I have seen Barn Owls flying across them on a number of occasions and I know they nest in a local Elsfield building. It is the only place where I have seen stoats/weasels (not good at telling them apart!) in my travels around Oxfordshire in general and within this area in particular. Neither they nor barn owls can compete with the human intrusion that would happen with significant building in the area. They are spared this at the moment by the fact that there is no development to speak of this side of the Oxford ring road in this area. They both need stretches of meadows to hunt in – an increasingly rare commodity and it would be made even rarer if this development was allowed.

A very valuable BBOWT reserve is also very close indeed to where the proposed development at Wick Farm would be sited. Sydlings Copse is interesting and very lovely and as I recall it has fairly rare species despite the fact that it is fairly close to Oxford. Houses are now proposed in such close proximity that it would become everyone's dog walk which would just completely destroy its integrity and biodiversity. It is so small it just could not cope with the footfall from the proposed new houses. When we are told that e.g. the walkers on the Pennine way can be harmful to that vast area how can such a small nature survive being so close to houses. It would turn from an area for wildlife to a recreation area, thus impacting heavily on local biodiversity

I understand that one of the reasons why these sites were discarded in the original Local Plan was because of the impact on wildlife. If that was true a couple of years ago it should be just as true today. I hope you will note these points when the full Council meets on Thursday

As well as destroying wildlife, in developing Wick Farm you are actually destroying the lowest cost housing around Oxford. Unless the development proposed can accommodate, and be within the means of, all the current residents of the existing Mobile Homes park at Wick Farm it will bring about a decrease in the amount of housing for those from Oxford on a low income – giving accommodation instead to those from quite possibly outside the county with more money. How can that be said that be said to be helping Oxford's housing need.

Lastly, every day on Radio Oxford we hear of traffic conditions worsening on the Northern bypass around Oxford due partly to the new traffic lights for the homes at the Barton west estate which is currently being developed. It is far from being fully inhabited but has already loaded extra traffic onto the B4027 with long delays now at the single vehicle bottleneck in Islip as people try to avoid the Green Road roundabout and the northern bypass. In rush hours Bayswater Road is blocked back from the crematorium down to the Green Road roundabout – already one of the most congested roundabouts in the City area. Already along Bayswater Road babies and toddlers in buggies are pushed along by parents taking their older children to school. These infants in buggies are just at car exhaust height, going past a solid stream of stationary cars pushing out noxious fumes. Is not air pollution one of the things that we should all fight against? Bayswater Road as with all other roads in the area cannot take more traffic. Even if all of the new residents would always get a bus, how can the roads cope with even that extra traffic? It is all these roads that will be the only way that people can leave the Wick Farm/Elsfield area. You may think the Expressway might help if it goes near

there – on the contrary it will just drag even more traffic through local roads as people drive to join or leave it.

Interestingly, when I was cabinet member for Sustainable Development on the County Council in 2001-2005, the reason that the County never included the land near Barton in its Structure Plan all those years ago was due to the traffic impact. Traffic has got worse not better since then. The Green Road Roundabout is very tight on space and the only thing that could be done when Barton expanded was to draw the lanes a bit differently; there is no scope for remodelling.

These additions of land in this area have been dumped on us with no warning and seemingly no proper investigations. Whilst areas such as Chalgrove have had years to draw together opposition to development planned there this has come on us out of the blue when we had been told we were safe from development. It feels very undemocratic that decisions are being taken within less than a month of this new plan being published.

I object to the inclusion of this land at Elsfield and Wick farm being proposed for development and also to the way we have been pushed into this situation in such a short time.

Please consider these views when making your decisions

Yours sincerely

Anne Purse

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