

Sent: 11 December 2018 18:06
To: Schrieber, Ron
Subject: Scrutiny Committee Meeting item.

Dear Mr Schrieber,

I am writing to express concern over the use of several patches of green belt land within SODC for new housing developments, specifically the proposed Wick Farm/Elsfield plan.

Historically the SODC has been a champion protecting Oxford's precious green belt. I am therefore saddened to see in various Scrutiny Committee papers moves to declassify several green belt areas for houses.

In doing so, SODC is making liberal use of the 'exceptional circumstances' clause in the NPPF - that allows housing to be built on green belt land if other land cannot be found for it.

In Oxfordshire in general, and Oxford City in particular, we have both a supply and demand problem. The supply is limited and Oxford City seems more concerned to devote limited building land for more jobs rather than more houses, thus exacerbating the problem. Future housing needs (the 'demand') are based on SHMA calculations which are now regarded as seriously flawed (they are in part based on future growth projections which are unrealistic). Oxford City's still unquantified 'unmet housing need' is forced upon your and other authorities to 'solve'.

I hope that SODC 'pushes back' on Government requirements to meet Oxford's unmet housing needs. In the meantime I attach a document based on your Scrutiny Committee papers and others that, I hope, shows you what members of the public will conclude from what appears to be you abandoning your historical stance against green belt developments.

In the attached, extracts from your own documents are in black. My comments are in red.

Justification for the use of the 'exceptional circumstances' clause in one case (development at Culham Science Centre) is contradicted by another (development at Elsfield/Wick Farm). (pages 1 and 2 in the attached)

We need to develop away from town centres because some of these are too polluted to live in (page 3)

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are also not exempt from the 'exceptional circumstances' clause, (page 3).

Your Core Strategy Policy of a minimum housing density of 25 houses per hectare is abandoned when it comes to green belt development at Elsfield/Wick Farm, where

the proposal is for a housing density of ONLY 9.6 houses per hectare. This is a profligate waste of a unique resource (pages 4 to 6).

Finally, promises made in 2012, that Barton Park residents would have local access to countryside, have now been abandoned. Barton Park will be more or less totally surrounded by the Wick farm/Elsfield proposal (pages 7 and 8).

The public of Oxfordshire deserve better than this. It is time for Councils to preserve what we have, rather than destroy what previous generations created with care and forethought.

Yours sincerely,

David Rogers

Unfortunately I am unable to attend the Scrutiny Committee meeting. I would be grateful if my document and email could be made available to the Committee.

David J. Rogers
Professor of Ecology (Retired)
Department of Zoology,
Oxford University, UK