

# LPP2 Preferred Options Consultation

## St Helen Without Parish Council Response

### Introduction

The St Helen Without Parish Council has taken the Draft LPP2 Preferred Options consultation process very seriously and initiated its own residents 'Open Day', which took place on Sunday the 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2017, to further inform and gather feedback on how to respond (including residents from Whitecross).

As a consequence, the Parish Council's response on behalf of its residents is evidence-based, i.e. in the form of completed questionnaires and open-ended written comments from 121 residents. This information is being securely stored by an independent market research company, under the Data Protection Act 1998, for future reference.

### Key Findings from the Residents Survey

- It is clear that both residents and the Parish Council recognise the need for the District Council to facilitate new homes in the area via the LPP2 mechanism.
  - Some 67% of residents polled agreed that new and affordable housing was needed.
- In addition, there was also agreement that the Dalton Barracks site is a suitable site for development once the MoD vacates the site.
  - However, critically, it is also clear that the vast majority of residents (97%) believe that it is unnecessary nor appropriate to develop the entire operational area of the Dalton Barracks site (including associated MoD housing sites and other MoD land) and areas into and alongside Shippon and Whitecross. This is especially the case when the requirement for this site, in the Draft LPP2 Preferred Options consultation (up to 2031), is for only 1,200 dwellings.
  - It should be noted though that some 73% of residents recognise that it would be appropriate to develop on some areas of the site, i.e. on the brownfield operational area of the site only.
- Despite this, residents are generally concerned about the impact of this proposed development.
  - Some 46% of residents perceive that there will likely be negative impacts associated with this development upon the local community, e.g. increased traffic, no guarantee that sufficient improved infrastructure and services would be provided, the detrimental effects to the existing habitat and natural ecosystems, etc.

- Regardless, it is also important to note that pragmatically some 45% of residents do recognise that there would likely be both positive and negative impacts.
- The top issues identified from the open-ended, written comments were:
  1. Traffic concerns
  2. Lack of and/or strain on infrastructure
  3. Concern over encroachment
  4. Urban sprawl
  5. Need for specific services, e.g. Schools, GP surgeries, fire services, etc.
- Another key issue, for both residents of Shippon and Whitecross, is the fear of coalescence of their settlements around the new development. The VWHDC stated that this new development would be based on ‘Garden Village principles’ – this implies that coalescence would not occur.
  - The use of ‘Garden Village principles’ is very important to residents because some 88% of them do not want coalescence of Shippon with the new development.
  - This was mirrored Whitecross residents; some 90% of responses indicated that residents did not want Whitecross to coalesce with the new development.
- Finally, residents are concerned about the VWHDC’s proposal to remove Shippon, Whitecross and all the operational areas of the Dalton Barracks site (and associated MoD housing and land) from the Green Belt.
  - Some 65% of residents do not want any sections of land in this area removed from the Green Belt.
  - However, this is balanced by the fact that some 33% of residents do think it is appropriate to remove parcels of land from the Green Belt, but only from the brownfield sections of previously developed land.
  - The wholesale removal of the villages of Shippon and Whitecross is rejected.

### Parish Council Conclusions

To conclude, on the evidence gathered from residents:

- The Parish Council accepts the concept of new housing developments in the parish.
- It also accepts its responsibility to accommodate some 1,200 homes as part of the unmet housing need for Oxford in the plan period.

However, the attempt in the Draft LPP2 Preferred Options consultation to take huge swaths of the parish, including Shippon (and Whitecross) out of the Oxford Green Belt is unnecessary and inappropriate in this plan period. Indeed, there are no exceptional reasons for doing so and it would result in encroachment into the countryside, which is against Purpose 3 of the Oxford Green Belt.

It is not necessary to take some 200 hectares from the Dalton Barracks site (excluding the 88 hectares for the proposed County Park) out of the Oxford Green Belt to develop some 1,200

homes. This would equate to a potential housing density of 6 homes per hectare! Indeed, the brownfield sites at Dalton Barracks could be legitimately redeveloped without removing them from the Oxford Green Belt.

In addition, the Draft LPP2 Preferred Options consultation wants to take further land out of the Oxford Green Belt across all of Shippon (and Whitecross); this is totally unnecessary and there are no exceptional reasons for doing so.

The issue of village coalescence is also important. Garden village principles suggest that this should not happen. Residents do not want this to happen.

As a result, the Parish Council argues that:

- There is no need to change the Green Belt status of any of the land at Dalton Barracks.
- Any new development on the Dalton Barracks site should be discrete and have its own footprint and identity.
- The land between the proposed 'Garden Village' development and Shippon should be protected to avoid the possibility of coalescence, i.e. by retaining the Oxford Green Belt.
  - This is the same principle that the Inspector identified in LPP1 in regard to the retention of the Oxford Green Belt between Abingdon and Shippon; and, Shippon and Wootton.
- Shippon's status within the Oxford Green Belt should be retained.

**St Helen Without Parish Council**

**2<sup>nd</sup> May 2017**