

Re: Local Plan – First Proposals – policy S/RRA site MF

I am writing to comment on the inclusion of site S/RRA/MF in the Greater Cambridge Local Plan. The release of Green Belt land to build 20 houses on this site in Oakington is not justified for the following reasons:

1. Principally, it is not in line with the Local Plan's Vision to "safeguard the unique heritage and landscapes" of our area. Oakington is an ancient village which retains its character as a vibrant, supportive, rural community. However, Northstowe, which was originally proposed to be separated from Oakington to safeguard its identity and viability, is now proposed to be built right up to its boundary. Further development on the other side of Water Lane will adversely impact the appearance and setting of the village. It is *not* "reinforcing the distinctive character of our villages", the stated intention of the Local Plan.
2. The Local Plan rightly places priority on maintaining and enhancing green spaces and biodiversity. The removal of this land from the Green Belt is in opposition to this goal.
3. In policy S/SH, a limit of 15 houses is put on developments in villages the size of Oakington.
4. Water Lane already suffers from excessive traffic, a problem predicted to get much worse if the southern access road to Northstowe is built on the outskirts of the village. Although it is hoped that a development close to the guided busway would be less car-dependent, there will be some extra traffic generated by it, and in particular the point of access onto Water Lane will from the development will add to the noise and risk.
5. The Green Belt land adjoins a field and a wood both of which regularly flood, and development will also increase the flood risk to existing houses.
6. The Green Belt land forms part of the green buffer preserving the distinctiveness of Westwick. It faces and would impact the Conservation Area.

In summary, although the goal of the Local Plan to concentrate development in locations with good public/active transport links is a laudable one, the inclusion of this small site by removing its Green Belt status is not justifiable on these grounds. The omission of these 20 houses will not make a material difference to the Local Plan, but its inclusion will make a serious negative difference to the character and setting of Oakington.