

Local Plan – First Proposals – policy S/RRA/MF Land at Mansell Farm Oakington

We would like to register our objection to the inclusion of this proposed site for 20 homes at Mansell Farm in Oakington. While we understand the justification provided for the inclusion this site is that it is in close proximity to the Guided Busway, we do not believe that this provides the exceptional justification for the release of Greenbelt land. There is significant opposition to this proposed site, both from residents and the Parish Council of Oakington and Westwick. We support their opposition and would like to see the removal of this site from plan. We do not believe that removal would make a significant difference to the ability to deliver the required new homes in this Local Plan. Its inclusion would, however, have a serious and lasting impact on the villages of Oakington and Westwick.

We are objecting to the inclusion of this site for the following reasons:

1. In policy S/SH a limit of 15 houses (in exceptional circumstances) is placed upon sites in rural group villages the size of Oakington. This site exceeds that. There is understandably concern from both residents and the Parish Council that this initial 20 homes will set a precedent for further release of Greenbelt land and further development beyond the 20 homes proposed.
2. Oakington is facing significant development on its doorstep with Northstowe. There is already concern that there is an erosion of the green separation proposed between Oakington and Northstowe, which is designed to safeguard the distinctive character of the village. Development on the other side of Water Lane will further impact the village character of Oakington and Westwick.
3. This area of Greenbelt land provides an important green buffer between the villages of Oakington and Westwick, preserving the unique character of Westwick. It also faces and would impact the village conservation area.
4. The new Local Plan proposes that 40% of new homes built will be affordable homes. While we and the Parish Council support the need for local affordable housing, we feel that Northstowe will more than meet this need.
5. Water Lane already suffers from issues with excessive traffic, and this would be exacerbated by further development, even if it is hoped that new residents would make use of the Guided Busway links. Our understanding from Highways Officers is that the crossroads junction in Oakington is already at capacity (before the potential building of the Northstowe SARE which is predicted to increase traffic flows) and that improvements to this junction are not possible.
6. This land adjoins a wooded area and field which regularly flood. We are concerned that any further development would increase the flood risk for the village.
7. We understand that this site is also of potential archaeological value, as the site of an Iron Age Barrow and would require full archaeological excavation before any development.

In summary the inclusion of this site, on Greenbelt land, is not consistent with the vision of this Local Plan to increase nature, wildlife and green spaces and safeguard our unique heritage and landscapes.

Cllrs Sarah Cheung Johnson, Alex Malyon and Firouz Thompson