



The worst planning application yet, “Land Grabs”

People of Hanwell Fields, North Banbury have been surrounded by new planning applications for housing. These are at the West of Warwick Rd, two applications to the North West of Hanwell fields (by Amber, Persimmon and Miller homes) and now two applications (by Rapleys) to the North East, either side of the Southam Rd, all of which are North of Dukes Meadow Drive, totally surrounding the North of Banbury.

In our view these applications are “land grabs” by development speculators. Banbury has already sufficient approved developments, at Bankside (1200 houses) and Canalside (1050 houses) to meet our needs for the next 15 years. Especially now that Cherwell District Council has reduced its figure for social housing demand from 4000 right down to 1200 recently. All of the applications round the North of the town are simply speculation on agricultural land to raise its asset value on developer’s books.

The Bankside site to the South East has been approved for 5 years, but today not a single brick has been laid.

Cherwell District Council has seemingly bent to the requests of developers and named the new Dukes Meadow Drive sites in their latest Local Plan, though conspicuously avoiding nomination of sites at of Salt Way near their own offices. The Dukes Meadow Drive sites had previously not been nominated for development or which had been rejected on previous planning applications.

The latest planning applications, by Rapleys, are for a further 880 houses spanning Southam

Road, sites known as BAN2 West and BAN2 East. There are many reasons why these applications are invalid and absurd, the most important of which are the visual impact and the isolation of the developments.

The facts.

First, in Cherwell District Council's own design brief 2007 for Hanwell Fields they say "*The land allocated for development at Hanwell Fields is located on the northern extremity of Banbury and will form the new urban edge to this side of town. The objective is to create an urban form and new urban edge which appears organic in character, relating to land form and local colour and therefore specifically distinctive as Banbury*". The nominations of land and recent development applications North of Dukes Meadow Dr, which means all the existing ones both West and East, including BAN2 West, break this commitment CDC made in 2007.

Second, the 2007 design brief said about the fields North of Dukes Meadow Dr, "The topography of the [Hanwell Fields] site affords extensive views generally northerly over the Area of High Landscape Value." This area of high landscape value would be completely destroyed by any building at BAN2, Southam Rd as houses would stretch up the hills as far as the cemetery.

Residents of Hanwell Fields are demanding their right that Cherwell District Council respect their 2007 commitments and not allow building North of Dukes Meadow Drive. An area which is enjoyed by many people as an open space. Any of these developments would mean Hanwell residents are no longer at the "edge of town" as they have been assured in the past.

Third, the planning principles laid down by the Council itself have not been respected for the BAN2 West site as this has been declared of exceptional visual impact, with the landscape rising up and defining the setting of Banbury to the North, especially the approach down Southam Road.

Both BAN2 West of Southam Road and BAN2 East, are areas that are non-contiguous with other housing and thus break the planning outlines of the Local Plan. BAN2 West is the East side of the bridge in Dukes Meadow Drive and opposite a site nominated for employment

and BAN2 East is entirely isolated beyond the large, empty employment site to the south.

There are many other reasons why these application must be rejected, lack of schools, lack of doctors, vast increase in traffic on Dukes Meadow Drive and Southam Road, Lack of demand for housing, incorrect reporting by Rapleys of the public views, noise from the M40 motorway, etc etc

In objecting to these planning applications at BAN2, the residents of Hanwell Fields hope that the people of Banbury will join them in making their objections known to Cherwell District Council, as these developments impact not only Hanwell residents but everyone who values the setting of Banbury.

To object please go to the web site www.hfdag.org.uk and sign up.