



## **Community rejects excessive development plans Letters to Sir Tony Baldry**

Dear Tony

You were not able to attend the meeting of Hanwell Fields Development Action Group with Cherwell District Council and Banbury town Council held recently.

We regard this meeting as a success as it has shown a better cooperation between the local community and the councils. In fact it garnered support from our local Councillors who have, I believe, lots of concerns about Cherwell District Council planning department overriding what they feel is right for Banbury. It was pointed out that although the Local Plan calls for a Banbury Master Plan to be a part, this document has not been prepared. We felt that this responsibility should be passed over the Banbury Town Council to prepare.

We presented a series of slides with the intention of

1. Emphasising that the old RSS and SE Plan (16750 houses in Cherwell, 5954 in Banbury, at least 1200/year) should not be used for future planning.
2. That the new NPPF objective of defining 5 year deliverable, plus 6-10 & 11-15 year areas with development potential, is the way that Cherwell have to use to arrive at a fact-based forecast of housing need, taking into account population growth, market demand/financial restrictions today, etc

Some figures for need, from a simple calculation based on ONS population growth in Cherwell and 33% in Banbury, shows that only 615 houses/5year periods are required.

3. And in the light of this it is clear that Banbury has more than the required 5 year deliverable supply, based solely on the existing approved site at Bankside for 1092 homes. No other sites should be named at this time, and developers must be prevented from applying for permission all over the place, especially on green field sites around the town (at North Hanwell, Southam Road, Bankside 2, West Bretch Hill, and Salt Way...). It is not a valid argument that since Bankside is not being built-out, due to financial restrictions, more land should be released for planning permission...
4. In addition to this, three reports on Sustainability, Landscape & Capacity for development and Traffic were analysed. These reports did not have analytical conclusions or site ratings. So figures were given to the report findings and a ranking of suitable sites obtained.

With no exception the reports clearly show that the first development that must go ahead must be Bankside, followed by the brown field area of Canalside. And that this must be the Local Plan and 100% focus of the District Council to make it happen. This would fulfill Banbury's need for over 15 years.

5. It is clear that there is too much developer pressure today, as they believe that the new NPPF allows them to bulldoze through planning without respecting Council plans.

Many concerns were expressed at the meeting about lack of infrastructure plans for schools, doctors, old people care and roads. These need to be clarified and some explicit plans put in place in cooperation with Oxfordshire Council.

A request for outline planning permission on valuable amenity green field land at North Hanwell has subsequently been "deferred" at last week's Cherwell District Council meeting. This is direct response to what we are saying and very welcome to see the

council having more backbone in getting development done in places that really benefit the town.

Let's hope that Cherwell District Council can now make some fact-based bottom-up forecasts of housing need and come to the Local Plan with sensible numbers. And that they can better respect the need under the Localism Act to fully consult with communities.

Best Regards

Antony Watts

PR, HFDAG

Dear Tony

Further to Antony's email about housing numbers we also identified and presented the clear lack of planning policy and one that needs urgent address. This comes in the form of different planning criteria for individual sites not being assessed on comparative grounds. We highlighted that Saltway received an unprecedented amount of council discouragement as it

1. Breached the southern boundary
2. it was a premature application - submitted whilst the local plan is still in consultation and
3. The topography of the site would lower the aesthetics of the surrounding countryside and south Banbury.

However we proved that north of Dukes Meadow Drive also falls into exactly the same criteria. Although this development has now been deferred we would still like to know how these identical situations could be handled in such an opposing manner and what can be done to stop such differing outcomes to similar issues.

Another noteworthy point is that according to CDC's own appraisals and assessments of the land surrounding Banbury, Saltway is considered one of the most reasonable areas to accommodate such developments.

So this just proves that CDC are failing to not only grasp their own planning policy but failing to act upon such basic, constructive information.

Perhaps a review of the planning department is needed.

Kind Regards

Malcolm Finch

Chairman, HFDAG

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