

Kidlington Parish Council

Chair's report

December 2019

Last month the Council resolved to join many other councils by declaring a Climate Change Emergency. This means, among other things, that we are committed to try and make Council activities net-zero-carbon by 2030, ensure that all strategic decisions, budgets and approaches to planning are in line with this, and work with other partners to the same end. We shall involve young people in the process, and hope that Kidlington residents will help us to implement the decision.

This is relevant background to two other issues that have come back to the fore in the last few weeks. Cherwell District Council have now published their response to the Planning Inspector's request that they should reallocate elsewhere in the district the 410 new dwellings previously allocated to Woodstock. All this is in the context of Cherwell's share of 4,400 new homes supposedly required to help satisfy Oxford City's unmet housing need. Cherwell now proposes that the 410 dwellings should be added to allocations already decided as follows (the figures in brackets are the numbers already allocated): 20 more at Stratfield Farm by the Sainsburys roundabout (100), 200 more around the Bicester Road Cemetery (230), 40 more on the East side of the main road between Cutteslowe and Parkway station (650), 140 more on the West side opposite (the North Oxford golf course) (530), and 10 more in Yarnton (530).

The only site in Kidlington proper is Stratfield Farm, so we are not much affected by this directly. However the largest increase proportionately goes to the site around Bicester Road cemetery, strictly speaking in Gosford, which will affect us significantly by shrinking the Kidlington Green Belt gap to almost nothing, and reducing previously planned sports field provision. Traffic density will be increased still further by these allocations, as it will by the much larger allocations on either side of the main road between Cutteslowe and Parkway. It remains the case, however, that the larger part of the new housing burden will fall on Yarnton and Begbroke.

There is now a consultation period ending Friday 20 December, in which we shall be objecting to these new proposals (to make a representation, see <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/planningpolicyconsultation>). In parallel, councillors have been attending the hearings on the Oxford City Local Plan, which are considering among other issues whether Oxford's unmet housing need is really as large as the city has estimated. We have reiterated the submission we made earlier, that the figures are based on out-of-date calculations, and that Oxford could do more to meet the need within its own boundaries. As I have also reported, we have argued to the Cherwell Planning Inspector that the allocation of new dwellings in the district should be suspended until the figures for Oxford's unmet need are finally determined. The Inspector did not accept this submission, so it remains to be seen what happens to the Cherwell Local Plan if the Oxford City Inspector decides that the figures are too high.

DAVID ROBEY