

## **Comments Local Plan 2032 Preferred Options Consultation June 2016 [27/06/16 to 26/08/16.]**

### **Question 7. Do you agree with a proposed approach for the Oxford Brookes Wheatley Campus? If not, what changes do you suggest?**

There were 234 responses to this question. 180 said they agreed with the proposed approach, 54 disagreed. I will deal with those who agreed first, because they gave reasons and often had suggestions and qualifications to offer. Finally, I will summarise the objections of those who said no.

I will summarise the responses under three broad categories – Housing, the Environment and Transport.

#### Housing.

Most of the responses to this question agreed that three hundred houses should be the maximum, as infrastructure and existing schools and transport would manage this number. Also there was a majority who thought that only the brownfield site should be used for housing – i.e. the land used by Oxford Brookes for housing and teaching and the tower block. Some suggested that the boundary for housing should be tightly drawn around the built up area and avoid open surrounding land.

There were alternative views that the whole area should be considered a brownfield site as it is surrounded by buildings. The nature of the site should include some affordable housing but some said it had to be subject to ‘the viability of the site.’

There were a number of respondents who suggested high density housing and a commitment to ‘zero carbon’ design and also some advocated taller buildings with flats and apartments, with one to two bedroom units for affordable housing for young local people, NHS workers and the elderly. Developers need to make a commitment so that they do provide affordable housing.

One respondent suggested that the site should be used for housing but should also include educational and employment provision. Another suggested that more housing should be built on the Brookes site because it is more sustainable than e.g. Wick Farm, Thornhill or Lower Elsfield. Two respondents said the timing of the re-development was important if it is to contribute to the council’s five year housing land requirement. The Neighbourhood Plan was mentioned as a good guide to local opinion which is against a huge housing build on the site.

#### The Environment.

The major concern here was green belt policy. Many respondents commented on the beautiful landscape and nearby farmland, which, they feel, should be preserved and references were made to ‘suburban sprawl’ along the M40 eastern approach to Oxford. This is the reason why people who said ‘yes’ to the housing development wanted to restrict it to the brownfield site.

#### Transport/Traffic.

Most respondents agreed the site has good transport links. Respondents did however point out that the position of the A40 means that the Brookes site cannot act as an integral part of Wheatley.

There were also concerns about the viability of the bus service. With only 300 dwellings and no students – will it have to be financially supported?

A need for good cycling and walking links to Wheatley and Holton from the site was expressed.

The proximity to the A40 is ideal for connectivity to the M40, Thornhill Park and Ride, the Oxford Tube, the X90, Airline links and the train station. On the other hand, concerns were expressed that the A40 could not cope with extra traffic and there is already a high volume of traffic through Wheatley.

#### Respondents who disagreed with question 7.

Most respondents in this category had environmental concerns but there were some in other categories.

#### Housing.

40% affordable housing is too high for developers – not only do they have to build them but also manage their letting.

Holton village does not have retail and social infrastructure to support 300 houses on its doorstep.

#### The Environment.

There is no justification for removing the ‘unbuilt’ area from the green belt. There must be other brownfield sites that SODC could find in the district.

Sport England is concerned about the playing fields, which are a vital resource for the community and Wheatley Park Academy.

Concerns were expressed about scheduled monuments – the moated site 580 metres west of Church Farm, also the monument of the moated site of Holton House and its ice house, the Grade 2 listed Holton Park and six other listed structures.

Some respondents emphasised that the district council has a duty to support rural communities and their way of life. This is what attracts people to the district.

#### Traffic.

Respondents said the A40 could not cope with extra traffic and that traffic through Wheatley is already a concern.

Some replies to this question were very detailed but I have summarised them here. Some respondents criticised the question i.e. Do you agree or disagree? should have invited the answer ‘I agree’ or ‘I disagree’ not ‘yes’ or ‘no’, which is confusing!

Any mistakes are my own. Judith Ormston, 31 Jan 2017.

#### **WNP Chairman's Observation.**

**Thanks are owed to Caroline Dalton and Judith Ormston for this careful analysis.**

**SODC was apparently overwhelmed by nearly 8000 responses to the Consultation, June-Aug 2016.**

**They may have analysed, but nothing seems to have been published. Public Consultation responses can be slewed and therefore contaminated as evidence. While addresses of respondees are protected by encoding, there is some indication of 'organised' responding far away from Wheatley and Holton, but in support of building (and even more of it !) on the Brookes site. SODC should have thanked the 7000+ respondees , and explained briefly why nothing was done with their reponses.**

**John Fox**



