

SAVE BAYSWATER BROOK COUNTRYSIDE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WANTON DESTRUCTION AT BAYSWATER BROOK

SAVE BAYSWATER BROOK COUNTRYSIDE GROUP CONDEMNS INSPECTOR'S REPORT ON SODC LOCAL PLAN

Save Bayswater Brook Countryside Group condemns Inspector Bore's final report on the controversial and very unpopular SODC Local Plan, published today. They are enraged at the proposed development of Land north of Bayswater Brook (LnBB) on the eastern edge of Oxford and the destruction of 278 acres (112 hectares) of the Green Belt, the countryside and the threat to the important SSSI Sidlings Copse and College Pond, particularly as this development is not needed.

Their spokesperson Ginette Camps-Walsh said *"Our parishes and communities will fight this Plan all the way. We urge the SODC councillors to vote against approval of this Plan. It has no local democratic mandate. Land north of Bayswater Brook is unsuitable for development with flooding and horrendous traffic problems, but we think the worst part of it is the wanton destruction of the Green Belt, countryside and risk to Sidlings Copse and College Pond."*

The strategic development site for 1,100 homes at LnBB is one of the 6 out of 7 sites that destroys the Green Belt in the emerging SODC Local Plan 2035. The important SSSI next to the site is very fragile and is part of the ancient hunting forest that stretched from the edge of Oxford to Shotover, Bernwood Forest and beyond. It contains important flora and fauna as well as archaeology. Both Natural England and BBOWT (Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust,) which owns part of the site and manages it all, are very opposed to this development. The fields around it are enjoyed by many people from Barton, Oxford, nearby villages and communities from further afield. Access to this countryside and fields at Bayswater Farm with a number of very well used footpaths and bridleways is important for local residents for both their physical and mental health and has been very valuable for their wellbeing during lockdown. The fields form an important green backdrop to Oxford to the north-east. Bayswater Brook itself floods frequently and more development is likely to exacerbate this.

The Green Belt is to stop urban sprawl from Oxford and protect encroachment of the countryside. Its function is at its most important at Bayswater Brook. This countryside will be lost forever to future generations. There is actually no need to develop Land north of Bayswater Brook at all, as the housing need calculations used out of date figures and was inflated by approximately 8,000 dwellings. These will not be needed for Oxford City's 'unmet' housing need and were nevertheless found 'sound' by the Inspector.

Save Bayswater Brook Countryside is an alliance of local groups opposing this development – Friends of Bayswater, Save Sidlings and the Bayswater Green Belt, Save Sandhills Green Belt.

ENDS

The **Save Bayswater Brook Countryside** Group represents Elsfeld Parish Meeting, Beckley and Stowood, Stanton St John, Forest Hill with Shotover and Risinghurst and Sandhills Parish Councils and Barton Community Group.