

Comments from: Oxford Green Belt Network

Section B

Oppose
Chap 22(9)

Section C

We dispute the existence of “exceptional circumstances” existing to justify a Green Belt review.

Section D1

There is reference in the text to the setting of Oxford being a broader concept that includes the countryside around Oxford. This is true, but the concept as defined by the County Council goes on to refer to control over the level of activity within the Green Belt in order to protect the interests of both city and surrounding villages. This amplification and explanation is very important because your apparent emphasis on growth at all costs is wholly inconsistent with what the concept of “setting” really implies, i.e. the need for restraint.

Your reference to a lack of realistic alternatives to focussing growth at Oxford fails to take account of the “country towns” strategy which, over the years, has sought to prevent over-concentration of higher order jobs and services in Oxford and has aimed to distribute economic activity and services more evenly throughout the county. The “country towns” strategy was slow to take off, mainly because it was housing-led and lacked appropriate investment in infrastructure, but now the benefits are being experienced in Bicester, Didcot and elsewhere, and it is our opinion that it would be wholly wrong to weaken this policy at the very time that it is bearing fruit.

Section D2

Expand the reference to the broader concept to state, “but a broader concept that seeks to control the level of activity within the Green Belt countryside in order to protect the interests of both the city and surrounding villages.”

Delete all that follows this statement about the Green Belt. Chapter 22(8) and Chapter 22(9) could well be conflated if this is done.