

**From:** Ian Scargill  
**To:** letters@oxfordtimes.co.uk  
**Sent:** Friday, October 02, 2009 10:37 AM  
**Subject:** Letter to the Editor

Sir - It is welcome news that the cost of a legal hearing into the South East Plan can be avoided (*Report*, October 1) but it should be remembered that the situation would not have arisen in the first place if the City Council had not promoted development south of Grenoble Road against the advice of the Regional Assembly, the County Council and South Oxfordshire District Council.

The danger now, as Reg Little rightly points out, is that a full-scale review of the Green Belt will be demanded and that this will re-open the debate over other vulnerable sites outside the City. The Oxford Green Belt Network has always believed that development should take place on brownfield sites within Oxford or outside the Green Belt altogether. We suggest, therefore, that any forthcoming review of alternatives to south of Grenoble Road should concentrate on these non-Green Belt locations and especially on the principle of accommodating Oxford's needs within Oxford's boundaries.

I once heard a talk by the late Councillor Mike Woodin in which he observed that the problem with Oxford was that it had to be top in everything, not only in higher education, but in manufacturing, retailing, tourism, culture etc. Such an aspiration is fine but only if it does not impact negatively on other needs such as housing and the benefit of preserving Oxford's green setting and its healthful Green Belt.

Planning for Oxford used to recognize the benefits of sharing the City's growth potential with other towns in the County, but this aim seems to have been forgotten in the City's present drive to expand at all costs. We think that now is the opportunity to seek a better balance between development and the environment, a balance that does not put at risk the green surroundings that contribute so much to Oxford's beauty and the well-being of its citizens.

**Ian Scargill**  
Chairman, Oxford Green Belt Network