

*KEEP HARWELL RURAL CAMPAIGN*

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Councillor Margaret Turner  
15 Tyrrells Close  
Harwell  
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Councillor Reg Waite  
7 Hengest Gate  
Harwell  
OX11 0HH

*(Separate identical letters)*

Dear

**Vale Housing Plans**

We understand that the Vale is about to review the housing figures for its Local Development Framework Core Strategy. We urge you as part of this review to support the removal of the 2,150 houses between Great Western Park and the A34 that are currently in the draft Core Strategy. They are there as a result of VWH agreeing to take 50% of the expansion plans for Didcot to 2026/27 included in the South East Plan.

We have consistently argued against this further westward expansion of Didcot because:

1. More BMV land will be lost to add to that already sacrificed by agreeing to GWP, at a time when global warming and attendant sea-level rises threaten the large fraction of the UK's BMV land near the east coast, making inland BMV land a more precious resource for indigenous food production;
2. The distinctiveness of Harwell village will disappear because the rural gap will almost vanish;
3. Building near to the A34 carries greater risks of noise and pollution than alternatives;
4. Didcot will become an even more unbalanced town now that the town centre development is shifting its centre of gravity eastwards and SODC plans to build in the north east.

We recognise that there are arguments that housing numbers on this scale are needed in the district, especially the component of affordable homes. However, even if this is the case we question whether Didcot is the right place, given the uncertain impact that Great Western Park will already have on the town and its neighbours. If Didcot is the right place, we have always argued that the lion's share of any further expansion should be in SODC not VWH.

It will be argued that without the extra houses planned for the Vale the case for new link roads near Harwell and West Hagbourne will be put in jeopardy. We think that this argument is spurious. The expansion of Didcot from Great Western Park, Ladygrove East and then the next phase of expansion in SODC will place traffic stresses on the area that will need new road infrastructure, regardless of any further housing in the Vale. The Vale should first change its housing plans and then, with SODC, review the implications for traffic and the new road infrastructure required to cope with the revised number and distribution of new housing.

If the Vale decides not to change its plans for housing west of Didcot as a result of the review we would be grateful to receive specific explanation as to why our points 1 to 4 above have been rejected. We hope, however, that you and your colleagues will be able to support the revision that we seek.

Yours sincerely

Dr A E Hughes (Chairman of the KHR Committee)