





Old Marston Parish Council

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South Oxford District Council

7th June 2023

Re Planning Application P22/S4618/O – Land North of Bayswater Brook

Dear Sir/Madam,

At its meeting held on Monday 5th June 2023 Old Marston Parish Council instructed me to send the following comments on the above application.

Although the development in question lies outside the parish boundary, it impacts heavily on Old Marston, particularly on Marsh Lane and the unofficial through-route via Old Marston village, which has itself been subject to three major planning applications for new housing in the last three years.

The main three objections to the development north of the ring road, which are themselves inter-connected, are as follows:

1. The impact on traffic into the city from Marston Flyover has been underestimated.
2. The density of housing and lack of adequate infrastructure exacerbates the problem.
3. The loss of green belt, at a time when we should be paying urgent attention to climate change, needs further examination.

The parish council has, on numerous occasions, drawn the attention of planners to the build-up of traffic from the ring road and over Marston Flyover at certain times. So dense is it on weekday mornings that there is often a tail back on to the



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ring road itself creating a danger for existing traffic on the ring road travelling in an easterly direction. The build-up of cars between 7 and 9am along Marsh Lane encourages many drivers to cut through the village which should be 'Access only'. Vehicles are regularly seen mounting the narrow pavements along Oxford Road endangering pedestrians, particularly those making their way to the local schools, of which there are many. Now, with the expectation of more cars from new housing developments along Mill Lane and Marston Paddock, the parish is facing a serious congestion problem which can only be made worse by further traffic from the development north of the ring road. Elms Drive can be affected too by rat running. The suggestion that traffic lights close to the flyover would be helpful in managing the flow of traffic seem fanciful when you consider the volume of traffic.

While the parish council appreciates the need for more affordable homes, this should not be at the price of the safety and nuisance caused to the residents in Old Marston, many of whom already complain about the traffic at peak times, the damage to their cars parked along Oxford Road, and the pollution vehicles cause. The transport assessment, in our view, does not adequately consider these congestion and safety issues, not only along Oxford Road but also at school drop-off on Raymond Road, and ignores the existing impact of additional housing in the parish. The assessment points to a "challenging" set of circumstances and accepts there is a rat-run through the village, despite it being 'Access Only', but offers no solutions. As a parish council we have lobbied our own City Councillors (unsuccessfully) to meet with representatives from the County who are responsible for highways to discuss our concerns but have met with resistance and complacency over what is already a serious problem in Marston.

While the proposals do address the need for improving bicycle access to the city, the assumption made that most householders will either not possess a car or find other means to travel, for example to the schools nearby, must be questioned. Even if the number of cars, vans and lorries is reduced, *any* increase will add to a pre-existing problem which is not going to go away over the next ten years. The density of housing alone will inevitably make the issue worse and while cycle lanes within the development may be adequate, they are conspicuously absent within the village with its narrow roads and narrower pavements.

Finally, while acknowledging the need for additional housing, surely space needs to be sought on brown field sites rather than green field sites. A modest incursion



into green fields may be necessary, but not the wholesale destruction of green field sites beyond the ring road.

It is the wish of the residents of Old Marston, represented by their parish council, that these plans be re-examined in the areas found wanting, notably in terms of traffic and congestion and the impact beyond land north of the brook be looked at in more detail.

Yours faithfully,

Tim Cann. PSLCC.
Clerk to Old Marston Parish Council

