

Protest over 3,500 homes



By Eva Astreinidou

CAMPAIGNERS braved the wet weather to show their opposition to a plan to build 3,500 homes in their area.

A residents' march on Monday evening set off from Clifton Hampden village hall, with campaigners 'celebrating the green belt' and denouncing 'ridiculous' housing targets for the area.

The development is set for land adjacent to Culham Science Centre and forms part of South Oxfordshire District

Council's local plan, which outlines housing targets until 2031.

Caroline Baird, a campaigner and resident, was among those who walked around the main road so motorists could see them.

She said: "We need to celebrate the green belt all around Oxford and we ought to show people the scale of these plans."

"The infrastructure for such a development is just not in place. Aside from that, Clifton Hampden and Culham are villages. You can't just stick a town in the middle."

Helen Marshall, from Oxfordshire's Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) said: "CPRE thinks this is one of the most worrying proposals out of all of the ones that have come forward over the last few years."

"It's driven by ridiculous, over exaggerated housing targets that are forcing more and more unsuitable sites to be brought forward in order to meet very short-term targets."

"But this is a site within the green belt, there is very little in the way of supporting

infrastructure and we feel that it would be a very dangerous precedent for the green belt as a whole.

"The point for the green belt is that people have confidence it is a permanent designation and for the benefit of nature and people, to give them access to the green space on their doorstep."

Out of the 3,500 homes, 750 are planned for development under the existing infrastructure by developers CEG.

Their representatives declined to comment.

Doorstep crime team helps to save victims from £250k of fraud

'VULNERABLE' victims of fraudulent crime have been saved from handing over a quarter of a million pounds to rogue traders. Over the last 12 months agencies have been working together to track down rogue traders who prey on the vulnerable and elderly, many of whom are being conned out of their life savings.

The doorstep crime team consists of a seconded Thames Valley Police officer and three trading standards officers from Oxfordshire County Council.

The team has helped save victims being cheated out of £250,000 by various methods, including responding to incidents while also working with local banks who spot and report suspicious large cash withdrawals.

Martin Woodley, the doorstep crime team leader for the council's trading standards service said: "It is encouraging that the team has managed to increase the savings for this financial year. However, we need to stay vigilant, as the number of incidents has also risen."

"This has led to a knock-on effect, increasing the amount of money obtained from victims. This type of fraudulent activity is happening frequently in Oxfordshire, where some victims are conned out of their

life savings for unnecessary and overpriced work.

"This causes a detrimental effect on the victim's health and on their confidence. We then need to provide continuing support, by putting safeguarding measures in place."

Jody Kerman, the county council's trading standards operations manager, said: "The figure of £250,000 is a visible sign of the hard work and dedication shown by the doorstep crime team, supported by other colleagues and a range of partner organisations."

"We are also grateful to the victims who come forward to report such incidents of doorstep crime and for the concerned neighbours and family members, who also help us to identify situations of concern."

The doorstep crime team delivers presentations and educational events to community groups, raising the awareness of rogue trader activities and other forms of financial abuse against older people.

The team say that to avoid becoming a victim, "do not make an instant decision on one cold call."

"Speak to family or friends to discuss it, do some online checks on the internet and get three quotes from reputable traders."