

Hearing Statement clarifying submitted comment on Oxford Local Plan 2013  
Proposed Submission Draft

Representor: Rowland Stout

Matter Arising: 6B – policy SP39 – Former Iffley Mead school playing field

Issues of access to sites would normally be considered at the stage of planning permission rather than at the stage of local plan. But in this case, the access issue involves probable changes to an adjoining recreation ground – Donnington Recreation Ground – changes which have been kept secret from the local community in a way that threatens not only the soundness but the legality of the plan.

I am not presenting an argument about the soundness of any plan concerning access, but claiming that the way this aspect of the plan has been considered so far fails to meet basic conditions of transparency. It is theoretically possible for the site to be accessed through the grounds of the current Iffley Academy State Special School. But there are clear reasons to presume that this is not what is being planned and that the access would be through Cavell Road and the Donnington Recreation Ground. It is very unlikely that access through the grounds of a special needs school would be granted, especially as the school is currently being redeveloped and resited in such a way that the access would be much closer to the school buildings. This is hinted at but not stated explicitly in sections 9.208 and 9.209 of the Proposed Submission Draft.

9.208 “There is need to negotiate access via adjoining land, as access to site is currently via school.”

9.209 “A minimum of 10% of the site should be for public open space which should be accessible for existing residents. It is likely that this space will be best provided as an extension to Donnington Recreation Ground.”

Donnington Recreation Ground cannot be extended except by cutting down the trees that currently make a border between it and the proposed site. So it is evident that the plan is to cut down these trees, carve out part of the Recreation Ground to make a new road into the site at the end of Cavell Road, and then extend the Recreation Ground into another part of the site.

My submission is that this sort of change, which is clearly envisaged by the plan but not made public, should have been considered at the local plan stage and not kept secret until the plan is in effect and specific planning permission sought on the basis of it. The residents of Cavell Road are completely in the dark concerning the changes envisaged by the planners and would have been very keen to consider the details of the local plan, and perhaps to make their own comments, if they had had any idea of what was in store for them.