

Possible loss of Weston-On-The-Green airfield.

One of the government's current 'green' proposals is the construction of 10 Ecotowns. These will be the first New Towns built for over 40 years, and are intended to be 'self sustaining' with local jobs, facilities and public transport which it is hoped would minimise the need for residents to use private cars.

The shortlist of 15 was recently published and it has transpired that one, the 'Weston – Otmoor' proposal will include Weston-On-The-Green airfield, the home of Oxford Gliding Club (OGC) since 1956. Of the 15 on the shortlist, the government intend to build 5 by 2016 and the remaining 5 by 2020 in an aggressive timetable which may circumvent some of the established planning control principles of this country. The Developers intends first occupations within Weston Otmoor to commence in 2012.

OGC is working closely with the local residents, elected representatives and the BGA team to try to prevent this from happening.

However it is not just about gliding. Apart from the loss of a gliding site and another historic RAF airfield, the proposed location is fundamentally and inherently unsuitable for many reasons including: -

- Increased traffic congestion on the already saturated M40 & A34 - why build a car free town adjacent to two of the country's busiest roads,
- The airfield with grass runways and limited buildings is not a 'Brownfield' site as is claimed by the Developer,
- 30% of the proposed site is within the Oxfordshire Green Belt,
- Part of the proposed site is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI),
- It will have a catastrophic social & economic effect on the surrounding villages and communities,
- It will result in a continuous conurbation between Bicester and Oxford.

The full details about the Government's Eco-town proposals can be found at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/ecotownsgreenerfuture> and details of the Weston Otmoor proposal specifically can be found at the Developer's web site: <http://www.parkridgeholdings.com/category.php?category=6&menuitem=5167>.

What you can do to help?

An on-line petition has been created and OGC would appreciate it if all supporters could sign up at <http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/WestonOtmoor/>.

Respond to the DCLG's consultation exercise as detailed at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/ecotownsgreenerfuture> by the 30th June 2008.

Lobby your MPs to oppose the inclusion of Weston Otmoor in the final list of ten sites.

If you would like more information, please contact me at pmorrison@madasafish.com

Thank you for your support.

Paul Morrison
Chairman, Oxford Gliding Club