

Tom Hawkes

From: [REDACTED]m
Sent: 26 September 2025 17:59
To: Consultations
Subject: Consultation Response - Draft Local Plan

You don't often get email from [REDACTED] [Learn why this is important](#)

--Email From External Account--

Dear Sirs,

Here is my response to the Draft Local Plan.

Policy N31 Chartham Paper Mill

The Consultation Document describes the site as 'predominantly brownfield'. This is misleading because it includes substantial areas of virgin greenfield land, notably a large area, at the west end of the site bounded by the River Great Stour and Parish Road, that is believed to be part of a flood plain.

The river passing through the Paper Mill site is one of the world's few chalkstreams, a precious and vulnerable asset that our national Government has pledged to protect. It is a Habitat of International Importance. I am concerned that the Draft Plan (both here and in the main body of the Local Plan) neglects this and underestimates the need for the protection of the river and the flood plain.

In particular, according to the Mill manager, there is a substantial artificial change of river level within the Mill building that was constructed to drive a turbine, and, furthermore, the river flow is elsewhere on the site controlled by sluice gates operated by Mill staff. Therefore, I am very concerned that the Plan does not require that when the Paper Mill site is developed there should be continued robust and sustainable provision for the proper future management of the river and the mill race to control the level of the water. This should be enforceable.

Ideally, the developer should be required to work with the relevant bodies including the Stour Fisheries Association, the Tonford Fly Fishing Club, the Environment Agency, The Wild Trout Trust and The Rivers Trust, etc, to develop and implement a scheme which restores the river to its natural condition without the restrictions of the weirs and sluices installed by the paper mill.

Otherwise, the management of the river level should not be left to new residents or a freeholder alone. It should be managed by a public agency, such as the Environment Agency. This too should be addressed in the plan.

It should be stressed in the Plan that particular care needs to be exercised during the period of the works on the site and it should be required that appropriate measures to screen and protect the river from the works should be included in the Plan and ultimately as planning conditions that are monitored and enforced.

Any proposed policy for public open space and public access to the river within the Paper Mill site should recognise that public access to this precious asset will bring many challenges to the river, not least the anti-social behaviour which is a frequent issue along the Chartham length of the river.

At the West end of the site, the open greenfield 'flood plain' area, the river and the trees close to the Mill buildings provide a distinct natural boundary between the urban development of the village and the start of the rural land. These trees should be retained undisturbed. While I note that on the plan it is coloured green, I strongly believe that the plan should explicitly NOT permit the development of this part of the site. It should not even be public open space but left wild and natural and secure.

My understanding is that outside the Mill itself, the river is privately owned by the Stour Fisheries Association and leased or licensed to the Tonford Fly Fishing Club and this land should not be considered as part of the Paper Mill Site.

With regard to your stated development criteria, I am at a loss to comprehend your statement that the development of the Mill Site will 'enhance the Chartham Conservation Area'. You should re-think this embarrassing statement or fully articulate it in the plan.

It is disappointing that no explicit opportunities for employment on the site are prescribed.

Policy N32 – Land at Rattington Street and Policy N31

Taken with the development of the Paper Mill site (165 dwellings), this site (170 dwellings) would bring 335 new dwellings to the village (about 740 people). This would overburden the village infrastructure – for one example, it is already difficult to get a GP appointment. It would completely change the rural character of the village and its demography. Traffic around The Green, which is a Conservation Area, indeed all the local roads, would inevitably substantially increase and one can but imagine the queue at the railway level crossing. The proposed widening of Station Road is not practicable for its full length and anyway would reduce the size of the recreation field and encroach on the mature trees thereon. Impacts on the village infrastructure are completely neglected in the draft Plan.

While I accept that the Paper Mill site should be redeveloped, I most strongly object to the imposition of 335 houses on the village. There is likely to be a strong negative reaction from most village residents. A density like that of the existing nearby Stour Road would be most appropriate.

During construction works on these large sites, the environment will be severely prejudiced, including traffic, noise, dust and parking of workers' cars. If such intensive development of these sites is retained in the Plan, it should recognize and address this.

Yours,
Dr N Parkinson

[Redacted signature block]