



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Gordon Stewart
Chief Executive
Cherwell District Council
Bodicote House
Bodicote
OX15 4AA

18 March 2024

Dear Gordon,

I am writing with reference to planning application **23/00977/OUT: *Outline Planning Application (except for access) for residential development of up to 60 dwellings (Use Class C3) including a community facility, new vehicular and pedestrian access off Claydon Road, public open space and associated landscaping, earthworks, parking, engineering works and infrastructure.*** My understanding is that this application will be considered at the next meeting of the Planning Committee on Thursday 21 March.

Following Obsidian's submission of this application almost a year ago, I have been contacted by a number of Cropredy residents who are very worried about the proposals. Their principal concern is around the scale and location of the development, which they feel would change the character of the village significantly. The site is currently greenfield agricultural land which lies between the northern edge of the village and the marina. These proposals would exceed Cropredy's built-up limits. Residents have told me that should permission be granted, they think further development to the north of the site will follow, promoting urban sprawl.

Cropredy is classed as a Category A service village under the current Local Plan, meaning it is considered suitable for minor development, infilling and conversions. However, officers have concluded that the village has become less sustainable for development since the Local Plan's adoption, noting the loss of its bus service. My constituents also do not feel that a development of up to 60 dwellings can be classified as minor, pointing out that the site is not allocated and that Cherwell can already demonstrate a 5-year supply of land for housing. I note that both the Highway Authority and Thames Water have shared their own concerns about the ability of the village's infrastructure to accommodate a development of this size.

Residents are worried that the proposed development would serve to increase existing pressures on local services. The service which has generated most concern, and become something of a focal point for this application, is primary healthcare provision. Cropredy Surgery is one of the smaller GP practices in North Oxfordshire, yet its patient list continues to grow. While primary healthcare has faced challenges across the country following the pandemic, our rate of growth locally has only exacerbated pressures on appointment availability.

I have regular conversations with primary healthcare providers across North Oxfordshire, as well as our Integrated Care Board. In the last two years, I have visited Cropredy Surgery twice to meet the GP partners and discuss the challenges they are facing. The partners have told me that they are restricted by the constraints of the current building and were keen to explore ways of redesigning or expanding the site. As a result, I was able to facilitate a positive conversation between the GP partners and their new landlord to look at various ways in which this might be achieved.



The development under consideration instead seeks to construct a new community facility. As the application has progressed, this has been refined as a new health centre for Cropredy. I am told the ICB prefers this approach over the expansion of the existing surgery. However, concerns have been raised throughout about a lack of clarity and detail on the proposals. Residents are worried that the community facility will not meet the expectations of a new health centre and will simply be used to facilitate the approval of the dwellings. Indeed, the current GP partners themselves have described the proposals as nebulous.

I trust that the concerns of my constituents will be at the forefront of considerations when this application goes before the Committee on Thursday.

Yours sincerely,



Rt Hon Victoria Prentis KC MP