The outline planning application **should be refused** on the following grounds:

1. Caversfield is a village and all applications for major residential projects have been refused or withdrawn…including 07/00225/out, 05/01091/out/ 03/02300/out, 03/02299/out, 99/00081/f, 98/01297/out, 98/00118/f, 96/00905/f, the main reasons being that a large development will detract from the village atmosphere
2. Neither Caversfield nor Bicester has any requirement for an extra 200 dwellings at this time. There are developments at Garden Quarter, Banbury Road, Bicester Eco Town, South West Bicester and Graven Hill already approved and/or in construction, that will provide properties for many years to come. Existing developments are currently being phased back due to slow sales.
3. The developer believes that Caversfield has been authorised as a relief building area for Bicester providing evidence as approval for building in the area. The Bicester master plan 314 includes 3 other areas as well as Caversfield as relief areas. They fail to mention that this is only likely to come into operation if the 10,500 dwellings planned for Bicester up to 2031 (Table 2- Housing Sites) is insufficient for the area’s need. At present development at SW Bicester is held in reserve up to 2026 (policy MON 1).
4. It seems perverse to deem land south of Caversfield as a green buffer to avoid Caversfield becoming conjoined to Bicester, but then allowing this development to the north thus connecting Caversfield to Bicester via the Eco Town development. Whilst this may not have been perceived in developing the Local Plans, it must not be allowed to happen by default.
5. The main push of current local plans is to ensure that housing development is only matched to available local employment and other infrastructure improvements. We do not want an estate of commuter’s houses within the village environment. This plan offers no comment or proposal on this and **should therefore be refused**. We do not want an estate of out of town commuters’ houses within the village environment.
6. The applicant dismisses St Laurence’s Parish Church as a chapel, though noting it to be listed as is nearby Caversfield House. They do not consider the impact the development will have on these two properties, and more importantly how the new residents would access the Church for services etc., and for this reason the application in its current form **should be refused.**
7. Throughout the application documentation the location has been described as “Fringford Road, Bicester”. If this is not cynical attempt by the developer to try and get the “suburb of Bicester” idea into the planners psyche., then it is confirmation that the applicant doesn’t understand we are talking here of an historical Oxfordshire Village whose boundaries are shared with the urban development of Bicester, and approval of this proposal will hasten the demise of the village, which has been successfully fought over for a number of years.

**PLEASE REFUSE THIS APPLICATION**

I would also like to comment on some of the documents attached to the application:

**Residential Travel Plan**

It is appreciated no OCC Highways comments are yet in the system, but I trust the following comment on the developers RTP show that as it stands the application should be refused

1. There are a number of inaccuracies:
2. 3.1.6 states that the southern side of Skimmingdish Lane “hosts a large driver training facility”. This is incorrect and the site of the old DCTA is now the residential development known as the Garden Quarter. On this basis any conclusions by the report have not been made using the true facts of the development’s location.
3. 3.1.11 and 3.1.12 indicates Buckingham Road and Banbury Road are both subject to 30mph limits. This is not correct.
4. 4.9 states the cycle/footway is on the northern side of the A4095, when in fact it on the southern side.
5. 5.1.3 and 5.3.5 dismisses these stops as irrelevant. The A4421 south bound bus stop DOES have a shelter and seating (though not yet an electrical connection). Both stops are well used by residents to access service X5 direct to Oxford (avoiding a change in Bicester) and stops to Cambridge (including Buckingham, Milton Keynes and Bedford). The development will add to this usage and it essential that safer crossing across the eastern end of Skimmingdish Lane and movement across the VERY busy A4421 is provided.
6. 5.3.4. The bus stop is for use of USAF children transport to and from their school, and is on USAF/MOD property. It is fairly obvious that the applicant has assumed it is for local village transport which is not correct. Perhaps the service provider (now changed) should have been consulted.

2 3.1.7 states the road to the south of the site is unnamed. In actual fact locally it is known as Aunt Emm’s Lane. It is also signed as not suitable for HGVs, though this does not appear to stop lorries and buses using the road. The plan admits that this road is used as a “rat-run” to avoid the Fringford Road/A4095 junction. The access to Fringford Road is not at a 90 degree angle resulting in a very difficult turn out, especially for USAF LH drive vehicles. There have been a number of accidents over the years, mostly car damage, but a very serious one occurred some years ago resulting in the road being closed for some time while the Fire Services had to cut open a car to allow the occupants to be medically dealt with. The other access point off the Banbury Road is also not ideal, in so far if cars are waiting to leave the road, the access is blocked to all but the smallest vehicles. Without major widening of the Lane and the re working of the junctions adding more vehicles from this development only aggravates the problem. The cost of this work must be paid for by Cala, and must be in addition to, rather than within any usual S106 agreement. Without this undertaking outline plans should be refused.

3. Nowhere in the travel plan does it actually state the increase in vehicular movements as a result of the development, but only states that attempts will be made to reduce the impact by 4% from the normal. Without knowledge of actual movements I assume that 200 houses occupied by 400 adults using their individual cars for 75% of their journeys at least twice a day will result in an extra 600 car movements in and out of the village per day just for work and school travel. Since this is usually condensed into 2 hours at the beginning and end of the day we are talking of one **extra** vehicle every 12 seconds. On top of that will be travel for social purposes. The present road infrastructure is not capable of sustaining this volume.

No mention has been made of the effect of Cherwood House on the statistics and calculations, both in respect of non-car owning residents and travel to work arrangements of employees. Without this data it is likely the statistics are skewed and therefore any conclusions drawn from them have to be suspect.

4. The Plan states that new residents will be provided with personal alarms and local transport season tickets to encourage them to walk and use public transport. This is an admission by Cala that this site is not suitable for their proposed development.

If the current facilities are not good enough then the developer should withdraw the plan, or agree to undertake work to make it so. It is imperative that the underlying cause is dealt with.

Based on all of the above it is obvious that the Residential Travel Plan has been constructed without an understanding of local issues, and as such is sufficient grounds for refusal.

**FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT**

1. The site plan is different from other plans. Perhaps consistency should be the first task.
2. 3.2.5 highlights a high groundwater level. This has resulted in flooding at the rear of the existing houses on the Fringford Road with one very bad year in the last 20 contrary to the statement made in 4.5, 5.2, 5.5 etc. It is fairly obvious that any ground run off will follow the contours to that area. Whilst an attenuation pond is envisaged this is not at the lowest point of the site and no contingency has been made for flooding at lower levels. The plan intimates that the houses should be built to a height to avoid high ground water, but is silent on the effect of this on surrounding properties. Obviously if the site is made higher then the risk to adjoining properties becomes greater. Whilst the plan is proposing the flow goes via the attenuation pond to the existing Fringford Road facilities it is essential that facilities are incorporated to capture excess ground water from behind the houses on the SE side at Fringford Road. A topographical survey of the existing properties should be made to ensure work is correctly planned and completed
3. Without the Thames Water study for foul drainage, **approval cannot be considered**. As it stands at the moment the Fringford Road houses lie directly between the proposed pumping station and the public sewer. It should be noted that 2 of the 4 houses are not linked to main drainage. The effect the development on the all of the houses on Fringford Road without mains drainage to be studied and quantified.

Without proper published studies in the “Flood Risk Assessment” document in respect of the above matters the **council should refuse the application.**

**PLANNING STATEMENT**

Title page: Again the developer doesn’t seem to recognise he is dealing with a village, not a suburb of a town. Without this understanding surely the application should fail?

* 1. As previously stated the applicant is trying to get round planning requirements on technicalities. It is hoped this can be resisted by local councils and authorities,
  2. The “much needed” housing is currently available in large numbers within a 5 mile radius, and this extra development is not required.

2.5 Not so, please refer to Flooding comments

2.7 The site is NOT within an urban environment. And whilst Bicester is quite close, Caversfield is not part of Bicester.

2.10 Not so, see comments on RTP.

3.9 Offering 2.5 storey buildings may be OK in an urban development, but NOT a village one.

4.2 Whilst there may have been some consultation, it is very difficult for a resident who is absolutely against the scheme to suggest things they would like to see. I assume the applicant has done all that is legally required, but it is hoped that if the Permission is given, then consultation is not curtailed.

5.5 The applicant appears only to consider this site for sustainability. No consideration has been given to employment, education or recreational (other than a small local playground).

5.10 It may well not be a formal document/policy yet, but the Draft LDF (which has gone through significant work and amendments) certainly demonstrates there is sufficient potential housing allocations for significantly longer than the 5 year requirement, and 5.15 confirms that the draft LDF should be given greater weight in these circumstances.

5.48 I cannot find any reference to Caversfield being part of the Bicester Urban Area. Such self-serving statements should be taken with a pinch of salt unless references are supplied.

6.4 Though nowhere does it state that Caversfield is an area for immediate development.

6.5 Has the applicant ever investigated the current residential building work progressing in Caversfield or Bicester? Another self-serving statement not backed up by references or fact. In fact the current residential development within Caversfield has not been understood or recognised (my comments in 1i about RTP.) I would be pleased to give them a tour of the district if they have any problems in identifying current works.

It appears the applicant has become legalistic as to why the proposal cannot be refused, rather than why it should be accepted. I certainly don’t appreciate this method of enforcing what is in effect a one-off windfall to a soon to be an ex-resident at the expense of the remaining inhabitants. Under the circumstances **the application should be refused.**

The Planning Statement recognises that this development will have an impact on the 4 houses on Fringford Road and so the development will be carried out with sensitivity. Placing a community centre and car park immediately behind these properties is not sensitive and needs to be amended. They also state that Fringford Road’s electricity supply will be placed underground. Without assurances for continuity of supply and/or compensation this cannot be acceptable.