



Yvonne Rees  
Chief Executive  
Cherwell District Council  
Bodicote House, Bodicote  
Banbury OX15 4AA

18 February 2022

Dear Yvonne,

I am writing with reference to planning application 21/04271/F: Erection of 6 one storey age-restricted dwellings in Sibford Ferris.

I am aware that this site is adjacent to a parcel of land on which 25 dwellings are to be constructed. This is the result of application 18/01894/OUT, which was originally refused by the Cherwell District Council Planning Committee but later allowed at appeal. I have been contacted by a number of constituents who have significant concerns regarding the possible cumulative impact of these developments.

The site in question, as with the previous application, is currently arable land classed as Grade 2 or "Very Good" by Natural England. While I fully recognise the necessity of sustainable home building, I am greatly concerned by the possible loss of such productive farmland when more suitable brownfield sites are available. The past two years have only highlighted the importance of a resilient domestic food supply and land of this quality is already in short supply.

A number of constituents have raised with me that Cherwell has already exceeded its target of constructing 750 homes in the largest rural villages under the current Local Plan. Moreover, my constituents have questioned whether Sibford Ferris should be considered as such a suitable village. Sibford Ferris, Sibford Gower and Burdrop are currently classified as one Category A village under the Local Plan. However, it is clear to me that these villages are separate and not capable of sustaining a large amount of further development.

Constituents have highlighted the narrow lanes and tight bends throughout the Sibfords, with limited footpaths and regular congestion caused by parked cars. While there is a small shop in Sibford Ferris, the remaining amenities lie in Sibford Gower and Burdrop, which are on the other side of a deep valley. Such factors would present clear challenges for older residents, bearing in mind that the current application is solely for age-restricted dwellings.

Given the above restrictions on residents' ability to walk and cycle, combined with a limited bus service, it is clear that future occupants of the proposed dwellings would largely be reliant on the use of cars. My constituents feel strongly that this is at odds with the vital need to promote sustainability in future housebuilding. I have also been made aware that the current water and sewage infrastructure in the Sibfords is already at capacity. It is not clear to me how the application in question will not simply push these systems to breaking point.

I trust that my constituents' concerns will be fully considered as this application is assessed.

Yours sincerely,

**Victoria Prentis MP**