

Objection letter to Planning Application - 21/04271/F on behalf of the Sibford Action Group.

Erection of 6 one storey age restricted dwellings (55 years) for older people with access, landscaping and associated infrastructure - Land south of Faraday House, Woodway Road Sibford Ferris - Blue Cedar Homes Limited.

Dear Mr Campbell

I write as a local resident to object most strongly to the above planning application.

Summary of Objection

In summary, I believe the proposal constitutes unnecessary, inappropriate and unsustainable development extending beyond the built up limits of the village into the attractive open countryside surrounding Sibford Ferris. Its layout and design for older people is unsuitable and would result in a cramped development, which in no way responds to the local character of Sibford Ferris. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy C28 of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996, Policies Villages 2 and Policies ESD13 and ESD 15 of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011 - 2031 Part 1 and Government guidance Contained within the National Planning Policy guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Guide.

Background

The village is under threat from development following the granting on appeal for 25 houses on the Hook Norton Road in 2018, when the inspector overturned the Council's refusal. The appeal overlooked the relative isolation, aged infrastructure, limited capacity, lack of facilities and poor accessibility of Sibford Ferris. The Parish Council is trying to remedy this through a review of the Cherwell Local Plan 2040, but it would be too late if further unsympathetic and inappropriate development is approved. The appeal on the Hook Norton should not be seen as an open door for developers to do what they please, further damaging the rural nature, character of an historic village and its beautiful surroundings on the edge of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The reasons for our objection are because the proposal will be :

1. Contrary to the local plan;
2. Unsustainable;
3. Will generate extra traffic on unsuitable roads;
4. Harmful to the landscape; and
5. Of poor layout and design contrary to the NPPF and National Design Guide.

1. Contrary to Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031.

The Local Plan housing quotas for rural villages in Cherwell has already been achieved, so this proposal is not necessary.

Since 2014 a total of 1062 houses have been identified for meeting the local plan which required 750 properties. Therefore the Policy Villages 2 requirement has already been exceeded by 312 homes. 749 houses have been built or are under construction and there is an appeal for 43 homes on Station Road, Hook Norton, which could lead to substantially more. As there are still 9 years to go before the end of the Plan period, this proposal would substantially exceed the policy figures.

This and other proposals that threaten to follow would further undermine the Local Plan strategy of directing most growth to Banbury and Bicester. These two towns have access to shops, services, jobs, and other facilities including the opportunity of travelling by train, rather than by car. This helps to avoid commuting, congestion, pollution, climate change and damaging the environment.

The District Council has declared a Climate change emergency, but none of these environmental objectives will be realised by repeating the same mistakes and approving more and more homes in attractive but unsustainable villages like Sibford Ferris.

This is a poorly conceived proposal on an unsuitable site and an unsustainable location and should be refused.

2 Unsustainable Development

Sibford Gower and Sibford Ferris are treated as one Category A village in the local plan, which is not a true reflection of the community, geography and location of sparse facilities.

Sibford Ferris has only one small shop. The few local amenities that are in Sibford Gower and Burdrop are only accessed by narrow roads with poor or incomplete footpaths, limited lighting and congestion from parked cars. The two villages are separated by a deep valley that results in poor accessibility for everyone, let alone the elderly.

The bus service has halved in recent years and is now subsidised by Warwickshire County Council and has a very limited service to Stratford and Banbury at inconvenient times and there are no services to Hook Norton or Chipping Norton.

The proposed development is unsuitable for older persons. Government advice on the location of houses for the elderly, includes the proximity to good public transport, local amenities, health services and town centres.

3. Extra Traffic on Unsuitable Roads.

Because of the location, occupants of the proposed houses who would be less mobile and less likely to walk or cycle and will be highly reliant on their cars. This would lead to extra traffic which would clash with traffic accessing Sibford Friends School at peak times. The roads are narrow, which makes it difficult for two vehicles to pass safely, littered with potholes and without pavements for substantial distances. Therefore the site is not appropriate for the proposed development.

4. Landscape impact

The proposal is for development on greenfield, agricultural land and is beyond Faraday House and in open country, it would be clearly visible and harm the rural character and appearance of this attractive landscape to the west of the village,

5. Design

The design, incorporating large bungalows with a variety of roof pitches, timber boarding and other uncharacteristic features takes no influence from the historic nature of its surroundings. The bungalows are sited close together, have very limited amenity spaces and appear cramped and out of character with Sibford Ferris, which is designated as a Conservation Area.

Paragraph 134 of the NPFF states:

Development which is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes.

The proposal is clearly not well designed, does not respond to existing local character and should be refused.

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