

Planning Application 21/04271/F Revised Transport Proposal: Sustained Objection by Sibford Action Group

Introduction

Sibford Action Group is a large group of some 120 plus local residents living in Sibford Ferris and Sibford Gower and Burdrop. The Group has already submitted its objections to the original application 21/04271/F (letter from Chadwick Town Planning dated 25 January 2022 to Wayne Campbell).

We have now seen the amended plans submitted by Blue Cedar Homes and understand that the Consultation on these revised proposals closes on 28 February. We state the continued **OBJECTION** of the Sibford Action Group as the amendments change only the internal layout within the site and do nothing to address the fundamental concerns concerning extra traffic on unsuitable roads set out in Section 4 of the original objection letter from Chadwick Town Planning.

This further objection should be read in conjunction with the points raised in the previous letter of objection.

Invalid Comparators for Traffic Movements

The predicted traffic movements contained in the 2021 Traffic Assessment by the Pegasus Group submitted in support of the Application are not based on any evidence specific to the proposed site but rather three previous Blue Cedar developments which are claimed to be comparable.

The claim is false as the examples are all of developments which are within the boundaries of built areas of sizeable centres of population, as the Pegasus figures themselves show. Specifically:

Budleigh Salterton: Development 300 metres north of the High Street of a population centre of 5,844 people

Shaftesbury: Development 500 metres from the centre of Shaftesbury with some 1,694 households

Wrington: Development 400 metres from Main Street of population centre of 1,234 households.

Sibford Ferris: The proposed development is beyond the built boundary of a village with a population of 476.

The only commercial facilities in Sibford Ferris are one very small local shop/post office, at a distance from the proposed development of 900 metres along narrow roads without a continuous footpath for two significant sectors of around 100 metres each. The nearest larger population centre and commercial facilities are at Banbury, some 8 miles distant on a twisty B- road.

Clearly vehicle movements for shopping and other purposes will be considerably higher than for the allegedly comparable developments where such facilities will be in easy walking distance.

Impact of Topography

In assessing distances and times for walking and cycling to other facilities, the Pegasus Group report quotes generic "typical" times for such journeys.

In the case of this development, however, topography is an important factor. With the exception of the Shop/Post Office to which reference has already been made, all the other facilities identified in Table 2.1 of the Pegasus Report are located in Sibford Gower. The only link between the two villages is a narrow road through the Sib valley with steep gradients (around 20%) for several hundred metres in each direction.

The generic "typical" walking and cycling times quoted in the Pegasus Report do not reflect the true situation on the ground. Moreover, as the Blue Cedar proposal is for age restricted dwellings for people over 55 the extent to which occupants will be willing to tackle such gradients is questionable. It is more likely that there will be much higher usage of private cars to access the facilities than in the "typical" case.

The generic "typical" walking and cycling distances and times do not reflect the topography of the location which is more likely to lead to journeys by private car given the age profile of the proposed occupants.

Road Safety

The Pegasus Report provides data showing that there have been no reported accidents at the location where it is proposed that the development will join Hook Norton Road via the Gade Development. This is unsurprising since the relevant junction does not yet exist. It cannot be taken as an indicator of the possible future level of danger at the proposed junction.

The proposed junction is at a blind summit in Hook Norton Road approaching or leaving the village. In particular, approaching from the south, once over the summit any vehicle is immediately entering the village and an area where there are roadside parked cars.

The junction with Hook Norton Road from the Gade development is also opposite the public entrance to Sibford School. This is a private school with a wide catchment area which generates considerable traffic of large coaches and minibuses, as well as private cars, at school opening and closing times. Moreover, because the school caters for a very wide age range, afternoon closing times are staggered and therefore traffic movements occur over a protracted period. These traffic movements are far larger than at generic "rush hour" times.

The proposals fail to take proper account of the specifics of the location providing access from the site to Hook Norton Road and of the traffic movements connected with Sibford School.

Changes to the Internal Layout of the Site

The Sibford Action Group understands that the Oxfordshire County Council Highways Department is satisfied that the changes included in the revised plans satisfactorily meet their concerns about access and manoeuvring of large vehicles – in particular “blue light” and refuse collection vehicles – within the proposed development.

They have, however, caused considerable loss of amenity to the existing residential properties adjoining the proposed development. For High Rocks, Butwick House and Bramley House a refuse collection site for the entire development is now proposed directly adjacent to their perimeter fences and back gardens. In the case of Faraday House an enlarged turning area now reaches to the perimeter of the development where it is the perimeter fence of their back garden with consequent fumes, noise and after dark light disturbance to the property.

We understand that the individual occupants of these properties will also be lodging their personal objections to these revised plans.

In revising the site plan to meet the concerns of the Oxfordshire County Council Highways Department the Applicants have introduced objectionable features causing loss of amenity to adjoining properties.

Broader Planning Considerations

As noted earlier, this Objection should be read as additional to the points concerning non-compliance with existing policies and guidance of Cherwell District Council stated in the Action Group’s previous Objection submitted on 25 January.

In an email dated 15 February to the Secretary of the Sibford Action Group an officer of Oxfordshire County Council stated, “We often have to judge applications on their own merit as opposed to taking into account the cumulative impact of multiple sites”. **On this basis, the information contained in paragraphs 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 of the Pegasus Group Report is irrelevant as it refers to a different application. It cannot set any precedent for consideration of this application.**

The Traffic Report by Pegasus is also flawed as it considers the position as it exists today and not as it will exist when the Gade Homes development has been completed. This will be prior to the completion of the Blue Cedar development but access between the Hook Norton Road and the Blue Cedar development will be through the Gade development which will have itself already created a new junction with additional traffic at the junction.

The Pegasus Report does not take into account the material change to access and traffic movements that will arise from the Gade Development through which all vehicular traffic to/from the Blue Cedar development will have to pass.

The Cherwell Rural Area Integrated Transport and Land Use Study (CRAITLUS) commissioned by Cherwell District Council and submitted in 2009 concluded that Sibford Ferris and Sibford Gower were two of only four villages in the rural area where road conditions and transport links rendered them unsuitable for further residential development. This was not reflected in the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 as in that Plan Sibford Ferris and Sibford Gower were considered a single entity despite having separate Parish Councils and being physically separated by the Sib Valley.

The classification as a single village is inconsistent with the reality of two separate entities and in the context of the revision of the Local Plan is being contested by both Parish Councils, with the support of the local constituency MP.

Conclusion

As previously noted, the Sibford Action Group has previously registered an objection to this Planning Application (Letter from Chadwick Town Planning of 25 January 2022).

We confirm the Action Group's continued objection to the Application notwithstanding the revised plans.

Sibford Action Group

25 February 2022