

PLANNING REPORT
(including Statement of Community Involvement)

in support of

**Erection of 6 one storey age restricted dwellings
(55 years) for older people with access, landscaping
and associated infrastructure**

on

**Land to the east of Woodway Road,
Sibford Ferris, Oxfordshire**

On behalf of

Blue Cedar Homes Limited

D2 Planning Ref: 118/21

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared to support a detailed planning application for the erection of 6 residential retirement properties for people over 55 years old on Land east of Woodway Road, Sibford Ferris.

1.2. The purpose of this statement is to assess the site's potential to accommodate housing with particular regard to the provision of housing for older people.

1.3. The proposed development comprises: -

Erection of 6 one storey age restricted dwellings (55 years) for older people with access, landscaping and associated infrastructure

1.4. In order to fully assess the application, this statement should be read in conjunction with the following information: -

- Application forms and ownership certificate;
- Design and Access Statement by BBA;
- Report on Need by Contact Consulting;
- Landscape and Visual Technical Note Report by Leyton Place;
- Transport Statement by Pegasus Group;
- Flood Risk & Drainage Assessment by Hydrock;
- Heritage Statement by Heritage Places Limited;
- Archaeological Evaluation by Red River Archaeology;
- Geophysical Survey Report by SUMO Geophysics Limited;
- Geotechnical and Geo-Environmental Assessment (Ground Investigation Phase 2) by South West Geotechnical;
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment prepared by Tyler Grange; and
- Ecological Appraisal by Malford Environmental Consulting.

Plans

- A series of plans have been submitted which shows the design and layout of the proposed development
- 1.5. This statement, along with the above reports, should be read as a complete package. It sets out details of the proposed development, an appraisal of the site and surrounding area, site planning history and an assessment of key planning issues within the context of relevant planning policy. These issues should all be considered in the determination of the application.
- 1.6. In summary, the proposal is consistent and in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Local Plan policy. The site and development are most sustainable, with Sibford Ferris (The Sibfords) being identified as a ‘Category A Village’ that has sufficient facilities and services to accommodate additional residential development (particularly retirement) in the period up to 2031.

Blue Cedar Homes Operation

- 1.7. Blue Cedar Homes are focused on providing high quality, private retirement housing. The Company was established in December 2007 and their Head Office is based in Exeter, with a regional office in Bristol.
- 1.8. Blue Cedar Homes recognise the housing and lifestyle needs of the active retired and specialise in selling distinct homes for people who want to get the most out of their retirement and value the quality of their living environment.
- 1.9. All of their properties are offered for sale to the retirement market, and the permanent occupier or at least one spouse must be over the age of 55.
- 1.10. All of their homes are supported by a range of core services including estate maintenance, gardening, external window cleaning, periodic building redecoration, security services and waste management. The company provides high quality accommodation in desirable towns and large villages in England and Wales, with retirement schemes currently under construction in Wedmore. Completed schemes include Bampton, Willersey, Kingston Bagpuize, Truro and Sidmouth.

- 1.11. Further information on the company can be found at www.bluecedarhomes.co.uk and within the Retirement Housing Statement and Blue Cedar Homes Living System leaflet submitted as part of this application.

Pre-Application Enquiry

- 1.12. The applicant has carried out pre-application consultation with both the Planning Authority and Highway Authority. The feedback was that access would be acceptable utilising the approved access for the site to the south of the application site by Gade Homes (Application No. 21/02893/REM). In terms of planning, it was accepted that Sibford Ferris represented a Category A settlement and given the recent appeal decision on the land to the south, this application site represented a ‘rounding off’ opportunity, particularly as a need for the elderly person accommodation could be demonstrated.
- 1.13. At the time of preparing this application, no formal response had been received on the pre-application enquiry but the applicants had sent their notes of the main points discussed to the planning officer.

2. SITE CONTEXT AND DESCRIPTION

- 2.1. The site relates to a parcel of land on the southern edge of Sibford Ferris, some 17km west of Banbury (9 miles). It comprises the northern part of a field in arable use measuring 0.94ha and surrounded by hedgerows.
- 2.2. To the north and east of the site lies residential development (medium/low density one and two storey housing). To the south is a site which has had residential development (25 dwellings) allowed on appeal (see planning history) and to the west the site is bound by Woodway Road.
- 2.3. Sibford Ferris is a village located in north west Oxfordshire. At the time of the 2011 Census, the Parish of Sibford Ferris had a resident population of 476 people and 172 dwellings. Adjoining Sibford Ferris is Sibford Gower which had 508 residents and 230 dwellings in 2011. The Parish of Sibford Gower includes Burdrop and together these closely related settlements are known as The Sibfords.
- 2.4. The adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 defines Sibford Ferris grouped with adjacent village Sibford Gower as a Category A Service Village. Category A Service Villages represent the most sustainable villages in the district.
- 2.5. Categorisation of villages for the Local Plan was based upon the findings of the Cherwell Rural Areas Integrated Transport and Land Use Study (2009). The 2009 study records Sibford Ferris/Sibford Gower as benefitting from a range of facilities including community facilities, nursery, public house, post offices, primary school, restaurant facilities and retail (food).
- 2.6. The 2014 Village Categorisation report comprises Sibford Ferris/Sibford Gower with other villages in the District. Whilst the population of the settlement is approximately the medium of these classified as Category A, the level of services/facilities as listed above is extremely high. Over recent years the village has seen very little recent development to continue to support the local facilities.
- 2.7. The Sibfords are therefore one of the most sustainable rural settlements in the District with a range of services and facilities within walking distance of the proposed development site.

3. APPLICATION PROPOSALS

- 3.1. A Design and Access Statement was prepared by BBA (Chartered Architects) which describes the extent of the proposals and the form of development now being proposed.
- 3.2. The Design and Access Statement explains the evolution of the proposed development and states: -

“A total of 6 dwellings are proposed which reflects the surrounding density of housing and enables the western area of the site to remain open, to retain the green landscape character at the edge of the village.

Each unit is proposed to be single storey and have 2 bedrooms, reflecting the intention of the provision of housing specifically for older people. Each of the dwellings would provide floor areas well above the national space standards, creating spacious homes suitable as retirement dwellings, with additional space for any adaptations that might be required.

Whilst it is recognised that the majority of buildings within Sibford Ferris are two storey, there are examples of single storey buildings within the street scene of Main Street in Sibford Ferris. In any case, the proposed development would provide accessible dwellings (Building Regulations part M4(2) compliant) which there is a lack of in the area. The comparatively lower ridge heights of the proposed dwellings will reduce the mass of the development when viewed from the countryside to the west and will ensure no amenity issues from surrounding neighbours.

M4(2) is an ‘optional requirement’ as defined by the Building Regulations. It will provide a higher level of accessibility that is beneficial to a wide range of people who occupy or visit the dwelling, and with a particular benefit to older and disabled people or those who require the use of a wheelchair.

Features will be included at design stage to allow common future adaptations.”

- 3.3. Further information on the proposals are available in the Design and Access Statement.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

i. Application Site

4.1. There is no planning history for the application site.

ii. OS Parcel 4300 North of Shortlands and South of High Rock, Hook Norton Road, Sibford Ferris, Oxfordshire OX15 5QWs

4.2. On 23rd December 2019, an appeal was allowed for the construction of up to 25 dwellings on the above site. The Inspector concluded that: - (Appendix 1) (paragraphs 46-49)

“The appeal proposals are consistent with the essential thrust of the housing policies included in the adopted CHLPP1. In particular, they are consistent with ESD1 and in line with policies PV1 and PV2. Set against this is the number of dwellings included in extant permissions in the Category A villages across the District which exceeds the 750 dwellings included in policy PV2. However, I do not consider that the appeal proposals represent a material exceedance to this figure given its modest size and they would not undermine policy PV2 and the basis of the local plan. Furthermore, the scheme includes a quantum of affordable units compliant with policy.

In addition, the scheme includes other features including a path across the site improving permeability, allotments and local play facilities. These key into some concerns identified in the non-statutory Sibford Action Plan (2012) and are consistent with adopted policies in the CHPP1. I have already identified the obligations included in the completed section 106 agreement which through contributions would improve local highways, restrict speeds into the village along Hook Norton Road and support active lifestyles through contributions to the facilities of the local secondary school and the Sibford School. In addition, 25 new households would go some way to support local services.

Whilst the proposed schemes location on the edge of the village does form a limited extension to its current settlement pattern this must be seen in the context of this site set close to Margaret Lane House. The integrity of the

landscape character is not compromised by the scheme. The character of the landscape means that the scheme’s visual impacts are reduced. Its most sensitive southern boundary can be adequately mitigated through landscaping. The details of this can be determined at reserved matters stage. Taking into account all these matters I conclude that the appeal is allowed and outline planning permission is granted subject to the conditions included in the attached schedule.”

SHLAA

- 4.3. The application site was put forward as a potential development site in the SHLAA (SF005). The relevant extract is attached as Appendix 2. The SHLAA concludes that:-

“This is considered to be a potentially deliverable site for about 20 dwellings in the next five year period subject to satisfying access being achieved and careful design and layout to achieve a satisfactory relationship with the existing dwellings in the vicinity.”

5. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Development Plan

- 5.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the relevant policies contained within the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.2. The development plan comprises the ‘saved’ policies of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1) – re-adopted 2016 and the ‘saved’ policies of the Adopted Cherwell Local Plan – 1996.

Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1) 2016

- 5.3. Policy PSD 1 ‘Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development’ advises that planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (or other part of the statutory Development Plan) will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.4. Policy Villages 1 ‘Village Categorisation’ identifies Sibford Ferris (The Sibfords) as a Category A village where minor development, infilling and conversion will be supported. Sibford Ferris (The Sibfords) as a Category A village is categorised as one of the more sustainable villages in the District because of its population and range of services.
- 5.5. Policy Villages 2 ‘Distributing Growth Across the Rural Areas’ seeks to deliver 750 homes across the rural areas, in addition to the rural allowance for small windfall sites. The policy applies to developments of ten or more dwellings and is subject to the site being considered against eleven separate criteria. The 750 housing provision is not a ceiling or target and this has been confirmed by numerous appeal inspectors.
- 5.6. Policy BSC 4 ‘Housing Mix’ advises that new residential development will be expected to provide a mix of homes to meet current and expected future requirements in the interests of meeting housing need and creating socially mixed and inclusive communities. There is an accepted need for retirement properties in the area and this proposal has been specifically designed to meet part of that need (see Need Report).

- 5.7. Policy BSC 1 ‘District Wide Housing Distribution’ seeks to deliver a varied choice of high quality homes across the District including 750 homes in the rural areas on windfall sites of 10 or more dwellings.
- 5.8. Policy BSC 2 ‘The Effective and Efficient Use of Land – Brownfield Land and Housing Density’ seeks to encourage the re-use of previously developed land in sustainable locations as well as ensuring the efficient use of land. The policy advises that in general, new housing should be provided at a net density of at least 30 dwellings per hectare, however the density of new housing development will be expected to reflect the character and appearance of individual localities and development principles that are appropriate to the individual circumstances of sites. The site is not on previously developed land but is located in a sustainable settlement. The proposed development would have a density of 15 dwellings to the hectare, this low density is considered to be an appropriate density for a rural village and to the site and its setting.
- 5.9. Policy ESD 3 ‘Sustainable Construction’ expects all new residential development to include sustainable design and construction technology to achieve zero carbon development in line with Government policy. Energy efficient measures can be incorporated into the proposed development.
- 5.10. Policy ESD 10 ‘Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment’ sets out a number of ways to protect the natural environment of the District. This planning application gives full consideration to the protection of and enhancement of biodiversity and the natural environment and to this end the application is accompanied by an ecological survey and a tree survey. The findings of the ecological survey indicate that the development can occur without harming any protected species or habitats, or otherwise affect any habitats of note. The accompanying tree survey indicates that the development can proceed without causing harm to any important trees. Indeed, substantial additional tree planting is proposed as part of the proposals.
- 5.11. Policy ESC 13 ‘Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement’ expects development to protect the countryside, seeks to secure the enhancement of the character and appearance of the landscape and important natural landscape features from undue visual harm; protect local character; not impact on areas with a high level of tranquillity; not

harm the setting of settlements, buildings, structures, other landmark features or the historic value of the landscape.

5.12. A number of policies have been ‘saved’ from the Cherwell Local Plan 1996. Of relevance to this application are policies which seek good design and the provision of safe access to new development, namely: -

- Policy H18 No dwellings in the countryside
- Policy C28 Layout, design and external appearance of new development
- Policy C30 Design control
- Policy C33 Retention of important gaps of undeveloped land

National Policy

5.13. The revised framework was published in July 2021 and sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how they are expected to be applied. Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision taking, this means: -

- Approving development proposals that accord with an up to date development plan without delay.

5.14. Paragraphs 60 and 61 state that development plans should cater for the needs of a variety of sectors of the population as follows: -

“To determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance – unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach which also reflects current and future demographic trends and market signals. In addition to the local housing need figure, any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should also be taken into account in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for.

Within this context, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing,

families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes).

5.15. The NPPF emphasises a need for a deliverable supply of new dwellings to ensure demand is met. Paragraph 68 states that: -

“Small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, and are often built-out relatively quickly.”

5.16. The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities (paragraph 124).

5.17. Paragraph 127 advises that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments: -

- “a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;**
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;**
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);**
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;**
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks;**
and

- f) **create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users, and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.”**

5.18. Moreover, the DCLG published guidance in the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) relating specifically to Housing for Older and Disabled People. Paragraph 001, which was revised in June 2019, explains that: -

“The need to provide housing for older people is critical. People are living longer lives and the proportion of older people in the population is increasing. In mid-2016 there were 1.6 million people aged 85 and over; by mid-2041 this is projected to double to 3.2 million. Offering older people a better choice of accommodation to suit their changing needs can help them live independently for longer, feel more connected to their communities and help reduce costs to the social care and health systems.” [emphasis added]

6. PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION

Methodology

Engagement Website

6.1. Blue Cedar Homes set up a smartphone-compatible engagement website, designed to provide a central hub of information for the project for the community and to give anyone with an interest in the project an opportunity to comment online. This website contained: -

- Background information on the project, including an explanation of how Blue Cedar Homes has responded to the unique site constraints and Cherwell District Council planning policy
- Details of plans for the site, including a masterplan
- A project timeline, setting out the community engagement exercise within the project's context
- A feedback questionnaire for members of the community to indicate their support for the project
- A contact form for members of the community to ask any questions or raise queries

Community postcard

6.2. Blue Cedar Homes distributed an A5, double sided postcard to all residential addresses in close proximity to the site, by 2nd class postage, setting out the following information: -

- Concise background information on the project
- The URL of the engagement website
- Alternative ways in which the recipient could get involved and have their say, by sending an SMS message to the consultation team

Stakeholder Briefing

6.3. Blue Cedar Homes sent a written briefing by email Sibford Ferris Parish Council, setting out the following information, in advance of the public consultation period commencing.

- Concise background information on the project
- An explanation of how Blue Cedar Homes intended to engage with the local community
- An invitation to contact Blue Cedar Homes directly in the event that the recipient had any questions or queries

Outcomes

Profile of Respondents

- 6.4. 33 members of the local community responded to the consultation, 94% of whom live or work in the OX15 postcode area and 88% of whom live or work in the Cropredy, Sibfords and Wroxton ward in the Cherwell District Council area.
- 6.5. The consultation website attracted 222 unique visitors, 61% of which were recorded in the wider Banbury area.

Comments

- 6.6. The following comments were received from the local community and key stakeholders (published in verbatim): -
- There certainly is a need for such “later living” homes in the immediate area. The majority of local residents are more than 70 years old. I believe that the six homes proposed would sell quickly at the right price and quality.
 - Looking at the proposed plans on this website and providing these are not going to alter too much I would be in general support for this development of bungalows with low rise pitch roofline, however I know how plans can alter when actual planning permission sort so I reserve judgement. Since this development backs directly onto our house I am pleased that you are proposing only six dwellings and to preserve the nature of the surroundings. It is important

that the existing ancient hedgerows are retained and that suitable planting of new trees is undertaken. I hope the Council and yourselves do not include excessive street lighting which is not required in this village setting. I hope you do not make any substantial alterations to these plans.

- We do need this type of property in the Sibfords in order to accommodate older residents who would like to downsize, but stay in the village. Will these properties be leasehold? The development in Walford Road has had difficult and expensive experiences with management costs and it would be better to have these proposed properties freehold. Then how would the common areas be maintained? Would it not be better to apportion the whole area between the six properties? Who would maintain the access road? Would The council adopt it?
- We do not need more retirement-restricted homes in Sibford Ferris, but we do need more affordable starter-homes for young people and homes for families.
- There are sufficient homes in the villages. It is too isolated for retirement homes. You need to be able to drive.
- Besides many local environmental factors such as inadequate sewerage capacity, I cannot see the benefit in encouraging even more older generation residents to the Sibfords. The villages already have a bias to an older residential base where the younger generation cannot afford to stay due to too many big houses being built. There is a very poor level of services to the village in the way of public transport which means that everyone residing would need to have their own transport, negatively impacting the environment and increasing traffic pollution. The local set up is not conducive for anyone with reduced mobility with narrow or non-existent footpaths especially in the area proposed.
- This is a bad idea in this location so I strongly oppose this as a development.
- No additional comments
- We would be interested to be kept informed of this development especially when the time comes to market them and would like to be on your marketing list when the time comes. We watch your development with great interest.

- Some questions:
 1. Who will be responsible for maintenance of the drainage pond and where is it to be located?
 2. We need an undertaking that no trees/shrubs will be destroyed. Will more shrubs be planted to shield existing houses from the new development?
 3. Could there be an entryway for a footpath through to Woodway Road on the western boundary for walkers/dog walking etc.?
 4. Will there be any street lighting?
 5. As the properties are freehold, what is stop someone over 55 purchasing a property and then letting to to a young family, for instance? Or any rules about family staying overnight?
- Also I think the minimum age should be 60 years at least. Everyone has to work until at least 67 now, so these properties need to accommodate retired villagers.
- How would they be heated and what are the eco standards of the build?
- In the light of COP26 and recent climate change events, it's now morally reprehensible to build new houses on green land. It is also widely documented that biodiversity in our country is on the brink of collapse. You cannot build a new house in a field and say that it is sustainable.
- Blue Cedar Homes is just another developer coming in to destroy our village. There are thousands of other development applications - What makes your application any better? Development destroys our villages in so many ways. Will you tell the new inhabitants of your houses that their rural life will last only till the next development takes away their rural view in a few years?
- You should be environmentally responsible and develop a brown field site.
- I am opposed to any further speculative development in Sibford Ferris.
- We already have 26 houses being built in the next field and we do not need any more.

- Your figure of 38% of Sibford residents being of pensionable age is a nonsense as they already live in their own homes in the village
- It is interesting that due to the 26 houses being built, then this development will be deemed as 'infill' (very clever on your behalf, being cynical)
- No more development in our village . Hands off
- NO NO NO, Massive over development in the adjoining field already.
- You are not welcome,
- NO MORE BUILDIN IN THE SIBFORDS
- We don't have the infrastructure to accommodate more homes in the the Sibfords, When it rains heavily we get regular flooding due to inadequate drainage & sewage facilities.
- Bringing in more building will exacerbate this issue particularly as we have permanent changes in weather conditions.
- Brown field sites closer to the hospital & town is more preferable for these kind of homes. We have been cut off in the past when it snows.
- No further speculative development is needed in either Sibford Ferris nor Sibford Gower/Burdrop.
- This is prime farmland and should not be covered in concrete
- There is no necessity for additional housing in this village
- No further speculative development is wanted in the Sibford.
- Sibford Ferris cannot support another development no matter how small it is. Even without Gade Homes the village is over subscribed. Retirement homes in principle are good but the village has limited footpaths. Already there are two key stretches with no footpaths so one has to run through theses sections when out walking. There are three street lights in the whole village which work randomly. The bus service has been reduced further and as it is supported by Warwick Council may well soon be cancelled all together. Traffic through the village is already at its peak during school term. Sibford School is a private

school and traffic is a nightmare during school term. The Woodway Road is hectic during harvest times as there is a constant flow of farm traffic coming through. Environmentally another agricultural piece of land will be lost. More cars will be expected notwithstanding what the proposals suggest. The drains in Sibford Ferris are already old and half of them are collapsed. More housing and more water waste cannot be supported. Sibford Ferris is totally separate to Sibford Gower and Burdrop. Our village cannot support this additional development. I totally object to this development.

- I am completely and utterly opposed to this proposal.
- There is too much development in Sibford already
- No further speculative development is wanted in the Sibfords
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- No further speculative development is wanted in the Sibfords.
- Further building developments in the Sibfords is not wanted. We are already subject to a huge scale development in Sibford Ferris and this new one is neither wanted nor necessary. Rural villages should be allowed to remain rural. There are no facilities or transport links to support 'later living'. It would be far better to place such a development nearer to a small town, with shops and transport links, enabling older people to access health centres, shops, libraries, cinemas, etc.
- I object to the proposals on the following grounds:
 1. The contention that 34% of the population in Sibford are aged over 55 applies to the whole of the UK. There is no particular need for retirement homes in the Sibfords.
 2. The infrastructure of the Sibfords is not - and can never be - suitable for any further housing.
- These rurally-located sites don't warrant or support further development. The infrastructure does not support existing village need, and increasing traffic in rural areas where public transport works directly against local authority remits

to reduce reliance on private vehicles. Traffic in the villages is already at dangerous levels due in part to the Quaker school. In addition, no provision for pedestrians further exacerbates safety concerns.

- Your proposal would result in development in an isolated location, remote from key services and facilities, and with increased reliance on private car journeys, contrary to CLP 2015 Policy ESD1 and saved Policy H18 and so is unacceptable in principle, and in conflict with LA housing strategy.
- In recent correspondence with Cherwell District Council, they state: Policy ESD1 of the CLP 2015 states measures will be taken to mitigate the impact of development on climate change and deliver the goals of sustainable development. This includes distributing housing growth to the most sustainable locations as defined in the Local Plan and delivering development which reduces the need to travel. The local plan has a strong urban focus with large amounts of housing planned at Bicester and Banbury. The policies relating to rural housing growth are therefore more restrained.
- No further speculative development is wanted or needed in The Sibfords.
- I am over 55 years of age. I am strongly opposed to any further speculative development of any sort in Sibford Ferris. The community has already been subject to significant development. Further development is not wanted by the community and is not sustainable.
- The houses that are about to be built on the Hook Norton road were permitted against the wishes of the vast majority of local residents and Cherwell DC.
- The Sibford villages do not need any more speculative development.
- No further speculative development is wanted in the Sibfords
- No further speculative development is wanted in the Sibfords
- Yes. we cannot see that we need a specific building plan for older people in our village. There are a number of bungalows in Sibford Ferris already. There are very few facilities for elderly people in Sibford and those there are will be car dependent. Having more elderly people in the village will place even more

strain on the surgery. Many of the older people in the village would be likely to find that they are unable to afford one of the new homes even if they wanted one. Many more wealthy older residents have already downsized to significantly smaller houses already and would be unlikely to want to undertake another move. In the meantime the quality of life of several homes will be impacted negatively for the development of six unnecessary bungalows. The tranquility we enjoy in this area will be ruined forever. Of particular concern is the access road which comes through the new estate which is about to be built. What about the people who live at High Rock - what about their needs? Or their close neighbours? All the proposed new houses are so close to the boundary to maximise the advantages to the new builds with little or no consideration being given to existing residents and the negative impact this development will have on them - all the trees in the world aren't going to make that much of a difference. I would prefer that this tract of land be given to the local community. The current playground is too small and the equipment in need of replacement - there are no pieces of equipment for older children. It would provide a perfect place for young families to come with their children and a place for people to simply enjoy sitting and enjoying the beautiful countryside. The bottom line is that there has been an assumption that Sibford Ferris requires specific housing for the over 55's and our assertion is that this is not true and particularly unnecessary given the negative level of impact a small development is going to have on the neighbourhood.

- No further speculative development is wanted in the Sibfords. The roads, infrastructure and lack of amenities makes Sibford Ferris totally unsuitable for retirement homes!
- There has been enough building in the village and the integrity and beauty of the village is going to be compromised.
- **NO MORE SPECULATIVE DEVELOPMENT.**

Response to Feedback

- 6.7. Blue Cedar Homes has considered all of the comments received and has made refinements to the design of the homes proposed, the site access and the configuration of the site layout.
- 6.8. Whilst a number of comments question the principle of development, and the demand for new retirement living homes of this type, our studies and Cherwell District Council's planning policy are clear that there is strong demand for such homes in this location and the wider local area.
- 6.9. Whilst a small number of comments related to highways access, we remain of the view that, because the proposed new homes are for people of retirement age, the development will not generate a significant number of vehicle movements that would result in a tangible impact to the local highway network at peak times. The site is in a well-connected location close to village amenities, making it a suitable place for new retirement living homes and further reducing the need for private car journeys on a day-to-day basis.

7. KEY PLANNING ISSUES

7.1. Taking into account the location of the site, the nature of the proposed development and the key local and national planning policy relevant to the proposal, it is considered that the relevant planning issues in the determination of the planning application are as follows: -

- i. Whether the Council can demonstrate a 5 year supply of deliverable housing land;
- ii. The Need for Elderly Persons Accommodation;
- iii. The Principle of Residential Development;
- iv. Landscape and Visual Impact;
- v. Biodiversity;
- vi. Heritage
- vii. Archaeological Issues
- viii. Hydrology (including Flood Risk & Drainage)
- ix. Transport;
- x. Section 106 Contributions and CIL

7.2. These issues are discussed in turn in the subsequent sections of this report.

i. Whether the Council can demonstrate a 5 year supply of deliverable housing land

7.3. Cherwell District Council are currently unable to demonstrate a 5 year housing supply. This was confirmed in the pre application meeting with the planning officer. The housing land supply is currently calculated at about 4.7 years. The shortfall in Cherwell, is at least 500 dwellings which must be considered as significant. Indeed an analysis of the supply suggested that it is likely to be worse given amongst other things the slow down due to the pandemic.

7.4. In view of the above, Paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF is therefore engaged. Accordingly in line with the guidance, planning permission should be granted unless any adverse

impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

- 7.5. An assessment of the local plan policies which are most important to the determination of the application is still required, but the tilted balance should be applied to their assessment. It should be noted however that the proposals comply with all relevant Development Plan policies. Therefore, the remainder of this chapter will now assess any adverse impacts/benefits of the proposed development, concluding with a summary as to how these weigh up in the balancing exercise.

ii. The Need for Elderly Persons Accommodation

- 7.6. The scheme provides housing for an identified housing need, namely retirement housing. This type of housing will add to the mix and tenure of dwellings in the locality, whilst also providing the option for existing homeowners to move to this purpose built specialist housing which suits their needs and in turn, frees up family homes. A report prepared by Contact Consulting deals with the issue of need/demand for elderly persons accommodation in more detail. The report states: -

“Both national and local policies direct attention to the challenges presented by an ageing population. The newly published White Paper on Social Care, discussed in Section Three

Taking the various forms of sheltered and retirement housing offered either to rent or to buy there appear to be currently around 2,278 units of accommodation. To achieve comparability this supply has been expressed as a ratio to the size of the population of older people in the district.

Various thresholds have been used but that which is generally recognised as having the greatest relevance is that for the number of people 75 years of age or older. There are around 172.58 units of any type in any tenure per thousand of the population in this age category in Cherwell.

This compares with benchmark figures derived from the data base of the Elderly Accommodation Counsel, which is the source relied upon by the Department for Communities and Local Government. These provide a

national average ratio of provision of 125.5 per thousand of those 75 years of age and over.

A less comfortable picture emerges when we compare the available accommodation in Affordable or Market categories with the population of older people in each main category of tenure. With just 754 units of retirement housing of all types for sale for a population of homeowners of 75 years of age or more of approximately 11,266 the ratio of provision for retirement housing for sale per thousand is 66.9.

The comparative figure for those 75 years of age or more who are in rented tenures the ratio per thousand is 788.0 (1,524 units for approximately 1,934 persons 75 years of age or more in tenures other than home ownership.)

It is clear from the levels of home ownership in succeeding cohorts that the level of those in old age who are homeowners will be maintained. The majority of those entering old age as homeowners will wish to maintain that tenure and there are sound economic arguments for the individual and for the public purse to support that.

To enable older people to exercise that choice, to meet the needs of older people for specialist accommodation in their tenure of choice, and to encourage older people to make a capital investment in their accommodation in old age the local authority needs to facilitate increased leasehold provision of suitable accommodation.

Cherwell follows, but substantially exceeds the national trend toward owner-occupation as the dominant tenure for older people. Around four out of every five older people in Cherwell are home-owners.

The profile of the Cherwell in relation to the age of its population is currently very slightly below the national average but those 65 years of age will make up a quarter of the total population of the district by 2040. This will be a major factor in shaping future policy for housing, health and social care authorities.

Between 2020 and 2040 there will be 9,500 more people in the District who are 85 years of age or more and this will present a major challenge for health and social care agencies.

In the absence of an adequate supply of appropriate, contemporary accommodation options pressures will increase on higher-end services, such as Registered Care Homes providing Personal Care and Registered Care Homes providing Nursing Care.

The proposed bungalows meet the definition of the first type of specialist housing for older people in the PPG, that is to say: "Age-restricted general market housing". The PPG definition says: "this type of housing is generally for people aged 55 and over and the active elderly. It may include some shared amenities such as communal gardens, but does not include support or care services."

Bungalows of the type proposed in this appeal do therefore appear any different to mainstream market housing - they are not built with visible adaptations, fixtures or fitting for older people as would be the case in a sheltered housing development. The only differences to market housing are not visible: they are for retired people (over 55) only and they are built to Part M4(2) so that they can be adapted. They are single storey so there is no need to fit stair lifts in the future if the circumstances of the occupiers change as they age.

They contribute to the range of provision for an old age population by offering to someone who is newly retired or approaching retirement that they can "age in place" for as long as possible, in line with the stated policy goals of both national government and the Welfare Authority (Oxfordshire County Council).

Indicators of need for specialised accommodation are projected to increase over time as the population of those in the highest age groups increases.

Between 2020 and 2040 the number of those experiencing Mobility difficulties is projected to increase by over 61%.

An increase in the proportion of the population living into advanced old age also impacts on the demands made upon health services. There will be an increase in the numbers of those experiencing a long-term limiting illness with a higher rate of increase in the older age cohorts of around 97% for those experiencing the higher level of difficulty.

There is a the predicted increase in those people aged over 55 likely to have a fall in Cherwell. From the baseline of 2020 to 2040 the predicted increase is shown to be around 55%..Coping with the consequence of avoidable falls has a major impact on hospital services generally but especially upon ambulance and accident and emergency departments.

The bungalow style accommodation proposed in this application are designed to meet and adapt to the needs and lifestyles of those approaching, and in old-age; supporting their independence for as long as possible in a safe and secure environment. Bearing in mind the caveats set out in the opening part of the preceding section we can recognise that by their design the proposed bungalows will offer some of the same benefits attributed to the forms of older persons' accommodation that include care and support services and are mainly the source of the findings detailed below.

In concept, delivery and continuing occupation a Blue Cedar home provides a form of specialised accommodation which meets a specific housing need among older people. In doing so, it gives rise to many significant planning and social benefits which in turn address national and local priorities, for example:

- An increase in retirement housing stock;**
- A better choice for older people;**
- A sense of community and security;**
- A home that can be adapted over time to meet a changing lifestyle;**
- Managed estate;**
- Supports independent living with additional help and support.”**

7.7. In view of the above, there is a clear need/demand for elderly persons accommodation in not only the District but also the Sibfords. The proposed development will go some way to meeting part of that need.

iii. Principle of Residential Development

7.8. At the outset, it is worth noting the comments of the appeal inspector on the land immediately to the south of the application site. He considered whether the residential proposals would be in accordance with the housing policies at the development plan. In considering that issue, he stated: - (paragraphs 12-23) (Appendix 1)

“There are two issues underpinning the application of adopted policy to this site with the first concerning the total of 750 homes to be delivered at the Category A villages and the second on whether the proposed scheme accords with other housing policies.

The Council acknowledges that the 750 housing figure is not a target. A point reinforced by my colleague Inspectors in recent appeal decisions. However, it should be regarded as a benchmark to govern future decisions on applications for housing development otherwise the integrity of the plan would be undermined. The Council can identify 5.2 years housing land supply in excess of the requirement for just 3 years required for the Oxfordshire Districts. Furthermore, it can demonstrate that 168 houses have been delivered against the PV2 target of 750 houses despite the Plan being only 4 years through its 16 years ‘life’. The Council’s statement identifies that across the District 7,455 houses were completed of which 2,765 are in the rest of the District and a further 6,715 houses are committed of which 1,129 are in the rest of the District.

The Council identifies that by 31st March 2019 planning permissions had been granted for over 750 houses on 18 large sites and to date 271 units had been built out on these sites in line with policy PV2. However, none of these have been permitted within the Sibfords. Evidence provided through the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) acknowledges the accelerating rate of delivery since 2015 and the Council anticipate that the 750 homes will be built out by 2028.

During the Hearing both parties made references to a large number of appeal decisions involving similar housing schemes throughout the District. Underpinning many of these decisions is the issue of ‘material exceedance’, a term used to describe the extent to which decisions to allow development above the figure of 750 houses for the Category A villages would erode the basis of the CLPP1. Whilst I do not have all the evidence before me regarding each of these appeal decisions there was discussion during the Hearing of a recent appeal decision¹, which had been allowed for an additional 84 dwellings at Ambrosden, another Category A village within the District albeit with a much larger population and containing a broader range of services. Again the issue of ‘material exceedance’ had informed the decision to allow the Appeal.

I do not consider ‘material exceedance’ to be an issue for this appeal given the modest number of units proposed and the categorisation and size of the Sibfords. The Category A status of the village in the plan warrants further investment in housing. Although the plan period is only 4 years old I do not consider that a decision to allow this appeal would undermine the essential thrust of policy PV2 and by extension the local plan.

The second issue is the extent to which the proposals are acceptable against other housing policies included in the CHPP1.

The principles of sustainable development, identified in the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) (the Framework), underpin policy PSD1 at several levels within the CLPP1. At a strategic level the policy seeks to ensure that development will be concentrated in the main centres, then outside those there is an allowance for development within the rural areas but concentrated within the Category A villages which are defined by their range of services and being located throughout the District would support a balanced pattern of growth. Finally, at another level within each village specific sites have to be ‘sustainable’ in how they function in their local context with regard to a range of criteria.

The Sibfords are identified as a Category A village because of several factors including its population and range of services. These services are spread across each of the 3 settlements. I acknowledge that local connectivity between them via walking and cycling is restricted by the steep sided Sib valley but these services do exist within reasonable proximity of the appeal site. Given the spread of services across each settlement it is unlikely that the development of any site around the Sibfords would readily enable access by sustainable transport modes. This is an argument against the inclusion of the Sibfords as a Category A village but is not a matter before me in this Appeal.

Policy PV2 identifies a broad range of criteria which would have informed the CHLPP2 allocations, not all of which are relevant to the issues concerning this appeal. However whilst the site does not comply with several of these I consider that the principle of some form of development on at least part of this site has been accepted. In addition, I accord moderate weight to the inclusion of the part of the appeal site in the Council's Housing and Economic Land Availability (HELAA 2018) for up to 10 houses.

The scheme would provide for 35% affordable housing in line with policy. I understand that one of the reasons for the Council's decision resolving to grant permission for a scheme in 2014 was the inclusion of 6 affordable homes to meet local housing need following the Housing Needs Survey in 2010 and the Register of Interest in 2013.

Part of the case presented by the Sibford Action Group (SAG) referred to the poor level of service provision in the Sibfords substantiating why further development should not occur. Whilst it is difficult to determine the exact impact that 25 new households would have on local services such as the local shop, it is a fair assumption that this is likely to be positive in supporting it.

For the above reasons on this main issue I conclude that the proposals would be in line with adopted housing policies and in line with the Framework. The proposals are in line with policies PSD1, PSV1 and PSV2 of the CHPP1. They are not in conflict with 'saved' policy H18 given the status of the village defined by PSV1 and PSV2. The scheme would not amount to a material

exceedance in breach of policy PV2 and would deliver housing in line with other policies of the Plan.”

7.9. It is worth noting that at this appeal, the Council could demonstrate a 5 year supply of deliverable housing land. However, the latest analysis indicates that the Council cannot now demonstrate a 5 year supply of deliverable housing land. In any event, the proposals comply with relevant Development Plan policies. Sibford Ferris is a sustainable location where additional residential development, particularly retirement, can be accommodated. The application site represents a rounding off to defensible boundaries.

iv. Landscape and Visual Technical Note

7.10. A Landscape and Visual Technical Note has been prepared by Leyton Place Limited. It concludes that: -

“The proposed development is located to avoid impacts on landscapes and townscape elements which have a recognised value, such as:

- **Those landscapes which benefit from a statutory protection such as National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and their setting.**
- **Areas protected by a regional or local designations such as Areas of Great Landscape Value.**
- **Not within or near a Registered Historic Parks and Gardens;**
- **Not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area;**

Furthermore, the landscape associated with the site has been examined at appeal and was not determined to be an NPPF ‘valued landscape’

Given the settled context and wooded character of the wider area potential visual effects are limited to a localised area, primarily the immediate environs to the east of the site.

The scheme has been informed by comprehensive, and detailed technical analysis across a range of disciplines. The team’s collaborative design approach has responded positively to the environmental requirements.”

7.11. The technical note concludes that the site is not part of the open countryside and relates to the settlement. Accordingly, there are no justified reasons to refuse the application based on landscape impact. This was also the conclusion of the appeal inspector on the site to the south.

v. **Biodiversity**

7.12. A Biodiversity Assessment has been carried out by Malford Environmental Consulting Limited. Their report concludes that: -

“Blue Cedar Homes Ltd is submitting a planning application to Cherwell District Council for a 6 dwelling housing scheme on land located to the east of Woodway Road, Sibford Ferris, Oxfordshire, OX15 5QW.

An ecological survey and appraisal of the site and proposed development has been undertaken that identifies impacts, mitigation and enhancement opportunities. An ecological survey was undertaken on the 23rd September 2021. The survey was supported with a desk-based review of maps, satellite imagery, and information supplied by the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre.

The proposed development site is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations, and there are no potentially affected designated sites in the local landscape.

The development site encompasses a single, small arable field and boundary vegetation, and all plants on site are common. No invasive plant species are present.

Boundary hedgerow used by common bats and two oak trees, which have low potential to support roosting bats, will be protected. The habitat affected by the development is of negligible value for foraging bats. Badger and other common mammals possibly move through the study area.

The site is not suitable for supporting ground nesting birds, and the vast majority of boundary hedgerow that could support low numbers of nesting common birds will be retained and protected. The site is not considered to support reptiles or great crested newt.

Residual impacts include the permanent change of arable land and a small cut through of an existing hedge to facilitate vehicle access to the site.

Mitigation is included to protect bats, badgers/mammals and nesting birds.

The scheme design can include new mixed native hedgerow, trees and species-rich grassland, while five bat roosting boxes and twelve swift nesting boxes will be installed on new buildings.

The proposed development complies with both national and local planning policies to maintain and enhance biodiversity, in particular those habitats and species identified as priorities in the UK and Oxfordshire, and the scheme provides a net biodiversity gain.

The residual ecological effect of the proposed development is considered to be positive in a Local context.”

7.13. In view of the above, there are no ecological objections in respect of the proposed development.

vi. Heritage

7.14. A Heritage Statement has been undertaken by Heritage Places. It concludes that there are no potential built heritage receptors likely to receive impacts from the proposals, while it is considered there is a low potential for archaeological remains, with little likely consequence in terms of adverse impacts of significant effect. This conclusion mirrors that of the Conservation Officer considering the substantially larger development proposed in the planning submission [ref. 18/01894/OUT] for the now appeal-consented scheme on the adjoining land to the south, who commented: -

‘In principle it is considered that the proposed development will not harm the character of the conservation area or the setting of any Listed Buildings and as a result the significance of the heritage assets will not be harmed in line with...the NPPF.’

7.15. The Planning Inspector for the 2019 appeal [APP/C3105/W/19/3229631] concurred with this assessment.

vii. Archaeological Evaluation

7.16. An Archaeological Evaluation Approach has been undertaken by Bristol & Bath Heritage Consultancy Limited. It concludes that there are no issues of archaeological significance on the site and that a condition would be wholly appropriate on any planning permission.

7.17. In view of the above, there are no heritage issues which would prohibit planning permission being granted for the proposed development.

viii. Hydrology (including Flood Risk and Drainage)

7.18. A Drainage Strategy has been prepared by Hydrock Consultants. The report concludes that the proposed development: -

- **“Is suitable in the location proposed.**
- **Can be adequately drained**
- **Will not place additional persons or properties at risk of flooding.**
- **Will put in place measures to ensure that surface water is appropriately managed.**
- **Will put in place measures to ensure that foul water drainage is appropriately managed.**

As such, the proposals are concluded to meet the surface water flood risk and management requirements of the NPPF.”

7.19. Accordingly, the proposals can provide adequate drainage and accordingly this does not represent a justified reason to refuse planning permission.

ix. Trees

7.20. An Arboricultural Method Statement has been prepared by Tyler Grange. It concludes that: -

“This report provides details of a tree survey and assesses the impact of the proposed development towards existing trees. This report has been guided by the recommendations set out within the British Standard BS5837:2012

‘Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction – Recommendations’.

Trees located on or adjacent to the site are contained to the boundaries and there are no trees located internally. There are two fully mature, high value, oaks present which are particularly good examples of the species. All remaining tree cover is generally unremarkable, comprising either garden ornamental trees or early mature hedgerow trees.

There are no tree removals required to facilitate the proposed development and there will be no impacts towards existing trees to facilitate the construction stage of the development provided that the tree protection measures are implemented. This has been achieved by designing the proposed scheme around the tree constraints, including the root protection areas, tree canopy spreads and tree shading considerations. A single 11m section of hedgerow will be removed to facilitate access to the site, which will be via an adjoining future development site. The hedgerow removal is unavoidable and is considered negligible considering its localised nature and the new planting proposed.

As there is no impact towards trees that are important to the character or appearance of the local landscape as a result of their ecological, historic or amenity value, the proposed development is consistent with local planning policy ES13. Approximately 30 new trees, together with new hedgerows and shrub planting, will be provided as part of the development. Therefore, an increase in tree canopy cover can be achieved which demonstrates accordance with local planning policy ES10.

This report identifies where construction work will be required near to trees and provides recommendations to ensure no lasting harm is caused to those being retained. An Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) has also been prepared to detail the procedures for hedgerow works and protection measures during the construction stage. It is recommended that adherence to the AMS is secured by way of a suitably worded planning condition.”

7.21. In view of the above, there are no objections to the proposals based on impact on trees.

x. Transportation

7.22. A Transport Statement has been prepared by Pegasus Group and states that: -

“It is concluded that the site is located in a relatively accessible location with a range of local services and facilities required on a daily basis located within appropriate walking and cycling distances of the site, with public transport links available for access to nearby settlements.

It is concluded that safe and suitable access arrangements for the scale of the development can be provided

Vehicle and cycle parking will be provided in accordance with local highway authority guidance from Oxfordshire County Council.

It is forecast that the development proposals could generate one vehicle trip (two two-way vehicle movements) during the AM and PM peak hours. It is concluded that the level of traffic associated with the proposed development will not have a material impact on the safety or operation of the local highway network.”

7.23. In view of the above, there are no valid transportation reasons which should prevent the future residential development of the site.

xi. Section 106 Contributions and CIL

7.24. The applicants are prepared to contribute toward necessary financial contributions where they are reasonable and necessary and comply with Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010.

8. BENEFITS

8.1. There are a range of significant benefits that are provided as part of these development proposals. They are as follows: -

- i. A bespoke residential retirement scheme which will meet an acknowledged and identified need for these type of properties both locally in Sibford Ferris (Policy BSC4) and nationally. Accordingly, the provision of such housing should be attributed significant weight.
- ii. This development would allow potential existing residents in The Sibfords to ‘downsize’ or ‘rightsized’ from their existing properties and to remain in the area. This would free up existing properties in the village for people to move into. This benefit would also attract significant weight particularly as no other similar residential scheme has been provided in The Sibfords.
- iii. Moderate weight should be given to the benefit arising from expenditure on construction and on the supply chain as well as to the economic benefit. The increased spending from residents and the associated construction to viability of the settlement. In providing particular weight to this issue regard is to the Government’s drive to increase housing supply and boost spending as part of the economic recovery from the global pandemic.

8.2. These benefits go into the balance in favour of allowing the proposals particularly as the Council cannot demonstrate a 5 year supply of deliverable housing land.

9. CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1. This detailed application provides 6 bespoke one storey properties for the elderly (55 years plus) together with access, landscaping and associated works.
- 9.2. There is a recognised and accepted need for elderly persons accommodation in Sibford Ferris which is not being met by any existing or proposed residential development. This development is bespoke to provide adaptable living accommodation specifically designed for the elderly.
- 9.3. The site is well related to the settlement form and a proper analysis of the proposal concludes that the development complies with Policy BSC4 of the adopted Local Plan.
- 9.4. Detailed analysis of the proposals have been undertaken in terms of landscaping, biodiversity, archaeology, transport, drainage etc. All of these issues can be satisfactorily accommodated and would have no adverse impact on the character or appearance of the area.
- 9.5. Finally, there are a range of significant benefits attributed to the scheme which are set out in Section 8. These all weigh in favour of granting planning permission for the development.
- 9.6. In view of the above, it is requested that detailed planning permission be granted.

APPENDIX 1

Appeal Decision – Land at Hook Norton, Sibford Ferris



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 September 2019

by **Stephen Wilkinson BA BPI MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 December 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/C3105/W/19/3229631

OS Parcel 4300 North of Shortlands and South of High Rock, Hook Norton Road, Sibford Ferris, Oxfordshire OX15 5QW

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Land and Partners against the decision of Cherwell District Council.
 - The application Ref 18/1894/OUT, dated 29 October 2018, was refused by notice dated 30 April 2019.
 - The development proposed is outline planning permission with all matters reserved for up to 25 dwellings, associated open space, parking and sustainable drainage.
-

This decision is issued in accordance with Section 56(2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and supersedes the decision issued on 5 November 2019.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and outline planning permission with all matters reserved for up to 25 dwellings, associated open space and sustainable drainage is granted at OS Parcel 4300 north of Shortlands and south of High Rock, Hook Norton Road, Sibford Ferris, Oxfordshire, OX15 5QW in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 18/1894/OUT, dated 29 October 2018, subject to the conditions included in the schedule attached to this letter.

Procedural Matters

2. The application has been submitted in outline with all matters reserved and this is the basis on which I considered this appeal. At the start of the Hearing I sought clarification over the proposed 'parameter plan' as two different revisions had been included for my consideration. I accepted the revised plan no. 6426/ASP3/PP Rev D which included a typographical change to the legend and my decision has been made on this basis.
3. A draft agreement made under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended, agreed by all parties was presented to me during the Hearing. This has been completed and informs my conclusion on the third main issue identified below.
4. In the week following the Hearing the Government issued a National Design Guide. I wrote to the parties seeking their views on whether this Guidance had any bearing on their cases and my findings have taken on board their views.

Main Issues

5. There are three main issues in this Appeal which I define as follows:
- Whether the proposals comply with the housing policies of the development plan
 - The effect of the proposals on the character and appearance of the settlement of Sibford Ferris and the surrounding area, and
 - Whether the proposals include adequate provision for the necessary infrastructure directly required by this development.

The appeal site

6. The appeal site forms part of an arable field, classified as Grade 2, with a site area of about 3.7ha located on the southern edge of Sibford Ferris on the western side of Hook Norton Road. The site slopes down by approximately 10m to Woodway Road, a single track road which forms its western boundary. The site affords good views to the west of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which lies approximately 1.5km away. The appeal site has hedges along each boundary apart from its southern side which is open to the remainder of the arable field.
7. Sibford Ferris is separated from its nearest settlements of Sibford Gower and Burdrop by approximately half a mile across the steep valley of the River Sib. For this appeal I will refer to these settlements, collectively, as the 'Sibfords'. Together they have a population of approximately 1,000 residents. The valley sides are characterised by small wooded copses and paddocks laced with footpaths. The Sibfords have a range of services which include, doctors surgery, primary school, public house, food shop and post office. Sibford School, a private school lies opposite the site on Hook Norton Road. Limited bus services connect the Sibfords to Banbury and Stratford.

Reasons

Policy background

8. The development plan comprises the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-31, Part 1 (2015) (CLPP1) and 'saved' policies Cherwell Local Plan (1996). The Policies cascade from principles of sustainable development included in Policy ESD1 in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) and seek to distribute growth to the most sustainable locations to ensure that amongst other matters, dependence on private transport is reduced.
9. Accordingly, the CLPP1 requires that the district wide housing target of 22,840 is delivered in the main centres of Bicester and Banbury. Outside these two centres the plan allocates 2,350 houses with 1,600 houses proposed for the former RAF base at Upper Heyford. The plan recognises the importance of sustaining rural villages and through Policy Villages 1 (PV1) defines categories of village by criteria which include their population, services/facilities, and accessibility. The focus of this policy is to 'manage' small scale development proposals which come forward within the built up limits of each village through minor development, infilling or conversions.
10. Policy Villages 2 (PV2) provides a rural allocation of sites of 10 or more dwellings at the Category A villages. This policy identifies that 750 houses will

be delivered at Category A villages; this would be in addition to the 'rural allowance' of small site windfalls and planning permissions that existed at 31st March 2014. Underpinning this policy is a recognition of the need to deliver housing growth evenly across the whole District at the larger villages. A range of criteria to guide new development in Category A villages is identified in policy PV2 covering matters such as the environmental qualities of sites, agricultural value, access to services and landscape impacts.

11. At the time of adoption of the CLPP1 the Council anticipated that it would prepare a CLP Part 2 which would have identified housing sites which would have informed policy PV2. This part of the Plan has not progressed because of the inception of the 'growth deal' for Oxfordshire.

Whether the proposal would be in accordance with the housing policies of the development plan

12. There are two issues underpinning the application of adopted policy to this site with the first concerning the total of 750 homes to be delivered at the Category A villages and the second on whether the proposed scheme accords with other housing policies.
13. The Council acknowledges that the 750 housing figure is not a target. A point reinforced by my colleague Inspectors in recent appeal decisions. However, it should be regarded as a benchmark to govern future decisions on applications for housing development otherwise the integrity of the plan would be undermined. The Council can identify 5.2 years housing land supply in excess of the requirement for just 3 years required for the Oxfordshire Districts. Furthermore, it can demonstrate that 168 houses have been delivered against the PV2 target of 750 houses despite the Plan being only 4 years through its 16 years 'life'. The Council's statement identifies that across the District 7,455 houses were completed of which 2,765 are in the rest of the District and a further 6,715 houses are committed of which 1,129 are in the rest of the District.
14. The Council identifies that by 31st March 2019 planning permissions had been granted for over 750 houses on 18 large sites and to date 271 units had been built out on these sites in line with policy PV2. However, none of these have been permitted within the Sibfords. Evidence provided through the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) acknowledges the accelerating rate of delivery since 2015 and the Council anticipate that the 750 homes will be built out by 2028.
15. During the Hearing both parties made references to a large number of appeal decisions involving similar housing schemes throughout the District. Underpinning many of these decisions is the issue of 'material exceedance', a term used to describe the extent to which decisions to allow development above the figure of 750 houses for the Category A villages would erode the basis of the CLPP1. Whilst I do not have all the evidence before me regarding each of these appeal decisions there was discussion during the Hearing of a recent appeal decision¹, which had been allowed for an additional 84 dwellings at Ambrosden, another Category A village within the District albeit with a much larger population and containing a broader range of services. Again the issue of 'material exceedance' had informed the decision to allow the Appeal.

¹ APP/C3105/W/19/3228169

16. I do not consider 'material exceedance' to be an issue for this appeal given the modest number of units proposed and the categorisation and size of the Sibfords. The Category A status of the village in the plan warrants further investment in housing. Although the plan period is only 4 years old I do not consider that a decision to allow this appeal would undermine the essential thrust of policy PV2 and by extension the local plan.
17. The second issue is the extent to which the proposals are acceptable against other housing policies included in the CHPP1.
18. The principles of sustainable development, identified in the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) (the Framework), underpin policy PSD1 at several levels within the CLPP1. At a strategic level the policy seeks to ensure that development will be concentrated in the main centres, then outside those there is an allowance for development within the rural areas but concentrated within the Category A villages which are defined by their range of services and being located throughout the District would support a balanced pattern of growth. Finally, at another level within each village specific sites have to be 'sustainable' in how they function in their local context with regard to a range of criteria.
19. The Sibfords are identified as a Category A village because of several factors including its population and range of services. These services are spread across each of the 3 settlements. I acknowledge that local connectivity between them via walking and cycling is restricted by the steep sided Sib valley but these services do exist within reasonable proximity of the appeal site. Given the spread of services across each settlement it is unlikely that the development of any site around the Sibfords would readily enable access by sustainable transport modes. This is an argument against the inclusion of the Sibfords as a Category A village but is not a matter before me in this Appeal.
20. Policy PV2 identifies a broad range of criteria which would have informed the CHLPP2 allocations, not all of which are relevant to the issues concerning this appeal. However whilst the site does not comply with several of these I consider that the principle of some form of development on at least part of this site has been accepted. In addition, I accord moderate weight to the inclusion of the part of the appeal site in the Council's Housing and Economic Land Availability (HELAA 2018) for up to 10 houses.
21. The scheme would provide for 35% affordable housing in line with policy. I understand that one of the reasons for the Council's decision resolving to grant permission for a scheme in 2014 was the inclusion of 6 affordable homes to meet local housing need following the Housing Needs Survey in 2010 and the Register of Interest in 2013.
22. Part of the case presented by the Sibford Action Group (SAG) referred to the poor level of service provision in the Sibfords substantiating why further development should not occur. Whilst it is difficult to determine the exact impact that 25 new households would have on local services such as the local shop, it is a fair assumption that this is likely to be positive in supporting it.
23. For the above reasons on this main issue I conclude that the proposals would be in line with adopted housing policies and in line with the Framework. The proposals are in line with policies PSD1, PSV1 and PSV2 of the CHPP1. They are not in conflict with 'saved' policy H18 given the status of the village defined by

PSV1 and PSV2. The scheme would not amount to a material exceedance in breach of policy PV2 and would deliver housing in line with other policies of the Plan.

Character and Appearance

24. Sibford Ferris is a linear village extending northwards along Hook Norton Road before turning east above the Sib valley. The village's linear character means that its rural landscape prevails with the village being a subservient element. For example, the well treed Sib valley restricts views between the Sibfords reducing the impacts of the settlement pattern on landscape. Over the last 20 years new housing has been integrated into the existing settlement pattern in a sensitive way.
25. The appeal site's boundaries are formed by hedges on each side apart from the southern edge which is open to the remainder of the arable field. The site sits on top of a broad ridge above the Sib valley and further away, to the south the Stour valley. When viewed from the south and west across both valleys the appeal site appears as an extension to arable fields. The line of trees on the western edge of the Sibford School is a critical boundary to the edge of the settlement. The site has no statutory or non statutory landscape designations.
26. The adopted policies ESD 13 and ESD15 included in the CLPP1 seek to both protect landscapes and to ensure that new development responds positively to an area's character through creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness. These policies are underpinned by the 'saved' policy C28 of the Cherwell Local Plan (1996) designed to ensure that new development is sympathetic to its rural context and high value landscapes.
27. Where adherence to these policies is not possible proposals will not be permitted if they cause undue visual intrusion into the countryside, impact on its natural landscape and topography and be inconsistent with local character. These policies are consistent with several of the criteria included in policy PV2 which seek amongst other matters, to avoid adverse landscape impacts of new development and to avoid development on the best and most versatile agricultural land.
28. Although the site lies outside the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) its landscape context is shaped by this. Furthermore, the site lies in Character Area 13 of the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study defined as an area of 'Rolling Village Pastures' and close to another landscape type, 'Wooded Pasture Valleys and Slopes'. The nature of this rolling landscape interspersed with hedgerows and copses means that views into the site from its immediate boundaries are limited compared to those from further away. For example, the proposed area of housing would be difficult to see from Woodway Road due to the slope the land and height of the hedge.
29. The appeal site would create a new pattern of development as an extension to the southern edge of the village. The indicative drawings identify that development would be set in the north east corner of the site with housing of 2.5 storeys which steps down towards the middle of the site to 1.5 storeys. Within the appeal site the extent of development would be limited and when set against existing development at Margaret Lane House (part of the Sibford School), it would extend the village envelope by only a small area. The

- suggested height parameters are important in reducing the visual impacts of the scheme from surrounding receptor points.
30. Whilst there are differences in approach to their respective landscape studies both the Appellants and the SAG identify a range of receptor points from which to gauge the impact of the scheme on landscape and visual character. However neither study include montages of the proposed development or images of what the site could look like after 1 and 15 years – critical points in the ‘life’ of a development.
 31. Having visited several of the receptor points and considered the views included in both reports in detail I conclude that potentially the two most sensitive receptor points are from the west from the Cotswolds AONB and from the south. From the former I consider that the integrity of the landscape would not be compromised by this development. This is in part because within the appeal site the dwellings would be set close to existing housing and only marginally extend the pattern of development to just south of Margaret Lane House which forms part of the Sibford School. Furthermore, the line of trees along the boundary of the Sibford School along Hook Norton Road would still be the dominant landscape feature when the site is viewed from the west. For these reasons I consider that the proposals would not have an ‘urbanising effect’ on the site and its surroundings as the Council have stated.
 32. From my own observations I find that the appeal site is most prominent when viewed at just over 1km away from the south along D’Arcy Dalton Way. This is particularly important given that at this point the appeal site would not have a natural edge to its southern boundary. However, the scheme does include mitigation along this edge in the form of tree planting. The Appellants Landscape and Visual Appraisal recognises that the proposed scheme would be contained within the existing landscape. The concentration of development at the north east corner of the site and its relative low density would reduce its intrusiveness.
 33. The National Design Guide 2019 builds on Chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019 which requires, amongst other matters, that new development reflects its landscape context and setting. Having viewed the site from a number of receptor points I consider that its low density combined with the extent of proposed planting belts would ensure that the proposal could be ‘accommodated’ within its context.
 34. On this issue I conclude that the proposals would not cause unacceptable harm to the landscape setting of the Cotswolds AONB and the setting of Sibford Ferris. For these reasons I consider that the proposed scheme would not be in conflict with saved policies C28 of the Cherwell Local Plan (1996) and ESD 13, ESD 15 and PV1 and PV2 of the CHPP1.

Infrastructure provision

35. The completed section 106 agreement includes a range of provisions. These cover the requirement that 35% of the dwellings are ‘affordable’, provision of and commuted payments for local play area and public amenity space within the scheme, maintenance arrangements for onsite trees and boundary hedgerows, and a sustainable drainage system. Other provisions include a contribution to the provision of waste management facilities and community hall facilities and contributions to the local secondary school and the Sibford

School for indoor and outdoor recreation opportunities. The agreement includes provisions made under section 278 for a new pedestrian footway, crossing and access into the site, bus shelter, local play and provisions for a traffic regulation order to ensure lower speed on Hook Norton Road as drivers approach from the south.

36. Overall, the obligations included in the agreement are related to the requirements of development plan policies and are necessary, directly related and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed scheme, in line with paragraphs 56-57 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.

Other Matters

37. Interested parties raised issues regarding matters which I address in turn below.

Unsustainability of the Sibfords to take more development

38. The Sibfords are a Category A settlement included in the local plan. Although the Inspector at the local plan inquiry did consider that the hierarchy of settlement types was not set in stone this is a matter for a review of the local plan and not one for me to determine in this appeal. This categorisation of village types was based on the range of factors including local service provision. Whilst I acknowledge that journey times between the Sibfords would be hindered by the quality of the local highway network and the Sib valley, potentially leading to more private transport use than would be normally expected, a range of services consistent with Category A settlements does still operate in the Sibfords for the benefit of residents of the appeal scheme.
39. Many of the decisions of my inspector colleagues to dismiss appeals in other villages within the District can be distinguished from this case for several reasons. In some cases the scale of development was large compared to the size of the original village. For example, in Finmere, the appeal² was dismissed for 47 houses but the range of services was limited as the village had no shop or post office. The Sibfords do have a shop and other services. In other cases the appeal proposals would add to further development given extant permissions as in the cases³ of both Weston on the Green and Chesterton. The Sibfords have not experienced new development since the adoption of the Local Plan.
40. In other appeals other factors such as substantial harm to heritage assets prevailed. For example, in Kirtlington and Cropredy the impact of proposals on the setting of listed buildings and the character and appearance of a conservation area was cited respectively as reasons for dismissal⁴. These are not matters relevant to this appeal.

Traffic generation and congestion

41. The amount of traffic generation arising from the appeal scheme was not identified in the Council's reasons for refusal. Whilst representations from interested parties focused on the extent of additional traffic generation arising from the appeal proposal, I did not receive other evidence to dispute the

² APP/C3105/WW/17/3169168

³ APP/C3105/W/16/3158925 and APP/C3105/W/15/3130576

⁴ APP/C3105/W/14/3001612 and APP3105/WW/17/3187461

Appellants traffic survey which indicated that during the critical morning and evening peaks the amount of traffic generation would be between 10 and 12 vehicles generated an hour by the proposals.

42. I acknowledge the CRAILTUS survey completed in 2009 and its conclusions on the use of private transport in the Sibfords but this matter was considered as part of the local plan which designated the village as a Category A village. Furthermore, although representations from SAG addressed concerns over the levels of congestion in the village caused by the amount of traffic passing through the narrow village roads, compounded by the 'school run' to the Sibford school I saw only limited examples of this during this critical time when I visited the village. Furthermore, during two visits to the village I observed that the amount of traffic on local roads was low. Although I acknowledge that bus services to the village have been reduced since the local plan's adoption in 2015 I still consider that the inclusion of new housing could go some way to sustaining the existing level of service provision.
43. Although the proposals would involve the loss of Grade 2 agricultural, land this has to be balanced against the benefits which the proposals could make to the provision of additional housing.
44. Finally, a further objection referred to concerns over flooding. The site lies in the Flood Zone 1 and a Flood Risk Assessment submitted with the appeal identified that the risk of flooding was low. Furthermore, the scheme does include sustainable urban drainage.

Planning balance and conclusions

45. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework (2019) places considerable emphasis on sustainable development and highlights the delivery of new housing as a national priority.
46. The appeal proposals are consistent with the essential thrust of the housing policies included in the adopted CHLPP1. In particular, they are consistent with ESD1 and in line with policies PV1 and PV2. Set against this is the number of dwellings included in extant permissions in the Category A villages across the District which exceeds the 750 dwellings included in policy PV2. However, I do not consider that the appeal proposals represent a material exceedance to this figure given its modest size and they would not undermine policy PV2 and the basis of the local plan. Furthermore, the scheme includes a quantum of affordable units compliant with policy.
47. In addition, the scheme includes other features including a path across the site improving permeability, allotments and local play facilities. These key into some concerns identified in the non-statutory Sibford Action Plan (2012) and are consistent with adopted policies in the CHPP1. I have already identified the obligations included in the completed section 106 agreement which through contributions would improve local highways, restrict speeds into the village along Hook Norton Road and support active lifestyles through contributions to the facilities of the local secondary school and the Sibford School. In addition, 25 new households would go some way to support local services.

48. Whilst the proposed schemes location on the edge of the village does form a limited extension to its current settlement pattern this must be seen in the context of this site set close to Margaret Lane House. The integrity of the landscape character is not compromised by the scheme. The character of the landscape means that the scheme's visual impacts are reduced. Its most sensitive southern boundary can be adequately mitigated through landscaping. The details of this can be determined at reserved matters stage.
49. Taking into account all these matters I conclude that the appeal is allowed and outline planning permission is granted subject to the conditions included in the attached schedule.

Conditions

50. During the Hearing there was a discussion between the main parties on the draft conditions. Having considered these further, I am making a series of small amendments to ensure full compliance with Planning Practice Guidance. I have imposed a condition specifying the timeframes for the commencement of development and for the submission of outstanding reserved matters as required by Sections 91 and 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended. A condition is required to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the plans and documents submitted with the application to ensure adherence to the principle of the proposed development hereby approved. Other conditions require a Construction Traffic Management Plan and Construction Environmental Management Plan to ensure that the operational works to complete the scheme do not adversely impact on the living conditions of surrounding residential occupiers, avoid potential conflict with highway users and protect the environment and biodiversity.
51. A condition requiring a Landscape and Ecology Management Plan is required to identify the habitats to be created in the scheme including the requirement for bat and bird boxes in line with both local and national policy. A condition requiring an energy statement is required to ensure that the energy consumption is minimised during construction and on completion to deliver a low carbon development in line with both local and national policy. A condition is required to ensure archaeological investigations are completed in advance of works proceeding following advice received from the County Council.
52. Other conditions include a need for detailed drawings of the proposed access from Hook Norton Road to ensure highway safety. A condition is required to address contamination if this is found on site. Finally, a condition is required for a starter pack for new homes advising on sustainable modes of travel to ensure that the use of private transport is reduced.

Stephen Wilkinson

Inspector

Schedule of Conditions

- 1) Details of the access, appearance, landscaping, layout, and scale, (hereinafter called "the reserved matters") shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority before any development takes place and the development shall be carried out as approved.
- 2) Application for approval of the reserved matters shall be made to the local planning authority not later than 3 years from the date of this permission.
- 3) The development hereby permitted shall take place not later than 2 years from the date of approval of the last of the reserved matters to be approved.
- 4) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved and submitted plans and documents: Site Location Plan 1; 2500 scale (Promap), Concept Schematic 6426/ASP3/PP – Rev D Parameter Plan and 6426/ASP4/LSP-Rev A-Landscape Strategy Plan, Design and Access Statement; Flood Risk Assessment; Arboricultural Impact Assessment; Ecological Impact Assessment; Archaeological Desk Based Assessment; Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy report and drawings labelled 3361.101.
- 5) Prior to commencement of the development hereby approved, full details of the means of access between the land and the highway shall be submitted to and approved in writing, by the Local Planning Authority. The access shall be broadly in accordance with the positioning indicated on the approved plan 3361.101-Concept Schematic, 6426/ASP3/PP and include detail of layout and vision splays. Thereafter and prior to the first occupation of any of the development the means of access shall be constructed and retained in accordance with the approved details.
- 6) Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby approved a travel information pack shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter and upon occupation the first residents of each dwelling shall be provided with a copy of the approved information pack.
- 7) Prior to commencement of the development hereby approved a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Thereafter, the approved CTMP shall be implemented and operated in accordance with the approved details.
- 8) Prior to commencement of the development hereby approved, full details of a surface water drainage scheme for the site detailing all on and off site drainage works required in relation to the development which shall

be broadly in accordance with the drainage proposals set out in the submitted flood risk assessment produced by JNP Group Consulting Engineers and which shall include a sewer modelling assessment shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved scheme, until such time no discharge of foul or surface water from the site shall be accepted from the site into the public system. The scheme shall also include:

- Discharge rates
 - Discharge volumes
 - SUDS (permeable paving, soakaways, infiltration devices, attenuation pond, swales)
 - Maintenance and management of SUDS features to include a SUDS management and maintenance plan
 - Sizing of features – attenuation volume
 - Infiltration in accordance with BRE 365 (to include comprehensive infiltration testing and annual monitoring recording of ground water levels across the site).
 - Detailed drainage layout with pipe numbers
 - Network drainage calculations
 - Phasing
 - Flood flow routing in exceedance conditions (to include provision of a flood exceedance route plan).
- 9) Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, a landscape and ecology management plan (LEMP) showing how all habitats will be created managed and funded and to include details of a bat and birdbox scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Thereafter, the development shall not be carried out other than in strict accordance with the approved LEMP.
- 10) Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, including any site clearance, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), which shall include details of the measures taken to ensure that construction works do not adversely affect biodiversity, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Thereafter, the development shall not be carried out other than in strict accordance with the approved CEMP.
- 11) If during development, contamination not previously identified is found at the site, no further development shall be carried out until full details of a remediation strategy detailing how the contamination shall be dealt with has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the remediation strategy shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
- 12) Prior to or as part of the first reserved matters submission, an Energy Statement shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Energy Statement should:

- Be structured in accordance with the energy hierarchy in ESD2 of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-31 Part 1 with information provided on each element of the hierarchy
- Inform and be reflected in the reserved matters
- Include a description of the development, number and type of residential units,
- Demonstrate sustainable construction methods as per Policy ESD3 of the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 2011-31, and
- Consider the use of renewable energy to supply the development.

Thereafter, the development shall be carried out in strict accordance with the recommendations and measures contained in the approved Energy Statement.

- 13) Prior to or as part of the submission of the first reserved matter a Written Scheme of Archaeological Investigation shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall include an assessment of significance and research questions:
- i) the programme and methodology of site investigation and recording;
 - ii) the programme for post investigation assessment;
 - iii) the provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording;
 - iv) the provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation;
 - v) the provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation;
 - vi) the nomination of a competent person or persons/organization to undertake the works set out within the Written Scheme of Investigation.

APPEARANCES

FOR THE APPELLANT:

Jonathan Harbottle	Director, Land and Partners
Alex Dalton	Project Planner, Land and Partners
Tom Hutchison	Projects, Land and Partners
Dan Skinner	Land and Partners
Ben Wright	Director, Aspect Landscape Planning Ltd

FOR THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:

Nathanael Stock	Team Leader, Cherwell District Council
Matthew Barratt	Solicitor

INTERESTED PERSONS:

Duncan Chadwick	Partner, David Lock Associates
David Newman	Quartet Design
Ginny Bennett	Parish Councillor, Sibford Ferris
Roger Mallows	Parish Councillor, Sibford Gower
Robin Grimston	Local Resident
John Perriss	Sibford Action Group

APPENDIX 2

Extract from SHLAA for application site

Site ref	Settlement	Gross site area (ha)	
SF005	Sibford Ferris	0.8	
Site address	Current/previous landuse	Type of site	
Land east of Woodway Road	Agriculture	Greenfield	
Planning status	No planning status		
Description of site			
<p>The site is located within the south western part of the part of the village. To the north and east of the site lies residential development (medium/low density two storey housing), to the south open fields and to the west the site is bounded by Woodway Road which leads towards Hook Norton.</p>			
Planning history			
There is no relevant planning history.			
Policy context			
<p>Sibford Ferris is one of the most sustainable rural settlements in the district with a range of services and facilities, with additional facilities available at the nearby Sibford Gower and Burdrop. The site is within reasonable walking distance of village services. The site is however greenfield. It is beyond the existing built limits of the village although is positioned adjacent to existing residential development, in between two roads (Woodway Road and Hook Norton Road).</p>			
Physical constraints			
<p>There are records of swifts in proximity to the site (to the north) and to the north east lies an archaeological constraint priority area. The primary constraint on development in this area is the need to achieve satisfactory access. Where Woodway Road bends round the site, the road is a single car width only, with no road markings, no pavement, and is more of a rural track.</p>			
Potential impacts			
<p>The key potential impacts in this location are likely to be on residential amenity in terms of proximity to existing residential development. Access issues would be a key consideration with significant improvement required.</p>			

Suitability summary					
There are few physical constraints and limited potential impacts and the site is therefore considered to be suitable for residential development. Woodway Road would form a defensible western boundary to the site and provide for access whilst to the south the site is well screened by a mature hedge.					
Market appraisal					
Since the SHLAA was completed for Cherwell in 2013, the housing market update provides evidence of strengthening conditions. Local market evidence underlines this view, together with favourable macroeconomic indicators, and increased housebuilder activity. While of course the housing market will be almost undoubtedly be subject to future cyclical fluctuations, at the very least, the short to medium term prospects are good.					
In the 2013 SHLAA a series of nominal sites were tested for their indicative viability. The updated housing market evidence suggests that the positive viability demonstrated for these sites at this time is still present – and indeed scheme viability is likely to have improved. The positive attributes Cherwell possesses in terms of its location and existing and planned infrastructure further serve to make the District an attractive housing area.					
Availability summary					
The site has been promoted through the 2014 SHLAA call for sites on behalf of the landowner, for 20 dwellings.					
Achievability summary					
From the information available, it is considered that there is a reasonable prospect that housing could be delivered on the site if the land were to be released. The site is available and potentially suitable if required by the Council and policy issues can be overcome. The site is therefore potentially developable within the plan period and worthy of further consideration. The site promotion indicates that the site would take 0-5 years to complete.					
Yield by year:					
2014 - 2019	2019 - 2024	2024 - 2029	2029 – 2031	Final density	Final suggested yield
20	0	0	0	24	20
Yield summary					
The theoretical density multiplier in this location is 35 dph which would result in a yield of 28 dwellings. Given the relatively low density of the surrounding residential development, and the site submission promoting the site for up to 20 dwellings, a reduction in the density would be appropriate to achieve 20 dwellings on the site (a final density of 25 dph).					
Conclusion					
This is considered to be a potentially developable site providing for about 20 dwellings in the next five year period subject to satisfactory access being achieved, and careful design and layout to achieve a satisfactory relationship with existing dwellings in the vicinity.					

