

**OBJECTION LETTER TO PLANNING APPLICATION – 22/01773/F**

**ON BEHALF OF THE SIBFORD ACTION GROUP**

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

Dear Mr Campbell,

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

**1. Contrary to the Local Plan;**

The Cherwell Local Plan 2011 – 2031 (“Plan”), at its adoption in 2015 “allocated” a further 750 houses to Category A Villages under Policy Villages 2 (page 250). The Annual Monitoring Review of March 2020 states at paragraph 5.175:

*“Since 1 April 2014 a total of 977 dwellings have been identified for meeting the Policy Villages 2 requirement of 750 dwellings. These are included in the Housing Delivery Monitor in Appendix 2. Policy Villages 2 requirement has already been exceeded by 227 dwellings when considering all of the planning permissions and identified sites without planning permission in the above (608+309+60).”*

The Planning Inspector at the Sibford Ferris Appeal on 5th November 2019 stated:

*“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.”*

I understand that by March 2021 a total of 1,062 dwellings have been identified for meeting the requirement of 750 dwellings. The Policy Villages 2 requirement has therefore already been exceeded by 312 dwellings, 40% over the target of 750. 749 have been built or are under construction and there is an appeal for 43 homes at Station Road, Hook Norton, which could lead to substantially more.

At close on 50% more than the 750 dwellings requirement, this proposal would add to a material exceedance of the policy figures.

The Plan on Page 29 at para A11 says that

*“most of the growth will be directed to locations within or immediately adjoining the main towns of Banbury and Bicester.....away from the towns the major single location for growth will be the former RAF Upper Heyford base.”*

As at March 2020 The Annual Monitoring Review sets out on page 31 in Table 17 demonstrates that Cherwell has a “Housing Land Supply from Deliverable Sites” for the 5 year period 2020 – 2025 and the other for the period 2021 – 2026 of respectively 4.8 and 4.7 years, marginally under the required 5 years.

The Cherwell Local Plan Review Planning for Cherwell Community Involvement Developing Our Options on page 18 includes a table of “Homes Planned and Delivered” includes the following table:

	Planned 2011 –	Delivered 2011 -	Homes with permission	% Delivered
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	2031	2021	(allocated sites only) 31 March 2021	
Bicester	10,129	2,879	5,579	28%
Banbury	7,139	3,612	1,536	50%
Upper Heyford	2,361	674	1,178	28%
Rural Areas	3,031	2,641		87%

Data produced by Cherwell Council shows that Policy Villages 2 housing has exceeded the target by 40%, midway through the 2011 – 2031 period, with 87% houses delivered, compared to 28% delivered in Bicester and Upper Heyford.

This – and other proposals that are threatened to follow - would further undermine the Local Plan housing strategy of directing most growth to Banbury and Bicester, where there is access to shops, services, jobs and other facilities and opportunities to travel other than by the car. This helps avoid commuting, congestion, pollution, climate change and harming the environment. The District Council has declared a Climate Change Emergency, but none of these environmental objectives will be achieved by repeating the same mistakes and approving more and more homes in attractive but inherently unsustainable villages like Sibford Ferris.

To respect the integrity of their own Plan Cherwell Council should consider no further Policy Villages 2 developments and should focus focus at Bicester and Upper Heyford.

## **2. Development Creep**

Planning permission was granted following appeal for 25 houses at Hook Norton Road in November 2019, when the Inspector overturned the unanimous decision of elected Councillors to refuse. Appeal Ref: APP/C3105/W/19/3229631. Application Ref: 18/1894/OUT This development will increase the housing stock of Sibford Ferris by 15%.

Of note this application superseded an earlier application, which was withdrawn for 8 homes.

The Land Registry transfer deed (Title ON 196300 dated 1st April 2021) between the developer and the landowner of the Hook Norton road site specifically allows for future development of the Retained Land to the South and Adjoining Land to the North. See Clauses 13.3.4, 14.5, 14.7.2, 15.5 2, 15.6.2, 16.1.2 and 16.1.3.

Hard on the heels of the Hook Norton road development Blue Cedar Homes are applying to develop, what is at present 6 homes, on the Adjoining Land.

I believe the spirit of granting permission to develop 25 homes on the Hook Norton Road (an increase from the original 8) was that this constituted the Sibford's fair share of the Policy Villages 2 Allocation. I do not believe that it was intended that a sluice gate should be opened to allow further development in the Sibfords.

Cherwell Council needs to be alert to developer creep and police it very carefully. Failing to do so will ruin the remaining rural areas of Cherwell District to the detriment of both those who live in the villages and those who want to visit and enjoy the rural areas.

## **3. Unsustainable development**

Sibford Gower and Sibford Ferris are located either side of the 1:4 Sib Valley (only water in Oxfordshire that flows into the River Severn) in a particularly tranquil and unspoilt part of Cherwell District. Both parishes abut the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Cherwell District Council Cherwell Rural Area Integrated Transport and Land Use Study (CRAITLUS) Stage 2: Criteria-Based Assessment on page 8 says:

*“Of the 33 villages only four show little capability to sustain additional housing. Shenington, Sibford Ferris / Sibford Gower and Charlton on Otmoor perform poorly due to their location on minor roads, with long travel times and distances to access key facilities. “*

Aside from the largely unclassified road network the local infrastructure, such as sewage plant and shop are rudimentary and off street parking is limited including outside the small surgery

The Council’s own CRAITLUS report says it all! Development in the Sibfords is the least sustainable in the Cherwell district.

#### **4. Landscape Impact**

The proposal would lead to compact, built development on greenfield, agricultural land beyond the physical extents of Faraday House and the building line of the Hook Norton Road development to the south into the attractive countryside surrounding the village. This would have an adverse visual impact on the landscape, resulting from the extension of the village and encroachment of built development all the way up to Woodway Road, which has an unspoilt, rural character. The development would be clearly visible at short and more distant range from highways and public rights of way extending out into the countryside and the Cotswolds AONB. This would harm the rural character and appearance of this attractive landscape to the west of the village.

#### **5. Council Procedure**

I am surprised to learn that the Blue Cedar application is being proposed as a “Delegated” decision. Given the experience of the Hook Norton road application this appears to fly in the face of democratic accountability.

**I OBJECT TO THIS PROPOSAL** and urge the Council to reconsider and put the Blue Cedar application to a full Planning Committee of elected Councillors

Yours sincerely,

Robin Grimston  
Elm Farm  
Sibford Ferris