

Folly Cottage,
Sibford Ferris
Banbury
Oxon OX15 5RG

1st June 2023

Saffron Loasby,
Principal Planning Officer
Cherwell District Council
Bodicote House

Dear Ms Loasby

Regarding Planning Application– 23/01316/F

Erection of 5 two story 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

I write as a local resident to strongly object to the above resubmitted planning application under a new reference (see prior application under reference 21/04271/F). Nothing has changed from my previous objection.

Background

The village is under threat from development following the granting of planning permission on appeal for 25 houses at Hook Norton Road in November 2019, when the Inspector regrettably overturned the Council's refusal. This appeal decision overlooked the relative isolation, aged infrastructure, limited capacity, lack of facilities and poor accessibility of Sibford Ferris.

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

1. Contrary to the Local Plan;
2. Unsustainable Development / Poor Infrastructure;
3. Traffic Implications
4. Visual Impact

1. Contrary to Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031

- The Local Plan housing quotas for rural villages in Cherwell have already been exceeded. The current application conflicts with an up-to-date Development Plan and therefore planning permission should be refused. There are no material considerations in this particular case that indicate that the Development Plan should not be followed in this case.

2. Unsustainable development / Poor Infrastructure

Sibford Gower and Sibford Ferris are treated as one Category A village in the current Local Plan which is being updated. It has been implied that the villages will be recategorized as part of the updated plan currently pending publication.

- Sibford Ferris only has a small shop. The few public amenities there are lie in Sibford Gower and Burdrop, only accessed by narrow roads with poor, incomplete footpaths, limited lighting and congestion caused by parked cars.
- The two villages are separated by a deep valley (Sib Brook) and have poor accessibility for anyone, let alone older persons, without a car.

- The bus service has more than halved in recent years. It is reliant on subsidy from Warwickshire County Council, has a very limited service to Stratford and Banbury at inconvenient times and has no direct services to Hook Norton or Chipping Norton. It is impossible to use this bus service to get to Oxford in a timely manner for work commitments on a daily basis.
- 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 where increased usage of cars will be inevitable thereby increased CO2 gases and impact to our environment.
- The proposed development is unsustainable for older persons. Government advice on the location of housing for older people states that factors to consider include the proximity to good public transport, local amenities, health services and town centers. None of these apply in this instance.
- As the world and the UK look to address climate change we are rightly constantly being asked to look at what we do and how our actions impact on carbon footprint, sustainability and emissions etc. At this time, why are developers, councils and local and state governments looking to develop on agricultural land that should be used to help us all adapt and live a more sustainable life. This just does not make sense.
- The existing infrastructure is very poor
 - During school term the roads are incredibly busy. Harvest time means that tractors and trailers are constantly coming through the village, when one of these meets the bus or a delivery truck to the shop there can be a bottleneck for a considerable time.
 - The sewerage and drainage systems are already at peak. The drains going down the main road are blocked and collapsed and in heavy rain there is considerable fast flowing water running the whole way down the road to the end where the drains finally are clear and work.
 - Mobile phone networks are patchy.
 - The doctor's surgery who provide an excellent service to existing clients is already at capacity.
 - The limited lighting and limited pavements in the village of Sibford Ferris makes walking at night a dangerous task.

3. Traffic Implications

- In this village the target market for these houses are expected to be older and therefore more reliant on the use of private cars due to the total lack of a suitable bus service to the villages. The proposal for the Hook Norton Road development laughably noted that 25 houses would only need 11 cars in total. With the Hook Norton Road Development and now this development there could be realistically in excess of 60+ more cars needed using the roads through the villages.
- Additionally, the lack of pavements and narrow roads makes it dangerous to walk at certain times and in some places, it is difficult for two vehicles to safely pass each other.
- The roads in the area are already in a dire state. The potholes are numerous and makes running, cycling and walking an impossible task as drivers try to avoid these potholes but it means pedestrians and horse riders are often being forced off the road onto the verges in a dangerous way.
- There is limited street lighting in Sibford Ferris. When they are working there are three street lights in the village. At the moment the one closest to the shop has not been working for 3 months notwithstanding the fact that it has been reported.

4. Visual Impact

- The proposed development will adversely affect the local character of the village and the outlook over the Cotswolds ANOB.
- Woodway Road is un-spoilt and has a rural character which is well used road by walkers, riders, cyclists and families with small children who frequently visit the Sunday smallholding.

