

## **Response to Planning Application 13/01056/OUT**

Caversfield Parish Council met on 31 July to discuss the above outline planning application. 35 residents of the village also attended.

The Parish Council wishes to object to the above application on the following grounds:

### **Local area**

- The emerging Local Plan for Cherwell categorises Caversfield as a 'Category C' village with the only type of development agreed as 'conversions' and no infilling or minor / major development. This development, therefore, does not conform to Cherwell District Council's emerging Local Plan.
- The 1996 Local Plan classes Caversfield as a Category 3 settlement restricted to the conversion of non-residential buildings in accordance with policy H21, or a new dwelling [not dwellings] when an essential need for agriculture or other existing undertaking can be established.
- It is understood that Cherwell District Council now has its five-year supply of housing required by Government.
- The proposal is outside the built environment of the village envelope and it would set a precedent for the village to create a 'ribbon development' all the way up the west side of Fringford Road towards Fringford which would not be in keeping with the village and about which the villagers have serious concerns.
- Although there is no agreed green buffer on the west side of Fringford Road, it was hoped that the farmland would have been an adequate green buffer to protect the village from further development. Without this area, Caversfield would easily get subsumed into the Eco Town and Bicester itself, thus losing its character and status as a village.
- The fields on the west side of Fringford Road have a wide range of fauna and flora including newts, deer, bats and buzzards and the hedgerow is understood to be about 1,000 years old. Development to any of these fields would have a detrimental impact on this fauna and flora.
- The developer continually refers to Caversfield as being part of Bicester. This is not true. Caversfield is a village, just to the north of Bicester, with its own identity and character.
- Adjoining the proposed development is Caversfield's Parish Church, St Lawrence, which is listed as Grade II\* and is not a 'chapel' as stated by the developer.

### **Water and drainage**

- The current water pressure for Caversfield is barely acceptable, often recorded as 0.8 bar. Adding a further 200 houses to this causes great concern.
- The general infrastructure for water services, both fresh, waste water and sewerage is currently at its limit.
- There is currently no mains drainage on Fringford Road to the south of Skimmingdish Lane.

### **Highways**

- The Parish Council has serious concerns about the affect the development will have on the wider network of village roads.
  - The Developer mentions access using the unnamed road, colloquially known as 'Aunt Em's Lane' as a means of accessing the Banbury Road (B4100). This road is a very narrow lane and access at both ends can be dangerous with difficult sight lines. It is certainly not suitable for the numbers of cars which might potentially use it and for those who will be using it from the Eco Town.
  - The other roads within Caversfield are also likely to be used more. Both Skimmingdish Lane and Thompson Drive join the A4421 to Buckingham, but they are residential roads which the villagers do not wish to encourage as 'rat runs'; the turnings out onto the A4421 are also becoming more and more dangerous with greater traffic numbers using the road, both incoming and exiting the road.
  - The turning out onto Southwold Lane (A4095) from Fringford Road would also have to be reconsidered. Villagers can currently wait for up to five minutes to turn right onto the ring road and this will only be exacerbated by more cars using the road.
  - Mention of the driver training facility on Skimmingdish Lane gave the Council concern as it indicates that the Residential Travel Plan consultants had not noticed that this facility is now being developed by *City and Country* into luxury apartments (as per the Local Plan as they are building conversions), known as The Garden Quarter. A project which has been in progress for at least the last eighteen months.
  - There is no public bus stop on Skimmingdish Lane at Paynes End, as has been stated in the Travel Plan, as this is on MOD land for the use of the children of US Service Personnel.
  - The existing traffic movement figures in the Consultants' Residential Travel Plan are likely to be skewed in relation to the existing residents because of the high number of elderly people who live at Cherwood House nursing home but who do not own cars.

### **Education**

- No consideration has been made as to where the children living on the development will go to school. The catchment school for the area, Southwold CP school, is almost full in the lower years (Year 3, Key Stage 1 and Foundation); whilst years 4, 5 and 6 have some space at present, this will only be for the next two years. The other two

local schools which many parents in Caversfield choose to send their children to, Bure Park and Fringford, are both understood to be at capacity.

## **The development**

### **Flooding**

- The field for the proposed development has been recorded as flooding and the Gate House has flooded in the past. The field to the south of 'Aunt Em's Lane' floods regularly, particularly close to the junction of Fringford Road.
- The proposed attenuation pond has been situated in the wrong place. The lowest part of the land is at the back of the current houses. The attenuation pond would not help with the capture of run-off water from the development, and if it did overflow, would be likely to flood Fringford Road – where the current drains would not be able to cope.
- The roundabout at the junction of Bure Park, Southwold Lane and the B4100 regularly floods now.

### **Green Space / Outdoor provision**

- The Parish Council believes that the green space provision is minimal and is not sufficient for the development. Caversfield's provision for green space is extremely limited as the only green areas are privately owned (by the MOD and other developers). Whilst it looks as though the village has a great deal of open land, none of it, apart from one small area in Old School Close is officially accessible.
- Within the development, there is no outdoor provision for activities for teenagers and very little for younger children.

### **Amenities**

- Whilst a shop has been suggested, the Parish Council understands that this is already in the plans for the Garden Quarter Development on Skimmingdish Lane and so would not be needed.
- Whilst a village hall has been suggested, the Parish Council has concerns about the running of such a building and would require a substantial long-term endowment to assist in the running and upkeep of the building. The Parish Council also has concerns about the size of the building and villagers have concerns about the siting of it particularly close to the existing houses on the Fringford Road.
- The only thing which villagers have requested in recent years has been an area for allotments, but this has been completely ignored.

Jane Olds  
Clerk to Caversfield Parish Council  
6 August 2013