**From:** SGPC [mailto:sibford.gower.pc@thesibfords.org.uk]
**Sent:** 30 November 2018 15:46
**To:** Bob Neville
**Subject:** Application 18/01894/OUT Hook Norton Road, Sibford Ferris

Dear Bob

**Ref :** **18/01894/OUT  Application for Outline Planning Permission – Hook Norton Road, Sibford Ferris**

**Submission by Sibford Gower Parish Council**

Sibford Gower Parish Council OBJECTS to this planning application.

The application has been identified with land in the adjoining parish of Sibford Ferris, but would have significant infrastructure impact on the village of Sibford Gower. It would, furthermore, profoundly affect the character of the village community as a whole, and set a precedent that would have potential repercussions throughout both villages. This would be in direct contradiction of the expressed wishes summarized in the Sibfords Community Plan 2012, referred to in Section 4.0 of the response to this application from the Sibford Ferris Council.

The Sibford Gower Council concurs with the interpretation made by the Sibford Ferris Council that the application is not in accordance with the Development Plan (Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1).  We note that although allowance is made within the plan for material considerations to be taken into account, under Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004*,* the Partial Review of the Local Plan Part 1 is not relevant to the assessment of this proposal because this Plan relates to Oxford’s unmet housing need and Sibford Ferris is located outside Search Areas A and B for the Plan. We further note that the Local Plan has not yet been submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination and so is not close enough to adoption to be a material consideration of any weight.

Having considered this application, we also share with the Sibford Ferris Council a number of significant concerns:

* **Size of development**   We see no justification for the change from the approval for 8 houses granted in 2014 (to comprise 6 affordable [75%] + 2 market sale houses) to the current application for 25 houses comprising 9 affordable [36%] + 16 market value. The increase of 3 affordable houses [+50%] is entirely offset by the proposed increase of 14 market sale houses [+700%].  Just on these grounds alone, we believe this application should be refused.
* **Development Policy**     Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1 identifies Sibford Ferris as a Category A village, being suitable for occasional minor development, infilling and conversions, and only within the built-up limits of the village.  The proposed figure of 25 houses would appear to be well beyond “minor development” in the context of this village, rendering it disproportionate. The proposal involves the development of greenfield land outside the built-up limits of the Village, and is in direct contradiction of Policy Villages 2: the land has not been previously developed and is classed as Grade 2 agricultural land, of which there is a presumption against the development of such land for residential purposes, as it is classed as the ‘best and most versatile’ agricultural land.
* **Housing density**    While a range of housing density figures are offered by the applicant for different elements of the current proposal, the essential focus of the 2014 approval, supported at the time by the local community, has been entirely corrupted  by incorporating 19 market value houses (64%) of varying size and potential value.
* **Setting a precedent**   When viewing the proposed site in conjunction with the immediately surrounding area, it becomes evident that there are adjacent parcels of land which could lead to further development. Indeed, it can be legitimately inferred that this constitutes an implicit intention on the part of Land & Partners South East Ltd. The applicant`s “Statement of Community Involvement 2018” clearly states “it is considered to be sensible to design this proposal so that it would not prejudice future development in the longer term”. It is evident, therefore, that the current proposal, with its new access to the Hook Norton Road, would set a precedent that would significantly weaken the intended constraints of Cherwell District Council’s Development Plan.
* **Village infrastructure**   We are supportive of the Sibford Ferris response on the issue of village infrastructure in every detail. Although the present extremely limited local amenities are able to meet with current resident requirements, with the level of significantly increased poplution envisaged they would be overwhelmed by the infrastructure requirements of the proposed development,– a level of impact that would be experienced as much in the village of Sibford Gower as in Sibford Ferris. Sibford Gower contains the village surgery, the two churches, the village primary school, the Wykham Arms pub and the village hall – all serving the communities of both Ferris and Gower.  None of these amenities are readily available on foot, the and there is no footpath for dangerous parts of the very steep Burdrop Hill. The only access road itself is narrow, steep and with several blind bends.
* **Additional traffic**   While traffic observations have been conducted at identified peak morning and evening times, this fails to acknowledge traffic movements associated with  the Sibford School at other times, particularly associated with the end of the school day. Any additional traffic will further compromise existing “pinch” points eg adjacent to the shop.
* **Village character**   Although the current proposal identifies a response to the potential built environment, there is no guarantee that any subsequent developer would respect the proposals as they seek to gain full planning permission.  Land & Partners’  application states “all matters reserved for approval”  There are a number of points at which the application leaves open the possibilities for further development - for example, the layout of the internal road layout, including roads that lead only into the adjacent agricultural land area.

But in our view, the use of this terminology in the application by Land and Partners SouthEast Ltd is the most significant because it would have immediate implications for the design and build of the present application, and carries a direct threat to the integrity of the village.  From our understanding of the term ‘all matters reserved’, the development remains open to being changed entirely both in layout and in character in the process of their furthering the application.

Our anticipation  and our greatest concern with this entire application is that, were Land & Partners South East Ltd to be successful in this first stage in gaining outline permission it would leave open the possibility they would be in a position to sell on the site to a home builder having gained outline planning permission.   We are persuaded that there would then be nothing to prevent the  home builder using this clause in the agreement to dilute the design during detail design applications – regardless of any conditions the District Council might place on the development and with no guarantee that the scheme proposed would actually  be built as currently presented by Land and Partners.

Given the sum total of these considerations, we do not believe it to be an exaggeration to conclude the character of the entire area,  a listed area of outstanding natural beauty would be directly threatened by this proposal.  It is our belief that, were Land & Partners South East to gain outline permission at this point, both at District and Parish level the Councils would lose significant control and influence over the character of any consequent build.

**Given our identified concerns, we have to advise that we strongly object to this proposal.**

Kind regards

Vanessa Mulley

Clerk to Sibford Gower Parish Council

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