**3 Sycamore Close – Sibford Gower – Banbury OX15 5SB**

Mr Paul Seckington 29 January 2019

Cherwell District council
Bodicote House
White Post Rd
Bodicote
Banbury
OX154AA

**reference is 18/01894/OUT**

Dear Mr Seckington

I am writing in reference to the above planning application to build a development of 25 homes on the Hook Norton Road in Sibford Ferris. I would be most grateful if you would consider my points below:

**Community Opinions on suitable and sustainable development in a Category A village**

In 2012 the populations of Sibford Gower, Burdrop and Sibford Ferris were asked for their opinions on the suitable development of the villages over the coming years. You will no doubt be aware that the village provided a very clear response to these questions, in which it considered the impact on village life, impact and safety on roads, and the sustainability of amenities available. The survey concluded that 64% of village people were willing to envisage up to ten new houses, 31% up to 20 and only 3% over 20 houses. These responses make it clear that the village has no desire for a large scale development such as this. They also have a particular concern to make housing available to young families and for those with a connection to the village who struggle to afford property here. It is frustrating that the considered opinions of villagers are being disregarded by these developers.

**The development goes against the policy for “Greenfield” sites located beyond the built-up limits of the village**

I believe this developer has been granted authority to develop this site on the basis of 8 houses, which would seem to meet the recognised guidelines for development in a village on this scale. However, the developers are now keen to renegotiate this application to become a larger development (of 25 homes). As stated, this disregards the expressed views of residents of the village and, indeed, exceeds the National Planning Policy Framework (2018) that only supports sustainable development. If this planning is successful, it also sets a dangerous precedent for ours, and similar villages.

**Landscape Impact from both the public rights of way and from far reaching views across the village**

My home is in the lower end of Sibford Gower adjacent to a public footpath, and we have the privilege of wonderful open views from our home and garden that span right across this valley and towards this site. I can’t imagine how our appreciation of this beautiful landscape will be enhanced in the slightest bit by this development. It is a terrible prospect.

**Impact on the Ecology of the area and the local Badger population**

I am also very concerned for the wildlife populations in this area. I am alarmed by the scale of wild animal casualties that I see on the roads, which I imagine is as a result of animals being driven from their homes by pressures on land and its development.

Badgers are a major feature of this village, with established setts all around and in particular very close to this site. I have also seen hares racing across the fields immediately opposite this site. Clearly these populations need areas to express their natural behaviour, forage, hunt and live healthily. We have a responsibility to ensure our wildlife communities continue to thrive here. I hope you are also aware that this land is very close to an Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust nature reserve also off Hook Norton Road (Woodford Bottom and Lambs Pool), and I find it hard to understand how the development of this agricultural land, especially at this scale, supports conserving this ecologically precious environment.

I do hope you will give your full consideration to my objections above, and I look forward to hearing about the outcome of this application.

Yours sincerely

Rachel Levell