

**From:** Sarah Nolan  
**Sent:** 10 November 2019 18:13  
**To:** Caroline Ford <[Caroline.Ford@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk](mailto:Caroline.Ford@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk)>  
**Cc:** Councillor Lynn Pratt <[Lynn.Pratt@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:Lynn.Pratt@cherwell-dc.gov.uk)>  
**Subject:** Re: FW: 19/01036/HYBRID - Exemplar Local Centre

Hi Caroline

Thank you for your email.

Elmsbrook Community Organisation (ECO) would like to submit the following comments with regard to this Application.

This has been taken directly from an email that has been sent to A2Dominion, therefore 'you' refers to A2Dominion.

I have spoken with members of the ECO committee and unfortunately, we are not able to support the current plans for the Community Hub as they stand.

We are fully behind the idea of the Community Hub and Cafe with flexible spaces to support different community groups, events and potential 'Pop Up' shops - and we applaud the recent changes to the planning applications, and the ideas you have generated and shared with us regarding the Community Hub premise so far.

However: we do not support the 16 flats that you propose to build above it. This comes from both wide discussion and polling with residents, and from analysis carried out by the ECO committee of how the Hub would be able to operate.

To begin with, building flats above a community centre is completely unprecedented in Bicester or the surrounding areas. All of the community centres I am aware of are single storey. There may be community centres further afield where this may work but we need to look at what will work here. This has 2 significant impacts:

(1) We have consulted widely with Elmsbrook residents, and the strong feeling is that there would be a significant risk of dividing the demographic within the community, as the 16 flats will be affordable rent housing only. We are trying to build an inclusive community where everyone feels they belong: we wouldn't want any of our residents to feel that their quality of life is less due to the location of their property. The other flats are in blocks of only 4-6, with nothing below them, and they are integrated within residential-only blocks – i.e. maintaining the variety of housing types. There is also the obvious potential for issues to develop over noise and parking between users of the cafe/hub and residents.

(2) For ECO, or whoever else might run the Community Hub, there will be significant costs involved, such as: electricity, water and heating bills; cleaning; routine maintenance; repairing any specific damages; security; equipment; and so on. Without some kind of significant subsidy, the money to pay these costs would have to be earned by Community Hub hosted Events. Day-time events such as Baby/Toddler groups would not be enough: we would need to run many evening events, when people are free to come and thus pay. Having flats above the Community Hub rooms would therefore limit the earning potential, as events would need to be finished by a relatively early time to accommodate the fact that there will no doubt be children living in the flats above.

We have listened to feedback from the community and we have now undertaken two Facebook polls to ask what the Elmsbrook residents would like to see above the Cafe and hub. The overwhelming favourite has been a pub however we have also had other suggestions for shops, a dentist, doctors, a greenhouse to grow vegetables to use/sell in the cafe, offices or simply "Nothing - don't have the additional stories."

These results indicate alignment with what we feel was the original intention of the Local Centre: to provide something more innovative for Elmsbrook, as the Bicester EcoTown's flagship/Exemplar site – i.e. a

showcase which produces long-term appeal, luring future homebuyers to Phases 3-4 and beyond for many years/future A2Dominion Phases – rather than a few more flats which give only a short-term financial benefit, and may cause all of the problems we highlight above.

With regard to running the Community hub: ECO still envisage doing so, however, we would need to work out exactly how this could be achieved before we could commit to doing so. At the moment we have a long list of questions that we really need the answers to first.

As the Community Organisation, we have to support the wishes of the community, and be sensible about the feasibility of our own projects/interests.

Kind regards

Sarah Nolan  
Chair - ECO

On Wed, 23 Oct 2019, 09:56 Caroline Ford, <[Caroline.Ford@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:Caroline.Ford@cherwell-dc.gov.uk)> wrote:

Sarah,

I write to advise you that the application for the Local Centre at Elmsbrook has been amended and is now in a different form – a HYBRID application with full planning permission being sought for part of the development and outline permission sought for another part. The details are available via the Council's website though the public access service. If you have any comments or queries on behalf of the CMO, please do let me know.

Kind regards

Caroline

**Caroline Ford** BA. (Hons) MA MRTPI  
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**From:** Caroline Ford  
**Sent:** 18 June 2019 11:58  
**To:** Sarah Nolan  
**Subject:** 19/01036/F - Exemplar Local Centre

Sarah, Tia,

This is just a short email to advise you – as Chair and Vice Chair of the CMO at Elmsbrook of the receipt of a planning application – 19/01036/F for the Local Centre at Elmsbrook. You can access the details of the application through the Council’s public access service via our website ([www.cherwell.gov.uk](http://www.cherwell.gov.uk)) using this application number. If you have any comments on behalf of the CMO, please do provide these within 21 days from the date of this email.

Kind regards

Caroline

**Caroline Ford** BA. (Hons) MA MRTPI  
**Principal Planning Officer – Major Projects Planning Team**  
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