

## **Sibford Ferris Parish Council response to The Cherwell Local Plan Review**

We commend the Oxfordshire strategic vision to achieve carbon neutral status and to leave the natural environment in a better state than that in which we found it. We support the 5 goals of sustainability put forward in the Oxford 2050 plan.

This report will focus on the rural community response to the local plan review site submissions being put forward for future development around our village.

The Sibford Ferris Parish Council strongly object to all 3 proposed sites being put forward in the local plan review document and any other sites that may be added during the planning review process for the reasons stated below.

We would also like it noted that Sibford Ferris and Sibford Gower have separate Parish councils and our categorisation as a category A village is not a true reflection of our community and its facilities. We expect this to be revised as part of the New Local Plan. (Please see point 5 below.)

### **Point 1 Sustainability**

By reason of the scale and the relative sustainability of all of the proposed areas of land for development in Sibford Ferris, and taking into account the number of dwellings already permitted in Sibford Ferris for 25 new homes on the Hook Norton road, all the proposed sites being put forward as part of the Local Plan review are considered by the community to be unnecessary, disproportionate, undesirable and unsustainable. They would undermine the housing strategy in the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1, which seeks to distribute new housing to the most sustainable locations with regards to public services and facilities, transport and employment. It also undermines the Oxford 2050 policies which focus on the 5 themes of addressing climate change, improving environmental quality, creating strong and healthy communities, planning for sustainable travel and connectivity and creating jobs while providing homes.

#### **References to the Cherwell local plan review document**

P.59 Transport Hierarchy emphasises a need to reduce the need to travel. Private car ownership is the least preferable option.

5.12.8 The transport strategy supporting this plan should consider the location of new development, directing it to areas that minimise the need to travel and support people in meeting their daily needs in the local areas through active travel following the transport hierarchy.

**Local perspective:** Bus services have once again been reduced as of October 25<sup>th</sup> 2021. “ The changes have been made by Warwickshire County Council to meet demands in their area, and as Oxfordshire do not make any financial contribution towards the service our ability to influence these changes is very limited.” Dave Harrison, senior public transport planner.

The bus service has more than halved in recent years and times are not convenient for people trying to get to and from Banbury (7.5 miles) for work. Connecting to Stratford (19.7 miles) is difficult. There are no direct bus services to Hook Norton or Chipping Norton.

The road conditions are bad and roads are so narrow that pavements cannot be provided. There is limited street lighting.

Due to a lack of local facilities and services, the private car is often the only option. Due to steep hills and roads full of potholes cycling is only for the courageous few. The nearest local town is 7.5 miles. There are no A roads connecting to our village.

The number of cars parked on the roads has increased dramatically and pedestrians, including school children are at risk especially during peak times particularly due to a lack of pavements and narrow road where in places it is hard for two cars to pass each other side by side. Parking at the small local shop is becoming more and more difficult.

The private school (Sibford Friends school) has its main entrance for traffic close to the Hook Norton Road development site and traffic will increase dramatically with work vehicles on site from next year.

**When CDC planning committee visited our village with reference to the Hook Norton road development they saw first hand the traffic and parking issues and unanimously objected to the development.**

We would like a traffic planner to come and see peak traffic during school times combined with work traffic of heavy vehicles while constructing 25 new homes. Then following the completion of this site, how the number of cars (potentially up to 50 cars) driving in and out of the entrance near the school impacts the traffic.

In the Local Plan Review document on page 101, 7.1.1 it says,

“ Your comments will help us to consider what policies we need for the future. We will examine, in particular, how necessary policy objectives from the local 1996 plan might be streamlined and incorporated into a new suite of strategic and non-strategic policies to guide decision-making.”

In Policy TR7 of the “saved” policies of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996 it states:

“Development that would regularly attract large numbers of cars onto unsuitable minor roads will not normally be permitted.”

We strongly urge that a new clear policy on how the impact of excessive traffic is assessed in rural areas where development is being proposed. **This policy needs to be revised and legally defined to protect small villages on unsuitable minor roads to be protected from speculative developments that have little regard inappropriate and excessive traffic and the impact that has on the community physically, mentally and emotionally.**

**Option 32** Developing a rural settlement hierarchy. Giving additional weight to the accessibility of the settlement to our urban centres by public transport, walking and cycling.

**Local perspective:** Travel is not sustainable and job opportunities severely limited, if any at all. Air quality and noise pollution due to the large number of privately owned cars is already impacting the village and will be made worse by the construction and work vehicles for the major development being constructed from 2022 by Gade homes on the Hook Norton road site.

## **Point 2 Development on high quality agricultural land versus Urban development**

**Local perspective:** All of the sites being put forward are on excellent agricultural land located with far reaching views close to the AONB. This land should be protected and preserved for agricultural purposes. The historic character of the area and its historic sensitivity should be protected.

Any further development would have further negative visual impact on the rural character and appearance of the locality and cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area, open rural countryside and rural edge of village setting, failing to reinforce local distinctiveness.

The chart below is found on page 18 of the Cherwell local plan review document (community involvement paper 2: Developing our options.)

**WE NOTE THAT A TOTAL OF 8,293 HOMES AT PRESENT STILL NEED TO BE DELIVERED IN BICESTER, BANBURY AND UPPER HEYFORD YET RURAL AREAS ON GOOD AGRICULTURAL LAND HAVE LARGELY BEEN DELIVERED.**

We support development that is in urban areas on brown field sites. Adding more good agricultural land will not encourage developers to complete urban developments. Developers will deliver on speculative rural developments as noted in 6.6.7 of your document. **“As such, most of the developments have come forward via the market as speculative developments. This means that it has been more challenging to co ordinate infrastructure improvements and supporting services.”**  
THIS IS THE CASE IN SIBFORD FERRIS.

Table 1: Homes Planned and Delivered			
	Planned for (2011- 2031)	Delivered (2011-2021)	Homes with Permission (allocated sites only) at 31 March 2021
Bicester	10,129 (44%)	2,879	5,579
Banbury	7, 139 (32%)	3,612	1,536
Upper Heyford	2,361 (10%)	674	1,178
Rural Areas	3,031 (13%)	2,641	n/a <sup>3</sup>

We support Option 30: Housing in rural areas

1. Limit development in the rural areas to that required to meet local needs.

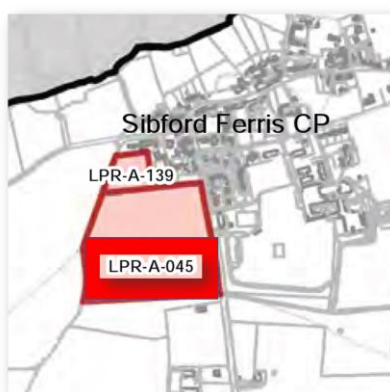
**Local Perspective.** The population is only 470 in Sibford Ferris. We would like to question how active applications on the housing register with preferences to living in Sibford Ferris are used to determine local needs?

Local needs in Sibford Ferris have already been exceeded with Gade homes building 25 new homes with 9 affordable, shared ownership, housing association properties.

We would like to question why Homes with permission at 31 March 2021 in rural areas are N/A on the above chart?

**Point 3 Infrastructure** The proposed development LPR-A-045 seeks to extend already approved development of 25 homes into the other half of the field. This would easily double the size of the existing development. Our infrastructure is already at its limit and we do not yet know how it will cope with this approved major development. It is

also an extension beyond the built limits of the village on a Greenfield site and in an



area of excellent agricultural land.

Local facilities in Sibford Ferris are limited to a small village shop and post office. Facilities cannot easily be expanded and due to high traffic are relatively inaccessible to the elderly and to children who are at risk when walking on the Main street (the only street) due to lack of footpaths.

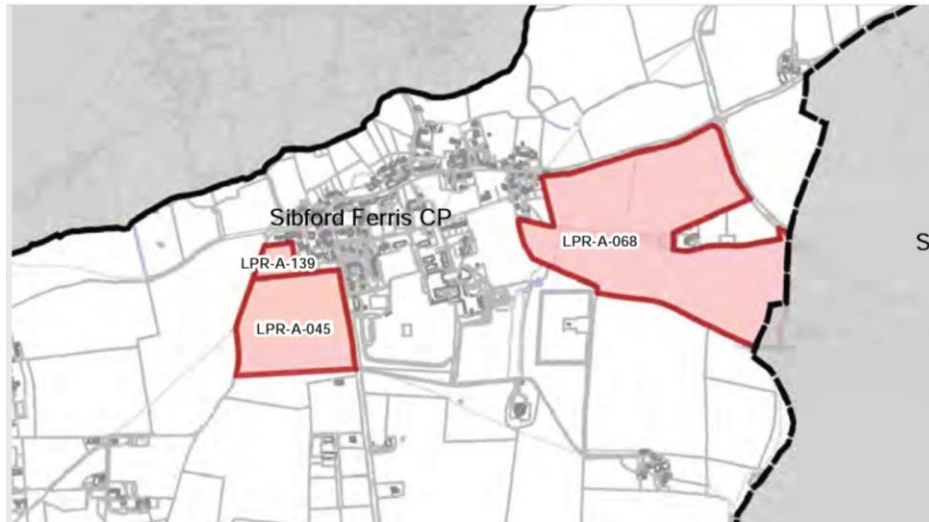
The sewage, water and power are aged and have had issues coping with current volumes in recent years.

The ability of the foul and waste water system to handle an increase in volume could impact the service provided to all residents. Our sewer is located in a steep valley, which cannot easily be accessed by large vehicles, especially in wet weather.

#### **Point 4.**

**LPR-A-068** is totally disproportionate in relation to the size of our village and for all the points mentioned above should not be included in the next local plan as a potential site.

**LPR-A-139** was included on the previous plan, however, we propose that it is removed from the local plan and allocated as a Green space for the community. Cherwell Planning committee recently opposed the development on the Hook Norton road unanimously with full understanding on the implications for our village. Now that the 25 new homes are going ahead in the top corner of the site LPR-A-045, We strongly urge the Council to take LPR-A-139 off the Cherwell local plan to protect it from further speculative development and thus increasing the traffic and sustainability issues already sited above.



### Point 5. Village classification

Cherwell local plan review 6.6.8

As a way of directing growth to the more sustainable villages, previous local plans have used a village classification system based on the level of services and facilities available in individual settlements at the time.

**Sibford Ferris and Sibford Gower wish to seek reclassification to two separate villages regarding planning status.** We have separate Parish councils and the community is separated by 1 mile and a steep valley, narrow and in parts without pavements. The classification as a category A village is not appropriate and the facilities and job opportunities are severely limited.

In his recent report, the Planning Inspector commenting on the Appeal case for the Hook Norton road development stated,

“Given the spread of services across each settlement it is unlikely that the development of any site around the Sibfords would readily enable access by sustainable transport modes. This is an argument against the inclusion of the Sibfords as a Category A village but is not a matter before me in this Appeal.”

Our categorisation as a Category A village is not a true reflection of our community and its facilities. We expect this to be revised as part of the New Local Plan. Thank you.

Sibford Ferris Parish Council Response  
Thursday, 14 October 21

