

Sibford Ferris Parish Council

Response to Question 11 of CDC Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review

1. Sibford Ferris is a village with around 140 dwellings within its main curtilage. A large section of the village lies within a conservation area. The village is close to an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Two sites in the village have been put forward for the purpose of the Partial Review with the presumption that each could hold upwards of 100 houses (PR46 and PR66).

2. It is the belief of the parish council that the village infrastructure is not sufficiently robust to sustain any kind of significant development, with particular reference to:

- The size and nature of the roads in and around the village which already cause traffic flow problems, especially at the various “pinch points” and where those with no off-road facilities park alongside verges and kerbs;
- The pressure on the roads from existing traffic levels particularly at busy periods;
- The safety of pedestrians from increased traffic levels associated with additional housing here and in neighbouring villages on roads not sufficiently wide to add footpaths;
- The ability of the ageing sewerage system to sustain increased levels of demand (the sewerage system has failed on several occasions in the past decade).

3. The parish council contends that all of the constraints identified by the District Council in the Partial Review that relate to Option I: *Remainder of District/Rural Dispersal* apply to Sibford Ferris:

- *Availability of infrastructure*: see above;
- *Rural road network*: approach from Banbury is via three villages for whom traffic throughput is already a huge issue;
- *Rural character*: Sibford Ferris has approximately 140 dwellings surrounded by landscape of exceptional amenity value; it has grown mainly in small increments meaning that there is a variety of house styles but there is a core vernacular uniting the whole;
- *Relationship to existing villages*: Sibford Ferris’s immediately neighbouring village is Sibford Gower, reached along a narrow, twisting road down and up a steep-sided valley;
- *Mostly lack of immediate relationship to Oxford*: Sibford Ferris is 26 miles from Oxford and has no sustainable transport links to the city;
- *Impact on countryside*: a development of 100 or so homes would inevitably impact on the countryside and disturb the rural nature of the area.

4. The parish council would like to point out that housing in Sibford Ferris would not comply with the Draft Vision set out in the Partial Review (at para 5.7) with respect to ensuring “that people have convenient, affordable and sustainable travel opportunities to the city’s places of work, study and recreation and to its services and facilities”.

5. The parish council has noted the submissions of agents for the two sites put forward in the Partial Review and would like to make corrections to or comments on some of the statements as follows:

a) LP2 A113 Brown & Co Land at Folly Farm

- “*The village has a good range of facilities, including a school, shop, church, public transport links to Banbury*”. Correction: Sibford Ferris has a private school and no church; the public transport links are limited.

- *Current use of Site: “Pasture”.* Correction: current use is arable.
- *Planning history: “None”.* Comment: while factual, it may be relevant to note that a 2003 application for a new access road on the residential property which is enclosed on three sides by the proposed site (03/00716/F) was refused on the grounds it would have a “detrimental impact on the visual amenities and rural character of the area”.
- *What are the surrounding land uses? “Housing to the west.”* Correction: this ignores the residential property situated in the centre of the submitted site and the one on its eastern boundary.
- *Site is of amenity value: “N/A”.* Correction: the site contains both a public footpath and bridleway, which are well used.
- *Conservation area: “N/A”.* Comment: the site is directly adjacent to the conservation area.
- *Listed building: “N/A”.* Correction: the site is adjacent to a Grade II listed cottage.
- *Access to the site (vehicle and pedestrian access): “Safe access available”.* Comment: pre-application advice on a proposal for housing behind the listed cottage advised an application would be refused.

b) PR A 125 Fisher German LLP – Land West of Hook Norton Road

- *“Site is poor in biodiversity with no protected creatures found/known on the site.”* Correction: there are badger setts along the southern hedge boundary.
- *“Previous proposals for the site have been conducted in close liaison with Sibford Ferris Parish Council.”* Comment: previous proposals for the site were for a small number of mainly affordable homes on a Rural Exception Site and support for this scheme should not be taken as indication of support for inclusion of this land in the Partial Review.
- *“Sibford Ferris is a popular village with a range of local amenities including a primary and secondary day and boarding school, small supermarket, post office and general store.”* Clarification: within Sibford Ferris there is a private, fee-paying school which takes pupils from 3 to 18 years. The village has one small shop with a post-office counter.
- *“There is a pedestrian footpath on the western side of Woodway Road and also to the eastern side of Hook Norton Road.”* Correction: there is a short, isolated, section of pedestrian footway on the northern side of Woodway Road.
- *“Sibford Ferris is a Category A village.”* Correction: this parish council understands that for purposes of the Partial Review parishes are being considered as separate entities; Sibford Ferris on its own would not have the amenities to be a Category A village.
- *“Site is well located to services and facilities. The Sibford School is located adjacent to the site.”* Comment: Sibford School is fee paying.
- *“Sibford Ferris also has regular bus services to the wider district and Oxford.”* Correction: there are only four buses each way (not Sundays) between Stratford-on-Avon and Banbury, not to Oxford and the last bus leaves Banbury at 5.22pm.
- *“The site is adjacent to a highly sustainable settlement with good transport links and a strong local economy.”* Correction: see comment above on the bus service.
- *“The site does not indicate that there will be any significant adverse effects to heritage, wildlife, ecology, landscape, transport or highways or flooding.”* Comment: see comments about badger setts, landscape and highways, above.

6. The parish council would like to affirm that it is not taking a reactionary stance on the question of housing, as illustrated in the 2012 Sibfords Community Plan, which sets out a vision of 10-20 additional houses for the two parishes in the next 20 years, and also by its support for a small affordable housing scheme.