

Caversfield Parish Council Response to the Local Plan Part II Consultation

Q. 90 - Updating Village Survey Information

A Is the survey information for your village accurate? (If not, please provide details of the current position)

Caversfield is a Category C village. The Village Survey (page 153) identifies that Caversfield has recreational facilities, but this is not the case (see below).

B Do you consider the existing facilities for open space, sport and recreation to be adequate? (If not, please provide details)

The existing facilities for open space etc are not adequate.

Currently, open space, recreation and dog walking area is provided by the glider overshoot area and the recreation field and play equipment leased by the MOD for use by American military personnel. However, this use could be withdrawn at any time for security or other reasons. Such "grace and favour" use is almost certainly not covered by insurance should a non-military family member sustain an injury.

Other green areas in the village are owned by a developer (Hodge), which have been allowed to grow wild and have been fenced off for many years. Several applications for housing development have been refused in the past. Unfortunately the owners have refused to engage with the PC and CDC – for example regarding derelict garages which pose an asbestos hazard and with a request for help with the provision of allotments. The PC would like to see these areas formally designated for recreation or allotment use and would appreciate help with obtaining the necessary agreements.

The Parish Council owns and maintains one small area of grass and trees in Old School Close.

C Are you aware of any problems with infrastructure provision? If so, please provide details.

Traffic has been an issue but it is hoped that road works planned in connection with the eco town should alleviate most problems. Skimmingdish Lane and Thompson Drive both suffer from "rat running" at busy times.

The entrance to Bicester Heritage is very close to the A4421 and ring road roundabout which is becoming more of a safety hazard.

The temporary entrance to Bicester airfield opposite Thompson Drive off the A4421 to provide temporary parking for Bicester Village is not acceptable as there is no turning lane. Villagers hope that the use of this site for Bicester village overflow parking will cease once Bicester Village has extended onto the Tesco site at Pingle Drive.

The water and sewerage system is very limited with low, verging on unacceptable, water pressure, particularly at the northern end of the village in the Springfield Road / Fairhaven Road / Woodcote Road / Elderfield Road area (also known as 'The Rowans').

The Broadband provision within the village is limited. Whilst some areas (ironically those with poor water / sewerage provision) have access to fibre broadband, other areas including the Brashfield Park area, the Brashfield House area and many of the properties on Fringford Road south of Skimmingdish Lane have exceptionally poor provision with no possibility, at present, of a fibre service.

With the development of the houses on the eco town, it is understood that St Laurence's Church may be used as a meeting place. The Church will require substantial modernisation and also a safe pedestrian crossing point across the B4100.

Q. 91 - Allocation of sites

Are there any sites which you consider suitable for development? If so, for what use?

As a Category C village, Caversfield should be exempt from this exercise.

The Planning Inspector ruled against the Cala Homes proposal for 200 homes off the Fringford Road to the north of Aunt Em's Lane on sustainability grounds in May 2014.

Caversfield is adjacent to the proposed Eco development at North West Bicester. Any further development in Caversfield would undermine the development of the eco town. It is also the case that the City and Country development of the former RAF domestic site as the Garden Quarter has significantly increased the size of the village by approximately 190 housing units.

It is worth noting that the building designated by City and Country for a shop/cafe attracted no interest despite extensive advertising. Planning permission has subsequently been granted for a change to residential use.

Q. 92 - Identifying where development would be inappropriate

A Are there local features or areas that you consider to be of particular value to the community? (If so, please provide details)

B Do you consider that there are valued landscapes and /or areas of environmental or historic significance that merit protection from development? If so, please give details.

To preserve the integrity of the village of Caversfield it is essential that the green buffer zone between Bicester and Caversfield, and Caversfield and the eco town, be maintained. In fact, the Boundary Commission has recognised Caversfield's importance as a village in its own right with the re-naming of the electoral ward to include the name of the village.

Areas of environmental and historic significance are St Laurence's Church (which dates from Saxon times), Brashfield House (Grade 2 listed), Caversfield House and its grounds and the whole of the City and Country Garden Quarter development, with no further infilling beyond what is already planned allowed.

Q. 93 Settlement boundaries

A Do you think we should define settlement boundaries, beyond which development would not normally be permitted?

Yes. The Parish Council agrees that these should be defined to prevent unplanned ribbon development. On the A4421, no further development should be allowed beyond Brashfield House (Stratton Audley turn).

On the Fringford Road, nothing beyond Springfield Road to the north and no further additional development beyond Skimmingdish Lane to the south.

The HB Timber Yard on the edge of Caversfield off the A4421, opposite the Stratton Audley Turn is an unsightly facility with a long history of noise, nuisance and enforcement problems. Due to the large number of accidents over many years at this junction on the A4421 the Parish Council does not feel that this site should be developed.

Q94 - Retail Development in the rural areas

A Should the Local Plan Part 2 contain a policy on retail development in the rural areas? What kinds of issues should such a policy cover?

The Parish Council does not feel that retail development should be encouraged in the rural areas around Bicester due to existing traffic problems on all sides of the town. It would be preferable for Cherwell to direct its energies on trying to ensure

that Bicester town becomes a more vibrant and viable shopping and recreational area with more integration between Bicester Village and Bicester town centre.

Q. 95 - Infrastructure issues

To avoid future problems there should be a presumption against any development in areas of flood plain.

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