

14 Stirling Way
Moreton-in-Marsh
Gloucestershire
GL56 0GS
www.ocplanning.co.uk

OXFORD & COUNTRY
• P L A N N I N G •

Office: 01608 652775

Mobile: 07435 446072

Email: mike.robinson@ocplanning.co.uk

Planning Policy Team
Cherwell District Council
Bodicote House
Bodicote
Banbury
OX15 4AA

9th November 2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Response to the Cherwell Local Plan Review Community Involvement Paper 2:
Developing our Options Consultation**

Sites at Caversfield – land north of Rau Court, land south of Springfield Road and three smaller land parcels in Caversfield

Oxford & Country Planning act on behalf of Mewslade (Eastern) Limited owners of the above sites in Caversfield. This representation along with the attached site submission form and associated plan forms my client's response to the consultation on the Options Consultation Paper of the District Council's Local Plan Review.

Our client owns around 4.5 hectares of vacant land within the built-up area of Caversfield, comprised of two larger parcels of land and three smaller incidental plots (see attached plan).

Caversfield is a village of around 2,200 people (about 1,000 households) located on the northern edge of Bicester. The market town of Bicester has grown rapidly in recent years and further significant growth is planned. This has delivered strategic levels of new housing and employment as well as investment in the town centre. Caversfield, in contrast, has seen little by the way of new development and consequentially little improvement to its local services and facilities.

The Parish Profile notes that open space is very limited in the village. This is reflected in a previous response from the Parish Council to the consultation on the Local Plan Part 2, stating that *the existing facilities for open space etc are not adequate*. The Parish Council also noted that they would like to see some of the areas owned by our client designated as recreation or allotment use.

It is noted within the Options Consultation that the Council will need to consider whether it is appropriate to allocate further areas for housing and employment Bicester and if so, where should this be identified (Option 22). Given its close proximity to Bicester and excellent public transport connections, our client considers that there is an opportunity for a modest scale new residential development at Caversfield.

The key benefits are summarised as follows -

- All sites are within the built-up area of Caversfield thereby avoiding new urban extensions into the open countryside.
- Opportunity to provide much needed formal areas of public open space, recreational land and allotments.
- Opportunity to deliver high quality new housing for the village, including affordable homes.
- Opportunity to enhance the local environment, including the removal of derelict garage courts.
- All sites have good access and well related to sustainable transport connections

Whilst no detailed plans have been prepared at this stage, our client's consider the individual sites could potentially be developed as follows:

Land north of Rau Court (approx. 2.9 hectares)

The site is surrounded on three sides by existing residential development. The northern side adjoins the RAF Bicester Conservation Area. The site is generally overgrown and contains a number of trees on the southern and western boundaries which are covered by a woodland TPO.

Accounting for the part of the site covered by trees, the net developable area is about 2.4 hectares which could accommodate around 85 new residential dwellings based on an average site density of 35 dph. Access can be achieved via Rau Court and/or via Woodcote Road (through Site 3 on attached plan).

The development would sit entirely within the built-up area of the village and could be readily designed to integrate with the existing surrounding residential character.

A suitable mix of housing types and tenures could be developed to meet local needs and those of the wider area.

Land south of Springfield Road (approx. 1.4 hectares)

The site comprises an open area of land at the western end of the village adjacent to Springfield Road. It is currently not available for authorised or formal public use. The area is residential in character being surrounded on three sides existing housing, with the Fringford Road forming the western boundary, with the countryside edge beyond. Along this boundary is a well established hedge which screen views of the site. A group of trees in the north eastern corner are the subject of a TPO.

The proposal for this area envisages a more limited development of around 15 new residential dwellings located in the south and eastern parts of the site which would help frame a significant area (around 1 hectare/2.5 acres) of public open space. This site therefore presents an excellent opportunity to meet the identified need for open space in the village and create a focal point for the local community.

Smaller sites (Numbered 1, 2 & 3 on attached plan)

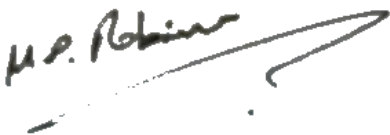
These three smaller parcels of land comprise two redundant garage courts, one off Springfield Road (Site 1), the other off Woodcote Road (Site 2) and a small parcel of open ground also off Woodcote Road (Site 3). The latter site could form an access into the land north of Rau Court and/or be left as incidental open space. The other two sites could be made available to the village for recreation or allotment use.

To conclude, my client considers that the Local Plan Review should identify their land holdings in Caversfield for residential development of about 100 new homes. With around 1,000 existing houses in Caversfield, this would represent a modest increase of about 10%. This would help provide much needed market and affordable housing for the village as well as the wider Bicester area. These houses would be delivered within the existing built-up part of the village and relatively quickly in comparison larger greenfield strategic sites.

Well-designed housing would integrate well with the existing pattern of surrounding development and offer potential local enhancements. All sites benefit from excellent connections to the public transport network.

The proposals offer the real opportunity to provide significant areas of new public open space, recreation land and allotments which are lacking in the village. Our client hopes that the District and Parish Councils recognise the potential benefits that the development could bring to Caversfield. We have copied this response to the Parish Council for their information.

Our client wishes to be notified of any updates or future consultations on the Local Plan Review in due course.



Mike Robinson BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

Director

Office: 01608 652775

Mobile: 07435 446072

Email: mike.robinson@ocplanning.co.uk

Web: www.ocplanning.co.uk



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Cc – Mrs Jane Olds, Clerk to Caversfield Parish Council