

Planning Appeal by Gladman, Land off Peppard Road

Helen Lambert, Chair of Caversham and District Residents Association since 2005, local resident since 1985.

I would like to highlight the distinction between the theory and formalities and the practice on the ground.

1. Formally the land in question sits within South Oxfordshire. However, the Appellant has maintained from the earliest stage that it forms a natural extension to Emmer Green. In reality, it would look mainly to Reading for its services. Residents, along with the existing population of Sonning Common and Emmer Green are most likely to travel towards Reading and beyond for employment.
2. The Appellant has been at pains to argue that it would contribute towards housing need for Oxford city. In reality, it is a long distance from the employment growth areas in the Oxford-Cambridge corridor. It is not, “close to where the economic potential will be delivered”. It does not provide, “the right homes in the right places.” While some might argue that it ticks a box, it would be against the spirit of government policy.
3. It does not fulfil a housing need for Reading. Rather, this proposed greenfield development risks undermining the NPG compliant focus on brownfield sites. Reading Borough Council have made clear their opposition to the development and its wider consequences.
4. Separated from existing settlements in South Oxfordshire and at a distance from main centres, it is less sustainable for provision of South Oxfordshire services – one of the many reasons that development on the Reading border was rejected earlier.
5. As has been made clear by others, the primary health services in Caversham and Emmer Green are under huge pressures since the closure of Priory Avenue Surgery which served 6,000 patients. The two major surgeries are already struggling to provide a service to existing

residents and South Oxfordshire practices have also had to absorb additional numbers of patients.

6. Reading have made clear that there is no capacity for primary school places and the available spaces in South Oxfordshire will include schools such as Shiplake which might take an hour to reach without a car – hardly a satisfactory position for new residents including those in affordable housing. For the many families where employment is towards Reading and children's schools in the opposite direction, public transport cannot be a viable option. These pressures would seriously affect the quality of life for new residents.
7. Some may argue that the development is sustainable in transport terms with some additional funding for bus services for three years. The reality is very different. It is unlikely that the new housing will be completed within three years. The local bus service reduces from next week (3 September 2018). The limited routes and limited frequency do not allow residents to go about their daily lives, thus forcing more cars on to the road.
8. The roads leading through Caversham towards the two bridges have limited capacity, as do the bridges themselves. Congestion – particularly at peak times – is a constant problem. This restricts the ability to run a reliable public transport alternative. It causes high levels of pollution, well above the EU limits. Without major new infrastructure, the cumulative impact of new development is not capable of mitigation.
9. This is a speculative unplanned development without the necessary infrastructure and services. It is not sustainable. It does not fulfil a genuine housing need. We ask you to hear the heartfelt concerns of the local community and refuse the appeal.

31 August 2018