

Greater Cambridge Share Planning Service

By Online Planning Register

15/05/2023

Dear Katie

Response to 23/01448/OUT: A hybrid planning application for the construction of an Integrated Retirement Community (IRC) of up to 200 extra care units (Use Class C2) with ancillary communal and care facilities and green space at Branch Road, Comberton.

Cambridge Past, Present & Future is Cambridge's largest civic society. We are a charity run by local people who are passionate about where they live. We operate in the greater Cambridge area and working with our members, supporters and volunteers we:

- Are dedicated to protecting and enhancing the green setting of Cambridge for people and nature.
- Care about Cambridge and are an independent voice for quality of life in the strategic planning of Greater Cambridge.
- Are working to protect, celebrate and improve the important built heritage of the Cambridge area.
- Own and care for green spaces and historic buildings in and around the city for people and nature, including Wandlebury Country Park, Coton Countryside Reserve, Cambridge Leper Chapel & Barnwell Meadows, Bourn Windmill and Hinxton Watermill.

Cambridge Past, Present & Future object to the application on the grounds that new building in the Green Belt is regarded as inappropriate and we do not consider that there are any special circumstances to warrant allowing the development.

The proposed development does not meet any of the exceptions listed in paragraph 149 or 150 of the NPPF.

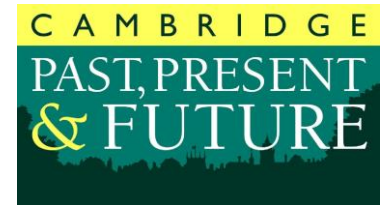
The Planning Statement argues a number of reasons why very special circumstances exist to warrant allowing development in the green belt. CPPF does not agree with these reasons, as set out below.

Harm to the wider purposes of the Green Belt

The built form of Comberton is in two areas. One, centred on the South Road/Barton Road crossroads and the other west of Long Road. There is a finger of Green Belt extending between the two. This development will narrow the gap between Green End and the housing to the east (The Valley) leading to coalescence of parts of the village. This is contrary to the fundamental aim of the green belt to keep land open.

Other suitable sites to meet extra care needs / meeting unmet needs

The Councils' adopted Local Plans and emerging Local Plan is based on a development strategy of directing development to strategic 'new settlement' sites. These sites are prime locations for extra



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care housing in order to deliver mixed and well-balanced communities. These locations should be considered prior to overriding national policy and developing in the Green Belt.

Freeing up housing stock

The Councils jointly have 6.2 years of housing land supply for the 2023 -2028 five-year period. There is therefore no need for the Council to override national policy to increase the housing stock. Furthermore, there is no guarantee that residents to the IRC will already live locally and free up housing locally.

Public use of facilities

It is unclear the degree to which the facilities being provided for the residents of IRC will be made available to residents from Comberton and other villages. Comberton already has a reasonable range of services and is identified in the local plan as providing services and facilities for a small rural hinterland and is classified as a Minor Rural Centre. There is therefore no need to override national policy to provide additional services.

Economic benefits

Unemployment in South Cambridgeshire is below national and regional average. There is no need for the Council to override national policy to create jobs. Employers often find it difficult to employ care workers as the pay is below average and the cost of living in and around Cambridge is high.

Green Infrastructure and BNG

Provision includes an area of grassland and an area of orchard and allotments. This does not constitute a country park. No significant green infrastructure is therefore being provided which can be considered a special circumstance.

CPPF therefore consider that the application should be refused as being contrary to national policy and Local Plan policy S/4.

I trust that you will take our comments into consideration.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Nicholas

Principal Planning Officer