

John Howell MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear John,

I am writing regarding the planning application P21/S5321/O from Beechcroft Developments Ltd for over fifty new homes in Chinnor. The application and the actions of the developer raises several issues regarding local planning.

It appears that the developer is using a loop hole for provisioning which permits development for age restricted (for people aged 55 or over). I understand that the applicant is asking the Planning Inspectorate to approve the plan and believe that, in the current environment, the Inspectorate is likely to accede to this request.

There are a number of points here:

- The loophole allows the developer to circumvent Chinnor's recently agreed Neighbourhood Plan. Clearly had the authors of the Plan (and indeed the wider community) felt the need for age restricted residences on this site they would have included it and the community would have approved that Plan. You may be aware that a site was allocated on the Old Kiln Lakes Community for elderly provision some years ago, but to date, no developer has taken the opportunity offered there;
- The application is also counter to South Oxfordshire's Local Plan which focuses on larger scale development in a number of agreed areas;
- Many of the points made by the Planning Inspector when refusing an application for residences on the same site, and those made by individuals and organisations at the time, still stand. Most relevant of these is the statement from Thames Water advising that the sewerage system cannot cope with the existing level, let alone additional flow (you may be aware that this is very much a current problem with some residents suffering flooding of raw sewerage into their gardens);
- There is a clear disconnect between building planning and planning for the related infrastructure. Villages such as Chinnor have been permitted to double in size without consideration of the impact on local health services and schools or the required improvement to infrastructure (roads, utilities and public transport);
- The threshold for age restricted developments has not kept pace with the changes to the State Pension age.

I should welcome your thoughts on these points. The use of a loophole particularly concerns me as we are nearing the completion of our own Neighbourhood Plan. If applications such as this circumvent local plans and are permitted by the Planning Inspectorate (an unelected bureaucrat), it rather flies in the face of the Conservative Party's mantra of putting planning in the control of local people.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Tinson
Chairman, Aston Rowant Parish Council