



Parish Council Public Meeting Regarding Retirement Village Planning Application

May 2023



Agenda

Introduction and objectives

Process

Application Overview

Areas of Concern

- Medical
- Size and Location
- Green Belt
- Integration
- Ecology
- Drainage/sewage
- Road, transport



Introduction

Outline what the Parish Council is doing

To summarise the application to develop the land between Branch Road and Recreation Ground

Help to inform residents

Explain what residents can do

Gain residents feedback

Next steps



Parish Council

- Your representatives from Comberton
- Different to South Cambs District Council
- Can support or object to a planning application but do not make any decisions on it

We want to gain your feedback and ensure that you have information available

We will put together our concerns and objection, with evidence from the application and local residents

Thank you to everyone who has helped

Process

We are here



Application submitted

Public comments

Parish Council comments

Organisations comments

SCDC Decide

Approve

Reject

Appeal Central Government

Approve

Reject





How you can respond

Your comments matter - number of responses impact decision making

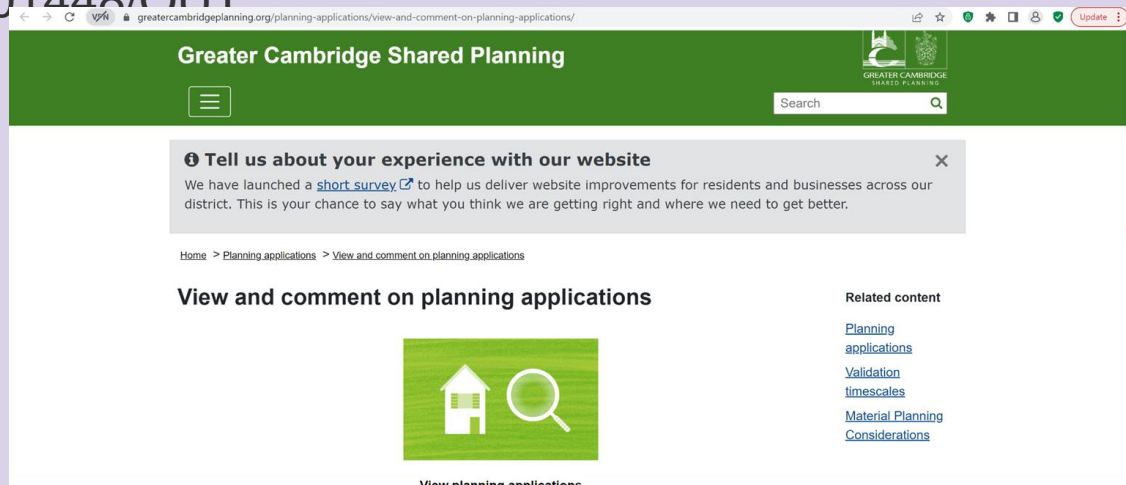
Online

If you need help; Comberton Library has online access.

- Greater Cambridge Shared Planning website
- Search Branch Road or 23/01448/01 IT
- Comments
- Make a Comment
- Short registration.

Can also write to our MP,

Anthony Browne



Proposal



200 apartments and houses,

Integrated Retirement Village facilities

For people with a care need and aged over 55

New access road from Branch Road

Drainage Pond

Keeps permissive path

Location



Site overview



View from Normandy Close





Points of Concern

Medical



Comberton & Eversden Surgery

Serves Comberton and surrounding villages

Patient numbers increasing every year, now at capacity, although providing more GP appointments than many similar sized Practices.

No physical room to extend the surgery

Requirements of these 300-400 new patients are likely to be higher than average due to age and care needs

Affordability of Retirement Properties means that most people will not be existing Comberton residents



Medical

Application includes medical rooms - not suitable for use by Comberton Surgery

Medical Standard of rooms not adequate

Not suitable for staff to leave surgery

Maintenance of rooms

No safe walking route to the surgery or sufficient car parking at Comberton Surgery

No pharmacy provision in Retirement Village

Site has no good link to Addenbrookes

Dentist has not been able to take on new NHS patients for several years



Points of Concern

Size and Location



Size of development

This will increase Comberton size by 20%

Comberton already has a larger than average population over 65 (25% vs 18% nationally)



Design of buildings

Clubhouse - 15m (50 foot) tall, 70m long. As wide as a 3-lane motorway. Situated right next to Jubilee Woods

Apartments - 3 (15m) and 2 storeys

Neighbouring houses are no more than 8m tall

Mix of Apartments and houses, in clusters.

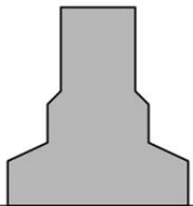
Garden areas

Design and Access Statement Part 1, Page 6,





Note: Existing buildings based on visual survey only



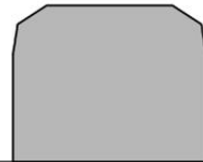
St Mary's Church



Comberton Village College
Sports and Arts



3 storey
new build in
Comberton



3 storey farmhouse,
St Mary's conservation area



Toft Toft



Location

Nationally, there is a shortage of supported homes, assisted living and retirement (downsize) properties.

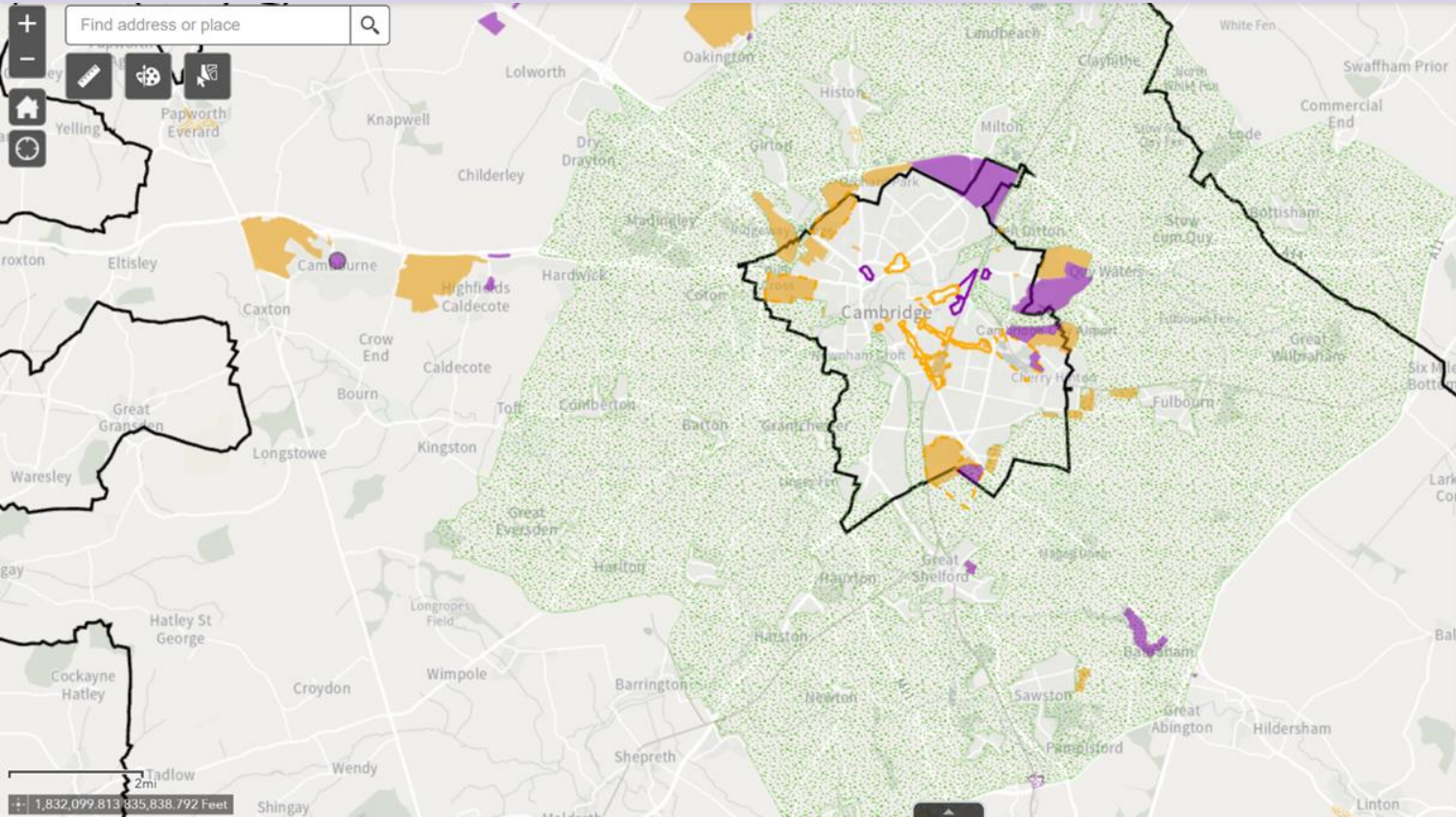
Within South Cambs, estimate is for need of further 289 Care Units¹

The Local Plan² shows existing allocations for residential building in the area, including at Bourn Airfield (5 miles away), Cambourne, Northstowe, Waterbeach and North East Cambridge.

1 South Cambs District Demands Profiles for Older People's Accommodation 2021-2036

2 Greater Cambridge Local Plan 2023

Local Plan



Legend

Greater Cambridge Local Plan - First Proposals Consultation data

Site allocations - November 2021

- Proposed new allocation
- Existing allocation

Expansion Of Cambourne - sites not yet defined

Area of Major Change - November 2021

Opportunity Area - November 2021

- Proposed new Opportunity Area
- Existing Opportunity Area

Policy Area - November 2021

- Proposed new Policy Area
- Existing Policy Area

Cambridge Green Belt

Cambridge Green Belt

Administrative Boundaries

City and District Council Boundaries



Location

Alternative sites will have more amenities, better access

Comberton very poorly served by public transport

Comberton already supports county facility - a large secondary school



Points of Concern

Green Belt



Green Belt Land

Purpose of Green Belt is to prevent loss of openness and to prevent encroachment into countryside

Can only be built on in exceptional circumstances. Developers need to prove that;

- There is a need for this type and scale of housing
- There is no suitable non-green belt land available
- There is no more suitable green belt land

And that this need outweighs the harm to

- Openness
- The existing wildlife
- Negative effects to existing community, infrastructure



Rural Openness

Key characteristic of Green Belt Land is the Rural Openness.

Loss of this to

- Recreation Ground Users
- Properties overlooking the site
- People residing in new development

Landscape of the rural village and recreation ground would become urban



Comberton Green Lungs

The importance of the Green Lungs of the village is in Comberton Village Design Guide (2012) and importance emphasised since the building of the estate to the East of the village in the 1970s

Sense of green space lost from recreation ground and the value of the green lung

Recreation extension and Jubilee Woods were bought and created by the Parish Council for the village.



Points of Concern

Integration to Comberton



Integration with Comberton

Comberton has a strong village community and we always welcome people

We want to ensure that future residents would be and consider themselves part of our village and avoid a gated community feel

Want to ensure that our village meets the needs of everyone

The developer should show how this can be achieved:

- Recreation
- Sports
- Clubs



Recreation within development

Swimming pool & gym (Comberton members only, over 55)

Croquet

Allotments (no detail)

Garden areas

Shared lawns (no detail on how Comberton can use)

Meeting rooms and fitness space (eg yoga, Comberton residents can join classes)

Cafe (open to all...)



Recreation not provided for

Comberton PC knows that residents of this age group enjoy lots of recreational activities

Bowls, walking, cricket, tennis, taking grandchildren to the park

Cinema nights, indoor bowls, twinning society, WI, amateur dramatics, book clubs, volunteering

Application does not provide for these on site, nor explain how existing facilities within Comberton can accommodate a large number of new members or users.



Examples from other villages for Integration

Contribution to or full provision of facilities for sports, cafes, dance, clubs, toilets

Support and upgrades to existing clubs (bowls, cricket)

Depending on Integration need, funding is allocated as part of a Section 106 agreement.



Points of Concern

Ecology



Important Biodiversity Area

The development site is important for wildlife

Part of a network of green spaces and corridors that connect across the village and outside to SSSIs (site of special scientific interest)

Dark sky area

St Mary's Churchyard Ecology Report (2022) demonstrates the Village cares for its Ecology, especially the linking Green Lung which links down to the St Mary's area.

Wildlife will be greatly affected by this development



Species affected

Breeding badgers, grass snake, great crested and common newts.

Many birds on the UK Red List (declined by more than 50% in the last 25 years): skylark, starling, greenfinch, yellowhammer and whitethroat. Grey Partridge have been documented by residents (not in developers survey).

The area is hunted regularly by mobile predators tawny owl (on the UK Amber List: 25 - 50% decline), barn owl, buzzard, red kite, kestrel and sparrow hawk

Barbastelle bats (which breed at Eversden and Wimpole Woods), one of six species hunting in the area.

- **There are fewer than 5000 left in the UK**
- The proposed buildings and associated lighting will rob these species of important foraging resources

Routes taken by radio tracked Barbastelle Bats (2002)



Orchard



Proposed restoration of the existing orchard adjacent to Green End will have a significant negative impact on the wildlife found within it and on adjacent land.

The area is used by a wide variety of birds, including summer and winter migrants, where the scrub, trees and rough grassland provide both food, shelter and nesting sites. There are also grass snakes and toads present.

This restoration would include removal of the scrub to give less than 10% ground cover and effectively destroy the features that make the site so attractive to wildlife.

There is already an orchard for public use on the adjacent recreation ground.



Developers Biodiversity Plans

Plans to achieve 20% above required biodiversity through;

- Wildflower meadow
- Solar Area
- Existing Hedgerows
- Orchard
- Pond

No detail for how Branch Road will be widened and effect on hedgerow

No detail on path to Green End (currently shown going through hedgerow)

No detail on how pond will be maintained during dry spells

No detail on how wildflower meadow will be maintained

Surveys

Developer has failed to do an adequate survey of the wildlife present;

- They have failed to note and act on the presence of corn bunting and grey partridge
- They have not adequately monitored for badger activity on site or in the western spinney.
- They have not surveyed or assessed the impact of the development on adjacent land.
- They have inadequately monitored the flora of the Branch Rd verges by monitoring at the wrong time of year
- They have not performed an adequate survey of adjacent ponds for Great Crested newts.





Points of Concern

Drainage



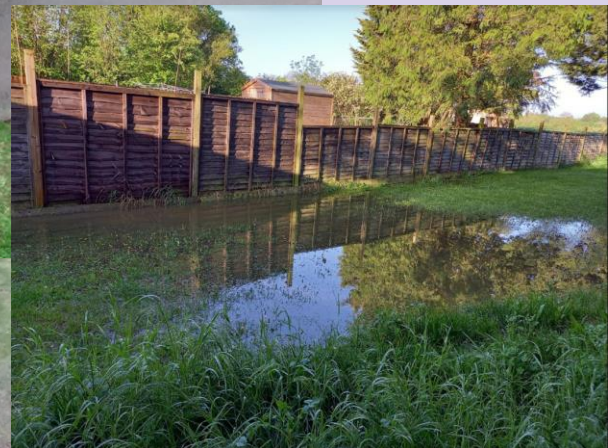
Comberton Drainage

Flooding is a key problem for the village.

Drainage network is often overwhelmed

Proposal is for a “Sustainable Drainage System” SuDS with one larger pond at the bottom of the site

Lead Local Flood Authority state proposal does not show a suitable drainage strategy



- The Valley
- St Thomas Close
- Swaynes Lane
- Green End

Sewerage



Sewerage is at capacity and overflows during winter flooding months

Recent developments in Toft Parish at Bennells Court has added to the problem.

A new main sewerage network is needed, until that time the system cannot cope



Points of Concern

Roads and Transport

Branch Road/Spine Road Junction



Spine Road + Branch Road East to be priority road

Local Highway Authority comment: Issue of visibility at junction. This junction design can only be authorised if the speed limit on Branch Road is lowered to 30mph

Parking

- 56 units
- 64 car parking space including for staff and visitors – slightly below average for other Inspired Villages
- 34 cycle spaces including for staff and visitors
- Mobility scooter/cycle parking seems identical
- Cycle parking and mobility scooter parking calculated for 1 resident per unit.
- Low number of cycle parking demonstrates low integration with Comberton

Travel times

Category	Facility / Amenity	Walking and Cycling Distance from Pedestrian Site Access Point	Travel Time (minutes) from site access point	
			Walking	Cycling
Health	Comberton Surgery	95m	1 min	1 min
	Apple Tree Dental Practice	350m	4 mins	1 min
Retail / Food and Drink	Budgens and Post Office	400m	5 mins	2 mins
	Three Horseshoes Pub	550m	7 mins	2 mins
Community	Village Hall	250m	3 mins	1 min
	Hairdresser	350m	5 mins	1 min
	Library	350m	5 mins	1 min

* Based on walking speeds of 80 metres per minute and cycling speeds of 320 metres per minute

Table 4.1: Facilities and Amenities

Category	Facility/Amenity	Walking/cycling distance from pedestrian site access point (metres)	Travel time walking (minute)
Health	Comberton surgery	516	9
	Apple tree dental practice	646	11
Retail/Foor and drink	Village shop/butcher	565/725	10/13
	Pub	802	14
Community	Village Hall	691	12
	Hairdresser	646	11
	Library	1200	21

*Distances measured on Google map along existing paths, Average walking speed for >65 yo: 57m / minute

Walking/Cycling access



Travel routes on Recreation Ground to access facilities are not suitable for wheelchairs, mobility scooters, poor mobility, low visibility.

Other transport

- Application suggests 1 bus #18/hour
- Village Transport Service as part of s106, covered by resident charges: for leisure and shopping. Unclear about other transport, such as visits to GP.



Other Concerns

Archaeology

Affordable housing

Safety of connecting paths (paths not shown in many documents)

Lack of Information about paths across recreation ground

Weighting given to factors in Green Belt balance document

Lack of Alternative Sites Assessment

What do we need from you?



Please comment on the planning application

Comberton.Org/Says-No-2-RV

Please ask your neighbours/share

