

Response to Rangeford's 'reserved matters' planning application for retirement care village and countryside park on Haverhill Road

What's going on?

Many residents will be aware that Rangeford has lodged 138 documents (!) in support of its reserved matters planning application for the retirement village. The deadline for residents and the Parish Council to respond is Mon 7 Nov.

The approved outline planning application established the principle of development on the greenbelt site and the nature of that development (a retirement care village), and set the access points and maximum building height. All other matters were 'reserved'. These have now been put forward by Rangeford, the retirement care village operator, in a comprehensive set of documents. You can view them at <https://applications.greatercambridgeplanning.org>, reference 22/04303/REM.

How can I respond?

Responses should ideally be made online via the web address above: click on the 'comments' tab and read the section 'make a comment' on how to do this. Or you can send them by post to Principal Planning Officer, South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne, Cambridge, CB23 6EA. However you respond, please give the correct reference 22/04303/REM and supply your full address.

What is the Parish Council's position?

The Parish Council has sought expert planning advice to respond to this application, which is the biggest single one that the village has had for decades. Given the number of documents our planning consultant needs to trawl through and the size of the development, this will not be available for the PC to review until the end of the month. However, we have given our consultant a lot of information and we can share this with you. Please understand, however, that this is not in its current state necessarily the final opinions of the PC.

How can I possibly respond to so much information?

Focus your efforts on what is most important to you. The PC's response will mainly focus on:

1. Design
2. Parking
3. Scale and density
4. Landscaping and environment

You don't have to look at all the plans to be able to comment on these issues. We suggest that you review documents called:

- Design and Access Statement Design Development
- Design and Access Statement – Character
- Landscape Illustrative Masterplan – Residential Site
- Site Roof Plan Proposed
- Planting Plan (Trees) – Residential Site
- As a lesser priority, you may wish to look at the Planning Statement

The PC is not really commenting on plans for the countryside park. This is being developed and then managed by Magog Trust, and we feel that they have more experience than we do in what is needed to establish an area of chalk down to support nature and recreation. You

may feel differently, in which case we refer your attention to documents called 'Landscape Illustrative Masterplan – Countryside Park' and 'Planting Plan Countryside Park'.

1. Design – in the PC's opinion...

- The design doesn't reflect the local vernacular in any way
- It is unsuitable for a rural location, being based on urban design at Ninewells, Trumpington, Eddington, Marmalade Lane, Aura, Great Kneighton, etc.
- It will be highly visible from Magog Down and the first thing you see when entering Stapleford from the east
- Long lengths of unbroken frontage and expanses of flat roof (notably the central 'pavilion') block existing views and bring urban design into a rural location
- The central pavilion is too contemporary, large and overbearing, and obstructs existing key views into and out of Stapleford. A better design – one without a flat roof – could be achieved if dwellings were removed from the top floor
- A substantial amount of full height glazing will result in glare from afar and poor heat control for elderly residents, necessitating the use of external blinds
- Stapleford already has a pavilion (at the Rec). This is noted on signs for emergency vehicle and defibrillator access, so the use of the same name at a different location will cause confusion

2. Parking – in the PC's opinion...

- No car parking at all for countryside park users, and limited parking for residents, staff and visitors, will lead to significant on-road parking around Stapleford (notably in the narrow and unmarked 20mph Gog Magog Way, and the already busy Haverhill Road) and abuse of free parking at the Recreation Ground
- Local public transport is too infrequent and unreliable, and the train station too far away, for routine use, so people will use cars but there isn't enough onsite parking

3. Build scale and density – in the PC's opinion...

- We are concerned about the number of units in the retirement village and the impact of trying to maximise this on the design
- The density of the retirement village is out of keeping with the rest of Stapleford, which has no multi-storey residential units or extended terraces of the nature proposed by Rangeford

4. Landscaping and environment – in the PC's opinion...

There are many issues here which you may care to address. Two of our main ones are:

- The tree planting plan in the care village needs more variety because it is dominated by sycamore, birch and beech
- The surface drainage system – two large attenuation pools will be located close to the boundary with existing properties at Chalk Hill and Gog Magog Way. We are concerned about the impact on the local water table in these areas. When Chalk Hill was built, there were quite significant flooding problems

And finally...

It is important that responses to planning applications are not copy-paste affairs so please make your response in your own words. You do not have to be a planning expert or fluent in planning policy to have valid opinions about the place where you live.

If you'd like to share anything with the PC, please direct your comments to the Clerk, Belinda Irons (clerk@staplefordparishcouncil.gov.uk / 07840 668048).