

Borough Councillor's report to Downham Market Town Council

Cllr Josie Ratcliffe

13th July 2021

As the Borough Councillor for East Downham ward, I visited residents who are directly behind the proposed Care Home development in Bexwell Road to consider the plans from their perspective and understand their concerns. I raised their points, and others from comments on the Borough Council planning portal, with the developer Aspire.

I'm pleased to report that Aspire are receptive to residents' concerns and willing to accept planning conditions or modify the design accordingly.

There are no residential properties opposite the front of the proposed Care Home site. There will be a supermarket or commercial development of some sort (when approved) and trees will be added along all boundaries to reduce the impact of the building.

I didn't raise queries regarding highway safety or overflow parking, because having read the developer's documents, I can see that their proposals comply with NCC Highways requirements and statutory/best practice guidelines so we'd be unlikely to get any changes. This care home is intended for "nursing and high dependancy" residents who will no longer be driving or have a car on site, and I expect that the proposed parking spaces will be sufficient for staff and visitors (my father was in a similar modern large care home for several years and the car park was rarely busy). Traffic and parking can be monitored when the site is operational and I would approach their Travel Plan coordinator if problems arise.

I have 'called in' this proposal and I will attend the Planning committee meeting when it's scheduled. I do not intend to speak against this development in principle, because I consider it to be beneficial on balance for the residents in my ward, due to providing local employment and local accommodation for their relatives. I will however work with colleagues on the Planning committee to ensure that planning conditions which mitigate the impact on the nearest existing residents are set.