

**Address to DCC by Graham Benjamin of 'Save Cofferridge Close'  
14th March 2013. Application 11/00143/FUL.**

"Members of the Committee

The case officer recommends refusal for three important reasons, which I hope you will accept. But, there is another of key concern to you - Economic Vitality.

The applicants have not presented an analysis of the impact on the town of their proposal. Neither have the council's specialist officers, so the case officer has no official basis to present this to you. It has been left to residents to fully research the position and the results are conclusive - this development is out-of-scale for the town and its catchment and may fail. It would destroy a purpose-designed mixed-use facility, thereby limiting employment, flexibility of use and the long-term viability of the High Street of which it is part. Closure for 1 to 2 years during demolition and reconstruction would harm trading throughout the town. And, remarkably after several years, the applicants still have no tenant or operator for this oversized supermarket, in a city already oversupplied with supermarkets. This application is an unsustainable speculation.

Solid evidence for this is provided by our reports, which are professionally judged authoritative, are adopted by Town Council, supported by the Business Association and have been submitted.

The town is not against re-development and there is a mixed-use alternative for the existing buildings. The two Doctors' Surgeries need new premises and want to go into Cofferridge Close. The NHS Dental Surgery wishes to remain in-situ. The much-needed Childrens' Day Nursery is ready to move in. These are all high quality, long-term, blue-chip commercial tenants. And Budgens, Waitrose and the Co-op have all shown interest in expanding the present store by 20 to 30%, which our and their studies show to be architecturally possible and commercially viable. This solution would serve the community far better.

The applicants have refused all attempts to discuss this. Nor have they presented any reasoned case to refute our findings. They persist with this out-of-scale single-use speculation because in doing so they skillfully transfer long-term risk from themselves to the town as a whole.

If you reject this application on only the three grounds presented to you and an Appeal follows, substantial evidence-based grounds for refusal will have been missed:

- (1) Harm to the viability and vitality of Stony Stratford town centre
- (2) Failure to provide for resilience to economic change; contrary to NPPF paragraph 23 and saved Local Plan policy R1 (2), and:
- (3) Failure to plan for community facilities and services; contrary to NPPF paragraph 70.

I respectfully urge you to reject this application also on these grounds."

