

Construction of Park & Ride Facility, Land to the North-West of the A41, Bicester, Oxfordshire

ATKINS

Planning Supporting Statement

October 2013

Plan Design Enable

Notice

This document and its contents have been prepared and are intended solely for Oxfordshire County Council Highways & Transport Services (OCCHTS) information and use in relation to the submission of a planning application and Supporting Statement for the construction of a Park and Ride Facility on land to the north-west of the A41, Bicester, Oxfordshire.

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1. Introduction

General

- 1.1. Atkins Limited (Atkins) is submitting a full planning application on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council Highways and Transport Services (OCCHTS) for the construction of a 580 space park and ride facility on land to the north-west of the A41 at Bicester, Oxfordshire. The proposed interchange facility would act as a 'remote' park and ride for Oxford and a 'local' park and ride for the Bicester Shopping Village.

Environmental Impact Assessment Screening

- 1.2. The proposed development falls within category 10(b) 'Urban Development Projects' of Schedule 2 to the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011. A Screening Request was submitted to Oxfordshire County Council Planning (OCC) by OCCHTS on 28th March 2013 in order to ascertain the opinion of OCC on the need for formal Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). A response was received on 3rd April 2013 which confirmed that, in the opinion of OCC, the proposed development would not result in significant environmental impacts and that EIA was not required. A response to the Screening Request was also received from Cherwell District Council (CDC) on 1st May echoing the view given by OCC that the proposed development would not result in significant environmental impacts and therefore was not EIA development.
- 1.3. A copy of CDC and OCC's Screening Opinion responses are attached as Appendix 1.

The Supporting Statement

- 1.4. This Supporting Statement is divided into 5 chapters. Chapter 1 provides a general introduction to the proposed development whilst a detailed description of the Site and its environs are provided in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 provides a detailed description of the proposed development and its rationale. Chapter 4 of the Statement considers in detail the relevant national and local level planning policy context within which the proposed development is to be considered and provides commentary on the extent to which the proposed development complies with these policies. Finally, Chapter 5 draws conclusions on the appropriateness of the proposed development and makes overall recommendations.
- 1.5. A Design & Access Statement (DAS) has also been produced in support of the application and accompanies this Statement.

Additional Supporting Documents

- 1.6. Although it has been agreed that the proposed development does not require formal EIA, a number of site surveys and assessments have been undertaken to support the planning application and to demonstrate that the proposed development would not have any unacceptable impacts on the immediate and surrounding environment. The range of supporting assessments has been developed based upon the advice issued by OCC Planning in its letter dated 11th April 2013 (See Appendix 2). The supporting surveys and assessments include:
 - Statement of Community Involvement;
 - Flood Risk Assessment;
 - Noise Assessment;
 - Air Quality Assessment;
 - Lighting Assessment;
 - Ecological Assessment;
 - Land Contamination Assessment;

- Utilities Statement;
- Transport Assessment;
- Outline Sustainable Transport Strategy; and
- Archaeological Evaluation.

1.7. Copies of each of these assessments accompany this Statement.

2. Site Description

Site Location

- 2.1. The application site (the Site) is located to the south of Bicester, approximately 1 mile (2.5km) to south of Bicester Town Centre. The Site is located to the north-west of the A41 Oxford Road, directly off a recently constructed 5-arm roundabout at the junction of the A41 and Vendee Drive. The new roundabout has been developed to serve the Kingsmere 'urban village' which is currently under construction.
- 2.2. The general location of the Site is shown on Drawing 512460.BIC.FEA.005.

Site Description

- 2.3. The Site covers an area of approximately 2.54 hectares (25,400m²) and is roughly square in shape. The Site was previously in use for arable farming. This use ceased in February 2012 when the Site was transferred to Oxfordshire County Council. The Site is relatively flat with a slight fall in levels from north to south, as it drops away from Vendee Drive. The Site is not covered by any statutory or non statutory designations.
- 2.4. There is currently no formal access to the Site for vehicles. However, vehicular access to the Site has been reserved via an arm of a new roundabout constructed between the A41 and Vendee Drive in the north-eastern corner of the Site.
- 2.5. The extent of the Site is shown on Drawing 5124607.BIC.FEA.010.

The Surrounding Area

- 2.6. The Site is bordered to the north-east by B4030 Vendee Drive with the Kingsmere mixed use development (currently under construction) beyond. New sapling planting has recently been provided along the north-eastern boundary of the Site where it adjoins Vendee Drive. This planting has been provided as part of the landscaping associated with the construction of Vendee Drive and the Kingsmere development.
- 2.7. To the east of the Site lies the A41 which provides a direct link from Bicester to the M40 and (via the A34) to Oxford and the recently constructed 5-arm roundabout which serves the Site, Vendee Drive, the A41 north and south and Wendlebury Road. The Site is bordered to the south-west by a belt of mature tree planting with a footpath and cycleway and agricultural fields beyond.
- 2.8. Land immediately adjoining the north-western boundary of the site, which currently comprises agricultural fields, is safeguarded for future use as community woodland. The village of Chesterton lies further to the south-west of the Site and is separated from the Site by agricultural fields and a belt of mature tree planting.

Land Ownership

- 2.9. The majority of the Site lies within the ownership of OCC as land owner and Highway Authority. However, additional land in the north-eastern and eastern sections of the Site under which drainage works would need to take place is in the ownership of Cherwell District Council (CDC) and Countryside Properties (CP). Both CDC and CP have been consulted as part of the development of the scheme and this planning application (see SCI for further information) and the relevant Notice has been served on CDC and CP when submitting this planning application.

3. Proposed Development

Description of Proposed Development

- 3.1. The proposed development would see the construction of a 580 space park and ride facility on land to the north-west of the A41 at Bicester, Oxfordshire. The proposed interchange facility would act as a 'remote' park and ride for Oxford and a 'local' park and ride for the Bicester Shopping Village.
- 3.2. The park and ride facility would provide a total of 580 parking spaces, of which 14 spaces would be for disabled use. 60 cycle parking spaces would be provided with a further area reserved for 36 motor cycle parking spaces if demand is sufficient. It is envisaged that these motor cycle spaces would be used for car parking when the site first opens and could convert to motor cycle parking if demand requires it.
- 3.3. Provision has been made within the Site for 3 bus stops. One stop would be reserved for the S5 Stagecoach route which links Bicester with Oxford via the A41/A34. This would operate 7 days a week and primarily service commuters and shoppers travelling from the Bicester area to Oxford. A second stop would be reserved for shuttle buses connecting the park and ride facility with the Bicester shopping village. This service would be run on weekends and at busy holiday periods when the existing car park at Bicester Shopping Village is at capacity and therefore the park and ride would act as an overflow facility. The third bus stop would be available for future services operated by either Stagecoach, Oxfordshire Bus Company or any other local or national services which agree use of the Site with OCC.
- 3.4. The three bus stops would be provided using a 'saw tooth' style arrangement to allow 3 buses to utilise the parking bays at the same time without any impediment to them leaving independently. An additional lay-over area would be provided in the centre of the bus gyratory. A covered, front and rear glazed bus shelter would be provided to give protection against the weather to passengers waiting for the buses. The bus shelter would incorporate perched seating, bus timetable/route information and real time bus information. Appropriate doorways would be provided to the front/rear of the shelter to enable passengers to board and alight buses and enable convenient access from the car park.
- 3.5. Passengers using the S5 service and the Bicester Village shuttle buses would not initially be charged to park at the facility. S5 users would pay a bus fare on the bus whilst the Bicester Village shuttle would be complimentary for its shoppers. Automatic Number Plate Recording (ANPR) would be used at the Site to monitor its use.
- 3.6. Two pedestrian walkways would be provided within the car parking area to link the car parking spaces to the bus waiting area. These would run in an east to west direction incorporating pedestrian crossings at appropriate intervals. The walkways would not be covered, to allow unhindered access for emergency vehicles if required. The two walkways would be constructed to be flush with the main car park so as to provide a continuous walkway with no tripping hazards. The walkways would be delineated from the main car park area using colour contrasting surfacing. Strategically placed bollards would be used along these walkways to provide further delineation and protection for pedestrians from vehicles.
- 3.7. The car parking areas would be surfaced using porous material with the park and ride gyratory, bus stops, paved pedestrian areas and roads being constructed from non porous, bituminous finished materials.
- 3.8. A 900m² attenuation pond would be provided in the eastern corner of the Site. The pond would have a depth of approximately 1m. Surface water run-off from the Site would be drained to this attenuation pond. From here it would be subject to a controlled discharged into an existing drainage ditch, running along the eastern Site boundary within the highway verge. This ditch discharges into the

Gagle Brook to the south. The ditch would be cleared and re-graded to ensure that it can adequately accommodate the flows. The attenuation pond has been designed for a 1:100 year storm plus 30%.

- 3.9. The car park, car park access roads and bus stop areas would be illuminated using lighting columns across the Site. The lighting design for the car park will provide a maintained average horizontal illuminance of 10 LUX. The lighting design for the car park access roads and bus stop area would provide a minimum maintained average horizontal illuminance of 15 LUX. Each lighting column would be fitted with a road lighting LED luminaire to minimise obtrusive light, light spill and sky glow. The luminaires would be provided with the constant light output facility. This compensates for the over lighting that normally occurs at the beginning of a new lighting installation and ensures that the designed light output is maintained throughout the life of the light source. This will reduce carbon emission and will reduce energy costs. Luminaires would be controlled by individual luminaire mounted photoelectric cells. The luminaires will have electronic dimmable drivers and part night dimming would be provided. Alternatively the luminaires could be group time-switched controlled so that the lighting could be set to switch on and off at different times during the week.
- 3.10. As the park and ride would not be manned, CCTV would be provided at the Site. It is likely that this would be linked to Bicester Village's existing security and CCTV camera network which is monitored 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Access

- 3.11. All vehicles would access the Site from one entrance and exit in the north-eastern corner of the Site off the existing A41/Vendee Drive roundabout. A one way system would operate for buses with a dedicated bus lane provided. A separate car/motorcycle lane would be provided to prevent bus/car conflict.
- 3.12. The site would be laid out to incorporate a one way system for cars and motorbikes. A height barrier would be provided at the car park access and exit. Emergency and recovery vehicles would be provided with a key to these barriers to allow access if required. A speed bump would also be provided at the entrance to the car park to slow vehicles on approach to the car parking spaces.
- 3.13. A separate pedestrian and cycle access would be provided into the Site from Vendee Drive. This would lead pedestrians and cyclists directly to the bus waiting area and cycle parking area to prevent any conflict with buses and other vehicles. A raised pedestrian crossing would be provided to allow pedestrians to safely cross the car park exit lane.
- 3.14. Two pedestrian access gates and footways would be provided along the south-western boundary of the Site for people wishing to visit the reserved community woodland in the future. It is not anticipated that the footfall for these accesses from car users would be significant (when the woodland is planted, it is expected to have its own visitor entrance, information and parking) but it is considered that access to the woodland from the park and ride car park would offer a community benefit.

Landscaping

- 3.15. A circa 2.5m wide landscaping strip has been retained around all boundaries of the Site. This would enable the retention of existing mature and sapling planting at the Site. Further planting, using native species, to support and enhance the existing vegetation, would also be incorporated. It is considered most appropriate to determine the nature and extent of this planting at the detailed design and specification stage. It is likely that this may also include some timber post and rail boundary fencing. It is suggested that an appropriate condition could be attached to the planning consent requiring the submission to, and agreement of, a detailed landscaping scheme for the Site prior to the construction of the park and ride scheme.

- 3.16. Sufficient land has been retained around the proposed attenuation pond to allow for perimeter fencing and landscaping to be installed. This would have two purposes, firstly to secure the pond and restrict public access to it in the interests of safety, and secondly to allow complimentary biodiversity planting. Again, it is suggested that this could be appropriately addressed through the attachment of an appropriate landscaping condition to the planning consent.
- 3.17. The general arrangement of the proposed park and ride facility is shown on Drawing 5124607.BIC.FEA.010. The bus stop and bus layby arrangements/tracking details are shown on Drawings 5124607.BIC.FEA.006 to 009 inclusive.

Programme

- 3.18. Subject to the grant of planning permission in early 2014, it is the intention of OCC to commence construction of the park and ride scheme during the Spring/Summer of 2014 with a view to the Site being open prior to Christmas 2014.

Management Plan

- 3.19. A Management Plan would be prepared for the Site prior to its construction and operation. This would be produced jointly by OCC, Stagecoach and Bicester Village and would deal with issues of how the Site would be managed on a day to day basis and would cover amongst other matters:
- CCTV;
 - Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR);
 - Management of unauthorised parking;
 - Prevention of joy riding at the Site;
 - Real time bus information provision;
 - Signage provision;
 - Vehicle Management System (VMS) signage on A41 and within the Site;
 - Lighting programme;
 - Attenuation pond maintenance;
 - General maintenance of other facilities; and
 - Provision for on-going management and review of safety and security provision.
- 3.20. It is suggested that an appropriate condition could be attached to the planning consent requiring the submission to, and agreement of, a Management Plan by OCC Planning prior to the construction and operation of the facility.

Design & Access Statement

- 3.21. A Design and Access Statement has been prepared for the proposed development in accordance with the requirements of Circular 01/06¹ and accompanies this Statement.

¹ Circular 01/2006 'Guidance on Changes to the Development Control System' (June 2006)

4. Planning Policy

General

- 4.1. This section of the Statement considers the merits of the proposed development against all relevant planning policy and guidance provided at the National, Regional and Local level. The Site lies within the County of Oxfordshire and falls under the administrative area of Cherwell District Council (CDC).

National Planning Policy

- 4.2. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) on the 27th March 2012. The policies contained within the NPPF came into effect immediately and consolidated those contained in Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG) and Planning Policy Statements (PPS) and the advice issued in Planning Circulars and other guidance documents.
- 4.3. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England. The Framework aims to allow local people and their accountable Councils to produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities. It must be taken into account in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans and is a material planning consideration in determining planning applications.
- 4.4. The Framework advocates a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Sustainable development dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform the following roles:
- ***'an economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;***
 - ***a social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and***
 - ***an environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy'.***
- 4.5. The Framework sets out 13 key Policies:
- Policy 1: Building a Strong and Competitive Economy;
 - Policy 2: Ensuring the Viability of Town Centres;
 - Policy 3: Supporting a Prosperous Rural Economy;
 - Policy 4: Promoting Sustainable Transport;
 - Policy 5: Supporting High Quality Communications Infrastructure;
 - Policy 6: Delivering a Wide Choice of High Quality Homes;
 - Policy 7: Requiring Good Design;
 - Policy 8: Promoting Healthy Communities;
 - Policy 9: Protecting Green Belt Land;
 - Policy 10: Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change;
 - Policy 11: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment;
 - Policy 12: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment; and
 - Policy 13: Facilitating the Sustainable Use of Minerals.

- 4.6. **Policy 4 'Promoting Sustainable Transport'** emphasises the role of transport policies in facilitating sustainable development and contributing to health objectives. The Policy advocates that strategies should be put in place for the provision of viable infrastructure necessary to support any major generators of travel in an area. Paragraph 29 makes clear that *'the transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes'*, whilst Paragraph 30 states that *'encouragement should be given to solutions which support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion'*.
- 4.7. The proposed development directly adheres to this policy as its fundamental objective is to encourage modal shift from private vehicles, to public transport. The park and ride facility would enable people to access both Oxford City Centre and Bicester Village retail outlet without having to drive their own vehicles on the A41 and other, often congested roads within the urban centre, which are less able to cope with an increased vehicle capacity. Consequently, this can reduce traffic congestion and green house gas emissions. The facility would offer parking for 60 cycle parking spaces, with dedicated pedestrian and cycle access routes which would link the park and ride site with nearby residential development. The facility would ensure that residents within these neighbouring developments are provided with sustainable alternatives to private car use.
- 4.8. **Policy 7, 'Requiring Good Design'** advises that good design should be indivisible from good planning. New developments should function well and add to the overall quality of an area for the lifetime of a development. They should incorporate buildings, structures and streetscapes which create attractive, comfortable places to live, work and visit, incorporate green and other public spaces as part of their development, create safe and accessible environments and be visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.
- 4.9. The proposed park and ride facility has been designed to a high quality to meet modern day standards, provide an appropriate function but also blend into the surrounding environment. The high quality design, coupled with a commitment to regular maintenance, would ensure that the appearance and functionality of the car park is maintained over time. The Site would be lit using a controllable lighting system and would incorporate separate pedestrian/cycle accesses to reduce the potential for conflict with cars and buses. This would help create a welcoming and safe environment for those using the facility. A surface water attenuation pond would form an attractive feature on entrance to the car park which would have perimeter fencing and planting to restrict access. Existing landscaping around the perimeter of the Site would be enhanced and improved to further assist in assimilating the development into the surrounding area.
- 4.10. The development of healthy and inclusive communities is pursued under **Policy 8 'Promoting Healthy Communities'**. This Policy seeks to ensure that safe and accessible environments are created where crime and disorder, and the fear of it are minimised and clear, legible pedestrian routes and high quality public open spaces are created.
- 4.11. The proposed development would incorporate pedestrian walkways through the car park which would be demarcated in different colours and materials from the parking areas, to ensure safe movement of pedestrians from the car park to the bus stops. New lighting and CCTV would be provided to further increase public safety and help reduce the fear and instance of crime. A dedicated pedestrian footway and cycle route into the Site would be provided to connect directly with the cycle parking and bus waiting areas. A dedicated pedestrian crossing would also be provided to ensure safe movement of pedestrians. Additional footpaths links would be provided on the south-western boundary of the Site to allow access to the land reserved for Community Woodland which lies adjacent to the Site.
- 4.12. **Policy 10 'Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change'** considers, amongst others, the impacts of development on flood risk. The Policy requires that development in areas at high risk of flooding be avoided by directing development towards areas at a lower risk of flooding. Where development is necessary in areas of high flood risk, such development should be made safe without increasing the risk of flooding elsewhere. The Sequential Test should be applied to steer development to areas at the lowest risk of flooding. If following the application of the

Sequential Test, it is not possible for the development to be located elsewhere; the Exception Test should be applied.

- 4.13. The Site is located within Flood Zone 1 which is at a low risk from flooding. The development of a park and ride facility in this location is therefore compliant with the requirements of national policy in respect of flood risk and the sequential test approach. A Level 2 Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been undertaken given that the proposed development covers an area of more than 1ha. The FRA has concluded that the proposed development would not cause unacceptable flood risk on the Site or elsewhere subject to the implementation of an appropriate drainage strategy to attenuate surface water run-off which restricts site run-off to existing Greenfield rates. A surface water attenuation pond has been included within the scheme design to which surface water on site would be directed. Surface water stored in this pond would be subject to controlled discharge to a highway verge drainage ditch to the south-east of the Site which discharges into the Gagle Brook further downstream. The attenuation pond has been designed to accommodate a 1:100 year storm plus 30%. Porous materials would be utilised for the car park surface, which will provide additional storage and further reduce any potential for surface run-off and associated flooding. The Flood Risk Assessment undertaken for the proposed development accompanies this Statement.
- 4.14. The protection of the natural environment is addressed through **Policy 11 'Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment'**. The Policy seeks to protect valued landscapes, recognise the value of eco-systems, minimise impacts on biodiversity and prevent new and existing developments from being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, noise and water pollution. Remediation and/or mitigation of impacts should be provided where appropriate.
- 4.15. A full range of assessments have been undertaken to assess the potential impacts of the proposed development on the natural environment. These include an Ecological Assessment, Noise Assessment and Air Quality Assessment. Overall, the assessments have concluded that subject to the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures (ecological enhancement, lighting control and best practice construction techniques); the impacts of the development on the natural environment would not be significant. The proposed development has been specifically designed to have a minimal impact on the natural environment. The development would not result in the loss of any trees, hedgerows or significant habitats and the Site has been determined to have limited ecological value and does not support any protected species. The biodiversity of the Site would be enhanced through the provision of the attenuation pond and associated native landscaping and boundary planting improvements. The provision of bird boxes on site is also proposed. Copies of the supporting assessments detailed above accompany this Statement.
- 4.16. **Policy 12 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment'** recognises the importance of the historic environment and its assets as irreplaceable resources and seeks to ensure that such assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. The Policy requires that proposals for development fully assess the potential presence of and impact of a scheme on heritage assets. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, developers should submit an appropriate desk based assessment and where necessary, a field evaluation. When considering the potential impacts of a scheme on heritage assets, the more significant the asset, then more weight should be provided.
- 4.17. The Site is located within an area which is known to have archaeological potential (Roman Alchester) and therefore a pre-determination field evaluation has been undertaken for the Site in accordance with a brief issued by OCC's Archaeologist. Evaluation Trenching was undertaken on the Site during September 2013. The Evaluation Trenching concluded that the heritage resource on site was low, however it did identify the presence of Roman enclosure ditches and field systems and pre-historic cremation burials. Given the Site's proximity to Roman Alchester, mitigation has been agreed with the OCC Archaeologist to undertake either a Site wide strip and sample excavation or a focused area excavation prior to construction followed by a watching brief for the remainder of the Site during topsoil stripping. This would ensure that any heritage asset on Site can be recorded and protected appropriately. A copy of the field evaluation report accompanies this Statement.

Regional Planning Policy

- 4.18. The Government's Localism Bill became an Act of Parliament on 15th November 2011. The central purpose of the Bill, to shift power back from Central Government into the hands of individuals, communities and Council's has resulted in the revocation of Regional Strategies, including the South East Regional Plan (SERP). The SERP was formally revoked on 25th March 2013. With the exception of Policy H2 (Former Airbase at Upper Heyford), the Oxfordshire Structure Plan was also formally revoked in March 2013 and therefore no longer forms part of the planning process. Consequently, there is no further requirement to give any consideration to Regional Planning Policy in the determination of this planning application.

Local Planning Policy

Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996

- 4.19. The Cherwell Local Plan (CLP) was adopted in 1996 and set out the Council's policies and proposals for the development of land up to 2001. The majority of the CLP policies were 'Saved' by the Secretary of State (SoS) under Schedule 8 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 for an interim period whilst CDC prepare their Local Development Framework (LDF), a suite of documents which would replace the CLP. 'Saved' CLP policies which are relevant to the proposed development are considered below.
- 4.20. **Policy TR1 'Transport Funding'** relates to transport funding and requires that adequate highways, highway improvement works, traffic management measures, or public transport facilities should be provided before proposals for development are permitted. The proposed development adheres to this Policy as it would be accessed via a recently constructed five arm roundabout on the A41. The roundabout has realigned the A41 and provides a junction with the South West Bicester Bypass (Vendee Drive), a replacement to the Chesterton slips and direct access to the proposed Park and Ride facility. These roads are very recently completed and would ensure the surrounding highway network has sufficient capacity to meet the demands of the park and ride facility.
- 4.21. **Policy C2 'Development Affecting Protected Species'** underlines that development which would adversely affect any species protected by Schedule 1, Schedule 5 and Schedule 8 of the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act and by the E.C. Habitats Directive 1992 will not normally be permitted. **Policy C4 'Creation of New Habitats'** advises that the Council will seek the creation of new habitats and promote the interests of nature conservation within the context of new development.
- 4.22. An Ecological Assessment has been undertaken to determine the potential ecological impacts of the proposed development. The assessment concludes that the loss of the agricultural land proposed would not have a detrimental impact on the ecological value of the Site subject to the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures, namely the appropriate management of the Site between now and construction, the inclusion of native species in the landscaping plan for the Site and erection of bird boxes at suitable locations within the Site. As the Site was previously open farmland with low ecological potential, it is considered the creation of a water attenuation pond and native boundary planting would create sufficient habitat and increase the biodiversity value of the site. The Ecological Assessment accompanies this Statement.
- 4.23. The protection of the landscape is controlled through **Policy C7 'Landscape Conservation'** which states that development will not normally be permitted if it would cause demonstrable harm to the topography and character of the landscape. The proposed development would have no significant impact on the topography of the landscape, but would result in the loss of some agricultural land. The agricultural land at the Site is Grade 4 agricultural land which is defined as poor quality and therefore this loss is not considered to be significant in terms of the agricultural value of the Site. In addition, the Kingsmere mixed use development being constructed to the north-east of the Site and associated highway improvements have already had an urbanising influence on the existing

- landscape and ensure the development would not prove too detrimental to the visual amenity of the area.
- 4.24. **Policy C8 'Sporadic Development in the Open Countryside'** relates to sporadic development in the open countryside and states that developments in the vicinity of motorway or major road junctions will generally be resisted. Where practicable development will be directed to suitable sites at Banbury or Bicester. The site has been subject to extensive study and assessment to determine its viability and suitability for a park and ride development. Given the location of the Site on the edge of the urban area, adjacent to the Kingsmere mixed use development, it is not considered that the park and ride would comprise sporadic development or have any detrimental impacts on the open countryside.
- 4.25. The protection of the District's heritage assets is controlled through **Policy C10 'Historic Landscapes, Parks, Gardens & Historic Battlefields'** which seeks to resist any development which would have an impact of heritage assets. The Site is located within an area which is known to have archaeological potential (Roman Alchester) and therefore a pre-determination field evaluation has been undertaken for the Site. The evaluation concluded that the heritage resource on site was low, however it did identify the presence of Roman enclosure ditches and field systems and pre-historic cremation burials. Given the Site's proximity to Roman Alchester, mitigation has been agreed with the OCC Archaeologist to undertake either a Site wide strip and sample excavation or a focused area excavation prior to construction followed by a watching brief for the remainder of the Site during topsoil stripping. This would ensure that any heritage asset on Site could be recorded and protected appropriately. A copy of the field evaluation report accompanies this Statement.
- 4.26. The design of new development is controlled through **Policy C28 'Layout, Design & External Appearance of New Development'**. The Policy requires that standards of design, layout and external appearance are sympathetic to the character of the area. The park and ride scheme has been designed and laid out to ensure a functional and safe development whilst taking into account the existing landform, access and site boundary constraints. The development would be constructed using high quality materials and would minimise clutter and light pollution both within the Site and when viewed from the surrounding area. There would be no terminal building or other significant structures beyond the bus stops, shelters and cycle parking. The inclusion of a surface water attenuation pond along with boundary planting would assist in assimilating the development into its surroundings, giving the Site an attractive edge, whilst also creating new habitat and increasing biodiversity at the Site.
- 4.27. **Policy C32 'Provision of Facilities for Disabled People'** states that the Council will support proposals which provide, improve or extend facilities for disabled people. The proposed facility would provide car parking for disabled people (14 spaces in accordance with the ratio provided at the recently completed extension to Thornhill Park and Ride) in accordance with best practice standards. These spaces would be located adjacent to the bus waiting areas and pedestrian walkways to ensure ease of access to buses for disabled users.
- 4.28. The control of pollution from new developments is addressed through **Policy ENV1 'Development Likely to Cause Detrimental Levels of Pollution'** which states that development which is likely to cause materially detrimental levels of noise, vibration, smell, smoke, fumes or other types of environmental pollution will be resisted. Noise and Air Quality assessments have been undertaken to assess the potential impacts of the proposed development both during the construction and operational phases. The assessments have concluded that subject to the implementation of best practice construction and management measures, the proposed development would not give rise to any significant or unacceptable levels of air or noise pollution. Copies of the two assessments accompany these Statements.
- 4.29. **Policy ENV7 'Development Affecting Water Quality'** states that development which will adversely affect to a material level, the water quality of surface or underground water bodies, including rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs will not be permitted. There are no major watercourses within the direct vicinity of the Site. Regardless, the proposed development has been designed to ensure water would

be adequately drained in a manner that would protect underground water bodies and water courses. Through the use of porous surface materials and the provision of a water attenuation pond, the impacts from surface run-off would be effectively mitigated against to ensure that site run-off does not exceed existing Greenfield rates.

Non Statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011

- 4.30. The Non Statutory Cherwell Local Plan (NSCLP) was intended to review and update the CLP 1996. Due to the changes to the planning system brought about through the introduction of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, work on this Plan was discontinued prior to adoption. The NSCLP does not form part of the statutory process but has been approved as interim planning policy and therefore its policies are material considerations in determining planning applications. NSCLP policies relevant to the proposed development are considered below.
- 4.31. **General Transport Policy TR1** states that all traffic generating development must contribute to achieving the objectives of the Local Transport Plan. The Site is allocated in the LTP as the suggested location for a park and ride facility. Therefore, the proposals are in direct conformity with this policy. The proposed development would generate traffic; however it would alleviate congestion and the associated negative impacts such as Co2 emissions.
- 4.32. Road Safety is addressed within **PolicyTR5 'Road Safety'** which states that before proposals for development are permitted the Council will need to be satisfied that:
- (i) *'Conflict between vehicles and pedestrians, cyclists and people with sensory and mobility impairments is minimised by securing segregated provision, controlled crossings or other measures as appropriate, and;*
 - (ii) *The development does not compromise the safe movement and free flow of traffic or the safe use of roads by others'.*
- 4.33. The proposed development has been designed in a manner that would ensure the highest levels of safety for all using the facility. Dedicated, continuous pedestrian walkways would be provided flush with the rest of the car park and demarked in different colours/materials from the parking areas and roads. Bollards would be used to provide a physical separation between pedestrians using the walkways and cars. A dedicated pedestrian and cycle access would be provided to the Site linking directly with the bus waiting and cycle parking areas to prevent conflict with pedestrians/cyclists and cars/buses. Speed bumps and a raised pedestrian crossing would further ensure pedestrian safety. A height restriction barrier at the entrance would ensure that no oversized vehicles use the facility unless for emergency purposes.
- 4.34. Access to the Site would be taken from a dedicated arm off the new A41 roundabout. This roundabout arm was constructed specifically to serve a park and ride facility and has therefore been designed, assessed and constructed to appropriate safety standards. A Transport Assessment (TA) has been undertaken which assesses the potential impacts of the proposed development on the road network, including highway safety and movement. The TA demonstrates that the proposed park and ride can operate at the capacity proposed without detriment to the local highway network. The TA accompanies this Statement.
- 4.35. The proposed Development is within direct conformity with **Policy TR6 'Public Transport'** which states that:
- 'The Council will seek to facilitate the provision and operation of an effective public transport system as a genuine alternative to the use of private vehicles, so far as it is possible to do so through its land use planning powers. This will include, where appropriate, giving priority to public transport over general traffic and making provision for interchange facilities and encouraging integration between different modes of transport'.*

- 4.36. The park and ride interchange facility would enhance the existing public transport system, offering a genuine alternative to the private car for commuters and visitors to Oxford whilst also reducing private car related congestion within Bicester Town Centre created by visitors to Bicester Shopping Village.
- 4.37. **Policy EN1 'Conserving & Enhancing the Environment'** states that in determining planning applications the Council will take into account the likely impacts of the proposed development on the natural and built environment and will, where possible, seek to enhance the environment. An Ecological Assessment has been undertaken to determine the potential ecological impacts of the proposed development. The assessment concludes that the loss of the agricultural land proposed would not have a detrimental impact on the ecological value of the Site subject to the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures, namely the appropriate management of the Site between now and construction, the inclusion of native species in the landscaping plan for the Site and erection of bird boxes at suitable locations within the Site. Considering the site was previously open farmland with low ecological potential, it is considered the creation of a water attenuation pond and native boundary planting would create sufficient habitat and increase the biodiversity value of the site. The Ecological Assessment accompanies this Statement.
- 4.38. **Policy EN5 'Air Quality'** highlights that the Council will have regard to the likely impact of the development on air quality as a result of its operation and the traffic generated by it. Development which would have a significant adverse impact on air quality will not be permitted. The proposed development should result in improvements of air quality in the local area due to a reduction in the number of vehicles on the road and the associated congestion and emissions. Both an Air Quality Assessment and a Transport Assessment have been undertaken to determine the impacts of the proposed development. The Air Quality Assessment concludes that subject to the implementation of best practice construction and management measures, the proposed development would not have a significant or unacceptable impact on air quality.
- 4.39. The Council seeks to avoid unnecessary light pollution through **Policy EN6 'Light Pollution'** which only allows development where it can be demonstrated that the lighting scheme proposed is necessary, that the minimum lighting required is proposed, there is no unacceptable light pollution and no detrimental impact on residential amenity, landscape character or appearance, nature conservation or highway safety.
- 4.40. A lighting scheme has been designed for the Site which would see the use of lighting columns across the Site. The lighting design for the car park would be in accordance with Table 5 of BS5489-1:2013 and specifically for an outdoor car park having a medium traffic usage and which will provide a maintained average horizontal illuminance of 10 LUX with an overall uniformity of 0.25. The lighting design for the car park access road and bus stop area would be in accordance with BS5489-1:2013, lighting class C3 and which will provide a minimum maintained average horizontal illuminance of 15 LUX with an overall uniformity of 0.40 minimum. Luminaires would be controlled by individual luminaire mounted photoelectric cells. The luminaires will have electronic dimmable drivers and part night dimming would be provided. Alternatively the luminaires could be group time-switched controlled so that the lighting could be set to switch on and off at different times during the week. The lighting scheme proposed would therefore ensure that lighting at the Site is kept to a minimum without compromising user safety and Site security. The scheme proposed would also ensure that there were no detrimental impacts on ecology, landscape character, residential amenity or highway safety. The scheme proposed would also ensure that there were no detrimental impacts on ecology, landscape character, residential amenity or highway safety. A lighting Assessment has been undertaken for the proposed scheme and accompanies this Statement.
- 4.41. **Policy ENV15 'Surface Water Run-Off & Source Control'** requires that new developments generating increased surface water run-off do not have a detrimental impact on surface drains and watercourses or increase flood risk. Schemes should include for appropriate source control or attenuation.

- 4.42. The Site is located within Flood Zone 1 which is at a low risk from flooding. A Level 2 Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been undertaken given that the proposed development covers an area of more than 1ha. The FRA has concluded that the proposed development would not cause unacceptable flood risk on the Site or elsewhere subject to the implementation of an appropriate drainage strategy to attenuate surface water run-off which restricts site run-off to existing Greenfield rates. A surface water attenuation pond has been included within the scheme design to which surface water on site would be directed. Surface water stored in this pond would be subject to controlled discharge to a highway verge drainage ditch to the south-east of the Site. The attenuation pond has been designed to accommodate a 1:100 year storm plus 30%. Porous materials would be utilised for the car park surface, which will provide additional storage and further reduce any potential for surface run-off and associated flooding. The Flood Risk Assessment undertaken for the proposed development accompanies this Statement.
- 4.43. **Policy EN22 'Nature Conservation'** requires that proposals incorporate features of nature conservation value within a site, with features being retained and enhanced where possible. The existing nature conservation value of the Site is considered to be relatively low and the loss of Grade 4 (poor quality) agricultural land to accommodate the development is not considered significant. The development would not result in the loss of any trees, hedgerows or other important habitats. A programme of mitigation is however proposed to ensure that the development enhances the biodiversity of the Site and surrounding area as far as practicable. Proposed mitigation includes the management of the Site between now and construction to prevent new colonisation by protected ecological species, the erection of bird boxes within the Site and the inclusion within the landscape scheme for the Site which includes native planting. The proposed attenuation pond would also create additional ecological habitat on Site and assist in increasing biodiversity.
- 4.44. **Policy D1 'Urban Design Objectives'** states that proposals for development will only be permitted provided that they demonstrate local distinctiveness, continuity and enclosure, provide public spaces which are attractive, safe and uncluttered, permeability through ease of movement for pedestrians, cyclists and disabled people, legibility through recognisable routes, adaptability and diversity through compatible land uses.
- 4.45. The park and ride scheme has been designed and laid out to ensure a functional and safe development whilst taking into account the existing landform, access and site boundary constraints. The development would be constructed using high quality materials and would minimise clutter and light pollution both within the Site and when viewed from the surrounding area. The scheme includes dedicated pedestrian (including disabled) and cycle accesses and footways, including a pedestrian crossing. The layout and lighting of the scheme has been designed to ensure high levels of safety and to deter crime whilst also reducing the fear of crime. There would be no terminal building or other significant structures beyond the bus stops, shelters and cycle parking. The inclusion of a surface water attenuation pond along with boundary planting would assist in assimilating the development into its surroundings, giving the Site an attractive edge, whilst also creating new habitat and increasing biodiversity at the Site. The Site design has also considered the need for future flexibility, growth and expansion.
- 4.46. Proposals are required to respect the local distinctiveness of an area through **Policy D3 'Local Distinctiveness'**. The Policy requires proposals to respect the site's landform and natural features, be well integrated into the landscape setting, reflect traditional patterns where relevant, include the retention and enhancement of open spaces, relate well to local architectural style, respect the scale, proportion, massing and height of surrounding buildings and not interfere with valued views and vistas.
- 4.47. The proposed development would have no significant impact on the topography of the landscape or any natural features. Nor would it have any significant or detrimental impacts on existing views or vistas. It would however result in the loss of some agricultural land. The agricultural land at the Site is Grade 4 agricultural land which is defined as poor quality and therefore this loss is not considered to be significant in terms of the agricultural value of the Site. The Kingsmere mixed use development which is currently being constructed to the north-east of the Site and associated highway

improvements have already had an urbanising influence on the existing landscape and provide a more urban form to the locality. The scheme would include for additional boundary planting and possible fencing (likely to be timber post and rail fencing) to ensure a defined and attractive Site boundary. Overall, it is not considered that the proposed development would have any detrimental impacts on the landscape value of the Site and/or surrounding area.

Cherwell Proposed Submission Local Plan 2012

- 4.48. CDC is currently preparing its new Local Plan (previously to be named the Cherwell Core Strategy). The new Local Plan will be the first LDF policy document adopted by the Council and will set out the Council's long term spatial vision and policies for how the District would grow and change over the period to 2031. The latest version of the Local Plan is the Cherwell Proposed Submission Local Plan 2012 (CPSLP) on which public consultation was undertaken during the period 28th March to 23rd May 2013. Although the CPSLP is yet to be adopted, it does represent the most up to date intended planning policy for the District and has gone a significant way through the LDF adoption process. It is therefore considered appropriate to consider the relevant emerging policies set out within the CPSLP in the determination of this application.
- 4.49. **Policy ESD1 'Mitigating & Adapting to Climate Change'** requires that measures are taken to mitigate the impacts of development in the District on climate change, strategically this includes the distribution of growth to sustainable locations, the encouragement of cycling, walking and public transport, the reduction of carbon emissions and use of low carbon energy. One of the key methods of reducing climate change impacts to be pursued in the District is cited as being by minimising flood risk and making use of sustainable drainage methods. In support of this, **Policy ESD6 'Sustainable Flood Risk Management'** sets out the Council's proposals to reduce flood risk in the District through the application of the sequential approach to development, ensuring that development is only permitted in areas of low flood risk unless there are no other reasonably available sites in areas of lower flood risk. Site specific Flood Risk Assessments must also be undertaken for development proposals which meet specific criteria, including development in Flood Zone 1 where the site area exceeds 1ha. The Policy continues that developments should not result in an increase in surface water discharge rates in a storm event, including the 1:100 year storm event plus an allowance for climate change.
- 4.50. Leading on from Policies ESD1 and ESD6, **Policy ESD7 'Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS)'** requires all development to use Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) for the management of surface water run-off. Appropriate systems should be used for SuDS on development sites and should take into account the potential to reduce flood and pollution risks and provide landscape and wildlife benefits.
- 4.51. The proposed park and ride facility would encourage the use of public transport and reduce the reliance on the private car for commuters, shoppers and visitors travelling between Bicester and Oxford whilst also assisting in reducing traffic congestion within Bicester created by visitors to Bicester Shopping Village. This would be in compliance with the objectives of Policy ESD1 to reduce the impacts of climate change and the reduction of carbon emissions.
- 4.52. The site is located within Flood Zone 1 which is at a low risk from flooding. The development of a park and ride in this location is therefore compliant with the requirements of the sequential test approach. A Level 2 Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been undertaken given that the proposed development covers an area of more than 1ha. The FRA has concluded that the proposed development would not cause unacceptable flood risk on the Site or elsewhere subject to the implementation of an appropriate drainage strategy to attenuate surface water run-off which restricts site run-off to existing Greenfield rates. A surface water attenuation pond has been included within the scheme design to which surface water on site would be directed. Surface water stored in this pond would be subject to controlled discharge to a highway verge drainage ditch to the south-east of the Site. The attenuation pond has been designed to accommodate a 1:100 year storm plus 30%. Porous materials would be utilised for the car park surface, which will provide additional storage and

further reduce any potential for surface run-off and associated flooding. The Flood Risk Assessment undertaken for the proposed development accompanies this Statement.

- 4.53. **Policy ESD10 'Protection & Enhancement of Biodiversity & the Natural Environment'** sets out a number of measures to achieve ecological protection and enhancement through new development. These include seeking net gains in biodiversity, protecting trees and re-using soils. The Policy seeks to resist development which would result in a loss of sites of biodiversity or geological value and encourage development which will result in gains to the natural environment through enhancement and retention measures. Relevant assessments are required to accompany applications for development which may have an impact on air quality, ecology etc.
- 4.54. The proposed development would not result in the loss of any significant ecological habitat and would not have any detrimental impacts on the natural or geological environment. The proposed development includes measures to strengthen and enhance the biodiversity of the site through improvements to boundary landscaping (including native species planting), the introduction of a balancing pond and the installation of bird boxes on Site. An Air Quality Assessment and an Ecological Assessment have both been undertaken which conclude that subject to the implementation on appropriate mitigation measures, the proposed development would not have any unacceptable impacts on these resources and that the biodiversity of the Site can be improved. The assessments accompany this Statement.
- 4.55. The protection and enhancement of the landscape is controlled through **Policy ESD13 'Local Landscape Protection & Enhancement'**. This Policy seeks to ensure enhancement to the character and appearance of the local landscape through new development proposals. The Policy states that this is particularly important in urban fringe locations. Development is expected to respect and enhance the local landscape character. Proposals should not cause undue visual intrusion into the open countryside or harm to important natural landscape features or topography, should be consistent with local character, should not harm the setting of settlements or buildings and should not historic landscape value.
- 4.56. The Site is located on the urban fringe of Bicester on land formerly used for agricultural purposes. The land is not of good agricultural quality and the Site itself does not contribute anything significant to the local landscape at present. It is considered that the development proposed would not have any detrimental impacts on the character and appearance of the local landscape or cause undue visual intrusion or harm to the open countryside. The development would be located adjacent to the new Kingsmere mixed use development which sets the urban context for the locality. The existing landscape planting along the boundaries of the Site would be enhanced through the development proposals and the new attenuation pond on site would add significant landscape value to the Site. The Site would also provide additional pedestrian links to the reserved Community Woodland to the west of the Site, maximising future access to it.
- 4.57. **Policy ESD15 'Green Borders to Growth'** seeks to ensure that proposals for development on the edge of built up areas are carefully designed and landscaped to soften the built edge and assimilate it into the landscape. Green buffers as indicated on the proposals maps will be kept free from development to protect the identity of settlements, vulnerable gaps, neighbouring villages and landscape or historic features. The Site is located within a green buffer between Bicester and the village of Chesterton. It should however be noted that the proposed development would not include and significant built development as its primary function would be as a car park and would not entirely close the gap between the two settlements. Whilst it would result in the loss of a small section of a much larger buffer area, the proposed park and ride would not result in settlement coalescence nor would it result in the loss of the distinct identities of the two settlements. The park and ride scheme has been designed to be as low key as possible and to be assimilated into the surrounding landscape as far as practicable. Existing boundary planting would be retained and enhanced to soften the edges of the Site. There would be no significant security/boundary fencing to the site, instead a low level timber post and rail fencing to define the Site boundary is proposed.

4.58. The design and layout of new development is controlled through **Policy ESD16 'Character of the Built Environment'**. This Policy requires all new development to complement and enhance the character of its context through sensitive siting, layout and high quality design. The proposed park and ride facility has been designed to a high quality to meet modern day standards, provide an appropriate function but also blend into the surrounding environment. The high quality design, coupled with a commitment to regular maintenance, would ensure that the appearance and functionality of the car park is maintained over time. The Site would be lit using a controllable lighting system and would incorporate separate pedestrian/cycle accesses to reduce the potential for conflict with cars and buses. This would help create a welcoming and safe environment for those using the facility. A surface water attenuation pond would form an attractive feature on entrance to the park which would have perimeter fencing and planting to restrict access. Existing landscaping around the perimeter of the Site would be enhanced and improved to further assist in assimilating the development into the surrounding area.

Summary

4.59. In light of the above, it can be concluded that the proposal is generally in compliance with the relevant planning policies and would:

- Provide a remote park and ride site which would encourage commuters, shoppers and visitors to travel between Bicester and Oxford using public transport instead of the private car, thereby reducing congestion and carbon emissions;
- Provide a local park and ride facility for visitors to Bicester Shopping Village at weekends and other busy periods, reducing traffic congestion within Bicester Town Centre and improving air quality and amenity;
- Not cause any increase in flood risk either on the Site or elsewhere;
- Incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage measures (SUDS) to ensure that surface water run-off from the Site does not exceed existing Greenfield run-off rates;
- Enhance the biodiversity value of the Site through the provision of a balancing pond, the strengthening of existing boundary planting with native species and the erection of bird boxes on the Site; and
- Not have any significant detrimental impacts on air quality, highway safety, landscape character, geological or heritage features.

5. Conclusions

Development Proposals

- 5.1. The proposed development would see the construction of a 580 space park and ride facility on land to the north-west of the A41, Bicester, Oxfordshire. The facility would provide a 'remote' park and ride for users travelling to Oxford and a 'local' park and ride for visitors to Bicester Village.

Compliance with Planning Policy

- 5.2. The proposed development is considered to comply with the National and Local Planning Policy and Guidance as outlined in Chapter 4 of this Statement.

Environmental Impacts

- 5.3. Through the formal Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening process, it has been determined by OCC Planning that the proposed scheme does not constitute EIA development and therefore an EIA has not been undertaken for the scheme or a resultant Environmental Statement produced.
- 5.4. Given the scale and nature of the proposed development, a number of technical assessments have been undertaken in order to assess the potential impacts of the proposed development upon the site and surrounding area. The technical assessments have concluded that subject to the implementation of specific mitigation measures, the proposed development would not have any significant long term detrimental impacts on the Site and surrounding area. All supporting assessments accompany this Statement.

Recommendation

- 5.5. The proposed development complies with planning policy and would have no significant detrimental impacts upon the Site and surrounding area. It is therefore recommended that the application be approved.

Appendices

Appendix 1:

EIA Screening Opinion Responses

Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment)
Regulations 2011

IS AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) NECESSARY?

Proposal:

500-space park and ride interchange

At: Land adjacent to new roundabout on A41 (junction with south west Bicester bypass), south west of Bicester

- | | | |
|---|---|-----|
| 1 | Has an Environmental Statement been submitted | Y/N |
| 2 | If not | |
| | a) Is the development listed in Schedule 1 | Y/N |
| | b) Is the development listed in Schedule 2 | Y/N |
| | c) If the answer to (b) is YES does it exceed any of the relevant thresholds and criteria in Schedule 2 | Y/N |
| 3 | Is there a Secretary of State Screening Direction or any pre-application screening opinion for the development? | Y/N |
| 4 | If the answer to 3 is NO then for any Schedule 2 development prepare a screening opinion as follows:- | |
| | a) Work through the sections as set out in Annex B of circular 02/99 (<i>Selection Criteria for Screening Schedule 2 Development</i>). Deal with each point under the following headings: | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Characteristics of development• Location of development• Characteristics of the potential impact | |
| | b) State why the characteristics of the development, the environmental sensitivity of the location and the characteristics of the potential impact does or does not mean that an ES is necessary. (Refer to paragraph 33 of EIA Circular 02/99 for advice). | |

Screening Opinion

It is proposed to develop a 500 space Park and Ride on a 2.03 ha site. No application has been submitted at this time and a screening opinion has been requested as part of pre-application discussions.

It is proposed that the site would primarily be used as a Park and Ride for Bicester. However, it would also function as overflow car parking for Bicester Shopping village and as a remote Park and Ride for Oxford.

This falls within Schedule 2, category 10 (b) 'urban development projects, including the construction of shopping centres and car parks, sports stadiums, leisure centres and multiplex cinemas.' It could also be considered to fall under 10 (c) – construction of an intermodal terminal. In either case the relevant threshold is a site area of 0.5 hectares, which this development exceeds.

Characteristics of the Development

Paragraphs A19 and A20 of Circular 2/99 advise that EIA is more likely to be required if the site area is more than 5 hectares. Paragraphs A18 and A20 advise that particular consideration should be given to the potential increase in traffic, emissions and noise. The proposed development area is significantly less than 5 hectares. The development is likely to cause an increase in traffic and associated emissions around the site area, which has the

potential to cause pollution and nuisance. However, the development is intended to relieve traffic and emissions in Bicester Town Centre where more people are likely to be affected by them.

Following the construction phase the development is not considered likely to use significant natural resources or produce significant quantities of waste. The risk of accidents is considered low.

Location of Development

The site for the proposed development is agricultural land 1 mile south of Bicester. The site is adjacent to a newly constructed five arm roundabout on the A41. The new roundabout provides a junction between the A41 and the newly constructed South West Bicester Bypass. An unclassified road to the village of Chesterton forms the southern boundary of the site. New residential development is taking place in south west Bicester, to the north of the new bypass.

The site is not located in a geographically sensitive area, a wetland, coastal zone, mountain area, forest area, nature reserve or park. However, it would involve the development of a green field site and change the use of an existing arable area.

The site has no designations for nature conservation or historic significance. However, it lies less than 300 metres from a Scheduled Ancient Monument (site of a Roman town.) There is a Local Wildlife Site approximately 600 metres away to the east of the A41.

The nearest centres of population are the village of Chesterton (750 metres) and Bicester (1.2 km) from the site. The new residential development underway will bring dwellings closer. The proposed site location is not considered to be in a sensitive area.

Characteristics of the potential impact

The potential impacts of the proposal include traffic, noise, emissions, visual impact, impacts on biodiversity, archaeology and changes to the drainage regime. The extent of the impact could be reasonably wide due to the proximity to residential areas. However, it is not considered likely that the development would have a direct and significant impact on any individual properties or people. The development has the potential to deliver a positive impact in terms of reducing traffic congestion on surrounding roads through transferring people from private cars onto buses for part of their journey. It has the potential to lead to a reduction in the number of cars on the local roads and town centre by up to 500 at any time.

There would be no transfrontier impacts. It is considered very likely that there would be an impact in terms of traffic and emissions but this is not likely to be of great magnitude or highly complex. There is the potential for a positive impact in the wider area. The impact would largely be for the duration of the development and reversible, although there is the potential for a longer term impact on the agricultural quality of the land. The environmental impacts in terms of noise and emissions are likely to peak during the day when the development would be most heavily used and reduce at night. However, the visual impact would be constant for the duration of the development.

Conclusion

Paragraph 33 of Circular 02/99 "Environmental Impact Assessment" states that in general EIA will be needed for Schedule 2 developments in 3 main types of cases:-

- a) for major developments which are of more than local importance;
- b) for developments which are proposed for particularly environmentally sensitive or vulnerable locations; and
- c) for developments with unusually complex and potentially hazardous environmental effects

Paragraph 41 states that a small number of developments may be likely to have significant effects on the environment because of the particular nature of their

impact. Consideration should be given to development which could have complex, long-term or irreversible impacts, and where expert and detailed analysis of those impacts would be desirable and would be relevant to the issue of whether or not the development should be allowed.

Circular 02/99 details indicative criteria and size thresholds, regarding potentially hazardous development, above which an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is more likely to be required. As set out above, the development is considerably less than the guidance of 5 hectares in site area.

Although it is anticipated that the proposed development has the potential to result in some environmental impacts including traffic, noise, emissions and visual impacts, it is considered that these should be limited. The nature of the development proposed is not considered to be of more than local importance or result in complex or hazardous effects.

In conclusion, the potential impacts of the proposed development would be limited in magnitude, complexity and duration. The proposal is not likely to have significant effects on the environment and therefore it is not considered that this Schedule 2 development warrants the preparation of an EIA. A formal EIA is not considered to be necessary.

However, detailed environmental information covering potential impacts including biodiversity, archaeology, drainage, traffic, air quality would need to be submitted with the planning application.

An EIA is needed

Y/N

Signed*M Thompson*..... (Case Officer)

Date3rd April 2013.....

Report approved by



Chris Kenneford, Planning Regulation Service Manager

On behalf of the Director for Environment & Economy

Date: 5 April 2013

Public Protection & Development Management

Andy Preston - Head of Public Protection & Development Management

Cherwell

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Direct Dial: 01295 227998
Our Ref: 13/00029/SO

1st May 2013

Dear Sirs

Proposed 500 Space Park and Ride, Part of OS Parcel 0006, South West of Foxey Lays Copse, Adjoining Oxford Road, Bicester

Request for Screening Opinion under Regulation 5 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment)(England) Regulations 2011.

Application Number 13/00029/SO

I write regarding your request for a 'Screening Opinion' under Regulation 5 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England) Regulations 2011 as to whether the above proposal requires an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

I consider that the proposed development is an 'Urban Development Project' falling within Schedule 2 Section 10(b) of the Regulations where the area of the development exceeds 0.5 hectares, which is the applicable threshold for the purpose of classifying the development as Schedule 2 Development.

The EIA Regulations are supplemented by guidance within Circular 2/99, paragraph 33 of that Circular gives advice on the main types of development that would require an EIA as follows:-

1. For major developments of more than local importance
2. Developments which are proposed on environmentally sensitive or vulnerable locations
3. Developments with unusually complex and potentially hazardous environmental effects

Consideration of the proposal has been given to the selection criteria for screening Schedule 2 developments in Schedule 3 of the Regulations and Circular 02/99. Furthermore, paragraph A18 of the annex to Circular 2/99 states that an EIA is unlikely to be required for the redevelopment of

land unless the new development is on a significantly greater scale than the previous use, or the types of impact are markedly different in nature or there is likely to be a very high level of contamination, or if the development is occurring in a 'sensitive area'.

It is considered that, whilst the development site is currently in agricultural use it lies adjacent to the South West Bicester urban extension which is currently under construction. The site is outside any designated area, and would not be of major or more than local importance and an assessment of the sites planning constraints has not revealed any ecological or other sensitive matters, although there is potential for archaeological finds, and, the site is not within a 'sensitive area' as defined by the Regulations. Given the nature of the proposal therefore, it is considered that the development does not fall into the above criteria, and I therefore conclude that the proposed development is unlikely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of its size, nature and location and that an Environmental Impact Assessment is therefore NOT required in this instance.

Whilst you are not required to provide an Environmental Statement with an application for the proposed development, the submission must still adequately cover ecological, archaeological, air quality, hydrology and transport issues together with the following constraints which have been identified:-

- Proximity of the public footpath
- Legally protected species, the site is within close proximity to Yellow Hammer and Grass Snake Populations

This letter constitutes the Local Planning Authority's formal 'Screening Opinion' of the proposed development under Regulation 5 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011.

Yours Faithfully



Andy Preston

Head of Development and Public Protection

Appendix 2:

Planning Submission Requirements Letter from OCC Planning



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



**OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL**

ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk

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Speedwell House
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Tel: 01865 815700

11/04/13

My ref: PRE.0003/13

Direct line: 01865 815901

Please ask for: **Mary Thompson**
Sent by email

e-mail: mary.thompson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Dear Aron,

Site details: Land adjacent to new roundabout on A41 (junction with south west Bicester bypass), south west of Bicester.

Description of proposed development: Proposed new 500 space Park and Ride.

Planning Officer dealing with your request: Mary Thompson

Thank you for attending a pre-application meeting on 10th April 2013.

The comments below record that meeting and are offered without prejudice to the determination of a future planning application for this development. Such an application would be assessed on its merits against the development plan and other material considerations at the time of submission.

Background

The proposal is for a 'remote' park and ride facility to serve Bicester and Oxford using existing bus services. It could also be used when required as a park and ride for Bicester Village outlet shopping centre. For those users Bicester Village would provide a shuttle bus service. The detailed design has not yet been drawn up but it is proposed that it would be a 500 space car park. It is not proposed to include a terminal building or associated facilities.

Planning Application Process

Once a planning application has been made and validated, we work to a 13 week target for determination. The likelihood of this being met depends on the complexity of the application, how comprehensive the information submitted is and the level of objection. If

objections are received then the decision cannot be delegated and would be made by Planning and Regulation committee. Fitting in with the committee timetable would then also affect the timescales for determination. The last two committee dates for 2013 are 21st October and 2nd December.

Consultees

A range of statutory and non-statutory consultees will be formally consulted for a 21 day period by OCC as Planning Authority following the submission of the application. These will include the District Council, neighbours within 350 metres, local Parish and Town Councils, internal consultees and expert bodies. The Oxfordshire Statement of Community Involvement contains more information.

Applicants are encouraged to liaise with stakeholders prior to the submission of an application to ensure that there is good communication and allow the potential for proposals to be amended in light of any legitimate concerns.

Delays following a decision

If planning permission were resolved to be granted then the permission would be issued as soon as possible after that resolution, unless there was a Section 106 agreement that needed to be signed first. Whether to implement the consent while there was still time for an objector to apply for a judicial review would be a decision for the applicant. The time period for judicial review is 3 months following the decision.

Planning Constraints

The site is not located in the Green Belt or Floodplain. Other constraints are identified below.

Planning Documents

Planning Statement – this would be required and should set out exactly what is proposed and why. In justifying the development it should consider not only transport policies set out in LTP3, but also the planning policies which are relevant to the development. These can be found in the NPPF and also in the District Council Local Plan. In the case of Cherwell there are three plans at different stages. There is an adopted Local Plan but it dates back to 1996, a non-statutory local plan and a new Local Plan in preparation which is currently out to consultation. Only the adopted local plan would be considered as Development Plan policy but the others are material considerations and as they are more recent and more likely to contain policies relevant to this site they would be used in the consideration of the application. However, the weight given to them would be limited by the fact they are not adopted. Paragraph 215 of the NPPF states that due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF. Paragraph 216 of the NPPF confirms that decision makers may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to the stage of preparation, the extent to which there are unresolved objections to the policies and the degree of consistency with the NPPF. The NPPF has a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraphs 29 to 41 in the NPPF relate to promoting sustainable transport.

It is recommended that you discuss the site with the planning department at Cherwell District Council prior to submission. I understand that you have contact details, but let me know if you would like me to provide any more information. The emerging Local Plan

refers to a Bicester Park and Ride associated with the South West Bicester development (paragraph C.15 and Policy Bicester 3) but does not refer to a specific site and this area proposed is shown as a 'green buffer' on Figure 5.2 'key Proposals: Bicester' contained within that plan.

Alternative site assessment – It is confirmed that as the site is neither in the Green Belt nor the flood plain a formal assessment to show that there are no suitable alternatives would not be required. However, the site proposed is green field open countryside and so will be assessed against policies related to the protection of the countryside. It is recommended that the planning statement sets out the justification for locating it here rather than on a previously developed site within the Bicester built up area or perimeter road. As the site is over 1 hectare a Flood Risk Assessment will be required and mitigation measures identified as appropriate.

Statement of Community Involvement – this should describe any engagement with stakeholders carried out prior to submission.

Noise/Lighting/Air quality Assessment – these are required and further advice about the scope should be obtained from the District Council Environmental Health team.

Biodiversity – At the meeting Tamsin Atley advised that an Extended Phase 1 Ecological survey would be required and this may lead to the recommendation that further survey work is also needed.

Flood Risk /Drainage – Gordon Hunt provided advice on this including the need for maximum SUDS coverage and storage on site. The Environment Agency can provide further information about the requirements for a Flood Risk Assessment. The contact in the first instance is Cathy Harrison, Planning Liaison Officer (01491 828515)

Land contamination assessment – The District Council holds these records. It is understood that land contamination was found on the site of the residential development to the north and therefore this should be considered for this application.

Archaeology – Richard Oram advised that this site is near a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM). Archaeological work is needed in order to establish whether this site also holds significant archaeological remains. If remains are found and they have the same archaeological interest as the SAM, the NPPF requires that they be preserved in situ. Therefore, it is crucial to get some archaeological evaluation of the site at an early stage. There could possibly also be an issue with affecting the setting of the SAM. English Heritage would advise on this but presumably this would be mitigated by the fact that the A41 runs between the application site and the SAM. Richard Oram agreed to speak to English Heritage to get their initial view on this.

Rights of Way – Sarah Aldous confirmed that no rights of way are directly affected, but it is considered that it would be beneficial if a link could be provided between the development and the community woodland adjacent (if it goes ahead.)

Transport Assessment (TA) -

Michael Deadman confirmed that he would expect the TA to include a worst case scenario i.e. the car park being at capacity.

If you have any questions regarding this response please contact me.

Yours sincerely

M Thompson

Mary Thompson
Senior Planning Officer

Disclaimer

Any advice given in relation to the planning history of the site, planning constraints or statutory designations does not constitute a formal response of the Council under the provisions of the Land Charges Act 1975.

Any pre-application advice given by Council Officers does not constitute a formal response or decision of the Council with regards to future planning consents.

Any views or opinions expressed are given in good faith, and to the best of ability, without prejudice to the formal consideration of any planning application, which will be subject to public consultation and ultimately decided by the Council. The Council cannot guarantee that new issues will not be raised following submission of a planning application and consultation upon it.

You should be aware that Officers cannot give guarantees about the final formal decision that will be made on your planning or related applications.

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