

Application no: 23/01558/DISC

Location: Proposed Himley Village North West Bicester, Middleton Stoney Road, Bicester

Transport Development Control

Recommendation:

Objection

Key issues:

This application is for a masterplan of the 'other land uses' area alongside Middleton Stoney Road, which separates the residential development from Middleton Stoney Road. Without understanding what the 'other uses' are, it's hard to comment on the suitability of this layout.

However, there are some key areas where it needs improvement in order to encourage walking and cycling by employees, users and residents

Detailed comments:

Pedestrian/cycle route along site frontage: This runs parallel to Middleton Stoney Road and would be used both by employees/residents to the site and as a main ped/cycle access to Himley Village. Whilst it is indicated that the buildings would have active frontage onto this route, in practice there is a narrow strip of green between the buildings and the path, and it is not clear whether this would be fenced off or open to the public. If the buildings are occupied as office or industrial premises they are unlikely to be occupied in the evening or weekends. Sandwiched between the hedge of Middleton Stoney Road and the buildings (or worse, their fences) the pedestrian/cycle route could be unattractive to use.

It's noted that green space is dotted around the area in pockets where it wouldn't have much public use. (In fact some of the areas are labelled 'landscaped parking/public pocket parks - they can't be both, so this needs clarification). The green space may be better located as a linear park alongside the cycle route, with seating and other landscaping interest. This would make it more attractive to use.

Without understanding the boundary treatments, it's hard to understand what this area would look like. If they have security fencing around them it could be very unattractive and give a poor sense of arrival to the development.

Connections to this path need to be sufficiently wide and open, i.e. not emerging from between fences directly onto the path. The connection through to the adjacent residential area should be a pedestrian/cycle route.

Bus stop area

The access through the hedge from the bus stop area should be opposite the path/open space area. The bus stop position on the main access road should be acknowledged on this masterplan. Public cycle parking should be located close to both bus stops.

Car parking

The layout seems to be dominated by car parking and the amount of car parking needs to be justified, taking into account the recently revised Oxfordshire Parking Standards. Consideration should be given to having a central car park rather than individual car parks for each unit, which would make more efficient use of parking spaces and allow for more significant communal landscaped areas, providing a better sense of place and wellbeing, as well as encouraging walking and cycling.

Cycle parking

Cycle parking should be conveniently located close to entrances of buildings. Some of the cycle stores appear to be at the back of the car park and some buildings don't seem to have cycle stores at all. Cycle parking must be in accordance with Oxfordshire Parking Standards.

This response needs to be read alongside our response to the consultations on the site-wide masterplan and adjacent reserved matters planning applications.

Note that a S278 submission had been made for adjacent works along Middleton Stoney Road by the previous developer but technical approval had not been granted, and a fresh submission would need to be made.

Officer's Name: Joy White

Officer's Title: Principal Transport Planner

Date: 20 July 2023