

Planning Inspectorate

Case Officer: APP/C3105/W/23/3326761

17<sup>th</sup> August 2023

### **Representation**

The MCNP Forum is a consortium whose principal members are twelve parish councils in the area of Cherwell District that is most affected by development at Heyford Park, the site of the appellant's proposed scheme for 230 houses. The Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan was "made" in May 2019; our policies operate as a part of the Development Plan for Cherwell.

We submitted our objection to approval of this scheme when it was considered by the LPA (as attached to this letter), and made representation at the Planning Committee where it was considered and refused.

We wish to become a Rule 6 interested party at the Public Enquiry, in order to present our case against the appeal and to have the opportunity to cross-examine witnesses.

Please advise whether we are acceptable as a Rule 6 party.

Regards

Martin Lipson

Chair, MCNP Forum

## RESPONSE TO PLANNING APPLICATION 21/04289/OUT

OS PARCEL 1570 ADJOINING AND WEST OF CHILGROVE DRIVE AND ADJOINING AND NORTH OF CAMP ROAD, HEYFORD PARK.

OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE ERECTION OF UP TO 230 DWELLINGS, CREATION OF NEW VEHICULAR ACCESS FROM CAMP ROAD AND ALL ASSOCIATED WORKS WITH ALL MATTERS RESERVED APART FROM ACCESS.

Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan Forum wishes to **OBJECT** to this application.

Application 21/04289/OUT is for development of a site wholly within the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) designated area, and therefore subject to NP policies as well as those of the approved Local Plan.

Our reasons for objecting are as follows:

### 1. Contrary to Local Plan policy Villages 5

The site was deliberately excluded from the designated area of the strategic development site for Heyford Park, which is the subject of Policy Villages 5. This exclusion reflected the fact that the site was considered to have not been “previously developed land” and was therefore a green field site. Some green field sites were incorporated in the designated strategic site as “areas with potential for additional development”, identified on the inset map for the policy, on p.358 of the Plan document. It is highly significant that this site was not one of them. The policy as a whole is subject to an over-riding directive that “a comprehensive approach will be required.....” and that “the additional land will not be permitted to be developed independently of the main development.....” (para. 291 of the Local Plan p.256).

It is clear from the above that Cherwell’s policy is that the site, now the subject of this application, was not intended to be developed. Indeed, an earlier application 14/02025/HYBRID was withdrawn when the Council made it clear to the applicant that development of this site (in this case for industrial use) was contrary to policy. It is interesting that the applicant’s Planning Statement fails to make any mention of this failed application in the summary of previous applications in section 3.7 of their document.

In response to a Scoping Opinion request from the present applicant for an Environmental Impact Assessment in December 2021, the Council responded (*inter alia*):

*“The site.... when taken together as a cumulative development with Policy Villages 5 would significantly exceed the indicative threshold of 1,000 units given the total number of dwellings to be provided as well as other development, which is proposed, to include community and social infrastructure, together with road infrastructure. The land is currently agricultural and given the scale of development proposed by these sites, there is likely to be significant urbanisation in this area and there are likely to be significant impacts including increases in traffic which may affect air quality, impacts during the construction phases, ecological impacts and impacts upon the local landscape.”*

### 2. Loss of greenfield land and biodiversity

The loss of this site to development would result in a loss of open countryside, green space, biodiversity and ecological assets of high value to the residents of Heyford Park. Development of the site would therefore be contrary to Local Plan policies ESD 10 and ESD 13. The latter policy in particular states that: “Proposals will not be permitted if they would (*inter alia*):

*cause undue visual intrusion into the open countryside; cause undue harm to important natural landscape features and topography; harm the setting of settlements, buildings, structures or other landmark features.”*

We submit that the application is contrary to each of the above criteria.

### **3. Loss of local landscape character**

Local Plan policy ESD 13 also states that all development should respect and enhance local landscape character. Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan policy PD3 "Development adjacent to Heyford Park" focusses on avoiding coalescence with surrounding settlements. The rationale for the policy makes specific reference to the "encroachment of further development extending the current boundary of Heyford Park" (para 3.2.20 of the MCNP), as being the principal concern underlying the policy.

It is clear that development of this site, the subject of this application, would damage local landscape character, including several of the criteria set out in 3.2.20 – in particular: loss of access to the countryside for the inhabitants of the settlement (of Heyford Park), and harm to the setting of and rural character of the settlement.

### **4. Incorrect Traffic Assessment**

The accompanying Traffic Assessment, prepared by the applicant in response to a requirement by OCC Highways, is not credible. Our reasons for this statement include the following:

- the TA is based on the Bicester Transport Model which contains a number of inaccuracies. A list of errors was submitted to OCC, but as yet no response has been forthcoming.
- in particular, the Bicester Transport Model greatly underestimates traffic from the West to Heyford Park. The traffic flow map shows 499 vehicles per am peak on the B4030 through Lower Heyford in 2031. This includes all background traffic, all traffic generated by the Heyford Park Masterplan plus this application and all traffic generated by Bicester's expansion up to 2031. However, the figure of 499 vehicles in 2031 is less than the traffic currently recorded - 605 vehicles per am peak (video recording taken in May 2022 by Lower Heyford PC). An explanation for this major anomaly is needed.

Unless and until a credible TA is submitted, we consider that the impact of increased traffic as a result of this application cannot be properly assessed, and a decision should therefore be deferred.

**Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan Forum,**

**May 2022**

