

**Application No.:** 19/01740/HYBRID  
**Applicant's Name:** Mr Kelvin Pearce  
**Proposal:** This application comprises a 'hybrid' planning application comprising: - Outline planning permission (all matters reserved except for access) for up to 23,400sq.m of B1 development (Use Classes B1a and/or B1b and/or B1c); highway works (including provision of a new roundabout at the junction between Vendee Drive and Wendlebury Road); creation of a wetland and landscaped areas; and associated infrastructure works. - Full planning permission for a health and racquets club, associated access and car parking, outdoor tennis courts, air dome, outdoor swimming pool, spa garden and terrace, and associated landscaping.  
**Location:** Land Adj To Promised Land Farm, Wendlebury Road, Chesterton

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## Comments from the Economic Growth Service

### Summary

Overall, I accept the proposed health club could contribute towards the creation of an attractive and viable business park to support the Council's objective of enhancing local employment opportunities through the attraction of high-value, knowledge-based employers. I support the stated aims of providing B1-focused premises with flexibility to meet the needs of occupiers within a high-quality environment. Given that occupiers' needs must be foreseen and provided for, and the apparent demand and viability of such flexible provision, I would consider it reasonable for this proposal to also contain detailed plans for the first demonstrator buildings for the B1 hybrid use as part of a coherent proposal.

### Catalyst Bicester

The report produced by VSL and partners – as translated into the Planning and Design & Access statements - provides helpful reflection upon recent experience along the A34 corridor, current market conditions and expectations of occupiers. There is clear market demand contrasting with a reluctance of some developers to speculatively develop without firstly securing an assured occupier.

An important point is made regarding Oxford Technology Park but could equally apply in this case: "Technology businesses are focused on rapid development of the business and these companies will often react to circumstances as and when they arrive rather than planning a more traditional business growth path. These businesses rarely have the necessary time to wait to acquire a build to suit solution and almost always require ready to occupy speculatively built accommodation that provides a flexible and adaptable offering for laboratory, R&D, office and technical requirements."

I concur with the point that the general lack of available space is a barrier to growth of many businesses within the local market, and an expectation of modern features, high quality environment and access to facilities for staff to use.

The location of the site is relatively accessible if not prominent, as opposed to what may be considered true 'backland'. Ironically, the B1 uses would be moved back from the A41 due to the leisure use being permitted. It would therefore be reasonable to expect a detailed planning application for speculative development of at least part of the site to respond to the identified market demand and occupier need for readily available premises to be constructed.

I agree that the provision of hybrid buildings to support a mix of office, research & development, production and ancillary distribution would suit the occupier need that I am aware of, especially in light of the experience in Kidlington and the likely transfer of market demand eastwards along the Oxford to Cambridge Arc.

### **Access**

As an exemplar garden/eco town, movement of people and vehicles will be crucial for the success of this site and its relationship with adjacent sites. Barriers between sites should be removed, sustainable transport facilities should be provided and the safety of vulnerable users should be assured.

### **Conclusion**

The proposal has great potential to herald much-needed hybrid-B1 development to satisfy market demand and the ambition for enhanced employment opportunities in Bicester. The creation of the proposed leisure use would create job opportunities, modern facilities and relate well to the hotel and people working locally – subject to those work places also be being built. Indeed, the leisure use would remove a prime part of the site allocated for generally higher value knowledge-related employment. It would therefore be reasonable to expect – especially given market intelligence of viability and occupier expectations of ready availability of premises – for an inter-dependent detailed planning consent to be sought for the first phase of hybrid-B1 premises.

With such a coherent proposal at this stage, I would support the development (option 4) comprising this site and the poultry farm site being considered as a single, larger and doubtless more viable site.

**Steven Newman**  
**Senior Economic Growth Officer**  
Cherwell District Council

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