

3 October 2019

Cllr Dr Suzanne Bartington
c/o Oxfordshire County Council
County Hall
New Road
Oxford
OX1 1ND



Dear Cherwell District Council Planning Committee Members,

Re Planning Application: 19/01746/OUT Land Adj To Promised Land Farm Wendlebury Road, Chesterton

In my capacity as Cycling Champion for Oxfordshire County Council, I am writing to raise my concerns regarding the inadequate provision of active travel network connectivity with regard to the above outline planning application.

Bicester has achieved local and national recognition as a NHS England 'Healthy New Town', with a stated vision to make it attractive and affordable for people of all ages to live healthy, sustainable lifestyles, applying a place-based population-wide prevention programme.¹ The town is also the location for our first Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) in Oxfordshire; a key Government initiative to provide evidence for prioritised investment in walking and cycling infrastructure provision.²

The *Active and Healthy Travel Strategy Connecting Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan (LTP4)*³ (and emerging LTP5) aims to ensure active travel is the first choice for more journeys; an aspiration not reflected in the proposed connectivity arrangements for this development. The Propensity to Cycle Tool also demonstrates the potential to increase modal share of cycling to work in the Bicester area from 6% baseline (2011 census) to over 20%, as currently observed in Oxford City. The CLP allocation Policy Bicester 10 places several obligations upon local development, including a requirement for 'provision and encouragement for sustainable travel options as the preferred modes of transport rather than the private car'. Furthermore, modal shift to sustainable transport modes across the county will be critical for achieving reductions in air pollution, known to be harmful for human health from before birth to old age, contributing to an estimated 1 in 20 early deaths in Oxfordshire each year.⁴

In addition, cycling to work is recognised to deliver multiple public health benefits for the mental and physical and health of employees including a 15% in employee's productivity, reduced sickness absence and improved punctuality.⁵ The health benefits of cycling are estimated to outweigh any risks by a ratio of 20:1, with reductions in cardiovascular, respiratory and metabolic disease risk in later life.⁶

I therefore object to these existing proposals, which are not in alignment with these overarching policy ambitions and will not achieve requisite connectivity to transport hubs and housing development sites.

Specifically, I wish to raise the following areas of concern:

- 1) Proposed connections to Bicester Village and Bicester North stations are inadequate to achieve modal shift to sustainable modes of travel. The Park and Ride site is within close proximity to the proposed business park; yet provision is not been planned for safe, protected, travel along Vector Road or for signalised crossings of the A41, which would facilitate access for those of all ages (including those with disabilities). There are no planned links to the Graven Hill or Kingsmere housing developments, reflecting a lost opportunity to provide safe active travel to employment site and amenity links among local employee and residents.
- 2) The development encompasses a significant section of NCN51 along Wendlebury road. The plans claim to improve the cycling provision but indicate only a mixed use path of 2.5 m width without cycle priority at side junctions; therefore not in accordance with the Cycling Design Standards.⁷

- 3) Given the additional car and HGV traffic (quoted as being 600-1800 cars per hour and 1000-3000 HGVs per day) a segregated cycle path with priority over the adjoining roads, including traffic calming measures and a 'dutch style' roundabout at Wendlebury Road should be considered. At present the plans are focused upon providing better circulation and vehicle access (by widening approaches from each direction along Wendlebury Road), which does not reflect the strategic need to achieve modal shift away from private vehicle usage.
- 4) The proposals indicate 250 car parking spaces and only 20 cycle spaces, this shows insufficient ambition regarding active travel and is likely to contravene the OCC guidelines of 1 space per 150m². It is also not evident if these are enclosed, protected lockable facilities or open air spaces.
- 5) Existing plans indicate access way to the leisure centre comprising an unnecessary long and circuitous route from some directions (e.g. the south and west). Additional access should be provided to ensure active travel is as direct as possible, to ensure a 'multi access for active travel' approach should be taken across the development.
- 6) Plans for Climate Change mitigation do not include any mention of active travel. Transport is recognised to contribute a third of all carbon dioxide emissions in the UK, with the large majority of emissions from road transport.

I therefore hope that you consider the above concerns in your detailed consideration of this outline application.

Yours faithfully



Cllr Suzanne Bartington
Oxfordshire County Council Cycling Champion
Oxfordshire County Councillor (Witney North and East)

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- 1) <https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/innovation/healthy-new-towns/demonstrator-sites/eco-bicester/>
 - 2) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-cycling-and-walking-infrastructure-plans-technical-guidance-and-tools>
 - 3) <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/connecting-oxfordshire/policy-and-overall-strategy>
 - 4) Director of Public Health Annual Report for Oxfordshire. August 2017. Available at: <https://www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/publichealth/2016-17DPHAnnualReportforHOSC.pdf>
 - 5) Celis-Morales et al. British Medical Journal 2017; 357 doi: <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.j1456> (Published 19 April 2017)
 - 6) Paffenbarger R et al (1986), Physical activity, all-cause mortality and longevity of college alumni. New England Journal of Medicine, vol. 314(10); pp 605-613
 - 7) Oxfordshire Cycling Design Standards. <https://www.cycling-embassy.org.uk/file/oxfordshire-cycling-design-standards>