

# EDGARS

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Cherwell District Council  
Bodicote House  
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OX15 4AA

Our Ref: 689/015  
Your Ref: 19/02431/DISC

20/12/2019

Dear Rebekah,

## **DISCHARGE OF CONDITION 7 (TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT PLAN) OF 18/01333/F**

Further to our recent discussions, I am writing to you regarding the submitted training and employment plan and apprenticeship opportunities to be supported in respect of the New Technical Site (NTS) at Bicester Heritage. It is acknowledged by the applicant that Condition 7 seeks opportunities for apprenticeships in construction and related trades.

The NTS will make a positive-sum contribution to the provision of apprenticeships and employment opportunities for apprentices to move into skilled employment. It is a unique project on the Bicester Heritage site, which is currently providing opportunities for apprentices in a range of sectors – mostly automotive and related sectors.

The key facts in respect of the existing apprenticeship opportunities on the site can be summarised as follows:

- **Heritage Skills Academy (HSA) – Institute for Apprenticeships:** Currently there are around 100 apprentices studying on the existing technical site. The target is to grow to 200 as part of the New Technical site, with future ambitions of 400 per year by 2023. In March 2019 HSA opened a new coachbuilding and trim facility at Bicester Heritage. Building on the success to date, the New Technical site will allow HSA to expand further. In 2020 HSA will be expanding into Bicester Heritage's New Technical Site. Currently, there are around 100 apprentices studying on the existing technical site. The target is to grow to 200 as part of the New Technical site, with future ambitions of 400 per year by 2023.
- **Banbury and Bicester College:** work closely with employers to ensure their learning programmes help develop the skills, attributes and confidence that are needed for the workplace. One such pathway is the classic vehicle restoration programme to help

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students develop the skills they need for a career in the industry. There are currently between 30 – 60 students studying per year on this course which is at the existing Technical Site at Bicester Heritage. The opportunity for apprenticeships and training will be expanded through the increased number of tenants moving into the New Technical Site and Technical Site as part of the proposed development.

At the time of writing there are approximately 130-160 apprentices employed across the existing Technical Site, with ambition to grow this by 250 apprentices to be directly supported by through the contribution of the New Technical Site. Furthermore, the added benefit of embedding apprenticeship opportunities into a place with many employment opportunities allows connections between colleges, apprentices and potential future employers to be made. The New Technical Site will further these opportunities.

### **Construction of the New Technical Site**

The NTS construction work will be undertaken by Buckingham Group Contracting Ltd, who have a history of supporting apprenticeships and upskilling the work force and have been winners of regional awards for providing apprentices. At the time of writing, Buckingham have confirmed that they have 14 trainees, 59 apprentices and 17 graduates in the business overall. It is their intention to involve these apprentices and graduates in the NTS project.

Buckingham have confirmed that they have a trainee commercial manager that is working on the scheme and that their sub-contractors are also likely to have trainees and apprentices working on the NTS construction as well. During the initial phase of the project, Buckingham have also been using an apprentice Quantity Surveyor on the project. It is necessary that the buildings are completed by individual tenants, which is considered further below.

Having regard to sector in which the business moving to the New Technical Site are involved in, they are often niche businesses with bespoke requirements. As an exemplar project with high quality design, the unique type of businesses that will be attracted to the site requires a construction process involving two phases to ensure quality construction.

The first phase is the construction of the shell, which is followed by a second phase of fit out by individual tenants. The first phase allows Bicester Heritage to ensure quality and maintain their brand, whilst the second phase is required to deliver bespoke facilities for individual tenants to meet their own requirements.

Whilst the applicant understands the main thrust of Condition 7, which is to provide construction and related apprentices, it is suggested that the two phase construction approach required does not lend itself to their timely delivery, whilst also ensuring timely delivery of the project and meeting the requirements of tenants.

The New Technical Site will clearly make a considerable contribution to apprenticeship opportunities at the site. It is therefore suggested that this contribution means the requirement to provide training and employment opportunities has been exceeded and the condition can be discharged.



Please do give me a call if you wish to talk through any of the above and I would be happy to do so.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

***William Sparling***

William Sparling

Senior Planner  
Edgars