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Sent by email: rebekah.morgan@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

27 March 2020

Dear Rebekah

Re: 19/02708/OUT Outline:- Provide new employment units comprising B1 (Business), B2 (General Industrial), B8 (Storage) and D1 (Education) uses with ancillary offices, storage, display and sales, with all matters reserved except for access

We are grateful for an opportunity to submit representations on behalf of our members. I write on behalf of the British Gliding Association (BGA) which is the National Governing Body responsible for the conduct of the sport of gliding in the UK. As the BGA's Development Officer, I am authorised by the Executive Committee to make this response on their behalf.

Currently Bicester airfield is used for gliding and aviation purposes by one of our member clubs, Bicester Gliding Centre (BGC). However, the future status as a site for a member club in doubt as BGC have been given notice that their current lease will end on 30th June 2020.

The BGA makes use of the Sport England Significant Area for Sport (SASP) scheme. Bicester airfield is registered as a National SASP. Therefore, the comments that follow are in relation to the BGA's interest in developments that might affect the future suitability of Bicester airfield for gliding related aviation activities.

In order to understand the potential impact of the proposals on gliding operations on Bicester airfield, the Bicester Motion (BM) planning proposal has been discussed at length with Bicester Gliding Centre. As the current airfield operators BGC are the experts with respect to aviation operations on Bicester airfield. The club says that they can live with these proposed buildings, with some reservations about their height; therefore the BGA is not in a position to comment otherwise. However, the BGA is aware that discussions between BM and BGC are ongoing and there is some possibility that any future use of Bicester airfield by BGC may be conditional on BGC not opposing BM planning proposals. Without an independent aviation assessment, it is not possible to understand any potential operational implications and/or limitations of the siting of the proposed buildings contained in 19/02708/OUT.

The BGA has concerns that with the creep of development, incursion into the omnidirectional nature of the airfield could be incremental, ultimately limiting or curtailing the possibility of aviation on the site. On that front, the BGA notes the inclusion of the diagram [‘LVIA Figure 9’](#) which has been submitted with this application. It indicates further developments including a ‘Demonstration / Drivers’ Experiences track’ which, if built, would pose serious concerns as, in their current form, these plans are likely to severely limit, if not curtail, aviation on Bicester airfield. There should not be any inference of approval of that document in this planning proposal. In regard to establishing mitigations to proposals put forward in ‘LVIA Figure 9’, the BGA would be keen to support processes to find solutions that could accommodate continued gliding activities on the site. The BGA would also be keen to work with other stakeholder organisations such as Sport England and Historic England to support processes to seek suitable mitigations.

Yours sincerely

Alison Randle MSc
Development Officer

cc. Peter Harvey, Chairman Bicester Gliding Centre
Dave Latimer, Chair BGA Development Committee
Pete Stratten, BGA Chief Executive
Richard Peats, Historic England
Bob Sharples RIBA MRTPI Principal Planning Manager - South Team, Sport England