

WENDLEBURY PARISH COUNCIL

Mrs Jane Olds, Parish Clerk

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Caroline Ford
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20 April 2020

Dear Caroline,

20/00293/OUT

The Parish Council considered planning application reference 20/00293/OUT at Bicester Gateway Business Park, Wendlebury Road for "Outline application (Phase 1B) including access (all other matters reserved) for approximately 4,413 sqm B1 office space (47,502 sqft) GIA, approximately 273 residential units (Use Class C3) including ancillary gym, approximately 177 sqm GIA of café space (Use Class A3), with an ancillary, mixed use co-working hub (794 sqm/ 8,550 sqft GIA), multi-storey car park, multi-use games area (MUGA), amenity space, associated infrastructure, parking and marketing boards" at a meeting on 26 March.

While the Parish Council supports the concept of a development designed to deliver high quality employment in research and development of products and processes that encourages the knowledge economy, the Council objects to the current proposals on the following grounds.

The Parish Council was particularly concerned with the real impact of traffic congestion from the developments in Local Plan Policy Bicester 10, not only on the A41, but the surrounding roads and the Wendlebury Road through the village.

1. The A41 and Bicester itself are already experiencing operational stress and a number of serious collisions and fatalities have been reported at the A41/Vendee Drive junction, and on the A41 near Wendlebury in recent years.
2. Both Junctions 9 and 10 of the M40 are already operating at capacity and when accidents occur, significant queueing and rat running occurs on surrounding roads.
3. Problems and hold ups will inevitably lead to more rat running through Wendlebury.

4. In spite of the claim by the applicant in their Transport Statement, the Parish Council believes that the development will generate a significant amount of travel, as potential users of the site may not necessarily come from Oxford or be local, and by virtue of its location will neither reduce the need to travel, nor reduce dependence on private cars.
5. The applicant did indeed have an informal meeting to outline some early thoughts with the Parish Council, but these were not on the scale of the proposals in this application. This application represents an over-intensification of the site.

The objection is supported by the following policies:

1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in paragraph 108 states that “it should be ensured that appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be, or have been taken up, given the type of development and its location.”
2. Policy SL4 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 states that “all development where reasonable to do so, should facilitate the use of sustainable modes of transport to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling.”
3. Policy ESD1 states that, “Measures will be taken to mitigate the impact of development within the District on climate change...delivering development that seeks to reduce the need to travel and which encourages sustainable travel options including walking, cycling and public transport to reduce dependence on private cars.”

This application is one of a number of planning applications in relation to the implementation of Local Plan Policy ‘Bicester 10,’ including The Holiday Inn complex, Bicester Office Park (the latter consented for 50,000sqm of B1), application 19/01746/OUT and 19/01740/HYBRID that includes a leisure Complex and this application.

The Parish Council argues that each of these applications will generate their own traffic and transport issues and it is the cumulative impact of these developments adjacent to each other that will lead to real impact on the local road network infrastructure. Further traffic will also be generated by the new secondary school at Kingsmere and the new shopping complex.

Planning Officers have taken the view in the past that each application should be considered on its merits, however the Parish Council is of the view that where developments accumulate, the following Regulations should apply in each of the applications.

The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England) Regulations 2017 states within Schedule 3(1) that “the characteristics of a development must be considered having regard in para b) the cumulation with other development” and within Schedule 3(2) that “the existing land use” and Schedule 4(4) “description of the development on the environment which should cover... cumulative effects”.

In summary, the Parish Council has serious concerns with regard to the sustainability of the proposed development and its impact on the local road network and over intensive use of the site. The scheme represents a change of use, and departure from the Local Plan.

The basis of this application is in fact a residential one in its majority use of the site, which is not what the site was allocated for and not what Bicester 10 was aiming to achieve on an important gateway site to the town.

However, if the Council is minded to approve this application, the Parish Council would expect to see a formal Planning Condition with a Framework Travel Plan which should also include discussions with those Parish Councils affected by the cumulative developments in Bicester 10 before any development is permitted.

I trust that this is of help to you.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Olds

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