

## **BICESTER GATEWAY PHASE 1B: JOB CREATION CALCULATION (ADDENDUM)**

**29 MAY 2020**

This paper addresses two questions posed by our Case Officer in response to the jobs creation calculations we submitted in April 2020.

**We have accepted the position that Phase 2 will deliver 1500 jobs (which includes 110 at the health club) compared to the assumption in your report of 1170 for Phase 2 (leading to your conclusion of 1595 across Bicester 10 as a whole). We have then taken the 425 for Phase 1 (as a total between the new Phase 1b and the hotel) and added that onto the 1500 giving 1925 jobs across Bicester 10. This was reported within the Committee Reports for the Phase 2 applications. I would therefore intend to replicate the above for Phase 1b rather than presenting a discrepancy in terms of numbers reported – are you content with that given your Job Creation Calculation paper?**

I am content with this, although Albion would have stretched every sinew to get to 1500 jobs with the “maximum” 35% B1a mix.

As explained below, I used a generic 1:30 ratio to be consistent with the very broad calculations we did with Adrian Colwell in 2014, at the time the policy for Bicester Gateway was being put together. I suspect Albion have now been more precise, Use Class by Use Class, area by area; with the specific knowledge of their Master Plan. In addition, their website refers to 1,750 jobs: <https://albionland.co.uk/projects/catalyst-bicester/> Whether any of these higher numbers are consistent with their TA is another matter, and we remain perplexed as to why 500 jobs on Phase 1B in 2017 required works to the A41 roundabout slips as a pre-commencement matter, yet 1500 jobs on Phase 2 now do not. However, these arguments have gone and are of no major interest to us now – provided the County is consistent with their stance in relation to our current Phase 1B submission.

**I do however have one query relating to how the job numbers for Phase 1B have now been calculated – it would appear that 1 job per 12sq m has now been used giving 367 jobs compared to previous calculations which were based upon 1 job per 30 sq m. Whilst I can see where these figures per sq m come from within the table taken from the Employment Densities Guide, I wonder if you could just explain the difference between how the calculation is being undertaken now compared to how the calculation was undertaken for the consented scheme for phase 1B.**

The answer to the 1:30 question starts with the 3,500 set out in Policy 10; being a figure that Bloombridge gave to the Policy Team at Cherwell in support of the allocation during the examination in 2014 (relating to discussions around the SOCG). It was a generic calculation, in 2014, which went something like this for Phase 1 and Phase 2 combined, based on the information then available:

- 50 acres at 20,000 sq ft B1 to the acre = 1,000,000 sq ft (95,000 sq m)
- 95,000 sq m at 1 job per 30 sq m = 3,200 jobs

Arguably you may now get, say, 23,000 sq ft of B1 to the acre, in part to reflect changes in car parking ratios (from 1:20 sq m to 1:30 sq m) and innovations in building design, but I would say 20,000 sq ft to the acre still remains a good/simple benchmark for local plan purposes, ie in advance of a full constraints analysis and detailed design. This may provide a partial explanation of Albion's higher job yield calculation – ie more detailed information is available.

The 1:30 ratio is applied as a 'rule of thumb' for technology parks at the early stages of master planning, including by market leaders such as Arlington Securities and MEPC. But we have now undertaken significant work and are now clear that we are targeting B1a on Phase 1B (at 1:12), not B1 generally (at 1:30); noting that B1a 'office' buildings are more compatible with our proposed innovation community concept than 'sheds'. With the benefit of detailed design work we are now happy to depart from the generic approach taken for the extant consent, where we felt it was particularly important to be consistent with the local plan methodology – note, for example, that our original application in 2016/17 was not considered policy compliant, so we took the decision to limit any possible areas of challenge/disagreement.

Our economist, Dr Rob Harris of Ramidus Consulting, always states that the jobs yield ratio varies greatly according to the precise use and mix, notably the office content, whether the efficiencies of a pre-let are available, and whether the site is in town or out of town. The ratio has also sharpened significantly for B1(a) in the last 5 years for now familiar reasons relating to occupancy costs, technology, and the efficiencies achieved from a range of work place initiatives. In simple terms, though, we have  $14,972/30 = 500$  for the extant permission and  $4413/12 = 367$  for the current application.