

Comment for planning application 20/02469/SCOP

Application Number	20/02469/SCOP
Location	Land On The North East Side Of Gavray Drive Bicester
Proposal	Scoping Opinion - Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the allocated Gavray Drive site in Bicester
Case Officer	Bernadette Owens
Organisation Name	Christopher Young
Address	23 London Road,Bicester,OX26 6BU
Type of Comment	Comment
Type	neighbour
Comments	<p>I am a local resident who does walk over the proposed redline area from time to time for recreational purposes. My professional background is that of an Inspector of Ancient Monuments and officer of English Heritage and its predecessor with more than 40 years experience, and with direct experience of carrying out and evaluating Heritage Impact Assessments which use similar methodologies and can form the cultural heritage aspect of an EIA. The land north of Gavray Drive and east of the Langford Brook is de facto an important public amenity used by many people as well as being a relict rural landscape with significant ecological, cultural heritage, and landscape aspects. It is also an important green lung in an increasingly developed area. The application at this stage is not for an actual development but for agreement to the proposed scoping study for the Environmental Impact Assessment which should identify any adverse impacts on the environment of the site including its cultural heritage. My current comments are directed solely at the scoping study and not at the wider issue of whether the development should eventually receive consent. The scoping study makes the point that there have been several previous EIAs which will act as the baseline for the new EIA. It also makes the point that it will take into account any changes in the evidential base which have emerged since the previous studies were carried out. It is important that this aspect of the study is carried out thoroughly and objectively since new evidence is available and may change previous conclusions and recommendations. In the case of cultural heritage, the County Archaeologist has pointed out the new evidence of the Environment Agency's Lidar data and the Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Characterisation data. The applicant's commitment to a new baseline assessment of the available evidence is welcome, and needs to be carried out thoroughly. Once completed the baseline assessment needs to be thoroughly evaluated to identify the significance of the cultural heritage, before any judgement is made about the impact of the proposed development. It would be helpful if the Council's decision on this scoping study, if allowing it go forward, adds a rider that the EIA needs to review the entire evidence base to collect and assess new evidence since the previous EIAs, and to assess all possible impacts on the basis of the evidence now available.</p>
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Attachments	