

## **Parish Council Response to the Bicester Motion Automotive Experience planning application 21/01224/OUT**

Stratton Audley Parish Council has reviewed the application for the Experience Centre and is generally supportive of the plans put forward. Although the application is for Outline planning permission, it is clear that much time and effort has gone into the thinking behind the plans and if they are developed as envisaged, it will help to ensure the continued viability of Bicester Motion as a major centre of leisure facilities as well as technical expertise in the automotive sector. It is in this spirit of support and cooperation that we would like the following concerns to be given serious consideration.

Stratton Audley is the closest rural village to Bicester Motion and less than 1 mile from the new development. The proposed site is located right next to a currently difficult and dangerous junction where the Bicester Road that leads to the village meets the A4421. Our concerns fall broadly into three areas:

- **Road safety particularly for cars, pedestrians and cyclists**
- **Increased traffic congestion**
- **Noise generated by test and track side events**
- **Increased air traffic surrounding the village**

### **Road Safety & Increased Traffic Congestion**

- We accept that the whole area is going to become more congested once the Experience Centre is open to the public in perhaps four years' time and we support any Highways improvements to the main A4421;
- Prior to this, the build process will also bring its challenges and ensuring that all site traffic only uses the main entrance is one way to reduce congestion at the Bicester road junction, so this condition needs to be built into any agreement;
- The A4421 at this particular point where it intersects with the junction with the Bicester road leading to Stratton Audley is already a dangerous pinch point, so with increased traffic especially large delivery vehicles using the secondary service entrance in the Bicester Road, it will quickly turn into a black spot. We accept that there are no significant Highway statistics to support this in terms of accidents, but this is because local people who ride bikes or like to walk, tend to avoid this part of the road;
- We believe that the A4421 over a short 300 yard section leading up to the junction with Bicester Road needs widening and a right hand filter included and would ask OCC Highways to insist upon improvements to this stretch of road as a priority measure;

- We seek assurances that all work to the road infrastructure is carried out and completed in advance of the commencement of works within the site, since both the A4421 and the Bicester Road will become more dangerous in the building phase (with construction traffic and service vehicles) prior to any congestion caused by increased numbers of visitors;
- In order to establish current vehicle movements, we ask that a traffic volume measure test is set up on the Bicester Road. This data can be compared to data captured in 2014/15 when traffic volumes were last measured on the same road. This we believe will demonstrate to what extent volumes have increase in a five year period;
- We also believe that traffic calming measures must be introduced such as a lowering of the speed limit to at least 40mph on A4421 from the main roundabout up to the Stratton Audley turning.

### Cycle and Pedestrian Safety

- Safety for walkers and cyclists along the Bicester Road from the village will become more problematic unless a dedicated access route is built and extended to the new Bicester Motion footpath on the A4421 by the main site entrance.
- Reference is made in several of the submission documents to pedestrian and cycle routes surrounding the site and providing good connections with neighbouring residential areas, but this is only true in the direction towards Bicester and not to the north and north east of the site which leads out to open countryside and villages;
- Central to the outline approval should be that adequate protection is provided for pedestrians and cyclists in the area who are badly served at the moment and this development will only worsen the situation;
- We have long campaigned for a cycle path to be included at the Bicester Road junction, as the A4421 is already inaccessible to most pedestrians and cyclist at this point and we feel there is a need for greater clarity as to how this is going to be achieved by both Bicester Motion and OCC Highways;
- There is the possibility that pedestrians and cyclists could avoid venturing onto the A4421, if there is open access to the Experience Centre which would mean that internal roads/paths could be used to access the main dual use path that Bicester motion plan to build from the Main entrance along the A4421 in the direction of Bicester. This would be an acceptable solution but would need open access to be included as a condition of development;
- If this is not thought to be feasible then provision for a cycle/pedestrian path alongside the perimeter fence from the main entrance on the A4421 to the service entrance on the Bicester Road should form part of the plans;
- There is also a public footpath that runs through part of the proposed development from the direction of the village and we understand provision to re-route this will form part of future plans when the Wilderness area is

developed. However we do not think this is acceptable and ask for this to be rightly built into this current application;

- The most logical route for this will be to re-route the ROW and run it parallel to the Bicester Road behind the hedge row and between the proposed 4x4 track, up against the perimeter fence. We maintain that it should be made into a shared use path and extend up to the secondary service access entrance at the top of Bicester Road.

### **Noise from Trackside Events and Increased Aircraft Activity**

- One of the big issues that has frequently been raised by residents in the past, concerns that of noise coming from the existing site, since on event days, when the wind is blowing towards the village sound can easily be heard;
- We appreciate that noise impact assessments have been carried out on and at the perimeter of the site, but question the limited assessments that they have provided since they are concentrated on the site and in the immediate vicinity of Caversfield. These tests were nevertheless heard in Stratton Audley which is three-quarters of a mile away;
- We believe it should be possible to set up sound monitors further away and feel that additional tests are most important. We would ask for this to form part of further investigations with monitors situated on the border with the village Conservation Area before any final decisions are made with regard to noises levels that will determine acceptability;
- We understand that there are no plans for building sound barriers as these are not proved to be effective and so wonder what supplementary measures could be employed, in order to mitigate against higher sound volumes at certain times;
- We accept that there are bound to be increased aircraft numbers but would expect there to be limits placed on numbers and types of aircraft. What provision is being made in this area?
- We would like clarification on aircraft circuit patterns in the skies over and around the village as there have been some infringements in the past which have been unacceptable;
- We also seek reassurance that the re-configuration of the landing and take-off field into two strips of grass runway, will not result in aircraft being directed over the village in such a pattern that does not exist at the moment.

### **Bicester Motion Master Plan**

Bicester motion are aware of some confusion amongst members of the public with regard to what this application covers and have subsequently issued a clearer plan, which is helpful. However we question why outline planning permission is not sought for the whole site rather than the piecemeal applications that we see and feel this should be considered by the planning authority.