



Langford Locks, Kidlington, Oxfordshire OX5 1HZ www.experienceoxfordshire.org

Bicester Motion
Building 123
The Station Armoury
Buckingham Road
Bicester
Oxfordshire
OX27 8AL

1 October 2021

Dear Jonty

RE: Bicester Motion – Automotive Experience Quarter

I am writing to you regarding the proposal for the Bicester Motion Experience Quarter.

Experience Oxfordshire (EO) is the official Destination Management Organisation (DMO) for Oxfordshire, with a remit to promote, grow and develop the visitor economy in a productive and sustainable way.

Prior to the pandemic Oxfordshire's visitor economy was worth £2.3 billion per annum and supported over 40,000 jobs across the county.

More specific to this application, prior to the pandemic the value of tourism to Cherwell was £495 million per annum, attracting 8.2 million visitors per year and supporting over 8,786 jobs which is 12% of the employment across the district. It is a vitally important sector for economic development, jobs and prosperity. The proposed development is an exciting opportunity for the district to significantly enhance the visitor offering in North Oxfordshire.

The Automotive Experience Quarter is a significant part of the Bicester Motion Masterplan. This element alone has the potential to bring in an additional 400,000 visitors per annum which would support 300 new jobs and provide an estimated £16.9million annual economic impact (*figures provided by Oxford Brookes Business School*).

The proposal is well planned and developed and provides a unique experience opportunity that is not rivalled anywhere else nationally. The development offers a landmark opportunity to Bicester to become a world leading destination for automotive and aviation culture. Currently only 5% of visitors to the Cherwell area stay overnight, with the significant factor here being that there is not enough to do locally to keep them in the Cherwell area – this proposed development could significantly improve dwell time in the locality and increase overnight stays in the area.



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The proposed development would offer a wide range of activities that that local economy would benefit from, as well as being able to attract domestic and international audiences and their associated spend, these include (but are not exclusive to);

- Inclusive and accessible in design
- Wide range of activities for all ages and abilities
- Promoting learning and cultural experiences alongside preserving heritage assets
- Supporting health, wellbeing and mobility

Furthermore, the proposal would attract a significant level of inward investment and help to support Oxfordshire's visitor economy recovery post pandemic – a sector that has been severely impacted.

The developer has clearly thought through access arrangements, quality of product and has a clear business plan that is working to achieve local and national strategic objectives.

Experience Oxfordshire has set out its own clear strategy for development of the visitor economy across Oxfordshire and this development supports key aspects of that including (but not exclusive to);

- **Encouraging and enabling the exploration of our cultural treasures across the county by local people** – *the whole proposal is based around preserving heritage and informing and inspiring past and future generations. To have an asset such as this in Bicester would also help to build a real pride in place for the town and something locals could be part of.*
- **Increasing overnight stays from both international and domestic visitors ensuring an increased spend per visit** – *to have new product in Oxfordshire aligns with our strategy of getting the right visitor profile – those that stay longer and spend and explore more. It also has the prospects for global recognition and further enhancing the reputation of Oxfordshire internationally.*
- **Encouraging visits that offer the best balance of impact and contribution to the county** – *the product by its very nature and quality is attracting a higher spend clientele and encouraging visitors to spend more time in the district and surrounding Oxfordshire area.*
- **Spreading the tourist season throughout the year to decrease the impact of seasonality and to encourage visitors to explore the whole county of Oxfordshire** - *this development is a year-round facility which would work alongside our ambitions of increasing visits during traditional shoulder season periods, thus also balancing the impact on the locality.*
- **Driving growth across the visitor economy and increasing the value of visitor expenditure 5% year on year** – *this proposal absolutely does that and could result in an additional spend in the local economy of around £16.9 million.*

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In June 2021 the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) launched their Tourism Recovery Plan. This document clearly cites tourism as an economic, social and cultural asset and a major contribute to jobs and growth. The government are looking to accelerate the tourism sectors recovery and an investment such as this would play a critical role in that recovery. The document also cites that want all regions of the UK to reach its potential in driving growth across the tourism sector. DCMS state that they want to see 'a growing, dynamic, sustainable, world-leading' tourism sector and this development does all of those things.

The recovery plan also cites that the tourism sector contributes to the enhancement and conservation of the country's cultural, natural and historic heritage, minimises damage to the environment and is inclusive and accessible to all – this proposal seeks to all those things.

At a local level Experience Oxfordshire is working hard to engage businesses and stakeholders on economic recovery planning, particularly for the visitor economy sector. This proposed development could play a significant role in our local recovery through providing increased jobs and investment and this has also been recognised by VisitEngland as having a positive impact on national recovery as has the potential to be a world class development.

In closing Experience Oxfordshire support this application and would encourage the Council to consider its approval. The development enhances the local offering, provides significant investment into the district, offers job creation and opportunity, and will help with economic growth and aid recovery post Covid19. This application should be welcomed and supported.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hayley Beer-Gamage", written over a horizontal line.

Hayley Beer-Gamage
Chief Executive Officer