

Experience Quarter (EQ)

Bicester Motion

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Client:	Bicester Motion	Job No	J323684
Date:	03 September 2021	Approved by:	BDF/DJF
Prepared by:	BDF/ALF		

Public Transport Contribution – Response to OCC

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Bicester Motion Ltd has appointed mode transport planning to provide highways and transportation professional advice in relation to a planning application for an Automotive Experience Quarter (EQ) on land at the former RAF Bicester, Bicester, Oxfordshire. The application has been submitted in outline (ref: 21/01224/OUT) to Cherwell District Council (CDC) as planning authority. Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) has been consulted in their capacity as Highway Authority, culminating in an officer response dated 24 May 2021.
- 1.1.2 OCC identify that the minimum level of service that should be available to this development is every 30 minutes, seven days per week, during the hours of operation of the site. OCC anticipate that this will be the case currently, however they wish to have certainty over this level of provision going forward.
- 1.1.3 The OCC response requests a S106 contribution of £900,000 to cover a 'bus failure' style arrangement to be used only if the bus service on Buckingham Road falls below a twice hourly frequency in the first 10 years of opening. OCC describe how this contribution could fund an additional vehicle on the X5 route for eight years.
- 1.1.4 It is considered that providing a fail-safe subsidy is unsound as the mitigation requested effectively provides for an unsubstantiated need that is outside of the applicant's control. This coupled with the assessment conclusions that draw no bus passenger numbers away from car use for robustness leads to a conclusion that the site can be accommodated on the local highway network in the worst-case scenario; however, the applicant is committed to enhancement of public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure and promotional TP measures to reduce potential impacts and improve accessibility for all.
- 1.1.5 On this basis we respectfully request that the request for this item be omitted by OCC.

1.1.6 It is considered that the request for S106 monies as a fail safe for bus subsidy is not reasonable. The following sections of this note demonstrate that the request does not satisfy the three tests for planning obligations, namely:

- necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- directly related to the development; and
- fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

1.2 Summary of X5 Service

1.2.1 OCC in their response conclude that whilst the X5 is operating at a reduced level of frequency currently (as an impact of the Covid pandemic/restrictions) the operator, however, confirmed their intent to resume the 30-minute frequency service from 21st June 2021 (which is now currently in operation). A copy of the latest timetable confirming this is included at **Appendix A**.

1.2.2 The current service operates at a 30-minute frequency Monday to Saturday during the core daytime hours and hourly in the shoulder hours. Service frequency on a Sunday is hourly.

1.3 Requested Contribution

1.3.1 The requested contribution is not considered to be reasonable in that it does not meet the necessary planning tests.

1.3.2 The NPPF, at paragraph, 110 (a) describes how: “so far as possible – to facilitating access to high quality public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use.”

1.3.3 The NPPF is not prescriptive in terms of required levels of service frequency, and nor is the local planning policy position set out by OCC, nor CDC.

1.3.4 Mitigation by its nature seeks to reduce the severity of an adverse impact that is forecast to occur. The submitted (dated December 2020) Transport Assessment (TA) acknowledges the 30-minute frequency of the X5 service (that is anticipated to be reinstated by the operator (Stagecoach) on 21st June 2021) but does not rely upon this in calculation of traffic forecasts, nor seek any mitigating effect from it to address forecast traffic impacts.

1.3.5 The accepted traffic generation methodology assumes that all staff and visitors associated with the EQ are forecast to arrive/depart by car for purposes of robustness. The mitigation package required to mitigate the proposals is based upon these forecasts and is unaffected by any change to the level or location of bus service provision in the locality of the site.

- 1.3.6 In terms of the point raised by OCC on the bus service having to operate at a half hourly frequency for all hours of operation of the site. No hours of operation are specified as part of the EQ submission; however, it is evident that a bus service operates for the core of each day and covering the network peak periods. There should be no obligation for EQ to provide supplementary bus services outside of these periods as no mitigating need has been demonstrated.
- 1.3.7 The assessment of the highway network capacity focusses upon the weekday peak hour periods as agreed with OCC during scoping discussions. The level of operation of the bus in terms of days of the week and hours (as summarised in **Section 1.2**) is considered reasonable currently. It is not considered to be reasonable to expect a subsidy to increase hours of operation to mitigate an impact not tested as part of the scoped assessment.
- 1.3.8 On this basis it is considered that the request fails the first test of “necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.”
- 1.3.9 The second test requires the requested contribution be “directly related to the development.” It is not considered to be reasonable to expect the applicant to subsidise an uplift in bus service frequency to deliver a previously operational timetable.
- 1.3.10 As an example many bus services have operated at a reduced timetable in recent months due to the Covid-19 pandemic. To expect Bicester Motion to subsidise provision of a service that may have been reduced because of matters beyond their control is unreasonable.
- 1.3.11 In addition if the bus service were to be reduced due to pandemic conditions it is reasonable to also assume that the demand generated by BM as a leisure destination would be similarly suppressed given recent trends.
- 1.3.12 The obligation in this instance would be expecting the applicant to mitigate for a situation in which they are not generating any meaningful trip demand.
- 1.3.13 The final test requires the requested contribution is fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
- 1.3.14 Bicester Motion is committed to encouragement of use of the X5 bus service via the following means:
- Upgraded bus stop infrastructure at both the north and southbound stops on Buckingham Road within the vicinity of the existing Buckingham Road/Main Bicester Motion access – works already delivered in relation to the Command Works application (ref: 18/01333/F).
 - Signalised toucan crossing on Buckingham Road providing better linkages between bus stops – works already delivered in relation to the Command Works application (ref: 18/01333/F).

- Contributions towards two new bus stops (flagpole design) along Buckingham Road, and contributions towards upgrading existing bus stop infrastructure in the vicinity of the main Bicester Motion access – to include a new shelter (with seating) to the northbound stop and a pair of Real-Time Information (RTI) displays for northbound and southbound (associated with refs: 18/01253/F and 18/01333/F, respectively).
- Brand Experience (EQ) visitors are anticipated to use the internal footway network with access/egress to/from the site via the approved hotel access and links to external foot/cycleway network onwards to the bus stops located on Buckingham Road (as advised and prescribed further within TN005).
- Seek to negotiate ongoing discounts with Stagecoach for staff on season tickets as a Travel Plan measure. Stagecoach offers a range of corporate services through their Stagecoach solutions portal.
- Publicity and encouragement of use of bus services to staff via induction process for new starters.
- Promotion of bus service to visitors via information provided at reception areas/main foyers/guest services and relevant public transport links on Brand Experience (EQ) website.

1.3.15 These measures are a proportionate level of mitigation given the existing operation of the X5 service. Furthermore, and noting the concerns from OCC in terms of the ongoing operation of the X5 service, these measures alongside the additional potential patronage generated by users of the EQ (and other already consented elements of the wider Bicester Motion masterplan) are considered to positively contribute towards the commercial viability of the X5 service, and therefore its ongoing operation.

Appendix A

X5 Bus Timetable (sourced from Stagecoach)

MONDAYS TO FRIDAYS EXCLUDING PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

	X5	X5	X5		X5	X5		X5	X5	X5	X5	X5	X5	X5	X5
Bedford Bus Station Stop N	0425	0525	0555	then at these times each hour	25	55	until	1625	1655	1725	1755	1855	1955	2055	2155
Milton Keynes Coachway	0450	0550	0620		50	20		1650	1720	1750	1820	1920	2020	2120	2220
Central Milton Keynes Stop H4	0502	0602	0632		02	32		1702	1732	1802	1832	1932	2032	2132	2232
Milton Keynes Rail Station Z4	ARR. 0514	0614	0644		14	44		1714	1744	1814	1844	1944	2044	2144	2244
same coach - no need to change															
Milton Keynes Rail Station Z4	DEP. 0515	0615	0645		15	45		1715	1745	-	1845	1945	2045	-	-
Buckingham High Street	ARR. 0537	0637	0707		37	07		1737	1807	-	1907	2007	2107	-	-
same coach - no need to change															
Buckingham High Street	DEP. 0542	0642	0712		42	12		1742	1812	-	1912	2012	2112	-	-
Buckingham Tesco stop B	0547	0647	0717		47	17		1747	1817	-	1917	2017	2117	-	-
Bicester Caversfield Turn	0602	0702	0732		02	32		1802	1832	-	1932	2032	2132	-	-
Bicester Bure Place stand 2	0610	0710	0740		10	40		1810	1840	-	1940	2040	2140	-	-
Oxford Bus Station stop 11	0640	0740	0810	40	10	1840	1910	-	2010	2110	2210	-	-		

SATURDAYS EXCLUDING PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

	X5	X5	X5	X5		X5	X5		X5	X5	X5	X5	X5	X5	X5	
Bedford Bus Station Stop N	0425	0525	0625	0655	then at these times each hour	25	55	until	1625	1655	1725	1755	1855	1955	2055	2155
Milton Keynes Coachway	0450	0550	0650	0720		50	20		1650	1720	1750	1820	1920	2020	2120	2220
Central Milton Keynes Stop H4	0502	0602	0702	0732		02	32		1702	1732	1802	1832	1932	2032	2132	2232
Milton Keynes Rail Station Z4	ARR. 0514	0614	0714	0744		14	44		1714	1744	1814	1844	1944	2044	2144	2244
same coach - no need to change																
Milton Keynes Rail Station Z4	DEP. 0515	0615	0715	0745		15	45		1715	1745	-	1845	1945	2045	-	-
Buckingham High Street	ARR. 0537	0637	0737	0807		37	07		1737	1807	-	1907	2007	2107	-	-
same coach - no need to change																
Buckingham High Street	DEP. 0542	0642	0742	0812		42	12		1742	1812	-	1912	2012	2112	-	-
Buckingham Tesco stop B	0547	0647	0747	0817		47	17		1747	1817	-	1917	2017	2117	-	-
Bicester Caversfield Turn	0602	0702	0802	0832		02	32		1802	1832	-	1932	2032	2132	-	-
Bicester Bure Place stand 2	0610	0710	0810	0840		10	40		1810	1840	-	1940	2040	2140	-	-
Oxford Bus Station stop 11	0640	0740	0840	0910	40	10	1840	1910	-	2010	2110	2210	-	-		

SUNDAYS INCLUDING PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

	X5		X5		X5	X5	X5
Bedford Bus Station Stop N	0630	then at these times each hour	30	until	1730	1830	1930
Milton Keynes Coachway	0655		55		1755	1855	1955
Central Milton Keynes Stop H4	0707		07		1807	1907	2007
Milton Keynes Rail Station Z4	ARR. 0719		19		1819	1919	2019
same coach - no need to change							
Milton Keynes Rail Station Z4	DEP. 0720		20		1820	-	-
Buckingham High Street	ARR. 0742		42		1842	-	-
same coach - no need to change							
Buckingham High Street	DEP. 0748		48		1848	-	-
Buckingham Tesco stop B	0753		53		1853	-	-
Bicester Caversfield Turn	0808		08		1908	-	-
Bicester Bure Place stand 2	0816		16		1916	-	-
Oxford Bus Station stop 11	0846	46	1946	-	-		

this timetable is valid from **20 June 2021**



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MONDAYS TO FRIDAYS EXCLUDING PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

	X5	X5	X5	X5		X5	X5		X5	X5	X5	X5	X5	
Oxford Bus Station stop 11	-	0650	0750	0820	then at these times each hour	50	20	until	1850	1920	2020	2120	2220	
Bicester Bure Place stand 2	-	0720	0820	0850		20	50		1920	1950	2050	2150	2250	
Bicester Caversfield Turn	-	0725	0825	0855		25	55		1925	1955	2055	2155	2255	
Buckingham Tesco stop B	-	0741	0841	0911		41	11		1941	2011	2111	2211	2311	
Buckingham High Street	ARR.	-	0750	0850		0920	50		20	1950	2020	2120	2220	2320
same coach - no need to change														
Buckingham High Street	DEP.	-	0751	0851		0921	51		21	1951	2021	2121	2221	2321
Milton Keynes Rail Station Y4	ARR.	-	0816	0916		0946	16		46	2016	2046	2146	2246	2346
same coach - no need to change														
Milton Keynes Rail Station Y4	DEP.	0716	0821	0921		0951	21		51	2021	2051	2151	2251	2351
Central Milton Keynes Stop G3		0727	0832	0932	1002	32	02	2032	2102	2202	2302	0002		
Milton Keynes Coachway		0739	0844	0944	1014	44	14	2044	2114	2214	2314	0014		
Bedford Bus Station Stop N		0815	0910	1010	1040	10	40	2110	2140	2240	2340	0040		

SATURDAYS EXCLUDING PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

	X5	X5	X5	X5	X5		X5	X5		X5	X5	X5	X5		
Oxford Bus Station stop 11	-	0650	0750	0850	0920	then at these times each hour	50	20	until	1850	1920	2020	2120	2220	
Bicester Bure Place stand 2	-	0720	0820	0920	0950		20	50		1920	1950	2050	2150	2250	
Bicester Caversfield Turn	-	0725	0825	0925	0955		25	55		1925	1955	2055	2155	2255	
Buckingham Tesco stop B	-	0741	0841	0941	1011		41	11		1941	2011	2111	2211	2311	
Buckingham High Street	ARR.	-	0750	0850	0950		1020	50		20	1950	2020	2120	2220	2320
same coach - no need to change															
Buckingham High Street	DEP.	-	0751	0851	0951		1021	51		21	1951	2021	2121	2221	2321
Milton Keynes Rail Station Y4	ARR.	-	0816	0916	1016		1046	16		46	2016	2046	2146	2246	2346
same coach - no need to change															
Milton Keynes Rail Station Y4	DEP.	0716	0821	0921	1021		1051	21		51	2021	2051	2151	2251	2351
Central Milton Keynes Stop G3		0727	0832	0932	1032	1102	32	02	2032	2102	2202	2302	0002		
Milton Keynes Coachway		0739	0844	0944	1044	1114	44	14	2044	2114	2214	2314	0014		
Bedford Bus Station Stop N		0815	0910	1010	1110	1140	10	40	2110	2140	2240	2340	0040		

SUNDAYS INCLUDING PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

	X5	X5	X5		X5	X5
Oxford Bus Station stop 11	-	-	0855	then at these times each hour	55	1955
Bicester Bure Place stand 2	-	-	0925		25	2025
Bicester Caversfield Turn	-	-	0930		30	2030
Buckingham Tesco stop B	-	-	0946		46	2046
Buckingham High Street	ARR.	-	0955		55	2055
same coach - no need to change						
Buckingham High Street	DEP.	-	0956		56	2056
Milton Keynes Rail Station Y4	ARR.	-	1021		21	2121
same coach - no need to change						
Milton Keynes Rail Station Y4	DEP.	0826	0926		1026	26
Central Milton Keynes Stop G3		0837	0937	1037	37	2137
Milton Keynes Coachway		0849	0949	1049	49	2149
Bedford Bus Station Stop N		0915	1015	1115	15	2215

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