



The countryside charity
Oxfordshire

Campaigning to protect our rural county

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November 19th 2021

By e-mail

For attention of the Case Officer
CC. Dr Charlotte Watkins, Ecology Officer

Re: 21/01224/OUT Outline planning application for Automotive Experience Quarter comprising Commercial, Business and Services uses (Class E), Light Industrial (Class B2), Local Community and Learning Uses (Class F) and vehicle circuits (Sui Generis)

CPRE notes that the committee date has been deferred to January 2022. CPRE has the following points to make in response to correspondence concerning the ecological assessments of the habitat at Bicester Airfield LWS:

1. In order for the LPA to have certainty as regards policy compliance with regard to this application and the wider masterplan, we maintain that an application specific and site wide calculation using Metric 3.0 would be beneficial.
2. We note that Ecology Solutions say that this would be hindered because they made "habitat assessments with the Warwickshire calculator in mind". There is clear guidance on how one can read across Phase 1 habitat classifications into the UKHab system and therefore we do not agree that this would be an onerous task. To the extent that there would be any difficulty at all, this could be assisted by seeking mutual expert agreement on classifications by means of the suggested site visit with the LPA ecologist, Ecology Solutions and Bioscan (representing CPRE).
3. We agree that by the means of replacing extant high distinctiveness calcareous grassland habitat with an aspiration to deliver a different habitat, the mitigation hierarchy of 'avoid-mitigate-compensate' is demonstrably not being followed and the proposals fail national policy presumptions and tests on this ground alone. We also agree that there is no assurance in the application information to counter the view that the impacts would result in the loss of the LWS designation where the proposals overlap. This would also fail national and local policy tests.

Continued below..



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4. We believe a site visit even at this time of year would still be sufficient to assist in identifying a common and robust position on habitat classifications to ensure the metric outputs were more robust, and sufficiently fit for purpose to test policy compliance.

5. We note that an area in the north east of the site is marked as 'e-karting' on the indicative layout plan where previously there were to be 'viewing pavilions'. CPRE questions whether details of this update are given and also included in the biodiversity assessment, such as the area this would cover and what kind of surface is intended.

Yours Faithfully,
Pamela Roberts

Cherwell District CPRE

Cc Andy Bateson Team Leader
Sir David Gilmour Chair, Cherwell District CPRE
Helen Marshall, Director CPRE Oxfordshire