



Parish Council response to the Amended Bicester Motion Outline Planning Application 21/01224/OUT.

This response should be viewed in conjunction with the Parish Council's previous submission in May 2021, which for convenience is included at the end of this letter.

The key issues as far as we are concerned were originally identified and remain as:

- Road safety particularly for pedestrians and cyclists
- Noise generated by test and trackside events and additional aircraft
- Increased traffic congestion

During the intervening time since the withdrawal of the initial submission in May, the Parish Council has looked more closely at the revised outline plans and held further discussions with Bicester Motion. Coincidentally several complaints by residents of Stratton Audley regarding both vehicle noise from existing trackside events and low flying aircraft only serve to emphasise the need for solutions as things will only get worse.

Whilst Stratton Audley Parish Council maintains its position of being generally supportive of Bicester Motion and believe that the County Council is going some way to address road traffic matters, three areas remain of great concern which the current plans do not satisfactorily address, namely:

- **Lack of 24 hour access through the site, to enable pedestrian and cyclists safe passage in the absence of a public path**
- **Noise reaching Stratton Audley from the proposed new track facilities**
- **Traffic calming measures to deal with concerns that the proposals will increase "rat running"- through Stratton Audley**

Pedestrian and Cycle Access through or along the edge of the site

Safety for walkers and cyclists along the Bicester Road/A4421 from the village in the direction of Bicester has always been a key priority for the Parish Council.

We have long campaigned for a cycle path to be included at the Bicester Road junction with the main road. As the A4421 is already inaccessible to most pedestrians and cyclists at this point, 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 because at the moment, we believe there is no agreement or adequate consideration for safety.

We have argued that the issue will become more problematic once the Experience Quarter is built and that the solution should be to build a dedicated access route from the proposed site service entrance along the perimeter fence (avoiding the A4421 junction). This could then link up with the new footpath by the proposed hotel entrance and be more conducive with safety.

The alternative that has been put forward by Bicester Motion is to allow pedestrian and cycle access through the Experience Quarter and thereby mitigating the need for a dedicated cycle path. We initially broadly welcomed this in the belief that there would be 24 hour access. However, it has now been made clear that there will only be limited access during working or perhaps daylight hours and outside of these times the site will be closed and access impossible.

Bicester Motion have confirmed that the pathway that they propose to run alongside the A4421 (on the inside of their perimeter fence and the current tree line) can only be open to the public during working and/or daylight hours for security reasons. So out of hours and when it is dark in winter, (and presumably at weekends) the general public will continue to have to risk their lives out on the A4421 over a 250 meter stretch of road where there are no paths and deep ditches. This is not a solution but an unacceptable exacerbation of a current road traffic problem.

The Parish Council believe that the solution is to run this path, as proposed along the inside of the perimeter fence and to also add a secondary fence to isolate the path from the Experience Quarter so that it can remain open and accessible at all times.

Bicester Motion say they do not want to do this because the pathway needs to be open to the whole site for their guests to be able to walk off into various parts of the Experience Quarter without restriction. They emphasise that it is

primarily a private path for their guests and the public access is a secondary consideration to help address a public concern.

We are of the opinion that we are at this point because this matter has never been properly taken into consideration by OCC or CDC. This is because the priority has always been to secure funding for the roads and access paths from the site to Bicester Town rather than anything beyond the site, that would link it with the outer areas such as Stratton Audley and villages to the northeast. What has never been fully appreciated is that many people do not cycle from Stratton Audley and the surrounding area into Bicester because of the danger on the A4421 at the junction in question.

The Parish Council do not think that the current plans are good enough and requests that the planning authority reject this part of the plan for the one we propose. Alternatively, we suggest that some of the additional funding being provided by Bicester Motion for other road improvements is diverted to create the dedicated cycle and pedestrian route along the A4421 that is desperately needed and so long overdue. This view is very much supported by Bicester Bugs and other cycling groups.

Additionally, the current plans and future proposals do not appear to show how the existing public footpaths/rights of way in the area will be accommodated or rerouted. Whilst some of these have been impassable in recent years, there is still a duty on all parties concerned to ensure that such routes are reinstated or rerouted for the benefit of local residents.

Noise reaching Stratton Audley from the proposed new track facilities

We believe that the following specific conditions should be applied to any preliminary approval:

- Agreement to immediately organise additional sound testing specifically for Stratton Audley to validate the existing models, including the installation of equipment to highlight the prevailing wind direction with a "wind rose". A representative from the Parish Council to attend such tests
- Repositioning or elimination of the proposed drift track (regardless of whether it will be a dry or wet track) unless more rigorous proof can be provided to demonstrate the track will not generate excessive noise

- A guarantee that vehicles breaking the pre-agreed and monitored noise limit will be immediately removed from the track and drivers to be permanently banned after breaking the limits on three occasions
- No back-firing or tyre squeal to be permitted as part of the license to operate. Where back-firing or tyre squeal occurs, the offending vehicles to be stopped and removed from the facilities immediately
- No track activity before 8am or after 8pm to reduce light, air and sound pollution
- Measures should be put in place to reduce sound reaching the village such as sound barriers next to the tracks, or alternatively grass mounds to be built
- Establishment of a direct dial contact telephone number and a guarantee to respond immediately to noise complaints from the village during operational hours and to report convoys of vehicles heading to or from the Bicester Motion site
- Multiple sound measuring points to be permanently located in the village on Launton Road and Bicester Road
- Air quality monitoring systems to be set up at Bicester Motion and in Stratton Audley due to the inevitable increases of exhaust gases
- Guarantee to permanently ban low flying aircraft not adhering to the current limits, plus a guarantee of no reduction in the minimum height limit currently in place for aircraft taking off and landing

Increased Traffic Congestion

Whilst great attention is being given to road layouts and traffic volumes between the site and Bicester Town, little has been considered to the north-east of the site, beyond addressing the layout for the Junction where the A4421 Buckingham Road meets the Bicester Road.

We therefore strongly request that greater consideration should be given to traffic levels that are likely to be generated along the Bicester Road leading to and from Stratton Audley. We request that the following conditions are incorporated into any agreement to proceed and funded by Bicester Motion or the County Council:

- Traffic calming measures for Stratton Audley including, but not limited to, annual traffic surveying and the provision of 20mph signage in the village
- OCC to undertake traffic calming surveys during 2022 and follow up works in order to slow vehicles

- Signage stating no access to Bicester Heritage/Motion to be sited off the A41 through Marsh Gibbon and Grendon Underwood, and signage stating no access to Bicester Motion off the A4421 through Stratton Audley
- Reduction of speed limits into and out of Stratton Audley on all major routes, from current national speed limit down to 40mph.

Submitted 13 December 2021

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

SUBMITTED IN MAY 2021 AND AS RELEVANT TODAY AS IT WAS THEN.

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.