

Lynne Baldwin

From: Julie Trinder <Julie.Trinder@bicester.gov.uk>
Sent: 12 January 2022 12:41
To: Planning
Cc: Phil Evans; Callum McMahon
Subject: Planning Application Department

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Dear Planning Department

Reference: 21/01454/F Applicant's Name: Mr Richard Drew Proposal: Proposed Bicester Health and Wellbeing Hub Location: Former Rodney House Private Drive Off, Graven Hill Road

The response is by the Chairman of the Planning Committee following consultation with other members of the planning committee and having offered the chance for all Town Councillors to influence the response.

Bicester Town Council has a number of concerns which we don't feel have been fully met. A majority of Bicester County and District Councillors do not feel that they have had enough time to consider all the most recent agreements and plans **covering this application in advance of the Planning Committee at Cherwell.**

A majority of Town Councillors would support any motion at Planning Committee on 13th January to defer the decision till after a site visit.

In general, the Town Council regrets the loss of facilities that serve the North and East of the Town ie Victoria House, and does not believe that any of the provisions adequately replace the existing facilities in terms of convenience for the elderly and infirm.

We wish to establish to the planning committee that visitors to the health hub will not be a representative sample of the whole population of the town. Visitors are less likely to be physically fit, and are more likely to be elderly, infirm, be mothers with infants often in push chairs, or with other mobility impairing conditions.

We are extremely concerned about the provision of public transport to the site.

There appears to be a bus stop outside the centre which is great, but we are concerned that the bus will not actually stop there, but will only stop on the spine road. We are concerned that the majority of users will need to take at least two buses to and from the Health Hub with a change on Manorsfield Road. Elderly and infirm residents who live in the East Ward in particular will have long walks both to the bus stop and Bicester North and then from Graven Hill Spine Road to the Health Hub

The Transport Assessment document states the following:

It should be noted that the bus stops in Graven Hill are located circa 170m from the Site and therefore **easily** accessible. I would ask whether stroke victims, long covid sufferers, the elderly or infirm would actually find 170m easily walkable?

The Transport Assessment document quotes selectively from the CIHT 'Planning for Walking' (2015) document ignoring the following paragraph which the Town Council believes should have been taken notice of.

2.4 Many find it difficult to walk. Over the whole population, approximately 15% of people, most of them elderly, have an impairment that affects their mobility. Figure 6 shows how the percentage of people with a mobility difficulty increases with age, reaching over 35% for people aged 70 and over. At all ages, more women report a mobility difficulty than men. A more detailed breakdown by age of the percentage of people with disabilities is available in the Family Resources Survey 2012-2013 (DWP, 2014), but this shows all disabilities, not only those specifically related to mobility. It demonstrates how rapidly disabilities increase as people age past 75 or so. More detailed, though older, studies show that, of people with mobility difficulties, about 70 per cent have difficulties walking, climbing and balancing, (Martin et al, 1988). They show too that about half of people with mobility difficulties are able to get about on their own, provided all pavements and public transport vehicles are appropriately designed (General household Survey 1998). **Martin et al (1988) estimated that 6.2 million adults could not walk 400 yards without a rest, and 3.4 million could not walk 200 yards without stopping or severe discomfort.**

That same document also reminds local authorities of their duties under the **equalities and disability discrimination acts** when considering walking and public transport decisions.

The Transport Assessment also selectively quotes from GUIDELINES FOR PROVIDING FOR JOURNEYS ON FOOT PUBLISHED BY THE INSTITUTION OF HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORTATION 2000

Bicester Town Council notes the following paragraph as there is no mention of other healthcare provision within the above mentioned document, and reasonably expects that the below could be applied to the Health Hub **hospitals generate movements by both able-bodied and mobility-impaired people, and others with a medical condition attending out-patient clinics, who may not be experienced in coping with their mobility difficulties.** The Transport assessment publishes a table from the above document aiming to demonstrate that 200m is a reasonable walking distance However it fails to quote any of the preceding paragraphs in GUIDELINES FOR PROVIDING FOR JOURNEYS ON FOOT PUBLISHED BY THE INSTITUTION OF HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORTATION 2000 These are

3.31. "Acceptable" walking distances will obviously vary between individuals and circumstances. Acceptable walking distances will depend on various factors including:

- **An individual's fitness and physical ability**
- **Encumbrances, eg shopping, pushchair**
- Availability, cost and convenience of alternatives transport modes
- Time savings
- Journey purpose
- Personal motivation
- General deterrents to walking.

3.32. Table 3.2 contains suggested acceptable walking distances, **for pedestrians without a mobility impairment for some common facilities.** These may be used for planning and evaluation purposes. (See also Table 4.2.)

By omitting these crucial points, the original table is mis-represented in the Transport Assessment. The particular needs of a health hub mean that the distances quoted for pedestrians without a mobility issue should NOT be used for planning and evaluation purposes when journeys to and from the Health Hub are concerned.

Bicester Town Council suggests that should the planning authority be minded to approve the application it should

- a) Ensure that bus services are re-routed to ensure a stop at the Health Hub
- b) Provide for sheltered benches to be made along the route from the bus stop on the spine road to allow elderly and infirm patients to rest along the route.

With kind regards

Julie Trinder

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