

Cherwell District Council
Planning & Development Services
Bodicote House White Post Road
Bodicote
Banbury
OX15 4AA

Our ref: WA/2021/129106/01-L01
Your ref: 21/01630/OUT
Date: 16 June 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

Outline planning application for residential development (within use class C3), open space provision, access, drainage and all associated works and operations including but not limited to demolition, earthworks, and engineering operations, with the details of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination

Land at North West Bicester, Home Farm, Lower Farm and SGR2, Caversfield

Thank you for consulting us on the above application on 20 May 2021. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding.

Environment Agency position

In the absence of an acceptable Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) we **object** to this application and recommend that planning permission is refused. The application is contrary to paragraph 163 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Local Plan Policy ESD6.

Reason

The submitted FRA does not comply with the requirements for site-specific flood risk assessments, as set out in paragraphs 30 to 32 of the Flood Risk and Coastal Change section of the planning practice guidance. The FRA does not therefore adequately assess the flood risks posed by the development. In particular, the FRA fails to:

- Consider how a range of flooding events (including extreme events) will affect people and property using evidence which is fit for purpose
- take the impacts of climate change into account as there is an inadequate assessment of climate change allowances.

Overcoming our objection

To overcome our objection, the applicant should submit a revised FRA which addresses the points highlighted above.

If this cannot be achieved, we are likely to maintain our objection. Please re-consult us on any revised FRA submitted and we'll respond within 21 days of receiving it.

Overcoming our objection

The submitted FRA has been compiled using data which is not considered fit for its intended purpose of establishing the extent and severity of potential flooding on site for a development of this nature. The FRA uses data derived from Jflow which is a very coarse and generalised modelling technique and is not always suitable to enable a detailed and site specific FRA to be produced.

Local policy ESD6 requires development to safeguard floodplains and to ensure the flood risk sequential approach is applied. In order to do this, the applicant will need to undertake and submit detailed hydraulic modelling to establish the baseline degree of flood risk in this location and to enable a robust investigation of future risks of flooding as a result of climate change. This was stated in our response to the scoping exercise.

As stipulated in National Planning Policy Guidance - Flood risk and coastal change, a FRA should establish whether a proposed development is likely to be affected by current and future flooding and whether it will increase flood risk elsewhere. It should also enable the decision maker to apply the sequential test and exception test if applicable (paragraph 30). The FRA should be credible and fit for purpose (paragraph 31).

The modelling will need to establish the 5% annual probability flood extent and depth (flood zone 3b) and the 1% annual probability flood extent and depth (flood zone 3a) and the expected extent of flooding with the appropriate climate change allowances included in accordance with the following guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-assessments-climate-change-allowances>

There is also a confluence of two watercourses at the south east boundary. As both of these watercourses have the potential to cause flooding on the site, we request that this is also taken into account with the model.

The model is necessary to ensure that there is a comprehensive understanding of the risk of flooding to this site in order to establish any limitations to development that may be necessary.

Please re-consult us on any revisions or additional information submitted and we will aim to respond within 21 days of receiving it. However, it should be noted that agreeing a flood risk model can be a lengthy process and can take up to 12 weeks to complete.

To assist the applicant, we can accept the modelling files directly through our DEFRA sharefile site, the details of which can be provided on request. We can also provide modelling guidelines if required.

Additional advice to planning authority

In addition to flood risk, we have also assessed the application in relation to the

proposed details of foul water disposal. We can advise that we are satisfied with the proposed plans in relation to this matter. Your authorities Water Cycle Study highlighted capacity issues at Bicester sewage treatment works. The developers and Thames Water are developing a wastewater strategy to ensure development does not outpace the required improvements at the sewage treatment works.

Closing comments

If you are minded to approve the application contrary to this advice, we request that you contact us to allow further discussion and/or representations from us in line with the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2021.

Should you require any additional information, or wish to discuss these matters further, please do not hesitate to contact me on the number below.

Yours faithfully

Miss Sarah Green
Sustainable Places - Planning Advisor

Direct dial 0208 474 9253

Direct e-mail planning_THM@environment-agency.gov.uk