

Comment for planning application 21/01630/OUT

Application Number	21/01630/OUT
Location	Land at North West Bicester Home Farm, Lower Farm and SGR2 Caversfield
Proposal	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
Case Officer	Caroline Ford
Organisation	
Name	Claire Hodson
Address	14 Sage Street, Bicester, OX27 8DE
Type of Comment	Objection
Type	neighbour
Comments	<p>I would like to object this proposal on a number of grounds and find the amended proposal of increasing concern given that it is now proposed that the development does not need to meet the already agreed standards of the eco-town. Firstly, the amended application does not address the concerns regarding the traffic and increase in activity using vehicles, instead attempting to defend the original flawed impact analysis. As noted in my original objection, survey data has already shown that all models projected prior, significantly underestimated traffic in the area. For example, the Traffic surveys and Traffic Monitoring data from 2019 showed the original model underestimated traffic in the 8-9am peak hour by 97% on Charlotte Avenue, and by 417% for the school when the school was only at 20% of its full pupil capacity. This is a gross underestimation, and as the data that is currently being used for predictions has not included the new developments in Bicester, this once again will be a gross underestimation of the data provided. Furthermore, the current proposal states that the roads can 'just about cope with the additional traffic', yet recent 2021 traffic data shows also that the model underestimates traffic in the 8-9AM peak by 126% - this is more than 2x an underestimation. As previous estimations have shown, the figures are yet again inaccurate. Thus, not only is the traffic plan relying on incorrect data but the statement 'just about cope with the additional traffic' acknowledges that current measures are lacking and will certainly not be sufficient once further developments occur (as already agreed as part of the NW eco-town development). Furthermore, this amended application does not address any of the concerns raised about the bus gate, and makes no modification or consideration of changes to be made. Therefore, the submitted proposal is based on inaccuracies and flawed data. It would be fundamentally remiss of the planning authority to enable the development to proceed using this erroneous data and would be extremely bad practice, setting a worrying precedent for future developments. What is more, the request to now break the ecotown requirement for true carbon zero is astonishing, particularly given how Elmsbrook has been regularly been showcased as Bicester and Cherwell's commitment to eco credentials. Thus, to then renege on that commitment is not only disappointing but against the Council's and Planning Authorities own obligations. Elmsbrook is an exemplar; a forward looking eco development, part of a wider plan for North-West Bicester and Eco-town. Thus, the homes on this site should adhere to this commitment - any home that does not meet this standard is profoundly against the ethos of the entire development and should be fervently rejected. If Firethorn cannot meet the standards of a True Zero Carbon build, then another developer will be able to. The financial viability assessment claims that meeting Ecotown requirements is, 'non-viable'. Again, not only would this break the masterplan requirements, and secondly, set a damning principal moving forward for other developments nationally that 'aim' to also achieve net carbon zero homes, but this reads as a prioritisation by the developer to maximise profits and build more homes to enable this. If Bicester is truly committed to its Garden Town status with clear Eco-credentials, prioritising developer revenues and allowing a sizeable number of additional houses on land previously not included in the masterplan, over benefits to communities, their health, wellbeing and longevity, is inexcusable. On a global scale we need to be pushing for true carbon zero and not continually breaking commitments to the wider aim of reducing carbon emissions. Furthermore, myself, my partner and the wider community bought into an eco-town - it was in our contracts, and to break this would have a severe impact on those living within Cherwell's communities. Do not let this development make Bicester Eco-town one more broken promise. Finally, the amended application makes no further consideration of the district heating network, waste water, or local services - issues all raised by residents in the</p>

initial consultation in July 2021. These are essential and critical issues for concern and the lack of detailed investigation or response is troubling. Firethorn must ensure they understand these systems before adding to or altering them (particular the heat network). The statement that a reduction in temperatures will be a first step is alarming. As a resident already using this system, I do not expect my services to be disrupted, altered, and effectively downgraded because a developer wishes to add more people to the network. If Firethorn are committed to this then they need to invest into the District Heating Network to ensure it is fit for purpose, for all. Many issues have been encountered with the DHN and the end-to-end design is fundamentally flawed. As such, consultants and a thorough assessment of the DHN is required. Thus, I strongly object to this proposal once more.

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Attachments