

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	
Name	Colin Cockshaw
Address	76 Willow Drive,Bicester,OX26 3XA
Type of Comment	Objection
Type	neighbour
Comments	<p>I have only recently discovered that the applicants are seeking to negotiate with the Council regarding 3 of the key requirements of the Council affecting this application, namely the proportion of affordable housing, the financial contributions required under a Section 106 agreement and the requirement that the development should be true zero-carbon. I am not aware what negotiations, if any, may have taken place since Rapley's Financial Viability Assessment was submitted in November, but as the application remains live, I hope you will have regard to my comments on these matters. The Council will be well aware that the whole development at NW Bicester was a Council proposal in response to a government initiative to encourage local authorities and developers to bring forward proposals for 'eco-towns'. Four such proposals were accepted by the government and these were identified in 'Planning Policy Statement: eco-towns' which was published in 2009 as a supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1. This supplement set out the standards proposed for such a development. Subsequently, in April 2011, the government announced that only NW Bicester would actually be built to the originally proposed standards. So NW Bicester is unique in the United Kingdom in this respect. As a result, the Council, the developers and the town of Bicester have been recognised with various awards and much favourable publicity, both nationally and internationally and this fact has been a significant factor in the provision of government grants and other financial benefits which have been received. Having regard to all these considerations, I sincerely hope that there will be no thought on the Council's part of departing in any way from the eco-town principles and standards which remain embedded not only in government policy, but also in the approved Local Plan and the approved NW Bicester SPD. To do so would completely negate the whole purpose of this unique and nationally important enterprise, as successive developers for other parts of NW Bicester would be guided by the Council's decision on this application in framing their own proposals. I also consider that the principles of incorporating affordable housing in all large developments is well-established and recognised as an essential part of housing provision. So I do not consider the Council should depart from its policies in this respect. As to the S106 agreement, this is obviously open to negotiation at this stage, but again the Council would be wise to take a firm stance in identifying their requirements and those of other public bodies. In my many years of experience as a Chartered Town Planner (now retired), I found that where developers sought to convince me to depart from firmly established policies and principles, it was wise to 'stick to my guns'. That is certainly true in this case as you have the authority of an approved Local Plan and a site-specific longstanding government policy to support you. So, I agree with the view expressed by the Elmsbrook Community Organisation (ECO) that the requirement to build homes that meet the Ecotown requirement of True Zero Carbon is absolutely non-negotiable. A2 Dominion were able to meet the eco-town standards and other Council requirements in gaining permission for the 'Exemplar' development. If the present applicants cannot do so, they should be advised to consider further revising their proposals or simply withdraw the application.</p>
Received Date	02/03/2022 16:44:08
Attachments	