

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 up to 530 residential dwellings (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	Rob Fellows
Address	8 Tayberry Close, Bicester, OX27 8AU
Type of Comment	Objection
Type	neighbour

Comments

Unfortunately, while I would like to see the NW Bicester Ecotown grow and thrive, and become a truly lauded "model" ecotown, encouraging future developers/builders to build new housing estates with future sustainability at the forefront of their thinking, and thus would have liked to support this application - in its current state, I can only Object to it, based on a number of key outstanding issues which would clearly prevent it from becoming the above. I would like to strongly endorse the responses from Elmsbrook Traffic and Parking Group, Bicester Bike Users Group, Elmsbrook Community Organisation, and Bicester Residents Group for a Zero Carbon Eco-Town. These highlight so many remaining issues ...Yet - I am also so disappointed at how few of the outstanding issues raised by residents including myself and my wife, and community groups, in our responses to this application in December 2021, have been addressed at all by the updated documentation. However, if I were to pick 5 most significant issues I would like to see addressed soonest and in detail - and we would welcome the chance for Elmsbrook's community to meet with Firethorn's representatives again, to go through these in detail - then these would be: 1. The Zero carbon requirement: The proposed Hawkwell Village application (which is aiming to be zero carbon) has recently been deemed not to be compliant with the zero carbon requirement in a "place and growth internal memo" from the Planning Policy team. This states, regarding the Hawkwell proposals: "The Local Plan requires that proposals for development at NW Bicester meet eco-town development standards set out in the Eco-Towns PPS. These standards have been carried through into the SPD. The Policy requires the development at Bicester 1 to be zero carbon (as defined in the Plan) to meet the eco town development standards set out in the Eco Town PPS. These standards have been carried forward into the adopted SPD for the site. The proposals as submitted do not meet these standards, therefore the proposals are contrary to Policy Bicester 1." It would therefore seem that the same direction/standard should also hold for Firethorn. If Firethorn are not prepared to build the right kind of homes on their part of the Ecotown, to meet the most critical Design Principles, and they say they will pull out because they can't make enough profit for it to be "viable" in their assessment - then they should be allowed to pull out. Another developer will soon come along who will make it work and in the desired/stipulated eco- way! 2. The Traffic Level assessments: These MUST be done so that simulations agree by comparison with traffic monitoring data; this still hasn't been done - there is an example calculation for this in the Traffic & Parking Group submission, just to give a demonstration of how serious the underestimation is that the model currently produces. When this is updated and done accurately, the proposed solution using only Charlotte/Braeburn Avenues can be realistically assessed; if it is then shown to be non-viable, in terms of traffic impacts (which strongly appears to be the case), then alternative approaches are needed - some ideas already discussed are also included in the Traffic & Parking Group submission at this stage. (Please also see issue 5 below, re another key point regarding these assessments.) 3. Construction Traffic - it would seem very sensible that this should not be allowed to cross between the Western and Eastern parcels - via the 'link' between Charlotte/Braeburn Avenues - specifically at any times when school children are using this route, to reduce risk of accidents. 4. Consideration of joined-up thinking for the District Heating System - we only had the "vaguest hint" back in November's added documents that this application was now potentially going to work with Elmsbrook for the future: this should be considered mandatory for this application and others - at least in terms of planning the future solutions in collaboration - i.e. so that full "advantages of scale" can be included, and optimised for the benefit of all. Initially, it would be very helpful if someone/anyone could involve

Elmsbrook's community in comms regarding plans for the network's future - as I mentioned in my previous response: there are a number of issues with the current "end to end system" which we do not believe are fully acknowledged/understood, let alone investigated and taken into account; this will be crucial for ensuring both Elmsbrook and the future Firethorn homes have a system which can deliver what they need, and not fail us all. 5. Consideration of joined-up thinking for the Traffic assessments due to the Strategic Link Road issue - i.e. Firethorn have proposed a solution apparently in isolation from Hallam/Hawkwell, A2/Aldershot, and the other NW Bicester Ecotown phases beyond these, which doesn't even mitigate the junction loadings (RFCs), queue lengths and journey delays enough just for the traffic their small proportion of the total future homes would add. It would seem extremely important that all the applicants involved in these proposed future phases should work together, and ensure that an overall model of all their junctions and traffic flows is created for simulations - such that all interaction effects are accounted for in one go. As a data analysis professional, I can see no other way in which these can be estimated with enough accuracy and best practice for reducing uncertainty. Thank you very much for reading this, and I am very grateful for any of these points which you can put to the developers as critical to read/solve/mitigate/alleviate. I am very happy to meet, discuss with yourselves or anyone involved, if I can help support in any way.

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Attachments