

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON THE FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

District: Cherwell

Application no: 21/01630/OUT

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

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

Response Date: 11th November 2022

This report sets out the officer views of Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) on the above proposal. These are set out by individual service area/technical discipline and include details of any planning conditions or Informatives that should be attached in the event that permission is granted and any obligations to be secured by way of a S106 agreement. Where considered appropriate, an overarching strategic commentary is also included. If the local County Council member has provided comments on the application these are provided as a separate attachment.

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General Information and Advice

Recommendations for approval contrary to OCC objection:

If within this response an OCC officer has raised an objection but the Local Planning Authority are still minded to recommend approval, OCC would be grateful for notification (via planningconsultations@oxfordshire.gov.uk) as to why material consideration outweighs OCC's objections, and to be given an opportunity to make further representations.

Outline applications and contributions

The anticipated number and type of dwellings and/or the floor space may be set by the developer at the time of application which is used to assess necessary mitigation. If not stated in the application, a policy compliant mix will be used. The number and type of dwellings used when assessing S106 planning obligations is set out on the first page of this response.

In the case of outline applications, once the unit mix/floor space is confirmed by reserved matters approval/discharge of condition a matrix (if appropriate) will be applied to establish any increase in contributions payable. A further increase in contributions may result if there is a reserved matters approval changing the unit mix/floor space.

Where a S106/Planning Obligation is required:

- **Index Linked** – in order to maintain the real value of S106 contributions, contributions will be index linked. Base values and the index to be applied are set out in the Schedules to this response.
- **Administration and Monitoring Fee - TBC**
This is an estimate of the amount required to cover the monitoring and administration associated with the S106 agreement. The final amount will be based on the OCC's scale of fees and will be adjusted to take account of the number of obligations and the complexity of the S106 agreement.
- **OCC Legal Fees** The applicant will be required to pay OCC's legal fees in relation to legal agreements. Please note the fees apply whether a S106 agreement is completed or not.

Security of payment for deferred contributions - Applicants should be aware that an approved bond will be required to secure a payment where a S106 contribution is to be paid post implementation and

- the contribution amounts to 25% or more (including anticipated indexation) of the cost of the project it is towards and that project cost £7.5m or more
- the developer is direct delivering an item of infrastructure costing £7.5m or more
- where aggregate contributions towards bus services exceeds £1m (including anticipated indexation).

A bond will also be required where a developer is direct delivering an item of infrastructure.

The County Infrastructure Funding Team can provide the full policy and advice, on request.

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Transport Schedule

Recommendation:

Objection for the following reasons:

- Severe traffic congestion impact at the junction of Howes Lane and Bucknell Road - as per our response of 6 September 2022.

If despite OCC's objection permission is proposed to be granted then OCC requires prior to the issuing of planning permission S106 obligations and conditions as per our previous response of 16 May 2022.

Comments:

We have been asked to comment on a letter from Velocity Transport Planning dated 7 October 2022. A meeting with Velocity was held to discuss this letter and our objection on 27 October 2021. At the meeting, further potential amendments to the junction modelling were discussed, and after the meeting, further data from the Bicester Transport Model was provided to Velocity. However, to date I have not received any further submissions containing amendments to the junction modelling, and OCC therefore maintains its objection on the basis of severe congestion impact.

As the letter is quite wide ranging, I have summarised the points raised and our responses to them, in the table below.

	Point made by Velocity	OCC response
1	Do not consider the traffic impact from the development at Howes Lane/Bucknell Rd priority junction to be severe	OCC stands by its response of 6 September 2022 and maintains the impact is severe.
2	'BTM data could be flawed as it is assigning more traffic through the junction than can reasonably be accommodated.' 'This in turn would mean that any further assessment of the impacts associated with the Firethorn development would always result in disproportionate impacts.'	BTM is a strategic model that assigns traffic to various routes, taking into account congestion. The demand showing at the junction is the predicted demand taking into account alternative routing choices, which may be limited or subject to even greater congestion. Drivers would experience delays, but journey time/cost may be even greater on other routes.
3	'The 2026 BTM data should have	The assessment has been made on

	<p>factored in a level of delay into the modelling that would be acceptable to OCC and the operation of the junction has to be calibrated so that it reflects the junction operating at or near capacity without the addition of the traffic associated with the proposed development.'</p>	<p>the basis of calibration of the PICADY junction model. Calibrating the model at an earlier stage, and then calibrating the PICADY model would be duplicating calibration, which is not justifiable.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>It is suggested that the measure of delay at the junction is assessed in terms of thresholds set out within the 'Guidelines for Environmental Assessment of Road Traffic'. The letter quotes paragraph 3.17 of the Guidance, saying that thresholds of 30%, 60% and 90% changes in traffic levels should be considered as 'slight', 'moderate' and 'substantial', and goes on to suggest that 90% increase in traffic would be the threshold for a severe impact, whereas the impact of Firethorn development at the junction would be less than 30%.</p>	<p>The Guidance has been quoted out of context. Para 3.17 clearly relates to noise, severance, pedestrian delay and intimidation impacts of traffic. Para 3.18 clearly differentiates the significance between the impact of increases in traffic on highway operational capacity criteria, versus environmental impacts. Para 4.32-4 discuss Driver Delay, with paragraph 4.34 clearly stating that values for delay can be determined by the use of computerised junction assessment packages. In other words increase in driver delay is not a simple function of increase in traffic flow.</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>The Howes Lane approach was not calibrated on the revised modelling presented in TN008 Rev B (which set out how the Lords Lane approach had been calibrated in order to validate the PICADY junction model). The implication presumably being that the predicted queuing on Howes Lane, which OCC determined as severe, is not reliable</p>	<p>TN0008B set out a methodology to solve the problem that the PICADY model of the junction of Howes Lane/Bucknell Road did not validate against observed queue lengths. Validation was achieved by reducing the demand flows on Bucknell Rd north by 14%. This approach was accepted by OCC. It would be acceptable to compare queue lengths on the Howes Lane arm and validate that arm too, provided validation was maintained on the other arms. However, it would not be acceptable to further calibrate the model to bring RFCs down to 1. The measured traffic flows input into the model were (correctly) demand flows (see para 2.5.1 of TN008B), the demand having been measured upstream of the junction rather than what has passed the give-way line. This means that the</p>

		junction CAN operate over capacity – this is what is causing the queues to build up. Re-calibrating the model back to RFC = 1 is artificial and unrepresentative.
6	'It is considered that these Technical Notes addressed the specific concerns raised by OCC at each stage.'	OCC considers that the technical notes sought to address concerns but at each stage the assessment was not considered to be reliable. In the previous submission the methodology was finally accepted to be reliable for the without mitigation scenario, and showed a severe impact. However, the methodology was considered unreliable for the with mitigation scenario.
7	'A comprehensive assessment of the junction in the future year of 2026 both with and without the proposed development traffic would be required once the 2026 BTM data has been considered further, and OCC have confirmed the level of delay that would have been factored into the 2026 BTM scenario in order to establish an appropriate baseline to undertake the further assessment from.'	OCC believe the model data supplied to be valid. The model is supported by a validation report which can be provided. Future year reports are also available. Please see above comments regarding the fact that there is no need or justification to 'factor in delay' to the model data. However, the 2026 reference case has recently been refined for other modelling purposes, and traffic flows from this reference case have now been provided . The updated 2026 RC has the same quantum of development on NW Bicester as the RC used for this assessment, but development further afield in Bicester has been revised to reflect the latest Annual Monitoring Report.
8	Request for details of development content included within the 2026 BTM	Uncertainty logs have been provided
9	Details of the delay that has been factored into the BTM	See above – not appropriate
10	Recalibration of the model based on the agreed methodology for all approaches (not just Lords Lane approach)	See above – point 5 – not justified.
11	Defining the thresholds of severity both in terms of vehicle queues and	Whilst I consider the predicted delay on Howes Lane (as set out in OCC's

driver delay	most recent response) to be clearly a severe impact, it is harder to agree a lower threshold above which the impact would be considered severe. I am consulting colleagues on this matter.
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Officer's Name: Joy White

Officer's Title: Principal Transport Planner

Date: 11 November 2022