

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

District: Cherwell

Application no: 21/03177/F

Proposal: Axis J9 Phase 3 Howes Lane Bicester

Location: Full planning application for employment development (Use Classes E(g)(iii), B2 and/or B8) and associated parking and servicing, landscaping and associated works

Date: 7 December 2021

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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Strategic Comments

The site is located within an allocation identified in the Adopted Cherwell Local Plan as Policy Bicester 1 for up to 6,000 homes and associated infrastructure. The Northwest Bicester SPD (2016) sets out further detailing for the comprehensive development of the site.

This application seeks full planning permission for 16,901 sqm of B2 and/or B8 employment space development on land that currently has unimplemented planning permission for 150 dwellings which was allowed on appeal (14/01675/OUT).

The application assumes that the Strategic Link Road/A4095 diversion will be in place in 2024 and argues that there is sufficient capacity in the local road network for the development to be occupied before the SLR is open. This point has not yet been established and there is now uncertainty of delivery of the SLR, which means that a resultant severe congestion impact could last many years.

The County Council is raising Transport and Local Lead Flood Authority objections.

Also attached are Local Member Views from Cllrs Sibley, Cllr Waine and Cllr Ford.

Officer's Name: Jacqui Cox

Officer's Title: Infrastructure Locality Lead Cherwell

Date: 6 December 2021

Application no: 21/03177/F

Location: Full planning application for employment development (Use Classes E(g)(iii), B2 and/or B8) and associated parking and servicing, landscaping and associated works

Transport Development Control

Recommendation

Objection for the following reasons:

- The application does not adequately demonstrate that the traffic impact of the development will not be severe.
- The development does not provide adequate pedestrian and cycle connectivity to existing residential areas, meaning that it does not provide a range of sustainable transport options. This is also an unacceptable safety risk.
- The amount of cycle parking appears to be insufficient for the size of the development, again meaning that development does not adequately provide for a range of sustainable transport options.
- The proposed cycle facilities are not considered to be compliant with current guidance

If despite OCC's objection permission is proposed to be granted then OCC requires prior to the issuing of planning permission a [S106 agreement including an obligation to enter into a [S278 agreement] [S38 agreement] to mitigate the impact of the development plus planning conditions and informatives] as detailed below.

S106 Contributions

Contribution	Amount £	Price base	Index	Towards (details)
Highway works	See below – need for link to existing major infrastructure agreement		Baxter	
Public transport services	£134,375	Q2 2017	RPI-x	Bus services serving NW Bicester
Public transport infrastructure (<i>if not dealt with under S278/S38</i>)	£19,460	April 2017	Baxter	Bus infrastructure at NW Bicester

<i>agreement)</i>				
Traffic Reg Order (<i>if not dealt with under S278/S38 agreement</i>)			RPI-x	
Travel Plan Monitoring	£5,271	Dec 2020	RPI-x	Towards the cost of monitoring the framework and individual travel plans over the life of the plans
Public Rights of Way	£2,846	April 2017	Baxter	Improvements to Bridleway 9 and Bucknell Bridleway 4
Total				

Other obligations:

- On site highway works – see below regarding need to link to existing agreement in relation to the Strategic Link Road
- Obligation to provide a pedestrian/cycle link between the SLR and existing Howes Lane (although note that a lack of a ped/cycle connection to Howes Lane in the interim access proposals is a reason for objection), and for this to be dedicated as highway once the SLR is connected.
- Routing agreement ahead of the SLR being open, to prevent HGV traffic from using Howes Lane.

Key points

- The application assumes that the Strategic Link Road/A4095 diversion will be in place in 2024, and argues that there is sufficient capacity in the local road network for the development to be occupied before the SLR is open. However, I do not accept this argument for reasons set out below. This compares with the current permitted residential use, which is restricted from being occupied before the SLR is open.
- Further, there is now uncertainty of delivery of the SLR (see below), which means that a resultant severe congestion impact could last many years.
- Permanent access would be via two ghost island priority junctions directly off the SLR.
- Temporary access would be via Empire Road directly onto Middleton Stoney Road. This route would be closed off between existing Axis Phase 1 and Phase 2 when the SLR is open to traffic.
- The proposed development includes a small section of the SLR. Cycle facilities on the north side do not appear to be segregated, which is in line with the permitted

layout for the SLR. However, policy has changed since that planning permission was granted, and a segregated, LTN 1/20 compliant facility would be required.

- There is no pedestrian/cycle access proposed onto existing Howes Lane – vehicular or pedestrian/cycle.
- There is no consideration in the TA of walking distances to bus stops in the interim situation (before SLR is open).
- The lack of connectivity is unacceptable even as an interim situation.
- Future bus stop positions need to be shown on the plans and agreed
- S106 contributions secured on the permitted residential development would need to be secured on this development if approved, in order for the site to contribute its share of the overall mitigation for the NW Bicester allocation

Comments:

Introduction

The application is for 16901 sqm of employment space on land that currently has permission for 150 dwellings, instead of those dwellings. This would be on two parcels, the larger being to the west of the future SLR, and the smaller parcel being between the future SLR and existing Howes Lane. The application assumes that the Strategic Link Road/A4095 diversion will be in place in 2024, and argues that there is sufficient capacity in the road network for the development to be occupied before the SLR is open. This compares with the current permitted residential use, which is restricted from being occupied before the SLR is open.

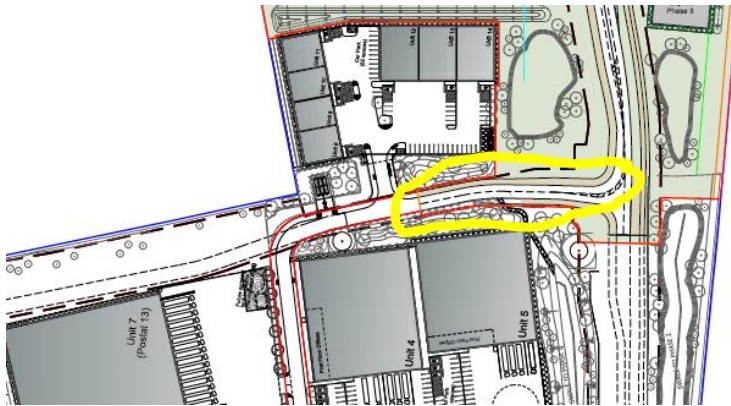
Access arrangements

Access is proposed directly onto the future SLR, a short section of which would be built as part of the development. The carriageway width, and the layout with right turning lanes is considered suitable for the nature of this road, which would be a diversion of an A road and carry significant volumes of traffic, including HGVs.

A 4.0m shared use footway/cycleway would be provided on the northern side, and a 2.5m cycleway and 2m footway on the south side, separated from the carriageway by a 5m verge. 2.5m cycleway is the 'absolute minimum at constraints' for two-way cycling as set out in LTN 1/20. 4m shared use is not compliant with LTN 1/20. Whilst these dimensions meet with the cycle/pedestrian facilities in the approved planning permission for the SLR (ref 14/01968/F) as described in section 4.3 of the Transport Assessment), policy has changed since that permission was granted, and the facility must now be compliant with LTN 1/20. Whilst priority for cyclists is provided across the access junctions, a pedestrian crossing point is missing from the access into the eastern parcel. Given the length of the crossings, consideration should be given to providing a refuge.

Further, the road infrastructure in the area circled yellow below will form part of the permanent road infrastructure linking units 8 to 14 to the SLR and must be designed to

be compliant with LTN 1/20. This link is intended in future to provide pedestrian, cycle and bus access into Himley Village so could experience high levels of pedestrian and cycle use.



A temporary access is proposed, prior to the opening of the SLR, via existing Phase 2 and Phase 1, onto Middleton Stoney Road via Empire Road. There would be no access onto Howes Lane. The TA states that this concept has been agreed with OCC, but this was always subject to a transport assessment. Cycle and ped access would be via 3m shared use facilities on Empire Road, which, given the level of use solely as a cul-de sac into an industrial estate, is likely to fall below the walking and cycling thresholds set out in LTN 1/20 that make 3m shared use acceptable. For information, Empire Road will be closed off after units 4 and 7 to become a cul de sac, once the SLR is open.

Plan 14042-60 Rev H (Access Road General Arrangement) appended to the TA shows an indicative arrow at the SE corner of the site saying 'protected route for pedestrian-cycle link to Howes Lane'. As the application assumes the future connection of the SLR, it should include the provision of a suitable ped/cycle connection to the site boundary to provide for the connection between existing Howes Lane and the SLR.

However, in the interim situation (before the SLR) pedestrian and cycle connectivity to the existing residential area would be poor, involving a long walk south to Middleton Stoney Road, along Middleton Stoney Road and then doubling back north into the residential area via the network of streets. This would discourage walking to the site. There would also be a desire line across existing Howes Lane, especially to the public footpath linking through to Wansbeck Drive. Pedestrians may well make their own way unofficially into the site, to cut off a large detour, leading to unsafe crossing and walking along the verge on Howes Lane.

The permitted housing development, in the situation where it could come forward in advance of the SLR, in lieu of a portion of the employment, (as permitted under 17/00455/HYBRID) would have required a 'pedestrian access leading to a new signalised pedestrian crossing of Howes Lane and a footway connection on the east site of Howes Lane to existing public footpath leading to Wansbeck Drive' (as per the S106 agreement dated 7 August 2017).

The site plan shows an access road leading east through the eastern parcel, ending at a gate. A pedestrian/cycle connection should be made here to Howes Lane, in the interest of providing a range of sustainable transport modes and of highway safety. The absence of a connection is a reason for objection, even in the interim situation, which could last many years.

Within the parcels, pedestrian priority should be provided across the accesses into each unit.

Strategic Link Road

The site is subject to a separate legal agreement committing the owner to paying a proportionate contribution to the major infrastructure at NW Bicester (principally the SLR). This agreement makes provisions for allowances against this contribution where the owner delivers part of the SLR themselves. It also ensures that construction of the part of the SLR cannot proceed until OCC grants technical approval, and various other provisions. The S106 agreement for this site would need to link it to that agreement. The need for technical approval of the SLR element prior to construction is critical to ensure that it is built to an adequate standard, suitable for final adoption.

Public transport

Following completion of the SLR, the site would be on the future NW Bicester bus route. However, no bus stops are shown on the plan. These could potentially be accommodated on the road between Phases 1 and 2, but this needs to be demonstrated, and bus stop and shelter provision needs to be taken account of in the design. In accordance with LTN 1/20 a cycle bypass would be required for the shelter, which needs to be accommodated in the design.

The TA mentions bus services that serve the residential area east of Howes Lane, but as no pedestrian connection is proposed, it is unclear how employees would access them. Until the SLR is open, employees and visitors would need to use stops on Middleton Stoney Road near the junction with Empire Road, which currently serve Phases 1 and 2. There is no consideration of the considerable walking distances to these stops in the TA.

Public transport contributions were secured via a S106 agreement on the existing permission. The elements that were to be triggered on occupation of the permitted residential development should be secured on this development to ensure that it pays its proportionate share to the bus strategy for NW Bicester.

Public rights of way

A contribution towards improvements of public rights of way Bicester Bridleway 9 and Bucknell Bridleway 4 was secured on the residential development that the proposed development would replace. The same contribution should be secured on this

development to ensure that it pays its proportionate share to the transport mitigation strategy for NW Bicester.

Site layout

Car and cycle parking

Car parking would be provided overall on the basis of one space per 82sqm. This is only slightly below the recommended 1 space per 50sqm for industrial (B2) use but well above the recommended one stand space per 200 sqm for warehousing (B8).

10% of spaces would have EV charging, with enabling infrastructure for 25% of spaces to have it in future. The Oxfordshire Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy requires 25% of spaces to have EV charging facilities, so there would need to be a condition to provide it by an agreed date.

Cycle parking – on the basis of the spaces shown for cycle shelters, it looks as though 35 spaces would be provided across the whole site. Allowing for the same balance of B2 and B8 that would result in the proposed number of car parking spaces, and allowing for visitors, this would be well below the recommended number. On the basis that this development would be part of an eco town, this is poor provision and should be increased. Also the cycle parking should be positioned close to the access doors, to give this priority as well as maximum security from overlooking. In some of the buildings the cycle parking appears to be in the HGV area, which is not acceptable. The recommended amounts are shown below.

	Residential	Food Retail	Non Food Retail	A2 - Banks and Profession	B1-Offices	B2 - General Industry	B8 Warehousing	D2 Assembly and Leisure	Cinema & Conference	Hotel and Guest Hse	Hospital	Higher Education	A3 - Restaurant / pubs	Stadia
Long stay/ employee/ resident	1bed - 1 space; 2+ beds - 2 Spaces***	1stand per 12 staff *	1stand per 6 staff *	1stand per 12 staff **	1stand per 150 sqm	1stand per 350 sqm	1stand per 500 sqm	1stand per 12 staff **	1stand per 12 staff **	1stand per 12 staff **	1stand per 12 staff	Subject to individual assessment	1stand per 12 staff **	1stand per 12 staff
Visitor	1stand per 2 units where more than 4 units	1stand per 200sqm	1stand per 200sqm	1stand per 100sqm	1stand per 500 sqm	1stand per 500 sqm	1stand per 1000 sqm	1stand per 20 sqm	1stand per 20 sqm	1stand per 10 beds	on merits	Subject to individual assessment	1stand per 20 sqm of public space	on merits (guide 1 stand per 30 seats)

Traffic impact

The impact of the development has been assessed for the future year 2031, using a 2018 scenario of the Bicester Transport Model, that includes most committed development, including that at Heyford. The scenario also assumes that the Strategic Link Road (SLR) at North West Bicester (a diversion of the A4095 through the NW Bicester Masterplan area, under the now constructed railway overbridge) will be in place in 2031. However, it has recently been recommended to the Oxfordshire Growth Board that the allocated Growth Deal funding for the project should be reallocated, and with no alternative forward funding currently in place, there is no longer certainty of its delivery

within that timescale. The Growth Board will consider the recommendation on 30 November.

Therefore the predictions in the Transport Assessment can no longer be regarded with any degree of certainty. Without the SLR, there would be severe congestion at the junction of Howes Lane, Bucknell Road and Lords Lane.

Putting this uncertainty aside, I have the following further comments about the 2031 assessment:

- The scenario does not include traffic from the consented Great Wolf resort at Chesterton, which is a non-local plan development for which planning permission was won on appeal. The TA does not provide the model output flows and the accompanying uncertainty log, which it should for completeness.
- It is noted and accepted that in terms of peak hour trips, the proposed uses would generate less traffic than the permitted residential development, albeit there would be a higher proportion of HGVs.
- Network diagrams are provided showing the development traffic, but not for the base flows. Development traffic has been added to 2031 flows from the Bicester Transport Model and the total flows used to assess the site access junctions and Vendee Drive/Middleton Stoney Road/SLR junction. However, flows from the Great Wolf resort have not been taken into account. This needs to be addressed.
- The results show that the SLR arm of the Middleton Stoney/Vendee Drive/SLR junction is predicted to be over capacity without the development, and that the development would make it slightly worse as well as pushing the Middleton Stoney Road East arm slightly over capacity.

Interim assessment

There is a restriction on the current planning permission that the dwellings permitted on this site cannot be occupied prior to the completion of the SLR. However, this application proposes that the development will be occupied ahead of the completion of the SLR. An argument is put forward for this in paragraphs 6.2.6-6.2.16 of the Transport Assessment. This hinges on assessment work carried out by others in 2015 to predict the performance of the existing Bucknell Road/ Howes Lane/ Lords Lane junction as NW Bicester develops. This is a junction that experiences severe congestion, and which will be relieved by the SLR. This assessment has been used to restrict (through planning conditions) the amount of development that can be occupied at NW Bicester before the SLR is connected, including an existing restriction on the Site, by which the permitted 150 homes may not be occupied before the SLR is open.

The assessment referred to above is now over six years old, and was based on a traffic model that did not include development at Heyford. As such it is no longer considered by OCC to be a reliable method of establishing the upper limits of capacity at the critical junction, being likely to under-estimate these upper limits.

Taking the overall theoretical capacity threshold at NW Bicester that was established by the 2015 assessment work referred to above, which was 900 dwellings and proportionate employment, the TA calculates that the application would generate 15% of the remaining traffic capacity (in terms of number of trips) at the critical junction before the threshold is reached. According to the TA this would reduce the number of dwellings that could be occupied across NW Bicester prior to the opening of the SLR by 76. This needs to be carefully considered in the context of live planning applications for dwellings.

My understanding of the argument put forward in the TA is as follows:

- PM Peak hour turning matrices for 900, 1200 and 2256 dwellings provided by Hyder to the applicant in 2015 showed that it was assumed the trip rate from NW Bicester passing through the critical Howes/Bucknell/Lords junction, was 0.373 trips per dwelling plus the proportional level of employment (based on the difference between these matrices).
- From this the TAs calculate that the 900 dwellings proposed to be the threshold across NW Bicester (plus proportionate employment) that can be allowed prior to the SLR, would generate 336 PM peak hour trips through the critical junction.
- The trips assumed to be generated from the employment element of the mixed use consent was 45 in the PM peak through the critical junction.
- Deducting these from the 336 above, would leave 291 for the housing element (900 dwellings) This works out at 0.323 trips per dwelling.
- Applying this to the difference between the 900 threshold and the Exemplar (393) of 507 dwellings, gives 164 peak trips as the permitted but unrealised traffic flow threshold.
- This application is predicted to generate 26 peak hour trips through the critical junction, i.e.15% of unrealised traffic allowed for within the threshold, or the equivalent of 76 vehicles not being occupied ahead of the SLR.

I recommend that the development is not permitted to be occupied ahead of the opening of the SLR, because it is not reliably demonstrated that there would not be severe congestion at the junction of Bucknell Road/Lords Lane/Howes Lane.

In the absence of certainty over delivery of the SLR, a further 2031 assessment would need to be carried out using a baseline scenario without the SLR. This would almost certainly show that there would be severe congestion at the above mentioned junction.

Travel Plan

The EV charging spaces, cycle parking spaces, and changing and shower facilities are all welcomed.

A couple of comments on the submitted Framework Travel Plan:

The mode share targets (table 2) are not very ambitious. We would expect to see a bigger decrease for the car driver mode share.

Please provide an interim TPC contact.

In addition to the overarching framework travel plan, Units 4 and 5 are above the threshold that would trigger a need for their own travel plan, which would be expected to be in line with the framework travel plan.

The final travel plans should be required by condition.

A contribution would be required of £2,379 for the Framework Travel Plan and £1446 each for the two individual travel plans, totalling £5,271 (RPIx Dec 2020).

S106 obligations and their compliance with Regulation 122(2) Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended):

£134,375 Public Transport Service Contribution indexed from Q2 2017 using RPI-x
Towards: Bus service linking NW Bicester with the town centre and railway station.

Justification: Needed to provide sustainable transport options to the site, and as part of the overall public transport strategy for the NW Bicester policy allocation.

Calculation: The amount is the same as the instalment of the agreed bus service contribution that is secured upon occupation of the permitted residential development that this development would replace.

£19,460 Public Transport Infrastructure Contribution indexed from April 2017 using Baxter Index

Towards: Provision of bus stop infrastructure serving the site.

Justification: Needed to provide sustainable transport options to the site, and as part of the overall public transport strategy for the NW Bicester policy allocation.

Calculation: The amount is the same as the instalment of the agreed bus infrastructure contribution that is secured upon occupation of the permitted residential development that this development would replace.

£2,846 Public Rights of Way Contribution indexed from April 2017 using Baxter Index
Towards: Improvements to Ardley Bridleway 9 and Bucknell Bridleway 4

Justification: This is necessary to ensure that the site continues to pay a proportionate contribution to the overall public rights of way improvements required for the NW Bicester policy allocation.

Calculation: The amount is the same as the public rights of way contribution that is secured upon occupation of the permitted residential development that this development would replace.

£5,271 Travel Plan Monitoring Fee indexed from December 2020 using RPI-x

Justification: The site will require a framework travel plan and individual travel plans for the two largest units. The fee is required to cover OCC's costs of monitoring the travel plans over their life.

Calculation: The amount is based on standard charging scales, which are in turn calculated on the basis of officer time at cost.

S278 Highway Works:

An obligation to enter into a S278 Agreement will be required to secure mitigation/improvement works for pedestrian/cycle facilities and a signalised crossing on Howes Lane. A drawing will need to be submitted. This is to provide safe access in the interim situation, ahead of the opening of the SLR.

Notes:

This is to be secured by means of S106 restriction not to implement development (or occasionally other trigger point) until S278 agreement has been entered into.

The trigger by which time S278 works are to be completed shall also be included in the S106 agreement.

Identification of areas required to be dedicated as public highway and agreement of all relevant landowners will be necessary in order to enter into the S278 agreements.

Planning Conditions:

In the event that permission is to be given, the following planning conditions should be attached:

Prior to occupation an updated Framework Travel Plan shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority, and within three months of occupation of the individual units Travel Plan(s) and / or Travel Plan Statements shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved travel plans.

Cycle parking - requiring provision of secure, covered parking for an agreed number of spaces for each building/phase, to be provided prior to first occupation of each building/phase. Further discussion with OCC is recommended.

Pedestrian and cycle facilities - requiring approval of pedestrian and cycle facilities on the new roads within the site prior to commencement, together with a timetable for their delivery.

Construction traffic management plan

Prior to commencement of the development hereby approved, a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved CTMP.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and the residential amenities of neighbouring occupiers and to comply with Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Officer's Name: Joy White

Officer's Title: Principal Transport Planner

Date: 24 November 2021

Application no: 21/03177/F

Location: Full planning application for employment development (Use Classes E(g)(iii), B2 and/or B8) and associated parking and servicing, landscaping and associated works

Lead Local Flood Authority

Recommendation:

Objection

Detailed comments:

Unable to find plan showing the exceedance flood routes.

Calculations provided do not indicate the impermeable area used.

Calculations must show the Max Volume column in the simulation results.

As this is a full application, we expect to have definite indication of all SuDS that will be installed as part of the development. Where SuDS cannot be implemented, valid justification must be provided.

A detailed surface water management strategy must be submitted in accordance with the [Local Standards and Guidance for Surface Water Drainage on Major Development in Oxfordshire](#)

In line with this guidance, runoff must be managed at source (i.e. close to where it falls) with residual flows then conveyed downstream to further storage or treatment components, where required. The proposed drainage should mimic the existing drainage regime of the site as much as possible.

In the guidance book, there's a checklist of everything that must be submitted as part of the full application. Please make sure all items on the checklist are submitted so that we can fully assess the strategy provided.

Officer's Name: Sujeenthan Jeevarangan

Officer's Title: LLFA Planning Engineer

Date: 23 November 2021

Application no: 21/03177/F

Location: Full planning application for employment development (Use Classes E(g)(iii), B2 and/or B8) and associated parking and servicing, landscaping and associated works

LOCAL MEMBERS VIEWS.

Cllr. Les Sibley, also on behalf of Cllrs Michael Waine and Donna Ford

Bicester West

Comments with regards to the CDC planning application No 21/03177/F- Axis J9 Phase 3 Howes Lane, Bicester

This planning application has a high level of public interest and concern amongst Bicester Residents.

Bicester Town Council strongly objects to this Planning Application.

This speculative planning application for industrial warehouses on a site earmarked for housing is premature and contrary to both the NW Bicester Master Plan and Bicester Policy 1 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan.

No further planning applications are allowed on the NW Bicester site other than those applications which have already been approved by the local planning authority (Cherwell District Council) until the new realigned Howes Lane has been constructed.

Last April, it was a fantastic engineering feat over 72 hours to install an under bridge and underpass through the railway embankment at Howes Lane Bicester. This scheme will facilitate the re-alignment of the A4095 Howes Lane that will deliver thousands of zero carbon neutral homes, a fit for purpose road network, social infrastructure and improve essential access links for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists across the 6,000 home ECO development at NW Bicester.

The proposed application site has an existing planning permission to build 150 residential units as part of the 6,000 home ECO development at the NW Bicester site.

The scale and height of the 11 warehouse buildings that range from 8 -12 metres in height will have an unacceptable landscape impact which will in turn impact on the amenity of existing and new residents.

The proposals are contrary to the Cherwell Local Plan para B42, the supporting text to SLE 1 which states that in all cases very careful consideration should be given to locating employment and housing in close proximity as unacceptable adverse effects on the amenity of residential properties will not be permitted.

The adverse impact the proposed development will have on the character and appearance of the area.

The proposed development by its size scale, height, massing, design, and visual impact will dominate the street scene and blight the skyline.

The proposed development will be built on land at high risk of flooding. During the past few years, the existing Howes Lane, and the Greenwood housing estate has suffered from severe flooding incidents which resulted in residential homes being damaged by excessive amounts of flood water.

The loss of Green Infrastructure and the impact the proposed development will have the Local Walking Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LWCIP) and the internal bus network throughout the NW Bicester.

The adverse impact that the proposed development will have on the large Secondary School site, sport pitches, shops, health, and community centres by marginalising them from the residential development. Concerns for the safety of school children and parents having to use an industrial business park as part of the route to new School.

The adverse impact that the proposed industrial development will have on the road network by traffic congestion, noise, air and light pollution.

The key priority to unlocking the full potential of the 6,000 home ECO development on the NW Bicester site is to get on and build the A4095 Strategic Link Road (new re-aligned Howes Lane) without any further delay.

The proposal to build storage and distribution units on a site zoned for housing is unacceptable and would unnecessarily and unjustifiably erode the ambitions of the Local Plan.

The proposal is contrary to Policy SLE1 and Policy Bicester 1 of the Cherwell Local Plan, and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The comments listed above are supported by my fellow Bicester County Councillors Michael Waine and Donna Ford.