



National Highways Planning Response (NHPR 21-09) Formal Recommendation to an Application for Planning Permission

From: Andrew Jinks (Regional Director),
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To: **Cherwell District Council – FAO: David Lowin**

CC: transportplanning@dft.gov.uk
spatialplanning@highwaysengland.co.uk

Council's Reference: 21/03268/OUT

Location: OS Parcel 2636, NW of Baynards House, Ardley

Proposal: Outline planning permission (all matters reserved except for access) for the erection of buildings comprising logistics (Use Class B8) and ancillary Office (Use Class E(g)(i)) floorspace; construction of new site access from the B4100; creation of internal roads and access routes; hard and soft landscaping including noise attenuation measures; and other associated infrastructure

National Highways Ref: 92859

Referring to the consultation on a planning application dated 05 Oct 2021 referenced above, in the vicinity of the A43 and M40 that form part of the Strategic Road Network, notice is hereby given that National Highways' formal recommendation is that we:

- ~~a) offer no objection (see reasons at Annex A);~~
- ~~b) recommend that conditions should be attached to any planning permission that may be granted (see Annex A – National Highways recommended Planning Conditions & reasons);~~
- c) recommend that planning permission not be granted for a specified period (see reasons at Annex A);
- ~~d) recommend that the application be refused (see reasons at Annex A)~~

Highways Act 1980 Section 175B is not relevant to this application.¹

This represents National Highways' formal recommendation and is copied to the Department for Transport as per the terms of our Licence.

Should the Local Planning Authority not propose to determine the application in accordance with this recommendation they are required to consult the Secretary of State for Transport, as set out in the [Town and Country Planning \(Development Affecting Trunk Roads\) Direction 2018](#), via transportplanning@df.gov.uk and may not determine the application until the consultation process is complete.

Signature: 	Date: 26 October 2021
Name: Martin Seldon	Position: Assistant Spatial Planner
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¹ Where relevant, further information will be provided within Annex A.

Annex A National Highway's assessment of the proposed development

National Highways has been appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport as a strategic highway company under the provisions of the Infrastructure Act 2015 and is the highway authority, traffic authority and street authority for the Strategic Road Network (SRN). The SRN is a critical national asset and as such we work to ensure that it operates and is managed in the public interest, both in respect of current activities and needs as well as in providing effective stewardship of its long-term operation and integrity.

Recommended Non-Approval

It is recommended that the application should not be approved for a period of three months from the date of this response to allow the applicant to provide the additional information required.

Reasons

National Highways was previously consulted on this development proposal during the pre-application stage in July 2021 where we provided our comments regarding trip generation, distribution/ assignment, likely SRN junctions to be assessed, etc.

Having reviewed the information submitted in support of the planning application, we have the following comments to provide.

Quantum of development

We have noted some inconsistencies between the total floorspace proposed for the Eastern Parcel in the application form and that stated within the Transport Assessment (TA). While the floorspace for the Eastern Parcel is stated as 100,000 sq.m within the TA submitted, it is entered as 107,000 sq.m in the application form. We require the applicant to use the floorspace as stated within the application form for all the assessments to ensure that the worst-case scenario is considered.

Trip generation

We note that the trip rates for the development have now been revised based on traffic survey data obtained from similar developments having comparable land use sizes. Based on our review of the proposed trip rates, we consider these to be acceptable and have no further comments to make.

Trip distribution

The applicant has undertaken the trip distribution for light vehicles based on 2011 Census data and heavy vehicles using the 2006 freight matrices published by DfT. While we acknowledge that the freight data in the DfT website is the latest available information, it should be noted that this data is now quite old and as such, may not capture the development growth that has happened in the area over the last 15 years.

Further to this, as the vehicular accesses to serve the Western Parcel and Eastern Parcel of the development are different, we require additional insight on how the distributions have been undertaken for the development at each.

National Highways would also welcome an alternative methodology to be adopted for determining trip distribution, for instance the use of a gravity model or the Bicester strategic model. We consider that this approach would provide a more robust assessment. We recommend that the applicant discusses and agrees with National Highways the methodology to be adopted.

TEMPro growth rates

We consider the growth factors to be acceptable.

Committed development

We would welcome a clarification on whether the committed developments considered for the assessments have been finalised following the confirmation from the Local Plan Authority.

Capacity assessments

Capacity assessments have currently been undertaken at the western and eastern site accesses and A43 Baynards Green roundabout only. We note that the applicant has made reference to the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal scheme which proposes improvements at the A43 Baynards Green roundabout and the Padbury roundabout of M40 J10, amongst other improvements. However, National Highways requires the applicant to undertake junction capacity assessments at M40 J10 and A43 Baynards Green roundabout using the latest available information regarding the proposed improvement schemes. Details regarding the improvement scheme can be made available to the applicant upon request.

Baseline traffic – We note from section 8.3.6 of the Environmental Statement (ES) that the baseline data has been collated from a number of sources, including the commissioning of traffic surveys, WEbTRIS data, the historic Transport Assessment for North West Bicester Masterplan (2014), freight matrices published by DfT, etc. However, it is not clear how the data has been processed and used for the assessments. As such, we require the applicant to include a section on this in the TA to understand the suitability of the data used.

We would also require the traffic flow diagrams to be provided (preferably in the form of spreadsheets) for all the scenarios under consideration.

Modelling software – We note that the capacity assessments at the site accesses and A43 Baynards Green roundabout have been undertaken using ARCADY. However, no information is provided regarding source or validation of the models.

Additionally, we would require the applicant to model the junctions in the area (including Baynards Green roundabout and M40 J10) using a linked model in order to capture the likely interactions between these closely placed junctions. As already noted in our response during the pre-application stage, National Highways' VISSIM model developed for M40 J10 in the area (the extent of which includes the A43 Baynards Green roundabout) can be shared with the applicant upon request.

Merge/ Diverge Assessments

While we acknowledge that the applicant has carried out the merge and diverge assessments on the slip roads at M40 J10, we are unable to undertake the checks as the flow data is unavailable. We would therefore welcome a review of this data.

Interim mitigation scheme

We note that the applicant has proposed an interim mitigation scheme at the A43 Baynards Green roundabout which includes widening of the B4100 entries and a standalone signal-controlled toucan (pedestrian and cycle) crossing. As there remains some outstanding concerns and the proposed improvement scheme as part of the Growth Deal scheme at the A43 Baynards Green roundabout and M40 J10 has not been modelled into the assessments, National Highways is currently not in a position to comment on the suitability of the interim mitigation scheme.

In line with the above, National Highways has not currently undertaken a detailed review of the assessments presented within the TA. We recommend that a call with the applicant is arranged to address the outstanding concerns as noted above.

In addition, the submitted preliminary Ground Investigation report is a geo-environmental Phase 2 investigation for the main developments themselves. It does not include any details of the boundaries with National Highways operations, aside from a comment about excavations in (Part 1(2) (1).pdf):

7.5 Excavations

Excavations up to 3-4m deep are locally envisaged as part of the reprofiling works to create the required development platforms. At these depths excavations are expected to be in a combination of weathered rock strata comprising gravelly clay and clayey gravel and competent rock strength strata (limestone).

The applicant will need to advise / confirm if there will be any earthworks associated with the development(s) in relatively close proximity to National Highways boundaries (e.g. the stability of the balancing ponds, etc). In the first instance, some cross sections (to scale) through the boundaries showing the proposed extent of the development, its features and any proposed changes in elevation (excavations, landscaping) etc should be submitted for further assessment. Once received, we will review to determine the possible extent of any geotechnical reporting under the Design

Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) standard CD 622, which may be required to confirm the extent of any geotechnical risk to the SRN.

Once this information has been provided, we can fully assess the potential impact on the drainage of the site and whether this will effectively mitigated.