



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 5 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: 25 July 2022
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 Highways' 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 further period of three months from the date of this response to allow the applicant to provide the additional information required.

Reasons

National Highways has been engaging with the applicant/ their consultants on this development proposal since the pre-application stage in July 2021, and have agreed the following matters with the applicant:

1. Trip generation
2. Trip distribution and assignment methodology
3. Modelling software to be used for capacity assessments

While the applicant submitted a Transport Assessment (TA) in support of the planning application, we noted that the trip distribution and capacity assessments undertaken were not in line with that previously agreed upon. We continue to have discussions with the applicant and consider that the outstanding matters will be resolved in due course.

National Highways issued a holding recommendation response on 25 April 2022 detailing the concerns identified with regard to the traffic related matters and geotechnical matters. The following sections detail the up-to-date position of this planning application from a National Highways' perspective.

Traffic related matters

Quantum of development

We noted some inconsistencies between the total floorspace proposed for the Eastern Parcel in the Application Form and that stated within the 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. Therefore, we require the applicant to use the floorspace stated within the Application Form for all the assessments to ensure that the worst-case scenario is considered.

Trip distribution

The applicant previously undertook the trip distribution for light vehicles based on 2011 Census data and heavy vehicles using the 2006 freight matrices published by DfT. While we acknowledged that the freight data on DfT's website is the latest available information, we noted in our response that this data is 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 serving the Western Parcel and Eastern Parcel of the development are different, we required additional insight on how the distributions have been undertaken for the development at each.

Following further discussions, it was agreed that the light vehicle trip distribution and assignment would be undertaken using the Bicester Transport Model (BTM) available for the area. Based on our review of the modelling brief provided in December 2021, the scope of the model runs to be performed and the outputs to be extracted were agreed with the applicant.

The traffic survey data available with National Highways for the area was supplied to the consultant to help determine the proposed HGV distribution for the development, which will be fed into the BTM model for undertaking the runs. Having reviewed the HGV trip distributions undertaken by the consultant, we are content with the proposed HGV trip distribution and have no further comment to provide on this.

The applicant's consultant has now submitted the initial outputs from BTM for our review. Based on our review, we have provided our comments to the consultant in an email on 13 July 2022 and recommended that they submit additional output plots to aid our review. Following the satisfactory review of the BTM runs, we will be in a better position to recommend the wider SRN junctions that are to be assessed in detail. Post approval of the BTM outputs, we would welcome the consultant to submit a short note on the matrix development methodology.

Committed development

We note that the uncertainty log has been updated by the consultant and has been agreed upon by the Oxfordshire County Council. As such, we have no further comments to raise.

Discussions are ongoing between the applicant, National Highways and Oxfordshire County Council on the need for sensitivity tests regarding development proposals in the area.

Capacity assessments

Capacity assessments have been undertaken using Junctions software for the western and eastern site accesses and the A43 Baynards Green roundabout, and results were presented within the TA. However, it was agreed that the applicant will undertake junction capacity assessments at M40 J10 and A43 Baynards Green

roundabout using National Highways' VISSIM model developed for M40 J10 in the area. Therefore, a detailed review of the assessments as presented within the TA was not undertaken by National Highways.

Based on discussions with the applicant, it was agreed that the A43 Growth Deal scheme (as per the latest design drawings) will be incorporated into the model for assessing the development impacts with the scheme in place. As such, National Highways provided the VISSIM models developed for M40 J10 along with Local Model Validation Report (LMVR) and A43 Growth Deal schemes drawings. We recommended that the applicant updates the modelling work based on the scheme layout drawings and provides the updated models for our review.

In line with this, the applicant's consultant has provided the updated M40 J10 VISSIM model along with the associated files for our review. Based on the review, we provided our detailed comments in an email in July 2022 regarding the discrepancies noted in the various modelled elements. The consultant has now provided an updated VISSIM model addressing our comments, which we are in the process of reviewing. We will provide our comments to the consultant in due course.

Merge/ Diverge Assessments

While the applicant has carried out 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

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 remain 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 satisfactorily modelled into the assessments, National Highways is not yet in a position to comment on the suitability of the interim mitigation scheme.

The outstanding concerns are likely to be resolved in due course and National Highways will provide comments accordingly.

Following the completion of the assessments, we would expect that the applicant provides a revised TA to reflect the updates as noted above.

Geotechnical matters

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 can effectively be mitigated.