

From: Julie Baxter
Sent: 17 May 2022 13:03
To: Andrew Lewis
Subject: RE: 22/00747/OUT - Land at Bicester Road, Kidlington

Dear Andrew,

Apologies for the delay in responding to this outline application. Please consider my response as below.

Overview of the Outline Application:

- Site total area: 27.75 ha (three pastoral fields with structural vegetation confined to the site boundaries and internal field boundaries and comprising established hedgerows and tree belts.)
- In terms of landscape value, the Site is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory designations for landscape character or quality. It is not publically accessible except for the south eastern edge which is crossed by a public footpath.
- 370 Homes, proposal will include: POS, play areas, allotments, woodland planting, sports pitches and pavilion with parking.
- Total number of 19 trees and 32 groups of trees. Limited number are of moderate value trees. There will be some tree loss on the Bicester Road to create visibility splays – G13 group.
- Managing surface water – creation of two retention basins. Small area of the site (east) shown to have medium to high risk from surface water flooding.
- In total 11 hectares will be allocated for sports facilities, 4 hectares in the south west will be set aside for sports pitches – plus a sport pavilion and car park.
- 0.4ha will be allocated for new allotments and a car park.
- Allocated Greenway on the eastern side.
- LVIA assessed the site as medium quality landscape quality and sensitivity as medium to low landscape value.

A LVIA was prepared and submitted in support of the planning application which finds that there are no landscape designations for character or quality covering the Application Site, and no TPOs covering any tree on the Application Site. It also finds that the Application Site's structural vegetation is confined to the internal field boundaries and the boundaries of the Application Site, and comprises tree belts and hedgerows, ranging between medium and low landscape quality. The LVIA assesses the Site as being of medium landscape quality and sensitivity and medium to low landscape value, with a reasonable ability to accommodate the proposed development.

The LVIA assesses that the Application Site is very well contained in views from its surroundings by the established field boundary tree belts. Views from the surrounding roads are typically screened or heavily filtered by this vegetation, with very limited views into the Application Site. Open views across the Application Site are possible from the public footpath which crosses its eastern edge, with partial views of the Application Site's northern field also possible from the cemetery and former allotments, seen above the boundary hedgerow. Consequently, the opportunity exists to introduce new tree and hedgerow planting to limit views into the cemetery in recognition of the need for privacy. Partial views of the northern field are also possible from several residential properties along Water Eaton Lane to the north east. Therefore, the new homes should sensitively relate to the existing homes, with new tree and hedgerow planting along the eastern boundary being used to screen and soften these existing views.

The draft Development Brief identifies landscape opportunities for the proposed development, as follows:

- New woodland planting along the south eastern boundary of the Application Site, to establish a new area of woodland planting to screen the Application Site from highways/rail infrastructure.
- Opportunity to protect, restore or enhance existing hedgerows and trees.

- Opportunity to protect and enhance the Application Site's existing wildlife corridors and habitats, and provide a connected corridor of green infrastructure across the Application Site.
- Opportunity to retain existing ponds and ditches within the landscape design of the Application Site.

The allocation of the overall PR7a Site has resulted in the Green Belt being revised so that only the southernmost field is retained within the Green Belt. This means that the southern part of the Site will maintain the sense of separation between Kidlington and Oxford. As per the provisions of Policy PR7a, the area retained within the Green Belt will be a focus for the provision of formal sports facilities, and other green infrastructure, for the benefit of the new residents and the wider community.

Comments:

Illustrative Landscape Strategy Plan and Development Framework Plan:

Combined LAP / LEAPs and combined LEAP / NEAP and MUGA with Trim Trail

Show two main areas of play. Northern part will be a combined LAP / LEAP for younger children. And the south west part which will provide a LEAP / NEAP & MUGA for young children, teenagers and adults. Plus a trim trail will be provided within the southern parkland area.

We will need to see a strategy for the location of these. The combined LAP / LEAP should be located within the housing areas so they can be accessed easily and can be overlooked. Play facilities can provide valuable open space within housing areas. Central LAPs and LEAPs provide facilities within safe easy walking distance and break up the built form.

Locations of both play areas are either close to an existing pond or a proposed SuDS basin. Although the SW combined play area has been located close to the proposed 'Greenway' and a secondary pedestrian route, the viability of the location needs to be taken into account with the retention of the existing vegetation which could reduce the amount of visual surveillance also taking into account the distance from the proposed residential areas.

Sports Pitches with Pavilion and Parking

Provision should be made in accordance with the minimum standards set out in 'Local Standards of Provision - Outdoor Recreation'.

Sports pitches must comply and meet the Sport England criteria. I trust they have been consulted as the application involves a proposed residential development of more than 300 dwellings.

Allotments and Parking

Ensure that adequate parking is provided (at least one parking space for every two plots). Design and layout needs to ensure that the location of the parking for the allotments and pavilion are kept separate to avoid allotment allocated spaces being used by those using the sport facilities. Suggested that allotments are to be divided into half plots of 5 or 125 sq. m. Plot numbers and parking spaces need to be verified.

- Quantitative standard: 0.37 ha per 1000 people with a 10 minute walk (800m). Does the allocated 0.4ha exclude / include the area provided for car parking?

The standards of provision to include a clean, well kept, secure site that encourages sustainable communities, biodiversity and healthy living with appropriate ancillary facilities to meet local needs, clearly marked pathways to and within the site.

Street Tree Planting

Street trees must be in a verge and maintained by OCC for the amenity and continuity. These should as such be located on the southern or southwestern side of the street planted into adequately wide grass verges.

Existing and Proposed Watercourses

On the eastern boundary there is an existing ditch, hedgerow and conifers. How are these features to be maintained? A sufficient depth of POS with path should be incorporated into the scheme to ensure these landscape features are maintained and managed.

The existing pond will need some form of protective fencing to discourage dogs and pedestrians from encroaching onto the marginal zones and into the pond itself. Currently this area is shown to be constrained by the play provision minimum area requirements:

Activity Area LEAP/NEAP/MUGA = 2,400m² (400+1000+1000)
Landscape Buffer 13,950 m² (3200+7500+3250)

It may be a consideration to relocate this play provision to the southern part of the proposed development (where the informal kickabout area is shown) but still located as close to dwellings as possible to meet the min. distance criteria.

Landscape Visual Effects

LVIA is comprehensive and proportionate and has assessed the site as medium quality landscape quality and sensitivity as medium to low landscape value. The evolution of the design does need to follow the findings of the LVIA and practical requests to make the facilities more useful. Ensure the group of pitches remain together to minimise the requirement for changing facilities.

Biodiversity Improvement and Landscape Management Plan: Management Prescriptions

Seeding / Turf laying should take place in Spring (March-May) or early Autumn (September-mid October) when soil is moist and warm. Paragraph 4.84 states: 'Seeding/turf laying will take place during the growing season (April – October) and will be fully watered at the time of installation.' During June - August, the conditions will potentially be too warm and dry so seed and turf will struggle to germinate and/or establish.

5.0 Management Timetable: Sports Pitches and equipment areas of play – pitch / play area implantation, shown as Jan to Dec – this needs to reflect the above timings for when the grass areas are to be seeded / turfed.
Formal Soft landscaping - plant new herbaceous planting into prepared ground, shown as Mar to Oct – this needs to reflect the most suitable times also to maximise establishment.

To reiterate, the square meterage of the two play provisions, allotments with parking, pavilion with parking, formal sport facilities and informal open space should be provided by the developer to allow us to check compliance.

Policy BSC 10: Open Space, Outdoor Sport and Recreation Provision
Policy BSC 11: Local Standards of Provision- Outdoor Recreation
Policy ESD 17: Green Infrastructure

Combined LAP and Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) to be provided for 2 to 8 year old children, situated to the northern end of the development:

Minimum 500 sq. m equipped activity zone set within a landscaped area designed to provide a safe area for alternative play for children aged 2 to 8. The size of the equipped activity zone should be a minimum of 10m x 10m in respect of the LAP element and 20m x 20m in respect of the LEAP element.

The size of the landscaped area (incorporating the equipped activity zone) will be informed by the development context (acknowledging activity zone buffer requirements) and local design guidance.

A minimum of 8 individual items of play equipment for a range of different play experiences and/or a number of multi-functional play units, depending on the design layout of the play space.

The equipped activity zone within the landscaped area should be located a minimum of 10 m from the nearest dwelling boundary and 20m from the nearest habitable room façade. The landscaped area around the equipped activity zone could be used to incorporate this buffer.

Combined LEAP, Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP) and Multi-use Games Area (MUGA) for 4 to 16 year old children indicated to the south west of the development:

Minimum 2400 sq. m equipped activity zone comprising an area of play equipment and structures and a hard surfaced area of at least 465 sq. m, set within a landscaped area designed to provide a safe area for alternative play for children aged 4 to 16. The size of the equipped activity zone should be a minimum of 20m x 20m in respect of the LEAP element, 31.6m x 31.6m in respect of the NEAP element and 40m x 20m in respect of the MUGA element.

The size of the landscaped area (incorporating the equipped activity zone) will be informed by the development context (acknowledging activity zone buffer requirements) and local design guidance.

A minimum of 13 individual items of play equipment for a range of different play experiences and/or single multi-functional play units. The design should incorporate both urban (steel) and natural (timber) elements.

The equipped activity zone within the landscaped area should be located a minimum of 10 m from the nearest dwelling boundary and 20m from the nearest habitable room façade in respect of the LEAP element and a minimum of 30m from the nearest dwelling boundary in respect of the NEAP and MUGA elements. The landscaped area around the equipped activity zone could be used to incorporate this buffer.

- Play areas are to be well overlooked. They should be located within the 400m walking distance of all new homes within the development and close to pedestrian and cycling routes.
- In respect of Health and Safety public play space and play equipment are to be designed to the most current safest, standards possible, to minimise the risks for children. Refer to Play Safety Forum: Managing Risk in Play and RoSPA.
- The location and design of play areas is to consider the risks to children's safety in relation to any areas of water including features forming part of the SuDS system
- All play surfaces, gate openings are to be accessible for disabled children, parents and carers with limited mobility. Each public play space should accommodate play equipment specifically designed for disabled children.

Furthermore:

1. Play areas are to be constructed from robust and durable materials to last into the future. Full construction details are required for planning approval under reserved matters. Valid suppliers' guarantees for play equipment, furniture and safer surfaces should be provided.
2. There is to be no underground or above ground utilities for play areas given the potential disruption to children's physical and social development when a play area has to be closed for essential maintenance and refurbishment of such utilities.
3. The public play space locations are not to be used for constructor's compounds, contractor parking, or storage of building materials. This is to prevent the contamination and compaction of topsoil and subsoil, resulting in a health risk for children.

The developer must confirm agreement to Items 2 and 3 and ensure this is followed through at (detailed design) reserved matters and the construction phase.

For the streets and open space the 'right tree in the right place' is crucial for urban GI and its success. In this regard the landscape consultant should consider <https://www.tdag.org.uk/tree-species-selection-for-green-infrastructure.html> (Trees Design Action Group's tree species selection).

Please let me know if you have any questions on the above matters.

Kind regards,

Julie.

Julie Baxter

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Landscape & Street Scene
Cherwell District Council



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