

# WESTON ON THE GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

[www.westononthegreen-pc.gov.uk](http://www.westononthegreen-pc.gov.uk)

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*Chairman:* Mrs Diane Bohm

*Clerk:* Mrs Jane Mullane

Cherwell District Council  
Planning Department

16<sup>th</sup> May 2022

Dear Sir/Madam

**Ref: OS Parcel 5700 South West Of Grange Farm Street Through Little Chesterton**

**Planning Application No. 22/01144/F**

Weston on the Green Parish Council wish to Object to the above planning application as it stands. The development proposal is out of scale relevant to the close adjacent villages in a rural environment, building over green space which is increasingly under pressure in this area.

We would note our specific reasons for rejection as below:

## **1. Contrary to Local Development Plan**

This proposal is contrary to the Cherwell Local Development Plan and to its strategic aims for i) preservation and enhancement of biodiversity; iii) reduction in the use of private motor vehicles and their effect on climate change.

The impact of this development on the extended local area (including several neighbouring parishes) will be significant, particularly with respect to traffic related issues where mitigation measures cannot adequately address the additional impact in an area which is already critically stressed.

The proposed site is within the open countryside, albeit bounded by two major traffic corridors, the M40 and the A34. The site is not allocated for any development in the adopted Development Plan and thus is contrary to the adopted plan. The proposals would be contrary to Policy ESD 13 in as much as they would cause visual and actual intrusion into open countryside, particularly in the context of the significant archaeological history in the immediate vicinity (Alchester Roman settlement and associated Romano-British and medieval settlements). The site also traverses the existing parish boundary between Chesterton and Wendlebury, which is still marked by a field hedge and would therefore change the historic landscape.

## **2. Sustainability Issues**

The proposed development is for a large footprint building of total volume 42,870 m<sup>2</sup> and an additional large carpark area to accommodate at least 638 motorised vehicles. Phase 1 will develop 54% of the total space. The profile of the building will be a mixture of conventional storage and glass structures. The traffic movements (for employees and delivery/distribution HGVs) will add to the heavy volume already on

the A34 and the private commuting vehicles will stretch the local road structure and significantly affect the lives of residents in surrounding villages (most impact will be in Chesterton, Little Chesterton, Wendlebury) but also including Middleton Stoney, Weston-on-the Green, Bletchington, Kirtlington and Ardley by virtue of commuters using rural roads to avoid the congested A34. Reliance on commuting using private vehicles and the increase in heavy service vehicles is directly contrary to the Cherwell Local Plan policies TR2 and TR16.

### **3. Landscape and Ecological Impact**

The planning proposal is for a large built-over area and large areas of ground covered in hard surfaces for parking and service access. In fact the built over footprint is similar in scale to the entire village of Wendlebury. The remaining green areas will be managed to mitigate flooding issues with only a very small proportion of the total area being managed as a true biodiversity habitat. The impact of this in the existing rural environment will further compromise remaining natural habitats which are already affected by the major road structures e.g. animal trackways; light and air pollution affecting birds, bats, microhabitats for native plants (including wildflowers) and insects (including pollinators). Extreme revision and management of the rural landscape is contrary to Cherwell Local Plan policies EN27, EN30, EN31, EN34 and EN35.

### **4. Traffic Impact**

The Transport Assessment submitted to support the application uses data and assumptions that raise concerns:

- The expectation is that 88% of employees will use car transport to commute to the site, and 5% will use public transport. The emphasis on staff private commuting is clear in the intention to develop a new signalled junction on the A41 and reduce the speed limit to 40mph. The proposal states that the impact of traffic will be reduced due to staggered shift times, but the evidence is not compelling. In fact the site scores a low accessibility BREEAM score of 2.11 but efforts to address this (proposed staff transport plan, encouraging delivery service vehicles to use the strategic highway network instead of local roads) is not likely to have much effect. All the local villages suffer from unacceptable levels of traffic using small (in some cases single track) local roads to avoid the highway network and we would expect a mandate to service vehicles NOT to use local roads instead of merely 'encouragement'.
- Pedestrian and cycle access to the site from Bicester and local villages is within the acceptable limit, but barriers include the lack of a safe pedestrian crossing on the A41 where the footway crosses to Wendlebury; the poor state of upkeep of the cycle path which would be the route used either approaching from Kidlington (Oxford Parkway station) or from Bicester (Bicester Village or Bicester North stations). We don't see either of these options being attractive alternatives to private vehicle journeys directly to the site for employees and visitors.

### **5. Economic Benefits for Cherwell and Local Area**

The proposal expects to generate 670 construction jobs and 1200 skilled jobs, retaining 528 current jobs, most of which are already Oxfordshire based (although west Oxfordshire). The wider economic benefits are projected to be significantly greater than this, capitalising on the proposed Oxford Cambridge Arc. It is noteworthy that the Oxford Cambridge Arc strategic development is still not confirmed and therefore the associated transformational capacity that might relate to the Grange Farm site may not be realised.

Of concern is that inevitably a site of this scale will deliver a staff turnover and new recruitment will put further pressure on local housing and amenities. Bicester is under-resourced for societal amenities given the large expansion of new housing in the last decade and further residential pressure will exacerbate this. The alternative, to encourage new staff to live outside Bicester environs, will then add more commuting journeys to and from the site and add to rural housing development pressures.

**6. Air/Noise Pollution/Quality/Water table**

We remain concerned with the resultant deterioration in air quality and noise pollution from additional traffic, construction and service vehicles.

The site has a flood risk which will have to be mitigated. It is worth stating that the site in terms of geological profile and landscape is part of greater Otmoor which is an area of importance in flood management and sustainability of the local water table, and although the development site has been isolated in recent years due to the elevated M40/A34 interchange, the ground water profile is still linked with the moor. Parishes in this area have a history of understanding local water management but their knowledge is not taken on board and has led to numerous instances of translated flooding issues, reduced water table levels, local ponds and dew ponds drying up. We are understandably concerned about measures proposed regarding water management and would want to see closer consultation with local farmers and residents to ensure that all aspects of water management are taken into account.

The Weston on the Green Parish Council hope and expect that the above points will mean that this application as it stands will be rejected by the Council.

Yours faithfully

Diane Bohm  
Chairman

On behalf of Weston on the Green Parish Council