

PLACE AND GROWTH INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

From: Planning Policy, Conservation and Design Team

To: Senior Manager – Development Management (FAO David Lowin)

Our Ref: Application Response

Your Ref: 22/01144/F

Ask for: Chris Cherry

Ext: 1851

Date: 27 May 2022

APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION PLANNING POLICY CONSULTATION RESPONSE

This response raises the key planning policy issues only.
All material planning policies and associated considerations will need to be taken into account.

Planning Application No.	22/01144/F
Address / Location	OS Parcel 5700 South West of Grange Farm, Street Through Little Chesterton, Chesterton
Proposal	Full planning application for the erection of a new high quality combined research, development and production facility comprising of Class B2 floorspace and ancillary office floorspace with associated infrastructure including: formation of signal-controlled vehicular access to the A41 and repositioning of existing bus stops; ancillary workshops; staff gym and canteen; security gate house; a building for use as an energy centre (details of the energy generation reserved for future approval); loading bays; service yard; waste management area; external plant; vehicle parking; landscaping including permanent landscaped mounds; sustainable drainage details; together with the demolition of existing agricultural buildings within the red line boundary; and the realignment of an existing watercourse.
Key Policies / Guidance	<p>Cherwell Local Plan 2011 - 2031</p> <p>Policy SLE1 - Employment Development Policy SLE4 - Improved Transport and Connections Policy ESD1 - Mitigating an Adapting to Climate Change Policy ESD2 - Energy Hierarchy and Allowable Solutions Policy ESD3 - Sustainable Construction Policy ESD4 - Decentralised Energy Systems Policy ESD5 - Renewable Energy Policy ESD6 - Sustainable Flood Risk Management Policy ESD7 - Sustainable Drainage Systems Policy ESD10 - Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment Policy ESD13 - Landscape Protection Policy ESD15 - The Character of Built and Historic Environment</p> <p>Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996</p> <p>Policy TR1 - Transport Policy TR10 - Heavy Goods Vehicles Policy C8 - Sporadic Development in the Countryside</p>

<p>Key Policy Observations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The application site extends to approximately 19.5 hectares and is located immediately to the north of M40 Junction 9. The main frontage then extends along the A41 north towards Bicester. To the east of the A41 is the village of Wendlebury. Immediately to the north west of the site is the hamlet of Little Chesterton. Bicester is approximately 2km north of the site. • The site is currently in agricultural use, with a number of buildings in agricultural or commercial use in the north east of the site. • The western boundary of the site is defined by the Wendlebury Brook, and a PROW crosses the site. • The proposed development is a manufacturing facility for medical equipment with ancillary buildings. • The proposed facility, to be built in two phases, covers a total area of approximately 56,162sq.m and consists of several distinct areas as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Single storey production space, delivered in 2 phases ○ Production ancillary spaces including workshops and office areas ○ Welfare facilities ○ Hard standings for external plant and parking ○ Loading bays and service yard ○ Landscaped carparking supporting a minimum of 474 parking spaces and external recreation space ○ Waste management space ○ Security gate house ○ Facilities Management Building (FMB) ○ Energy Centre • The adopted 2015 Local Plan has an urban focus with the bulk of the District's strategic growth to 2031 directed to Banbury and Bicester. • In the rural areas growth is limited and directed towards larger and more sustainable villages. Development in the open countryside is strictly controlled. • A strategic objective of the adopted local plan (SO 1) is to facilitate economic growth and employment and a more diverse local economy with an emphasis on attracting and developing higher technology industries. • Paragraph B.30 of the plan explains that that the aim is to secure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ business-friendly and well-functioning towns ○ an eco-innovation hub along the Oxford – Cambridge technology corridor ○ internationally connected and export driven economic growth ○ investment in people to grow skills and the local workforce ○ vibrant, creative and attractive market towns ○ family housing ○ measures to reclaim commuters where possible ○ measures to increase labour productivity.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paragraph B.31 continues by outlining the type of employment development the District wants to attract, which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ advanced manufacturing/high performance engineering ○ the Green Economy ○ innovation, research and development ○ retailing ○ consumer services. • Policy SLE1 helps to deliver the Plan's strategy for economic growth. In addition a number of strategic employment sites are allocated for development at Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington. • The application site is on an unallocated greenfield site in open countryside, with the nearest settlements being Little Chesterton, and Wendlebury, two Cat C villages, which are both in close proximity to Bicester and the A34 transport corridor. • Policy SLE 1 states that in the rural areas employment development should be located within or on the edge of Category A villages (see Policy Villages 1) unless exceptional circumstances are demonstrated. • The policy sets out a list of criteria for assessing new employment proposals within the rural areas on non-allocated sites. These include the applicant demonstrating why the development should be located in the rural areas on a non-allocated site; and that proposals should be small scale unless it can be demonstrated that there will be no significant adverse impacts on the character of a village or surrounding area. • Policy SLE 1 also requires the applicants to demonstrate a need for, and the benefits of, the employment development in the location proposed supported by an explanation of why the proposed development should not be located at the towns, close to the proposed labour supply. • The application has provided significant supporting material, which includes an assessment of alternative, available sites which concludes that none are available. • The application has also sought to demonstrate a need for, and benefits of, employment in the location proposed, including explaining the uses proposed, job creation, the locational requirements of the applicants and the role of this sector within the local, regional and national economy. • The views of the Council's economic development team should be sought on the economic and locational evidence submitted in support of the application. • Policy SLE 4 seeks to deliver key transport connections, supports a modal shift towards more sustainable modes of transport and supports employment growth in more sustainable locations. • The proximity of the application site to Bicester and its location on a major strategic transport corridor provides an opportunity to meet employment needs, whilst facilitating modal shift, with a focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions as encouraged by Policy SLE 4. The views of the Highway Authority should be sought for compliance with this policy, including to ensure that the proposals makes the most of opportunities in the area to
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	<p>provide public transport and safe walking and cycling to Bicester and nearby settlements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies ESD 1-5 provide a suite of policies related to sustainable construction and sustainable energy. The application includes a detailed sustainability statement, and this should be assessed to ensure that the requirements of the local plan policies are met. • Saved policy Policy C8 of the 1996 Local Plan seeks to resist sporadic development in the open countryside including in the vicinity of motorway or major road junctions. The application is therefore contrary to this policy. • In assessing the merits of this proposal consideration also needs to be given to Government advice in the NPPF. • Paragraph 83 states that <i>'Planning policies and decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors. This includes making provision for clusters or networks of knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries; and for storage and distribution operations at a variety of scales and in suitably accessible locations'</i>. • Paragraph 84 states that <i>'Planning policies and decisions should enable:</i> a) <i>the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;</i> • Paragraph 85 states that <i>'Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.</i> • In conclusion, this proposal for the relocation and expansion of a high-quality combined R&D and manufacturing facility to Cherwell District is strongly supported by the strategic objectives of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan. The proposal is contrary to saved policy C8 of the 1996 Local Plan, however, the application has sought to demonstrate that this development meets Policy SLE1 criteria for employment on unallocated sites in the rural areas. This included an assessment of potential suitable, available alternative sites which concluded that none was available.
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Policy Recommendation	No objections
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