

FRITWELL PARISH COUNCIL (FPC)

Response Planning Application - 22/01340/OUT: Tritax Group with application for Class b8 Warehousing at OS Parcel 6124 East of Baynards Green Farm Street to Horwell Farm Baynards Green

Fritwell Parish Council **strongly objects** to these applications for reasons following:

General Comments

As always, the supporting analysis documentation concludes in favour of the proposed development (quelle surprise), that:

- 1) Market Analysis *"We conclude that without allowing Symmetry Park, Ardley to come forward there is not enough allocated land available and likely to come forward to meet anticipated demand over the next 10 years. If Symmetry Park, Ardley is permitted then the gap between supply and estimated demand is reduced substantially but still leaves insufficient capacity to meet estimated demand"*. FPC understands this is the case nationally, but in our opinion, this does not present a strategic case for this **specific** area.
- 2) *"There is a suitable sized and qualified workforce within the labour market area"* but also states elsewhere that *"The proposed development is likely to draw its workforce from beyond the Oxfordshire boundary"* Fritwell is the largest community closest to this proposed development. FPC, with support from others in the community see only detrimental effects to our village, a rural community established even before the Roman conquest of Britain with a rich heritage. The jobs offered will likely be largely low skilled and with the number of warehouses already springing up from Bicester to Banbury we are quite sure that thousands of newcomers to the area will be needed, with low, to no employment benefits coming to Fritwell, a community of less than 740 with no employment issues.
- 3) *This "is within Flood Zone 1(the lowest risk of flooding)"*. That may be the case as agricultural land, but again FPC note the use of the "SUDS Strategy" with swales, basins etc. to offset rafts of concrete as part of the development. We remain unconvinced, particularly in respect of long-term maintenance. More comments later.

This development:

- Disregards local planning norms as this is not a designated site for development.
- Irreparably harms the character and visual appearance of the area.
- Will lead to an urbanisation of the area, as the catchment area will not support the employment needs of this facility (despite the analysis report suggesting otherwise). These employees will come from elsewhere in the country and this influx of people will have to live somewhere. The Bicester to Banbury corridor is exhausted by the pressures of already planned and now, speculative developments.
- Will be a "speculative development" referencing the "need for warehouse space" does not accommodate a strategic plan for where it **should** be located to accommodate minimum traffic movements to serve the real needs of the country, FPC see nowhere in this application a reference to this as a strategic location other than it is located along a major road system. Thousands of square feet of warehouse space already developed along the M40 corridor remains unused.
- States in the Statement of Community Involvement a local consultation has been concluded. Villages, and estates (Tusmore Park) that will be affected by this development, have been excluded from the consultation, in FPC opinion, rendering this exercise unproductive.

Biodiversity impact

Reference Biodiversity Impact Assessment document (*edp2355_r016a*) concludes that although "despite the relatively low ecological value of the arable fields and margins" and these "areas of low distinctiveness habitat are none-the-less extensive and therefore cumulatively add up to a significant loss, which is compounded by replacement across much of this area with buildings and hardstanding which is of negligible ecological value, or amenity grassland which is of low value". FPC supports this view that this development will irrevocably damage the rural nature of this area and the species it supports.

Traffic and Congestion

Albeit a traffic survey has been completed and takes account of the Albion Land proposal as well, it fails to accommodate the larger impact of the OXSRFi project which will be determined at national rather than local planning level which in FPC opinion renders this analysis redundant. It was however noted *“that the Strategic Rail Freight facility is at a relatively early stage of the planning process and as such there is not anything in the public domain that outlines the likely traffic implications of this emerging scheme”*. This does not obviate the necessity to at least estimate the impact – the recent public “roadshow” suggested up to 20,000 additional daily (to and from) freight traffic movements (not including staff movements).

The M40 Junction 10 / A43 / Baynards Green junctions is a known accident/traffic snarl-up hotspot (source: SABRE), this development can only increase the problems at this junction. The M40/A34/A43 road system "arc" is a well known area for congestion, increasing travel times and resultant pollution, given the massive increase in Bicester of housing and population, the Great Wolf resort planning refusal overturned, this project will only exacerbate an already untenable traffic problem in this vicinity. There are already issues at Junction 9 of the M40 - "Firm admits M40 works at J9 for Bicester made traffic worse" Source: Oxford Mail, 8th April 2019, and at Junction 10 as previously mentioned, often during peak times, negotiating the Baynards Green roundabout can take upwards of 15-20 minutes. Citing "Traffic Congestion to Cost the UK Economy More Than £300 Billion Over the Next 16 Years" Source: Study from INRIX and the Centre for Economics and Business Research Predicts Annual Cost of Congestion in the UK will Rise 63 Percent by 2030 to £21 Billion. LONDON, UK – 14th October 2014. Building such large structures at this junction will only exacerbate already intractable problems and increase traffic pollution in this area, an area that is essentially rural in nature. While this development is close to a motorway junction, there is no public transport to this site.

Conversion of Agricultural Land to Industrial use

FPC opines that far too much local green field land has been absorbed in development recently and to remove land from agricultural use when there are many brownfield sites (per CPRE in 2020, 21,000 sites at around 25,000 Hectares) available for development, why not on these sites obviating the need to develop new infrastructure, as would be needed here. FPC opts for the “Do Nothing” scenario preserving the land for agricultural use, this is what farmland is for!

Pollution

Noise, light, and Air pollution are of significant concern during the construction and operation of these warehouses, particularly the cumulative effect that would surround the village of Fritwell with the Heyford development to the Southwest, the potential for the Rail Freight Terminal in the South and this development with Albion Land and this development to the East. Fritwell Parish are deeply concerned about noise attenuation resulting from this facility operating 24/7. Fritwell is Class 3/Class 4 on the Bortle Scale for Night Sky Brightness, this would be compromised by additional light pollution from this planned facility. We enjoy good air quality in Fritwell despite the proximity of the motorway, this will be compromised by this development.

Flooding

This may well have been identified this area as Flood Zone 1, but local experience in Fritwell indicates that 1. This area has a very high water table with groundworks finding water during dry seasons about 60cms below the ground in some areas, and; 2. Fritwell experiences annual flooding, varying in severity, with 2020 being a particularly bad year with several properties being inundated, 3. Maintenance of an increasingly ageing drainage system is minimal, with the council this year unable to clear gully's because of “budget issues”, we are very cynical that this would be sustained over the years of operation. We know that water runoff from a large built area such as this will increase substantially (despite “SUDS”), and even though swales and infiltration basins are suggested, these may work for a while but when “budgets” for maintenance prevent this from happening to retain the efficiency of these measures, we are quite certain that with nowhere else to go, the local villages will suffer.

Fritwell Parish Council (June 2022)