

Our ref: Q210843
Your ref: 22/01611/OUT
Email: gregory.blaxland@quod.com
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For the attention of Andrew Thompson

Dear Andrew

Application 22/01611/OUT ('the Application') - Clarification regarding the proposed canal bridge connecting PR8 to PR7b

I write on behalf of Oxford University Development ('OUD'), the applicant of the outline planning application (ref: 23/02098/OUT) for land east of the A44. That application relates to land allocated by Policy PR8 of the Local Plan Part 1 Partial Review ('LPP1PR'). OUD support the Application, but would like to provide clarification in relation to the delivery of the canal bridge, given its relationship to related infrastructure that is expected to be provided within PR8.

Delivery of the canal bridge

The Officer's report ('the Report') makes reference to the discussions that have taken place between OUD and the applicant – Manor Oak Homes ('MOH') - regarding the delivery of a canal bridge linking the two sites. Paragraph 9.52 notes that final contribution from MOH towards the delivery of a new canal bridge can be deferred to post-planning committee "*which should give PR8 time to work on the bridge design.*" Paragraph 9.78 states that "*the precise detail of the bridge would form part of detailed approval of the land in the east of the railway and would be delivered eventually by the PR8 developer (OUD) in consultation with officers, the County Council and the Canals and Rivers Trust.*"

OUD has proactively progressed matters relating to the canal bridge, including preparing a preliminary design for a canal crossing to understand cost implications. Item 16 of Appendix 4 of the LPP1PR shows an indicative cost for the delivery of the canal bridge of c.£250,000, subject to feasibility and design. OUD identified that this figure is likely significantly lower than the real cost, and so have prepared the preliminary design to gain a more accurate understanding of what a proportionate contribution from PR7b and PR8 would be. The actual cost is, we estimate, closer to £4m and hence the Report is correct to suggest that at proportionate contribution from PR7b alone would be c.£250,000 (the remaining coming from the three PR8 applicants).



The responsibility to design and deliver the canal bridge has not yet been agreed. Part 13 of Policy PR8 requires the “*provision for a pedestrian, cycle and wheelchair bridge over the Oxford Canal...*”, which recognises that the bridge cannot be delivered solely by OUD. Delivering the bridge requires access to multiple third-party land ownerships and it is right that policy should reflect by requiring the PR8 applicant(s) to make provision for, rather than provision of, the new canal bridge (as is the case for PR7b).

Enhanced canal bridge

OUD see an important opportunity to provide a public transport connection that would link Oxford Parkway to the planned Oxford Airport Park and Ride via Begbroke Science Park and through the PR7b site. The route would provide a direct link between the existing and planned travel hubs and also to the planned expansion of the Science Park. This would help ease congestion and provide a high quality alternative to private vehicle use in accordance with the County Council's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan. The anticipated relocation of Oxford United FC to the ‘triangle’ site just west of Oxford Parkway only lends further weight to the potential benefits such a connection could deliver.

OUD do not expect MOH to commit to any contributions above that which is expected for the ‘baseline’ policy option. Nor would this require any changes to MOH's outline application. At this stage, OUD are only seeking to ensure that such an opportunity is not lost, and have sought to work with MOH to secure a further feasibility study in the section 106 agreement that allows this potential to be explored further.

Should the Council resolve to grant planning permission subject to a section 106 agreement, we would encourage the Council to ensure that the opportunity to deliver a potentially transformational new transport link is not lost. A Section 106 Obligation of the type suggested would not place any additional financial burden on MOH, or delay the delivery of their project.

As the Council is acutely aware, the promotion of more sustainable travel patterns is an important local issue, which means that an obligation of the nature proposed would be necessary to make the scheme acceptable, is directly related to the development and is considered to be fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development. The obligation is therefore considered to meet the tests set out in CIL regulation 122.

OUD remain open to further discussions with MOH, the District Council and the County Council on this matter.

Yours sincerely
Gregory Blaxland
Associate

cc. Tom Clarke (OUD)
Matthew Sharpe (Quod)