

Application No.: 22/03728/DISC

Applicant's Name: Albion Land Limited (c/o Quod)

Proposal: Discharge of Condition 17 (Training and Employment Plan) of 19/01746/OUT

Location: Land Adj To Promised Land Farm, Wendlebury Road, Chesterton

Consultation Response – Economic Growth

9th February 2023

The Catalyst development is a tremendously important emerging component of Bicester's local economy, providing valuable employment space and related facilities.

The Training and Employment Plan (TEMP) is stated to be a requirement through condition 17 of planning permission reference 19/01746/OUT. It was prepared by Quod (on behalf of Albion Land) in November 2020 and is also dated April 2021. It relates to Phase 3 of the development but is applicable throughout.

My main observation with the TEMP is that, several years on, it requires updating to be meaningful. It should also provide monitoring and measurement of progress.

For example, in para 3.4 - The Apprenticeship and Training Company is a key partner – but was dissolved in 2020. It mentions that '... a similar available service (might alternatively) assist with the recruitment, selection and training of apprentices' but does not expand upon this.

- How has the plan been delivered, and how will it be delivered going forward?
- How many apprentices have been employed – including by sub-contractors?
- What connections have been made with local skills and other supply chains?
- What if any issues have been encountered or remain?

Abingdon and Witney College operates the Bicester Construction Skills Centre and is an important local asset for the provision of the 'pipeline' of skills for local development.

- It is unclear what if any connections already exist between the lead Contractor (Parkway Construction) and the Bicester Construction Skills Centre, or a similar provider?
- If no connections exist, are introductions required?

The TEMP should not be an onerous requirement – indeed it should draw on the support that has been offered and remains available through the Council's economic growth service alongside its partners. The resources of Oxfordshire LEP, Job Centre Plus, skills providers and others can be assembled to assist the applicant in continuing its important role in meeting the premises needs of businesses and contributing infrastructure to support the local economy.

Please let me know if any questions arise, or if a meeting is required to assist implementation.

Steven Newman
Senior Economic Growth Officer
Communities Directorate
Cherwell District Council