

Cherwell District Council
Bodicote House
Bodicote
Banbury
OX15 4AA

31st May 2023

By online portal.

Dear Sir/Madam,

FURTHER OBJECTION TO PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT HATCH END, OLD POULTRY FARM FOR THE ERECTION OF THREE INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS, REPLACEMENT OF FORMER SCOUT HUT BUILDING AND ASSOCIATED WORKS (PLANNING APPLICATION REFERENCE 22/03877/F)

We write again in relation to the above development following the submission of new information by the applicant.

We remain **strongly opposed** to the proposal for the following key reasons:

- **Principle of Development:** The site is located outside of the settlement boundaries of Steeple Aston and Middle Aston – indeed, it is in open countryside. There is no policy basis for the provision of new industrial units on this site. The proposal should be refused for this reason alone.
- **Erosion of Gap:** The proposed development and intensification in use of the site will erode the gap between Steeple Aston and Middle Aston – this conflicts with Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan Policy PD1 (criterion e), which states that “development should not give rise to coalescence with any other nearby settlement. This particularly applies to Steeple Aston and Middle Aston.”
- **Adverse Effect on Built, Natural and Historic Environment; Neighbouring Amenity and Highway Safety:** The proposal is in direct conflict with the Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan Policy PC1 (Local Employment) as it will: have an adverse effect on the surrounding built, natural and historic environment and it would generate a volume of traffic that would have a significantly harmful effect on road safety and congestion.
 - Fir Lane is a rural lane and forms an important part of Steeple Aston Conservation Area. The increase in traffic (including HGVs) will cause **substantial harm to the Steeple Aston Conservation Area** and the setting of numerous listed buildings – including ours on Fir Lane;
 - The increase in traffic using the site will exacerbate an already unacceptable situation for local residents; and raises **significant safety concerns** – being adjacent to a primary school with already traffic safety issues surrounding it;
 - **Construction traffic routing is plainly and wholly unsuitable and unsafe.**
 - The proposal will result in the **loss of trees** and potentially encroach on the root protection area of others. As a minimum the applicant must complete an appropriate assessment. The applicant's disregard for trees is disappointing.
 - The applicant has failed to demonstrate how it will achieve biodiversity enhancements.
 - The applicant has not submitted a landscaping scheme to mitigate the visual effects of the development – particularly when viewed from the adjacent Public Right of Way.

- **Sustainable travel:** The proposed development is still unsustainable:
 - The applicant suggests that the provision of a footpath link and a financial contribution to the bus service would not meet CIL Regulation 122 Tests (i.e. necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms; directly related to the development; and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development).
 - We are puzzled by the applicant's response to the County's request for financial contributions to the S4 bus service and their provision of a footpath. The applicant does not agree to these requests because they are 'not directly related to the development'. Therefore, is the applicant agreeing that the site will only be accessed by unsustainable modes of travel?
 - The applicant references an application for 10 new employment units that is currently under consideration by the Council at Apollo Business Park, Wroxton (reference 22/03245/FUL). We are unclear why the applicant thinks referring to this application is of any relevance whatsoever – as the applicant will know all planning application must be considered on their own merits and the circumstances for this site are entirely different, in any event.

Finally, we note that the development appears to have commenced on site already – **the description of development should be updated to reflect the retrospective nature of this application and it should be reconsulted on, appropriately.**

For the reasons set out above, we **strongly object** to application reference 22/03877/F, which is wholly unacceptable and plainly contrary to existing planning policies.

We trust you will find this response useful and we hope the Local Planning Authority will ensure that this application is **refused**.

Should you require any more information or wish to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully,

Fir Cottage, Fir Lane, Steeple Aston, OX25 4SF