

Case Officer: Suzanne Taylor

Recommendation: Approve

Applicant: Tritax Symmetry Oxford North Ltd & Siemens Healtineers

Proposal: Discharge of Stage 1 of Condition 29 (Apprenticeship and Training Opportunities for construction phase) of 22/01144/F

Expiry Date: 14 August 2023

Extension of Time:

1. APPLICATION SITE AND DESCRIPTION OF APPROVED DEVELOPMENT

- 1.1. The whole application site extends to approximately 19.35 hectares and is located immediately to the north of M40 Junction 9. The main frontage extends along the A41 northeast towards Bicester. To the southeast of the A41 is the village of Wendlebury. Immediately to the northwest of the site is the hamlet of Little Chesterton. Bicester is approximately 2km northeast of the site.
- 1.2. The site is currently in agricultural use, with several buildings in agricultural or converted commercial use to the northeast of the site. The south-eastern boundary of the site fronts the A41 and extends across several open fields. Generally, ground levels fall gently from north to southeast. The north-eastern extent of the site is defined by field boundaries and hedgerows, the Grange Farm Industrial Estate, and Lower Grange Farm. The industrial estate comprises a group of former agricultural buildings and some later structures currently in use for employment purposes. The Wendlebury Brook defines the western edge of the site, flowing from north to south towards a small area of woodland, which is a designated ancient woodland, where its course then changes to flow east across the site, before passing under the A41 in culvert towards Wendlebury. Most of the site is in Flood Zone 1 (the lowest risk of flooding) but a very small proportion is located within Flood Zone 2. The area affected follows the existing route of the Brook, which is proposed to be re-routed along the M40/A41 boundaries as part of the approved development proposals.
- 1.3. Footpath 161/4/20 traverses the site from Chesterton to the north and crosses the A41 to the village of Wendlebury, although there are presently no formal crossing points for this PROW across the A41, but there is a pedestrian refuge area provided in the central reservation of the A41.
- 1.4. The approved development is for a high-tech production and research facility for the manufacture of medical equipment (MRI scanners) with ancillary buildings. The new building will have two production halls and a spine, which serves the length of the production hall. From here goods loading, innovation centre, plant and personnel can serve both production spaces. Several external buildings required to support the production process will be situated on the northwest side of the facility.
- 1.5. The facility, is to be built in two phases and overall, will provide a total floorspace area of approximately 56,162sqm with external loading bays and service yard and landscaped car park with 474 staff and visitor parking spaces.

2. CONDITIONS PROPOSED TO BE DISCHARGED

- 2.1. The application seeks to discharge the first part of Condition 29 (Apprenticeships and Training Opportunities for the construction phase) of 22/01144/F and a Training and Apprenticeships Strategy has been submitted in support of the application.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1. Directly relevant to this proposal is **22/01144/F**, which was granted permission in July 2022 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.

4. RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

- 4.1. Consultees were given to 18 July to comment on the proposals and the publicity period on the site notice expires on **5 August 2023**.
- 4.2. CDC Economic Growth and OxLEP were consulted on the original Strategy. OxLEP recommended that some indicative dates for quarterly meetings were added to the document and the applicants responded by submitting an amended version of the Strategy which included the requested meeting dates. Both OxLEP and Economic Growth have confirmed that they are satisfied with the amended version and are content for the condition to be discharged.

5. APPRAISAL

- 5.1. The Apprenticeship and Training Strategy was developed in collaboration with OxLEP and Cherwell's Economic Growth Team and, now with the addition of some meeting dates, both are satisfied with the document and advise that the first part of the condition can be discharged. The condition is staged; requiring approval of a strategy for encouraging and providing opportunities for Training and Apprenticeships by the building contractor before construction above ground level and then the submission of subsequent strategies by future occupiers prior to occupation.

6. RECOMMENDATION

That Stage 1 of Planning Condition 29 of 22/01144/F be discharged based upon the following:

Condition 29:

Apprenticeship and Training Strategy by Buckingham Group Contracting dated July 2023.

Case Officer: Suzanne Taylor

DATE: 1 August 2023

Checked By: Andy Bateson

DATE: 7th August 2023
