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Your Ref: 23/02098/OUT  
Our Ref: ATE/23/00409/OUT  
Date: 19 January 2024

## Active Travel England Planning Response Detailed Response to an Application for Planning Permission

From: Planning & Development Division, Active Travel England

To: Cherwell District Council

**Application Ref:** 23/02098/OUT

**Site Address:** BEGBROKE SCIENCE PARK, BEGBROKE HILL, BEGBROKE, OX5 1PF

**Description of development:** Outline application, with all matters reserved, for a multi-phased (severable), comprehensive residential-led mixed use development comprising: Up to 215,000 square metres gross external area of residential floorspace (or c.1,800 homes which depending on the housing mix could result in a higher or lower number of housing units) within Use Class C3/C4 and large houses of multiple occupation (Sui Generis); Supporting social infrastructure including secondary school/primary school(s) (Use Class F1); health, indoor sport and recreation, emergency and nursery facilities (Class E(d)-(f)). Supporting retail, leisure and community uses, including retail (Class E(a)), cafes and restaurants (Class E(b)), commercial and professional services (Class E(c)), a hotel (Use Class C1), local community uses (Class F2), and other local centre uses within a Sui Generis use including public houses, bars and drinking establishments (including with expanded food provision), hot food takeaways, venues for live music performance, theatre, and cinema. Up to 155,000 net additional square metres (gross external area) of flexible employment uses including research and development, office and workspace and associated uses (Use E(g)), industrial (Use Class B2) and storage (Use Class B8) in connection with the expansion of Begbroke Science Park; Highway works, including new vehicular, cyclist and pedestrian roads and paths, improvements to the existing Sandy Lane and Begbroke Hill road, a bridge over the Oxford Canal, safeguarded land for a rail halt, and car and cycle parking with associated electric vehicle charging infrastructure; Landscape and public realm, including areas for sustainable urban drainage systems, allotments, biodiversity areas, outdoor play and sports facilities (Use Class F2(c)); Utility, energy, water, and waste water facilities and infrastructure; together with enabling, site clearance, demolition and associated works, including temporary meanwhile uses. The Proposed Development affects the setting of a listed building and includes potential alterations to public rights of way. The application is accompanied by an Environmental Statement

Notice is hereby given that Active Travel England's formal recommendation is as follows:

- a. ~~**No Objection:** ATE has undertaken a detailed assessment of this application and is content with the submission.~~
- b. **Conditional approval:** ATE recommends approval of the application, subject to the agreement and implementation of planning conditions and/or obligations as set out in this response.
- c. ~~**Deferral:** ATE is not currently in a position to support this application and requests further assessment, evidence, revisions and/or dialogue as set out in this response.~~
- d. ~~**Refusal:** ATE recommends that the application be refused for the reasons set out in this response~~

## 1.0 Background

Active Travel England (ATE) welcomes the opportunity to comment on this further consultation for a mixed use residential and commercial development at Begbroke Science Park.

ATE has previously submitted a response dated 05 September 2023 Ref: ATE/23/00409/OUT which recommended deferral of the application with further information requested. The response focused on:

- Layout and permeability
- The active travel network within the site and externally
- Approach to the Oxford Canal
- Travel plan

## 2.0 Summary

ATE note that since issuing the previous consultation response, a series of updated plans have been submitted to address consultee comments. These plans are accompanied by:

- Begbroke Innovation District Guide to the Application (BIDGA); and
- Begbroke Innovation District Supplementary Transport Information (BIDSTI)

The BIDGA explains that *'In response to Active Travel England: A written response to Active Travel England has also been prepared to respond to numerous queries raised by them.'*

ATE is grateful for the time taken by the applicant to produce the BIDSTI in response to its previous comments.

Following a review of the submission documents, ATE still has concerns around the lack of detail presented, however note the 'Format of the Application' as set out within the BIDGA which will follow a 'tiered approach.' ATE understand that the outline planning permission ('OPP') (Tier 1) has been submitted and this establishes the limits of the development. Tier 2 will follow this and include a set of more detailed spatial plans, ahead of Tier 3, which will involve the submission of detailed reserved matters and enabling works applications.

Given the alternative approach being taken, it will be necessary to secure a number of conditions which commit the applicant to the submission of detail at later stages. ATE is therefore issuing an 'Approve with Conditions/Obligations' response in light of the applicant's position and in anticipation of subsequent future opportunities to comment on the detailed design of active travel.

ATE also note comments submitted by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) Highway Authority which include a robust package of obligations alongside planning conditions which address many of the concerns raised previously by ATE and are subsequently fully endorsed.

As such, a summary position in relation to each 'Area of Concern' in ATEs previous consultation is set out below.

Formal Conditions/Obligations have not been drafted; however, recommendations have been put forward with regards to their content.

### **3.0 Areas of Concern**

#### Layout and permeability

Whilst limited detail was submitted with the Tier 1 application, ATE felt that the approach taken internally as set out in the submitted Parameter Plans and the Strategic Design Guide was generally welcome with the Principles also supported.

It was noted that East/West walking, wheeling, and cycling connections were important to secure and Policy PR8 placed great weight on the delivery of bridges both over the railway line and canal. There was some concern that the DAS explained that '*The Railway bridge is not part of this proposal*', however it is noted in the BIDSTI that Parameter Plan 4 on Access and Movement is a Control Document and compliance with it will be a condition of any outline planning permission. The position is therefore accepted. ATE also note and support the OCCs request to submit a Phasing and Access Strategy and consider that all future links should be secured in accordance with LTN 1/20 and Oxford Street Design Guide standards.

#### Access

Access arrangements at the Begbroke Hill / A44 junction are a reserved matter and concern was raised regarding lack of detail presented. Whilst it is noted that the proposed points of access are detailed in Parameter Plan 4 Access and Movement Plan, it will still be necessary to understand how these accesses will connect into the existing active travel network.

It is noted that OCC have recommended that '*Prior to commencement of the development, details of the access arrangements at the Begbroke Hill / A44 junction between the development site and adopted highway shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.*' ATE support this approach and also the need to ensure that '*The design be in accordance with the Oxford Street Design Guide and LTN1/20 standards.*'

Active travel network within the site and external

Internal:

ATE raised concern that the outline submission did not include indicative street hierarchy plans and therefore it wasn't possible to properly integrate the internal network.

The BIDSTI notes that *'The Strategic Design Guide (which is a Control Document) sets strategic guidelines that are applicable to the development and the outline planning application. The details set out in the Strategic Design Guide will inform future area-specific masterplans that will be submitted as part of the Tier 2 submissions.'* It goes on to state that *'Street hierarchies will form part of the Tier 2 submissions, and we will consult with ATE on those when they come forward.'*

It is recognised that OCC raised similar concerns and as such have suggested a draft condition requesting that *'Prior to implementation, a Design Code shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority.'* The Design Code shall include relevant detail on street hierarchy, street typologies and the provision and type of LTN 1/20 compliant pedestrian and cycle routes and infrastructure. ATE endorse this approach.

External:

Concern was raised regarding the lack of detail available to assess proposed improvements to the A44 corridor. The BIDSTI explains that *'The off-site routes connecting to the Begbroke Innovation District are proposed to be upgraded by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), which would be funded through developer financial contributions'* and that *'The delivery of these schemes does not fall directly to this planning application, rather it is part of a plan-led process to ensure infrastructure is provided that caters for all of the allocated sites in the vicinity of the site rather than any single site.'*

ATE note OCC has sought the submission of *'a scheme of improvements on the A44 corridor between the Begbroke Hill junction and the Cassington Road junction'* as well as S278 and S106 commitments. Again, ATE endorse the position of OCC here. It is essential that appropriate contributions are secured which support the delivery of active travel links to unlock allocated land for housing in this area.

Oxford Canal

It is noted that the OCC response requested a financial contribution both towards the provision of a bridge over Oxford Canal and also upgrades to the canal towpath. ATE support such an approach and welcome recognition of this commitment within the BIDSTI.

Travel Plan

The BIDSTI sets out a position regarding The Framework Site-Wide Travel Plan which is welcome and accepted. It is encouraging that *'The updated Framework Site-Wide Travel Plan will provide greater detail on the development proposed across specific areas and will provide more information in respect of forecast / targeted travel patterns which will include details for walking and cycling.'*

ATE agree that active travel trips can be assessed collectively when considering overall success against objectives. It is however important to remember that certain interventions relate to specific modes. For example, offsite cycle route interventions. To measure the success of such interventions it will be necessary to measure by mode.

#### **4.0 Recommended Draft Planning Conditions and Obligations**

1. Prior to implementation an Access Strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Access Strategy shall include all access points for pedestrians and/or cyclists in accordance with submitted Access and Movement Plan and be delivered in accordance with the Oxford Street Design Guide and LTN1/20 standards.
2. No reserved or full applications shall be submitted until a Design Code document (or series of documents) showing how the development will comply with the guidance in LTN 1/20 on Cycle Infrastructure Design, in Manual for Streets 3, Oxford Street Design Guide and the National Model Design Code have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This must include details of the phasing of the development including the phasing of infrastructure. Subsequent applications for reserved matters approval and/or full planning permission shall accord with the approved details.
3. Prior to the commencement of the development, details of a scheme of improvements on the A44 corridor shall be submitted to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority and in accordance with LTN 1/20 standards.
4. Prior to first occupation an updated Framework Travel Plan shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority and implemented thereafter comprising immediate, continuing, and long-term measures to promote and prioritise alternatives to private vehicular use, which shall include clear objectives and modal share targets, together with a time-bound programme of implementation, monitoring, regular review and interventions.

#### **5.0 Next Steps**

We request that these comments are provided to the LPA case officer and forwarded to the agent and applicant. ATE would be content to review any further submitted information or engage in future dialogue.