

Our ref: Q210843
Your ref: 23/02098/OUT
Email: Matthew.sharpe@quod.com
Date: 22 February 2024



Chloe Alma-Daykin
Planning Advisor
Environment Agency

For the attention of Chloe Alma-Daykin

By email

Dear Chloe

23/02098/OUT – Applicant response to Environment Agency letter dated 15 February 2024

I write on behalf of Oxford University Development, the applicant of the above referenced outline planning application, in response to your comments. We welcome the Agency's feedback and would like to work with you to resolve outstanding matters.

We have considered your comments including, but not limited to, the sequential approach, exception test and the hydraulic model. We have enclosed a detailed response (**Appendix 1**) to each of the points in your letter.

By way of background, you will be aware the application relates to the Site Allocation known as PR8, which was allocated in the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1) Partial Review. The Local Plan site allocation process was supported by a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, which included a sequential assessment of each of the site allocations considered by the Local Plan process. This identified PR8 site to be both suitable and available for development. The PR8 site allocation boundary includes land within Flood Zone 1, along with retained Green Belt that is located within Flood Zones 2 and 3. The PR8 allocation within the Local Plan then allocates the land for the following uses:

- **Within Flood Zone 1:**
 - 1,950 net new homes, 50% of which should be affordable;
 - 14.7ha of land for the expansion of the Begbroke Science Park;
 - A new local centre
 - A secondary school;
 - A 3FE primary school;
 - A 2FE primary school;
 - The provision of homes for students and staff of the University of Oxford; and

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- Safeguarding of 0.5ha of land for the potential delivery of a new rail halt;
- **Within the retained Green Belt** (within Flood Zone 2 and 3)
 - The creation of a Local Nature Reserve on 29.2ha of land;
 - The creation of a Nature Conservation Area on 12.2ha of land;
 - The provision of a new canal side park on 23.4ha of land;
 - The retention of 12ha of land in an agricultural use;
 - New public bridleways suitable for pedestrians, cyclists and wheelchair users; and
 - Provision made for a new bridge over to Oxford Canal to connect to land at Stratfield Farm.

Appendix 2 of this letter includes a copy of the drawing title '**Parameter Plan 1** – Development Zones P1' and '**Parameter Plan 3** - Green Infrastructure Plan P1', which control the location of development set out within the outline planning application. Parameter Plan 1 limits built development to the area of land allocated for housing, commercial and social infrastructure. Green infrastructure is then shown on Parameter Plan 3, which confirms that development in Flood Zones 2 and 3 is limited to green infrastructure land uses.

The location of built development assumed within the outline planning application is consistent with the areas of land shown for built development within the Local Plan, and therefore in accordance with the sequential assessment that was carried out as part of the Local Plan process.

This above definition of Flood Zones (considering the EA Flood Maps for Planning (Rivers and Sea)) is confirmed in the FRA and is consistent with the SFRA. In accordance with the paragraph 172 of the NPPF, applicants need not apply the sequential test or exception again.

Following guidance stated in the SFRA and given by the EA through pre-application enquiry, detailed hydraulic modelling was undertaken to support the Site-Specific FRA. This modelling shows the majority of the application site has a low probability of flooding. Some areas are shown to have higher probability along areas of the site adjacent to Rowel Brook, to the north of the site, a parcel of land immediately to the west of the Oxford Canal and a small area to the south of the site.

Our assessment is considered to be consistent with the findings of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, and therefore there is no reason to suggest that there has been any material change in circumstance that would warrant the PR8 proposals to reconsider the sequential approach, or the exception test.

Further to the above, we think it would be very helpful to arrange a meeting to discuss any further comments you may have following your review of our response to your feedback. We would be grateful if you could please provide your availability for this meeting as soon as possible.



We look forward to meeting with you shortly to discuss your position and our considered responses enclosed within this correspondence.

Yours sincerely,

Matthew Sharpe
Senior Director

cc. Tom Clarke (OUD)

Enclosed

Appendix 1: EA Responses to Flood Risk Comments

Appendix 2: Parameter Plans 1 (Development Areas) and 3 (Green Infrastructure)