

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON THE FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

District: Cherwell

Application no: 14/02067/OUT

Proposal: New build Technology Park comprising 40,362 sq.m. of office, research and development, laboratory, storage and ancillary space

Location: Land East of Evenlode Crescent and South of Langford Lane, Kidlington

This report sets out Oxfordshire County Council's view on the proposal.

Annexe 1 to this report contains detailed officer advice.

Overall view of Oxfordshire County Council:-

Oxford Technology Park is identified in Policy Kidlington 1 of the emerging Cherwell Local Plan as being in an area that will be subject to a small scale local review of the Green Belt (as part of Local Plan Part 2) to accommodate high value employment need. This review has not yet taken place.

Transport Development Control have raised an objection to the application for the following reasons:

1. The submitted transport assessment does not demonstrate that traffic arising from the site can be accommodated safely and efficiently on the transport network, contrary to Policy SD1 of Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan 3 and the National Planning Policy Framework.
2. The proposals are not considered adequate to meet the requirement under the NPPF and LTP3 Policy SD1 to promote access by sustainable means. In particular, the proposed modal share targets are too low for non-car modes, and no off-site mitigation for pedestrian and cycle access is proposed.

Detailed comments are provided in Annex 1.

Officer's Name: Lisa Michelson

Officer's Title: Locality Manager (Cherwell and West)

Date: 25 February 2015

ANNEX 1

OFFICER ADVICE

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Transport

Recommendation:

Objection

Officers recommend that this application is refused for the following reasons:

3. The submitted transport assessment does not demonstrate that traffic arising from the site can be accommodated safely and efficiently on the transport network, contrary to Policy SD1 of Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan 3 and the National Planning Policy Framework. In particular:
 - a. The Transport Assessment gives no consideration to HGV traffic when this will clearly be an important factor in the development.
 - b. The modelling of the site access shows unacceptable delay to traffic leaving the site, likely to result in unsafe manoeuvres.
4. The proposals are not considered adequate to meet the requirement under the NPPF and LTP3 Policy SD1 to promote access by sustainable means. In particular, the proposed modal share targets are too low for non-car modes, and no off-site mitigation for pedestrian and cycle access is proposed.

Key issues:

- No consideration of HGV/goods in and out
- Mode share targets
- Proposed mitigation
- Capacity issues at site access and Bladon roundabout

Legal Agreement required to secure:

If the Planning Authority is minded to grant permission for this development, then the developer would be expected to provide the following:

- Continuous cycle facilities and pedestrian improvements along Langford Lane (see Mitigation)
- Pedestrian/cycle crossing of the A44 at the junction with Langford Lane.
- Additional bus stop including hard standing to the north of the roundabout in The Boulevard, and improvements to pedestrian route to the bus stop.

- Improved bus service linking Langford Lane with Water Eaton Parkway and Oxford, to provide a half hourly service at between peak times plus three evening hours Monday-Friday, as well as services on Saturdays and Sundays – expected to cost around £400,000 on a pump-priming basis over 4/5 years.
- Contribution of £1,000 to install pole and flag at the bus stop.
- Contribution of £12,000 to install CCTV at the junction of the A4260 and Langford Lane
- Contribution of £9,040 for monitoring support of travel plans for the site.
- S278 agreement for highway works to create site access, plus mitigation measures mentioned above.

Conditions:

	Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, full details of the means of access between the land and the highway, including, position, layout, construction, drainage and vision splays shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, and prior to commencement on site , the means of access shall be constructed and retained in accordance with the approved details. Reason DR1
D15	Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, full specification details (including construction, layout, surfacing and drainage) of the parking and manoeuvring areas shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, and prior to the first occupation of the development, the parking and manoeuvring areas shall be provided on the site in accordance with the approved details and shall be retained unobstructed except for the parking and manoeuvring of vehicles at all times thereafter. Reason DR1
D20	Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby approved, a Travel Plan, prepared in accordance with the Department of Transport's Best Practice Guidance Note "Using the Planning Process to Secure Travel Plans", shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the approved Travel Plan shall be implemented and operated in accordance with the approved details. Reason DR4
	Prior to commencement on site a Construction Traffic Management Plan must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Informatives:

Please note the Advance Payments Code (APC), Sections 219 -225 of the Highways Act, is in force in the county to ensure financial security from the developer to off-set the frontage owners' liability for private street works, typically in the form of a cash deposit or bond. Should a developer wish for a street or estate to remain private then to secure exemption from the APC procedure a 'Private Road Agreement' must be entered into with the County Council to protect the interests of prospective frontage owners.

For guidance and information on road adoptions please contact the County's Road Agreements Team on 01865815700 or email Road.Agreements@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

Detailed Comments:

Sustainability of the site

The site is located on the extreme edge of Kidlington, well away from its residential area, and over 2km walking distance from the village centre. The walking and cycling route from Kidlington is indirect, due to the location of the railway and canal. The footway in Langford Lane is narrow and the environment is dominated by vehicles, with several side road crossings where pedestrian facilities are poor.

There is a shared use cycle track alongside the A4260 and the A44 at either end of Langford Lane, but there are no cycle facilities along the length of Langford Lane. In Langford Lane there are several busy junctions and a roundabout for cyclists to negotiate.

The site extends a long way back from the road, with no connections towards Kidlington other than the main site access, thereby compounding walking distances from units at the southern end of the site. Walking from bus stops on the A44 is unattractive because of the length of the walk, the narrow footway, the road's national speed limit, and lack of street lighting.

The current bus service to Langford Lane is focused on Monday to Friday peak hours. There is a minimal off-peak and Saturday service and no buses on Sundays or during the evening.

Because walking and cycling to the site will be unattractive, and due to the limitations in the bus service, combined with easy access by car, there will be a propensity for car travel to the site, even from the nearest residential area. However, there is good opportunity to encourage travel by sustainable modes. The development should encourage use of public transport through improved bus service provision, integration of services with rail links from the proposed new station at Water Eaton, and improvements to access by cycle and on foot.

Strategy

Connecting Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire's new Local Transport Plan currently out for consultation, sets out a new Oxford Transport Strategy, which includes a new park and ride in the Langford Lane area, with two bus rapid transit routes linking it with Oxford Parkway Station, and central and east Oxford. The rapid transit concept encompasses priority measures for public transport, high frequencies and a range of other measures to attract people to using public transport rather than cars. This concept will take a number of years to build up, and the early provision of a credible level of service to Langford Lane at off-peak times, evenings and weekends will help to establish demand, as well as providing vital access for employees and visitors to the Technology Park.

It will also be important to minimise congestion on these key public transport routes by encouraging as many local trips as possible to be made on foot or by cycle. This site is located a suitable cycling distance away from large residential areas, and therefore the potential for increasing cycling modal share needs to be exploited.

The area transport strategy for Kidlington, set out in Local Transport Plan 3 sets out a strategy for improving cycle links to the Langford Lane area :

'...improving infrastructure and facilities for cyclists by conducting an audit of any existing cycleways, well used routes and locations of cycle parking across Kidlington. This data will be used to develop schemes which will provide a high quality cycle network to improve

accessibility to key destinations; including the business parks and London Oxford Airport.’ (Para 23.18)

Traffic impact

The Transport Assessment provides a sensitivity scenario based on 85th percentile trip generation figures from TRICS.. The peak hour proportional impact of the development is shown to be greatest (8% in the pm peak) at the nearest junction, which is the roundabout at The Boulevard and Langford Lane. Traffic then dissipates such that at the Kidlington Roundabout the proportional impact is 2%. (However, it is unclear whether these proportional impacts are based on the sensitivity or average scenario).

Nevertheless no mention in the Transport Assessment is made of HGVs, which would clearly be important element of traffic to and from the proposed site, since it includes over 30 HGV loading bays. The modal split calculations do not take delivery vehicles into account and it is not clear whether the capacity assessments of nearby junctions and the site access reflect the generated HGV traffic and the proportion of HGV traffic.

The assessment of junctions shows some operating close to capacity in the 2025 with development (sensitivity) scenario. Two junctions are shown operating over capacity: Bladon Roundabout (A44/A4095) and the site access junction. A ‘nil-detriment’ mitigation scheme has been proposed by the developer for the Bladon Roundabout. However, this will do little to address overall capacity issues in future years, so it is considered that mitigation might be better focussed on sustainable travel to the site.

At the site access junction, the 2025 with development sensitivity scenario shows insufficient capacity and an average delay to vehicles leaving the site in the pm peak of over 3.5 minutes, which is likely to lead to unsafe manoeuvres as drivers become impatient. The impact of HGVs at the site access and within the site could compound delays to car drivers. There is also a risk of vehicles being delayed going into the site because of HGV manoeuvring within the site. A report on anticipated HGV movements will be required, together with tracking drawings, to allow an assessment of this risk.

Other comments on the Transport Assessment:

- I am unsure why 2001 census mode share data has been used when 2011 data is available.
- As the crow flies distances have been used, when the actual walking distances are further.
- In the Transyt modelling:
 - A44 Woodstock Road/Langford Lane – Traffic Phase D is declared as an Indicative Arrow whereas it should be a Traffic Phase
 - A4260 Oxford Road/Bicester Road – The intergreen figure from Phase B to Phase E is declared as 4 seconds when it should be 14 seconds.

Modal shift targets

The travel plan targets for car driver reduction, and increase in walking, cycling and public transport, are insufficiently ambitious and do not fit with emerging transport strategy for Langford Lane as part of the Oxford Transport Strategy (see above).

The target mode share for car share of 16.4% is considered unrealistic and we would want to see evidence from other sites where this has been achieved.

The target reduction in car modal share overall (taking into account car sharing assuming 2 persons per vehicle) would be insufficient for parking to be accommodated within the site’s car parking spaces, leading to potential nuisance parking overspill within and off site.

Proposed mitigation

The measures set out in the walking and cycling strategy are considered insufficient to achieve an acceptable level of walking and cycling to the site. To encourage people to walk and cycle to the site, improvements in walking and cycling infrastructure in Langford Lane are required, yet no off site walking or cycling mitigation is proposed in the Transport Assessment. We would expect the developer to provide the following improvements:

- A formalised pedestrian/cycle crossing across the A44 at the Langford Lane junction linking the northbound S3 service bus stop and the cycle network on the A44 to the development. A revised assessment of the junction capacity will be required along with a scheme proposal.
- A shared pedestrian/cycle facility (preferably 3m wide) along the south side of Langford Lane between the development and A44, and continuous pedestrian/cycle facilities on Langford Lane between the site and the A4260. These improvements must not reduce traffic capacity.

We would expect the developer to propose a scheme and carry out the works under a S278 agreement, subject to technical approval and safety audit.

The only off-site mitigation proposed in the Transport Assessment is improved bus stops in The Boulevard, and improvements to Bladon roundabout.

- Bus stops: see comments on site access arrangements.
- Bladon Roundabout: as discussed above, the proposed nil detriment mitigation would be insufficient to have a significant effect given future traffic conditions, and it is considered that mitigation would be better focussed elsewhere.

However, the junction of Langford Lane and the A4260 is showing as running close to capacity in future years. To enable better control of the signals at this sensitive junction, the developer would be required to provide CCTV.

The Transport Assessment proposes a contribution towards improvements to the bus service to Langford Lane, with hourly interpeak and evening services Monday to Friday. However, modern working patterns require a credible level of service at off-peak times, to meet the expectation of people who prefer to work part-time or at unconventional times. Given the number of people expected to work at the site (1250) and the proportion of these assumed in the Transport Assessment (TA) not to be arriving in the peak, there is likely to be a significant number of such people. **Therefore the public transport mitigation proposed is insufficient.** The mitigation required is pump priming of a half-hourly interpeak service plus evenings Monday-Friday, and a service on Saturdays and Sundays.

Site access

PBA Drawing 23588/001/001 shows the proposed junction layout. In addition to the capacity concern mentioned above, I have the following concerns with this drawing:

- The engineering report also contains a drawing of the access showing 70m vision splay. For the avoidance of doubt the vision splay should be as per Drawing 23588/001/001, i.e. 4.5 x 120m, due to the 85th percentile speeds. This will require some removal/cutting back of vegetation.
- The engineering report also shows no island to help pedestrians cross the junction whereas the drawing 23588/001/001 does. Neither drawing shows dropped kerbs. Both must be provided to sufficient dimensions to allow for a future shared ped/cycle route.

- The drawing shows widening (to accommodate the right turning lane) on the north side of Langford Lane. It is the applicant's responsibility to check for highway boundary and land ownership issues.
- Tie in with right turning arrangements for Evenlode Crescent should be shown.
- Lane widths and key dimensions should be shown on the drawing.
- The 1.8m footway along the front of the site should be widened to accommodate shared ped/cycle use.
- To improve access to the bus stops in The Boulevard, a crossing point should be provided closer to the site, with a pedestrian refuge in the hatched area and a new section of footway on the north side of Langford Lane. The current crossing point is uncomfortably close to the roundabout.
- HGV swept path drawing for the access should be provided.

Please note that the design would be subject to technical approval and audit as part of the S278 process.

Travel Plan

A framework travel plan has been submitted with the application. In addition individual travel plans will be required within 3 months of first occupation for some of the units: units 1-4, 7 and 8 (the other units are smaller than the threshold for requiring a travel plan).

On this basis a contribution for ongoing monitoring support over the life of the travel plans will be required, totalling £9,040.

Contact details for the site travel plan co-ordinator should be sent to the Travel Plans Team at Oxfordshire County Council prior to first occupation.

Comments on the draft travel plan supplied with the application:

- Paragraph 6.5.1 – A site travel plan steering group meeting should happen more often than bi-annually. It is envisaged that such a meeting would take place **once every 6 months**.
- Paragraph 7.3.2 – Reference to Transport Direct journey planner should be removed as this journey planner is no longer available. Traveline is an alternative - www.travelinesoutheast.org.uk
- Paragraph 7.5.3. – The commitment by the developer to fund two sustainable travel related events annually is welcomed.
- Paragraph 7.7 – Would like to see designated car sharing spaces for each unit featured on the site plan.
- The travel plan will need to indicate how parking at the site will be managed such that overspill parking onto the main access road

Notes on the indicative layout

- Cycle parking not shown
- Tracking shown in the engineering report is for a different layout – full HGV tracking will be required, covering full route through the site.
- Close attention will need to be paid to the quality of the walking route through the site

Officer's Name: Joy White

Officer's Title: Senior Transport Planner

Date: 24 February 2015

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Location: Land East of Evenlode Crescent and South of Langford Lane, Kidlington

Economy and Skills

Recommendation:

No objection

Key issues:

- The developers will be required to prepare and implement, with local agencies and providers, an Employment & Skills Plan (ESP) that will ensure, as far as possible, that local people have access to training (including apprenticeships) and employment opportunities available at the construction and end user phases of this proposed development.

Detailed Comments:

Recent policy initiatives relating to skills development are contained in:

- The Oxfordshire City Deal
- Oxfordshire European Structural Investment Fund (ESIF) Strategy
- Strategic Economic Plan

The recently launched **Oxfordshire Skills Strategy** has five strategic priorities:

- SP1: To meet the needs of local employers through a more integrated and responsive approach to education and training: developed in partnership with our provider network, to encourage more training provision in priority sectors - both current and projected - to meet the needs of employers or to train future entrepreneurs, particularly in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).
- SP2: Creating the 'skills continuum' to support young people through their learning journey: the ambition is to develop integrated, seamless services that support young people through school and on into training, further education, employment or business, where they understand the full breadth of career options, including local demand, and the training path to succeed in that career.
- SP3: Up-skilling and improving the chances of young people and adults marginalised or disadvantaged from work, based on moving them closer to the labour market.

- SP4: To increase the number of apprenticeship opportunities, particularly those offered by small to medium sized businesses.
- SP5: To explore how we can better retain graduates within Oxfordshire to meet the demand for the higher level skills our businesses need.

Employment and skills planning justification

A better, appropriately skilled local workforce can provide a pool of talent to both developers and end occupiers. This will reduce the need to import skills, and in doing so reduce congestion and unsustainable travel to work modes, reduce carbon emissions and the pressure on the local housing infrastructure.

Seeking skills and training planning obligations or conditions to maximise the potential of the existing population to compete for the jobs being created, whether during the construction phase or end user phase, through improving their skills levels, is necessary to ensure that future development is economically and socially sustainable, and that barriers to employment for those marginalised from the workforce are removed.

Developers often identify projected training and employment outcomes as part of the justification for development. It is important therefore that the impacts of economic development are mitigated and the economic benefits of new development in terms of improved local skills and employment outcomes are realised.

Not only is it clear that skills levels are a key determinant of a sustainable local economy, but they also have an impact on employment opportunities and thus an individual's economic prosperity. Up-skilling the area's labour force will be key to maintaining economic competitiveness.. Securing obligations for skills development and employment of local people will be necessary to enhance social inclusion by reducing the potential for economic and social disparity, another key policy driver at the local level.

Officer's Name: Dawn Pettis

Officer's Title: Economic Development Strategy Officer

Date: 24 February 2015

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Property

Recommendation:

No comment

Officer's Name: Will Madgwick

Officer's Title: Planning Liaison Officer

Date: 21 January 2015
