

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

District: Cherwell

Application no: 14/00005/SCOP

Proposal: Scoping opinion for development to provide residential dwellings, commercial floor space, leisure facilities, social and community facilities, a primary school, extra care housing, water treatment plant and energy centre, amenity space and service infrastructure.

Location: Various Parcel Of Land North Of Lords Farm And South Of Hawkwell Farm Bucknell Road Bicester

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

Annexes to the report contain officer advice

Overall view of Oxfordshire County Council:-

In addition to the issues identified in *Table 2 EIA Topic and Scopes* in the submitted scoping report, the County Council would like to see the following issues addressed in the Environmental Statement:

- **Transport Strategy:** Boundary Way should be included within the transport assessment area
- **Rights of Way:** The impact on pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians needs to be assessed in relation to Bicester Bridleway 4 (via Aldershot Farm) which is a key strategic walking, cycling and equestrian route. Other current rights of way as well as those planned for the Eco-Town area and surrounds should also be included.
- **Drainage:** At formal application stage a drainage strategy should be submitted which needs to include a Flood Risk Assessment and an indicative surface water drainage proposal.
- **Archaeology:** The EIA will need to contain the already completed desk based archaeological assessment as well as the reports for the geophysical survey and trenched evaluation. A programme of mitigation will be required ahead of any development.
- **Ecology:** The EIA should:
 - provide an outline of the proposed ecological management and monitoring.
 - include an assessment of cumulative impacts on ecology, both direct and non-direct impacts within the site and off-site.
 - assess the impacts on Priority Habitats and Species, in addition to protected species
 - assess impacts on Local Wildlife Sites as well as statutory sites.

More detailed comments on these points are detailed in the annexes.

Officer's Name: Lisa Michelson

Officer's Title: Cherwell Locality Manager

Date: 04 July 2014

ANNEX 1
OFFICER ADVICE

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Transport

Key issues:

- Proposed contents of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)
- 14/00005/SCOP is one of three scoping opinions submitted to the Local Planning Authority for consideration

Detailed Comments:

The submitted scoping opinion is one of three (14/00005/SCOP, 14/00006/SCOP and 14/00007/SCOP) which have been submitted to the Local Planning Authority for consideration promoting the North West Bicester development site.

The submitted scoping opinion contents proposed for the northern section of the overall development site does not appear to include some of the items expected. Please see the comments below:

Transport Strategy Comments

“No key issues with this EIA scoping from a strategy point of view as long as Boundary Way is included within the assessment area. Financial contributions towards the area strategy for Bicester are to be sought”.

Public Transport Comments

“There have been several discussions regarding principles of bus routing and service levels. There would appear to be outstanding issues regarding future service provision to the ‘exemplar’ part of the site, as there is a clear tension between the principles of direct routing and serving all parts of the site.

It should be conditional that the developer funds the agreed level of bus service provision until full commercial viability is achieved.

The developer must produce a robust plan to deliver the agreed proportion of journeys by public transport. Effective delivery of a good public transport service will reduce the number of car trips on the wider Bicester highway network.

The developer will produce a highways layout which maximises the attractiveness of the bus, through facilitating direct journeys which avoiding deviation as far as possible. High quality bus stops will be identified on the highways layout, located in places which have excellent footway connectivity to the wider site.

The delivery of an eventual commercially viable bus service is of the greatest importance. The developer will be expected to fund the cost of bus service provision until such time as the service can be operated on a fully commercial basis.”

Rights of Way comments

“Unlike the EIA application for area 3 (Howes Lane) section 3.2.12, this EIA application does not appear to consider impacts in Transport for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians. This needs to be addressed as the site includes Bicester Bridleway 4 (via Aldershot Farm) which is a key strategic walking, cycling and equestrian route.

The EIA must assess the impacts on this particular route, especially any severance caused by the new road/building construction, and proposals for mitigation and assessment should include a controlled crossing of the new road for walkers, cyclists and equestrians and means to provide an integrated network to and through the development site. Other current rights of way as well as those planned for the Eco-Town area and surrounds should also be included”.

Drainage comments

“The development is large in scale and would have a significant impact on surface water drainage. No drainage information has been given due to the nature of the application. Should a formal application be submitted a drainage strategy should be submitted which needs to include a Flood Risk Assessment and an indicative surface water drainage proposal at the very least.

The development needs to adhere to the requirements of the Flood and water Management Act 2010”.

Travel Plan comments

“A framework travel plan is produce and agreed with the Oxfordshire County Council Travel plan team prior to work starting on this development and supplementary travel plans are produce in accordance with OCC’s adopted guidance document, Transport for New Developments: Transport Assessments and Travel Plans (March 2014)

As part of the master plan submission a framework travel plan will be required for the whole site setting out how the Eco town travel targets will be meet and any mitigation action that will be taken by the developers if these targets are not achieved.

A supplementary travel plan and monitoring fees will be required for each of the different land use, giving details of how they will mitigate the travel impact from them and how these travel plans will be monitored”.

Masterplan/Layout comments

While layout details are not expected to be within an EIA scoping opinion it is essential that as part of a future planning submission(s) the following issues are considered (not a robust list):

- Pedestrian and cyclist links both internal and external throughout the overall development site;
- Location of vehicle access points and their impact on the overall road and street hierarchy for the overall development;
- Parking levels for both car and cycle parking (all land uses);
- Location of Public Transport links/connections/infrastructure;
- Materials, street lighting requirements/design, landscaping/tree types, utility/service requirements;
- Coach dropping off areas for pupils for primary and secondary schools;

Officer's Name: Michael Deadman

Officer's Title: Principal Engineer

Date: 01 July 2014

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Archaeology

Recommendation:

No objection

Key issues:

The site is located in an area of archaeological interest identified through a desk based assessment, geophysical survey and a trenched evaluation. The archaeological evaluation recorded a range of features across the site dating to the Neolithic through to the Roman period. A programme of mitigation will be required ahead of any development.

The Environmental Impact Assessment will need to contain this desk based assessment as well as the reports for the geophysical survey and trenched evaluation.

Conditions:

Not appropriate for scoping.

Detailed Comments:

The site is located in an area of archaeological interest identified through a desk based assessment, geophysical survey and a trenched evaluation. The archaeological evaluation recorded a range of features across the site dating to the Neolithic through to the Roman period. A programme of mitigation will be required ahead of any development.

The Environmental Impact Assessment will need to contain this desk based assessment as well as the reports for the geophysical survey and trenched evaluation.

Officer's Name: Richard Oram

Officer's Title: Planning Archaeologist

Date: 23 June 2014

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Ecology

Recommendation:

Comments

Key issues:

Appropriate management and monitoring of the site could be crucial to whether the proposed development is able to succeed in delivering a net gain in biodiversity. The public areas of the site would need to be managed for biodiversity in perpetuity to avoid the loss of potential benefits from the mitigation and enhancement measures. Ecological monitoring is important to ensure that the management is successful in meeting its objectives for biodiversity and to enable remedial action to be identified, if necessary. The EIA should provide an outline of the proposed management and monitoring.

The applicant would need to demonstrate that a net gain in biodiversity would be delivered (in line with the National Planning Policy Framework) using an accepted biodiversity metric in the EIA.

All EIAs should include an assessment of cumulative impacts on ecology, both direct and non-direct impacts within the site and off-site.

EIAs should assess the impacts on Priority Habitats and Species, in addition to protected species (in line with paragraph 117 of the National Planning Policy Framework). Assessment of impacts on species and habitats should include at a site and local level. EIAs should also assess impacts on Local Wildlife Sites as well as statutory sites.

Enhancements in biodiversity should be built into the design from an early stage on various scales, from individual house design to the masterplanning work. Features for biodiversity within the site should be planned to link up to habitats and features in the surrounding landscape. The EIA should demonstrate whether best practice has been followed, as suggested in the Oxfordshire Biodiversity & Planning Guidance.

Officer's Name: Tamsin Atley

Officer's Title: Ecologist Planner

Date: 02 July 2014

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Economy and Skills

Recommendation:

No objection

The Economy & Skills team has had significant input into the Eco Towns Economic Development Strategy that will accompany the Masterplan.

Officer's Name: Dawn Pettis

Officer's Title: Economic Development Strategy Officer

Date: 03 July 2014
