

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

District: Cherwell

Application no: 15/00760/F

Proposal: Development of a new Local Centre comprising a Convenience Store (use class A1), Retail Units (flexible use class A1/A3/A5), Pub (use class A4), Community Hall (use class D1), Nursery (use class D1), Commercial Units (flexible use class A2/B1/D1) with associated Access, Servicing, Landscaping and Parking with a total GEA of 3,617 sqm

Location: North And South Arcade At Bicester Eco Town Exemplar Site Charlotte Avenue Bicester

Purpose of document

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

This report contains officer advice in the form of a strategic localities response and technical team response(s). Where local member have responded these have been attached by OCCs Major Planning Applications Team (planningconsultations@oxfordshire.gov.uk).

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Location: North And South Arcade At Bicester Eco Town Exemplar Site Charlotte Avenue Bicester

Officer's Name: Lisa Michelson

Officer's Title: Locality Manager

Date: 04 June 2015

District: Cherwell

Application no: 15/00760/F

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Transport

Recommendation:

No objection subject to conditions

Key issues:

- Quantity and type of cycle parking not adequate/appropriate
- Concerns over parking provision
- Concerns over street layout and materials
- Further tracking required
- Incomplete drainage information

Legal agreement required to secure:

- Revision to existing S38 agreement for spine road
- A lorry routeing agreement is proposed within the TA

Conditions:

Road Construction, Surface and Layout

Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, full specification details of the spine road through the development including construction, surfacing, layout, drainage and road markings, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter and prior to the first occupation of any of the buildings in the local centre the road shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details.

[Reason DR2](#)

Turning Area and Car Parking

Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, full specification details (including construction, layout, surfacing and drainage) of the turning area and parking spaces within the curtilage of the site, arranged so that motor vehicles may enter, turn round and leave in a forward direction and vehicles may park off the highway, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development. Thereafter, and prior to the first occupation of the development, the turning area and car parking spaces shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details and shall be retained for the parking and manoeuvring of vehicles at all times thereafter.

[Reason DR3](#)

Details of Turning for Service Vehicles

Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, and notwithstanding the application details, full details of refuse, fire tender and pantechnicon turning within the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

[Reason DR1](#)

Cycle Parking Provision

Prior to the first use or occupation of the development hereby permitted, covered cycle parking facilities shall be provided on the site in accordance with details which shall be firstly submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the covered cycle parking facilities shall be permanently retained and maintained for the parking of cycles in connection with the development.

[Reason DR4](#)

Travel Plan – condition requiring individual site travel plans – detail to follow.

Construction traffic management plan – will be required if not already covered by the Hybrid consent for the Exemplar Site as a whole.

Parking management plan for the centre - will be required if not already covered by the Hybrid consent for the Exemplar Site as a whole.

Drainage Strategy

Prior to the commencement of the development, full details of a drainage strategy for the entire site, detailing all on and off site drainage works required in relation to the development, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the drainage works shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the approved strategy, until which time no discharge of foul or surface water from the site shall be accepted into the public system.

Reason ER15

Informatives:

Detailed comments:

The principle of development in this location within the context of a wider development and transport mitigation for the site has been secured through the planning application 10/01780/HYBRID. A full planning application has been made due to the changes in floor areas of the proposed uses within the site.

Cherwell District Local Plan seeks to address the issue of significant out-commuting from Bicester through the provision of employment land. Whilst the proposed increase in Class 'A' land uses will provide some food/non-food retail employment, there is already a range of similar employment opportunities within walking/cycling distance of the site. The reduction of the currently approved class 'B' employment use could result in an increase in out commuting from Bicester reducing the potential sustainability benefits of the approved site.

Notable changes in usage are significant increases in the size of the nursery, and the pub. This is likely to attract more users in from outside the development and beyond Bicester.

However, the Transport Assessment provides a comparison between the trip generation associated with the consented land use and the proposed land use, which shows a reduction

in peak hour trips, based on trip generation rates per floor area used in the assessment of the hybrid planning application. Therefore there is not considered to be any additional impact on peak hour traffic.

Car parking

The parking provision is well below the maximum parking standards. The TA argues that the various uses do not generate demand at the same time. Notwithstanding the parking accumulation survey which has been provided seeking to demonstrate that the parking would be adequate, and the overall future sustainability of the site and strong travel plan measures, I have concerns that in reality parking would not be adequate and inappropriate overspill parking would be a problem.

A total of 37 spaces are proposed to be available to the public, with the remaining 46 allocated for staff at all the various uses. The CDC max parking standard for the Eco Business Centre and Nursery (which would be very largely intended for staff) alone would be 84, so there is a significant risk of all-day staff parking spilling into the public parking spaces or into nearby residential areas. The Travel Plan states that there will be a 'need for a strict parking management regime' and 'enforcement of inappropriate overspill parking' but no details are provided in the TA. It is also not clear in whose ownership the car park will be. Further details including a parking management scheme will be required.

Uses other than the Eco Business Centre and Nursery are likely to have demand at the same time, albeit the peaks may differ. Staff taking up spaces for customers/users of the pub, community centre and shops will add to the pressure on spaces for daytime users and people dropping children off at the nursery.

Parking spaces should be 5m x 2.5m – they appear shorter.

The Travel Plan says there would be car sharing spaces but I cannot see any of these.

Cycle parking

There appears to be confusion over 'stands' and 'spaces'. The cycle parking standards set out a requirement for stands, and are clear that one stand equals two spaces. Therefore on the basis of the cycle parking standards, the overall proposed provision is inadequate.

The Travel Plan states that cycle parking would be of the Sheffield stand type. All of the staff cycle parking, and some of the visitor parking is in rack arrangements, some double deck. This is not considered appropriate for visitor cycle parking, given its short term nature, the variety in types of user and the fact that it would likely seem daunting to new cyclists. Also, for the staff cycle parking, further details or specifications of the arrangements are required to assess whether adequate space in and around the racking has been provided.

Further, the Travel Plan says that stands for the commercial and shop units would have extra space around them to accommodate trailers, and I can see no evidence of that.

Servicing

Tracking has been provided showing how delivery lorries would enter and exit the service yard for the pub and convenience store. However, this needs to extend to show the vehicles turning off and onto the street. It will not be acceptable for them to over-run the space indicated for pedestrians as proposed to be demarcated by setts.

Tracking should also be provided for refuse vehicles into the yard behind units 5 and 4 (assuming the gates to the service yard are closed).

I note that there is an aim to provide future servicing access from the south. This would be much preferable as it would keep it separate from pedestrians and cyclists, but it cannot be guaranteed. It is unfortunate that the car and servicing accesses are directly opposite each other, in the middle of the parades.

The high street

The first thing to note is that the spine road for the Exemplar Site is covered by an existing S38 agreement, which specifies the design and materials. The planning application shows a street that is very different from the one agreed under S38.

The materials shown on the Landscape Masterplan differ significantly from that what were approved in the spine road technical audit. Whilst there were expected to be some changes in the local centre material palette, none of the materials shown have yet been approved for use on the spine road. There are also significant changes in the layout with on street parking, trees and benches being introduced.

The S38 layout includes traffic calming to the West of the local centre which is not shown on the application landscape masterplan. There are also open drainage channels in the local centre area to the South of the spine road at the road edges.

The street lighting positions may have also changed and the street light in to the North of retail unit 4 now looks to be in a vulnerable location, where it is likely to be hit by manoeuvring vehicles.

The 'formal' crossing points in fact appear to be informal. Also they only show a change in paving element size rather than a change in colour. Unless there is significant contrast in the road surface colour or some other warning, vehicle drivers will assume priority. They need to be very clearly differentiated or not marked on the carriageway at all. Particularly given the HGV use, I would prefer to see them further away from the turning into the service yard/car park.

The paving appears to be flush all the way across the adoptable areas. Kerb upstands would help prevent parking outside the designated bays and if there are no upstands some bollards or other deterrent may be required to prevent vehicles accessing the non-vehicular areas. The area in front of the nursery and directly opposite it could be especially vulnerable to use by goods vehicles and parents parking for the nursery. Along with the risk to pedestrian safety, consideration needs to be given to the risk of damage of the footway by goods vehicles.

The service bay appears to be too shallow and to have an inadequate taper. This should be redesigned with the size of intended vehicles in mind, and tracking provided. It may be more appropriate to switch the parking and servicing bays due to proximity of the service bay to the informal crossing and access to the car park (visibility concern).

The proposal is to use Yorkstone paving, but the applicant has provided no details of the interface between that and the bituminous surfacing either side of the local centre.

The proposed street design would need to be the subject of a revision to the S38 agreement, which would require further technical audit. It would be helpful for the applicant to confirm the areas proposed to be offered for adoption. The landscape masterplan appears to indicate a colonnade on both sides – areas underneath this could not be adopted.

Public transport

The combination of uses and risk of inappropriate parking and loading mean that the carriageway width will be tight at 6m and should be widened, preferably to around 6.75m. This is to allow buses to serve the development without delay.

The developer must provide greater detail about the bus stopping area, including clearer information about the proposed style of bus shelter and the intended method of procuring the shelter and the adjacent pole/flag/information case unit. The bus stopping area between the formal crossing points is very tight, at 18 metres, and passenger movement is compromised by the cycle stands. The developer should provide a detailed plan of this area, showing the exact orientation of the suggested style of bus shelter, the location of the pole/flag/information case unit, and the clear walking route from the bus to the retail facilities.

Travel Plan

A travel plan exists for the Exemplar Site as a whole, associated with the consented hybrid planning application for the site. This is intended to be followed up by individual travel plans for each of the uses at the local centre once the occupier is known. The developer does not propose to update the framework travel plan, but since it contains specifics, for example parking and cycle parking figures relating to the previously consented floor areas of each use, and provides the framework for future travel planning, it should be updated to reflect the revised floor areas.

Drainage

Appendices 2 and 3 are missing from the Flood Risk Assessment. The remainder of the documents relevant to surface water drainage have been reviewed and appear acceptable, but approval cannot be given without the appendices.

Officer's Name: Joy White

Officer's Title: Principal Transport Planner

Date: 29 May 2015

District: Cherwell

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Location: North And South Arcade At Bicester Eco Town Exemplar Site Charlotte Avenue Bicester

Economy and Skills

Recommendation:

No objection

Key issues:

Bicester is identified as a key location for employment growth on the Oxfordshire Knowledge Spine through the City Deal and Strategic Economic Plan (SEP). The SEP looks to support significant increases in employment at Bicester through infrastructure improvements and land availability.

Bicester members have expressed concerns about whether the North West Bicester jobs target will be met. Whilst this application does not reduce job numbers, it is disappointing to see a reduction in the number of potentially highly skilled B1 office jobs. The extant permission provides for 90 office jobs whereas the revised proposals reduce this to 37 office jobs. The difference is proposed to be made up by an increase in retail, pub/restaurant and nursery jobs.

Conditions:

- 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.

Officer's Name: Dawn Pettis

Officer's Title: Economic Development Strategy Officer

Date: 01 June 2015
