

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

District: Cherwell

Application no: 15/01012/OUT-2

Proposal: OUTLINE - Development of up to 48,308sqm of employment floorspace (Class B1c, B2, B8 and ancillary B1a uses), the siting of buildings to the south of the site, servicing and circulation areas, vehicular and pedestrian access from Skimmingdish Lane and landscaping

Location: Land North East Of Skimmingdish Lane Launton Oxfordshire

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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Officer's Name: Lisa Michelson

Officer's Title: Locality Manager

Date: 21 October 2015

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Transport

Recommendation:

Objection

Key issues:

- Insufficient mitigation proposed for transport impact.
- Right of way diversion is unsatisfactory.

Legal agreement required to secure:

S106 agreement:

- £530,000 towards implementing increased capacity on the A4421 between the Buckingham Road and Gavray Drive
- Travel plan monitoring fees of £1,240
- The developer to provide or procure a bus service from Bicester's residential areas to the development site, to operate at least two times per hour at defined and agreed journey-to-work times, for a period of at least five years

Access arrangements (via S278, secured through S106 agreement)

- Priority junction with ghosted right turn, footway/cycleways, signalised crossing, as shown on indicative drawings 15230/07 and /08 in the transport assessment. Note that this drawing will need to be amended to demonstrate commitment that streetlighting will be provided between the site access and existing lighting near the Launton Road roundabout.

Conditions:

As per the county council's original response dated 29 June 2015.

Informatives:

None

Detailed comments:

A revised transport assessment has been submitted, which sets out the developer's position on the planning obligations and contributions requested in the county council's original response dated 29 June 2015.

Bus service provision and bus infrastructure contribution

- This request is not disputed but no commitment is made. The Transport Assessment says that the developer is still in discussion with Stagecoach.
- The TA says that if the service to the development is provided, bus stops including laybys and shelters will be provided closer to the development as shown in indicative drawing 15230-04. This would be acceptable in principle.

Strategic contribution

The developer argues that 'it is not considered appropriate for the developer to pay any form of contribution towards improvements to the A4421 as no defined need in terms of impact has been identified, nor is there an appropriate mechanism in place to do so.'

Defined need in terms of impact

The Transport Assessment demonstrates that the proposed development will have an impact of over 1100 vehicles per day over a 12 hour period, over 100 vehicles in the AM peak and 88 vehicles in the PM peak, with a significant proportion of HGVs. At the A4421/Launton Road roundabout, in the PM peak the A4421 south arm is already forecast to be over capacity in 2024, and the development would add 13 vehicles to a queue of 76 vehicles, which is a significant increase. And at the A4421/Charbridge Lane Roundabout, the development would make a small addition to a queue on an arm already very close to capacity.

Thus the development would add further pressure to an already very congested series of junctions, where a clear need has been identified in the Bicester Area Strategy as part of the Oxfordshire Local Transport plan. This strategy (adopted in September 2015) includes proposals for improvements to the Eastern peripheral corridor to which Bicester 11 connects. The scheme of particular relevance towards mitigating proposals at Bicester 11, is as follows:

"Upgrade link to dual carriageway on the A4421 between the Buckingham Road and Gavray Drive to complement the transport solution at the railway level crossing at Charbridge Lane and facilitate development in the area. This scheme will improve the operation of this section of the eastern perimeter road, and enhance the integration of the North East Bicester Business Park site with the rest of the town."

Further, the site allocation of Bicester 11 is identified in the Cherwell Local Plan as relevant to contribute towards strategies set out in the Infrastructure Development Plan. Of particular note, is that it is connected with number 15 'Highway capacity improvements to peripheral routes'.

Contributions are required from the developments that will contribute to congestion on this peripheral route in order to mitigate their combined impact. Without this mitigation the development would be unacceptable in planning terms as it would not be providing towards a scheme to accommodate its share of additional traffic impact. The scheme is directly related to the development because all of the development's traffic discharges onto and approaches the site via the peripheral route.

Thus both the need and the need for the site to contribute to mitigating it, are identified in adopted policy, and the need is also identified through the increase in queues shown in the Transport Assessment.

Appropriate mechanism in place

The developer correctly identifies that the mechanism for calculating the strategic contribution is based on the Cherwell 2011 Planning Obligations SPD. This set out the principle of collecting contributions towards strategic highway infrastructure improvements from developments in a fair and proportionate way, based on a per dwelling or per floor area basis, and has been used successfully elsewhere to secure contributions.

It is acknowledged that the inputs to the formula are out of date and the mechanism is being revised. However, updating the inputs is likely to result in a higher contribution rate so the rates used to calculate the contribution in this case are conservative.

In my opinion the mechanism is appropriate as a means of ensuring that the contribution is scaled proportionately to the development. However, I am prepared to accept that, because the usage is proposed to be flexible, the contribution could be calculated on the basis of 100% B8 use, which would result in a figure of £530,000.

Public Rights of Way

The Cherwell Local Plan details the requirements for development of the Employment Land at North East Bicester allocation under 'Policy Bicester 11 - Employment Land at North East Bicester'. This includes

Retention and enhancement of existing Public Rights of Way, and the provision of links from the development and Bicester's urban area to the wider Public Rights of Way network.

This planning proposal requires a public footpath [Launton Footpath 17 (272/17)] to be diverted under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 section 257. The county council has made comments on the Pre-Order Consultation for the footpath diversion, expressing concerns over the proposed route and in particular that it created four right angled bends. The Design and Access Statement says that *'the route of the diverted right of way replicates the linear form of paths in the locality and the pattern of right angle turns or junctions along the network'*. Whilst some footpaths do have right angle bends this is usually at a junction of paths or where a path meets a physical boundary.

The amendments to the building and hard surface zones to the south-east of the site means that there is an increased area of planting and landscaping. It would therefore be possible to provide a diverted path through this landscaping area which could have gentle, curved changes in direction rather than the proposed right angle bends. We would like to see the proposals for the footpath diversion changed to create a path with smooth transitions in direction that will feel more direct and less harsh than that currently proposed.

Travel plan

A draft framework travel plan has been submitted. Comments on the draft are provided below. The travel plan should be revised in accordance with our comments and submitted for approval before first occupation.

- 7.1.1 A travel plan coordinator (TPC) will be required for the whole development and it will be their responsibility to manage the implementation of the framework travel plan and to ensure that future site occupiers then develop their own travel plans which take into account the framework travel plan for the site.

- The site TPC will need to be appointed before first occupation and their contact details will be sent to the Travel Plan Team at Oxfordshire County Council. The framework travel plan should state this.
- References to OCC in the framework travel plan should be changed to the Travel Plan Team at Oxfordshire County Council TravelPlan@Oxfordshire.gov.uk
- It would be easier to use Oxfordshire Liftshare than to set up a new car share scheme <https://oxfordshire.liftshare.com/>
- 7.3.3 Anyone who will be travelling to or from the site should be provided with appropriate travel information including details of on-site facilities like cycle parking
- 7.3.4 Welcome packs should be offered in a format which is most useful to their recipients, this would be most likely to be electronically, which would allow direct links to timetable information which would not need subsequent updating and other web based resources such as journey planners.
- 7.4.4 Perhaps the addition of a Facebook closed group travel page would be useful?
- 7.4.12 It would be worth allocating a number of dedicated car parking spaces which are set aside for the exclusive use of car sharers
- 9.1.1 Oxfordshire County Council no longer offer survey templates and these will have to be developed individually, please remove this reference from the travel plan
- The success of the framework travel plan will be measured by its success in reducing single occupancy car trips to and from the site
- Please include details of how the TPC for the site will be recruited and funded

Flood risk assessment and drainage strategy

Revisions have been made to this document but I have not received comments from our drainage team. In the absence of their comments the originally proposed drainage condition applies.

Officer's Name: Joy White

Officer's Title: Principal Transport Planner

Date: 21 October 2015
