

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

District: Cherwell

Application No: 17/00001/SCOP

Proposal: Scoping Opinion for the construction of a commercial scheme

Location: Land North Of Bicester Avenue Garden Centre Oxford Road Bicester

Purpose of document

This report contains officer advice in the form of technical team response(s).

District: Cherwell

Application No: 17/00001/SCOP

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Location: Land North Of Bicester Avenue Garden Centre Oxford Road Bicester

Transport

Legal agreement required to secure:

Should planning permission be granted for this application then S106 and S278 agreements will be needed to ensure that it is acceptable in planning terms. The agreements would cover such things as new site accesses, off site transport network improvements, new and enhanced existing bus services, travel plan monitoring etc.

Detailed comments:

The applicant has requested for a Scoping Opinion under Regulation 13 of the EIA Regulations. In the Scoping Report, the applicant has identified some of the main or likely significant environmental effects, to be assessed within a range of topics which include construction and transport before a final decision is taken on design.

This EIA scoping opinion is on land which forms part of an approved outline application (Ref: 07/01106/OUT) for the construction of a 60,000sqm B1 office park comprising 53,000sqm of B1 office space and a 7,000sqm C1 hotel. Planning consent was subsequently granted in 2013 for the construction of a Tesco foodstore of 8,135 sqm and petrol filling station on part of the consented office park site (Planning Ref: 12/01193/F).

However, OCC was consulted for pre-application advice on this development and a copy of our response dated 9th May 2017 is attached. The advice therein is considered relevant to this scoping request and the applicant is hence advised to make reference of it when writing the TA.

The outline scope of assessment as suggested by the scoping report has listed a number of junctions to consider for capacity modelling. In addition to these, we would like to see Rodney House roundabout included.

It was also suggested that a future assessment year of 2026 should be considered rather than 2022 proposed here.

Also, it is felt appropriate that subsequent applications should include impacts on all pedestrian infrastructure, connectivity and other informal access routes within the redline and in the vicinity of the development - as well as the users of those resources. These include walkers, cyclists and equestrians - some of whom may have disabilities or are accompanied by children, wheel or pushchairs and dogs. As well as mitigating impacts the proposals may also look at opportunities for enhancements.

There will be transport effects, the most notable being the increase in traffic around the junctions in close proximity to the site particularly at peak periods. Overall, these increased

traffic flows will potentially make conditions less pleasant for pedestrians and cyclists in the vicinity of the development. The scale of this negative effect and therefore what will be needed to mitigate it is impossible to judge without any attempt by the applicant to quantify the scale of increase of traffic as a result of the development.

Previous Pre-app Response below

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District: Cherwell

Application No: 17/CH0005/PREAPP

Proposal: The construction of an office park providing up to 57,000 square metres of B1 office space.

Location: Bicester Office Park. Land To South And East Of The A41 Oxford Road, Bicester, Oxfordshire

Transport

Oxfordshire County Council is a consultee of the local planning authority and provides advice on the likely transport and highways impact of development where necessary.

It should be noted that the advice below represents the informal opinion of an officer of the council only, which is given entirely without prejudice to the formal consideration of any planning application, which may be submitted. Nevertheless the comments are given in good faith and fairly reflect an opinion at the time of drafting given the information submitted.

Key issues:

- Strategic contribution towards the South Eastern Perimeter Road

Legal agreement required to secure:

If a planning application were to be submitted and approved a S278 would be required to deliver any highway improvements that it was decided would be needed to make the development acceptable e.g. new site access junction, footway improvements.

A new S106 agreement would be needed to secure the S278 works and also a financial contribution towards

- (i) Public transport improvements and
- (ii) Strategic contribution towards the delivery of the South East Link Road- required to mitigate the development's impact on the A41 junctions

Travel Plan monitoring fees shall be required

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 etc. please email the County's Road Agreements Team at roadagreements@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Detailed comments:

The A41 from which the site is accessed is heavily trafficked and will be put under further pressure from Cherwell Local Plan growth allocations, including the allocation on this site (Bicester 4).

This was recognised by Bicester Village in their application for Phase 4 of their development, where they are now delivering major highway improvements at and between the Esso roundabout and Pingle Drive junctions, having also provided a Bicester Park and Ride facility.

The highway works which are currently underway on the A41 (and related to the expansion of Bicester Village) will deliver a new bus layby on the northbound side of the A41. The highway works which are related to the construction and use of the permitted Bicester Business Park would, once they are triggered (i.e. once construction begins), also provide a northbound and southbound bus layby. Clearly as the Bicester Village works are already underway, once construction of any permission granted for the business park begins, its corresponding remaining liability would be to provide the southbound layby (as the northbound will have by then been delivered).

Scoping Note

Having had a chance to look at the Scoping Note dated 19th April 2017 for a Transport Assessment, I wish to make the following comments.

Policy Consideration

Various Policies that should be considered relevant to this development are:

National Policies

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Local Policy Context include

- Connecting Oxfordshire 2015-2031 (LTP4)
- The Cherwell Local Plan (Adopted July 2015) from which the Policy Bicester 4 requires;

- Layout that enables a high degree of integration and connectivity between new and existing development particularly the mixed use urban extension at South West Bicester to the west, the garden centre to the south, and, to the north, Bicester town centre and Bicester Village retail outlet.
- Provision for safe pedestrian access from the A41 including facilitating the crossing of the A41 to the north and west, and the provision and upgrading of footpaths and cycleways that link to existing networks to improve connectivity generally and to develop links between this site, nearby development sites and the town centre.
- Good accessibility to public transport services should be provided for, including the accommodation of new bus stops to link the development to the wider town.

- A Transport Assessment and Travel Plan to accompany development proposals.

Area of Impact and Junction Modelling

The scoping note accompanying this pre-application enquiry proposes to consider the following junctions for assessment

- Oxford Road / Pingle Drive Roundabout
- Oxford Road / A41 signalised roundabout
- Site Access (Oxford Road / A41 Lakeview Drive signalised junction)
- Oxford Road (A41) / Kingsmere signalised junction.

As previously mentioned in our telephone conversation on 26th April, in addition to the above junctions, the Transport Assessment will need to look at a wider study area to include;

- A41 / Vendee Drive / Oxford Road (A41) roundabout and
- Oxford Road / Middleton Stoney Road / Kings End roundabout
- Rodney House roundabout junction.

These junctions further afield are critical, likely to be impacted by the whole of Bicester 10 when it comes forward and Bicester 4 and the TA shall be expected to carry out capacity tests demonstrating the effect of the development on the highway network.

The scoping note under section 4.4 mentions that traffic surveys shall be undertaken during a weekday morning and evening peak period. The weekend peaks on the A41 approaching Bicester are very high. Owing to the adjacent land use particularly Bicester Village and Tesco superstore, in terms of the effect of the proposal on traffic at the Saturday and Sunday peak times, it would add to the already high volume of retail development traffic in the area. I would like to see further justification of not including a weekend assessment.

Future Years

Paragraph 4.5 of the Scoping Note sets a future year assessment to the fifth year after submission of the Transport Assessment – which puts it down to 2022. In my view, I feel this period should be extended to cover 2026 in line with the Bicester Transport Model which includes 2024 interim year and also includes the committed development expected to come forward at that time. We would like this to be the forecast year rather than 2022.

Committed development – Use of the Bicester Transport Model 2026 would include all development expected to come forward by that time. Consideration also needs to be given to two pending planning applications close by to the site, which are both proposing highway mitigation works along the A41. These are;

- 16-02505-OUT – Bicester Gateway (Kingsmere Retail)
- 16-02586-OUT – Bicester Gateway (Bicester 10)

The model includes significant committed developments expected to come forward and including the growth trips. Should the model be used, TEMPRO shall not be required in this case.

We shall however like to see the network tested using the flows from the model.

Trip Generation

The scoping note accompanying this pre-application enquiry proposes to use TRICS database to establish an estimate of the number of vehicles that the proposed development might generate when it is fully occupied.

I appreciate that the scoping note submitted attempts to estimate the likely number of trips generated that shall be generated by the development. However, the trip rates used appear rather low especially in the PM peak. I would further appreciate that a trip rates commensurate to the developments close by to be considered, such as ones used in planning ref: 16-02586-OUT.

Characteristics of business parks are likely to have very high levels of car use and very peaky demand for travel. The Oxford Business Park (Garsington Road) certainly displays these characteristics, which results in very long queues and delays when employees decide to leave at the same time (at 1705, for example). Arguably, similar characteristics could be expected on this site, especially when combined with the late Friday afternoon flow from the Tesco store. Will these characteristics be reflected in a TA – what mitigation can be provided – to spread the peak for example.

Other scoping matters

Public Transport - The applicant will need to robustly assess public transport accessibility between the development site and the wider network. The original application included a requirement to provide a pair of bus stops on the A41 and an agreement to provide some S106 funding to provide a bus service into the site.

The bus stops have not been fully delivered, with a new bus stop having recently been installed on the western side of the A41, to the north of the Premier Inn hotel. I guess the bus stop on the eastern side of the A41 is tied up with the Bicester Business Park Legal Agreement. In any event, it is absolutely essential that this is provided.

That being said, the walking distance to these bus stops along the A41 from some of these workplace units could be around 750 metres. I would like to see how the applicant addresses the distance in the TA.

South Eastern Perimeter Road (SEPR)

The Local Transport Plan 4 Bicester Area Strategy proposes a South East Perimeter Road in Bicester, which will ease congestion on the A41 and also mitigate the development's impact on the A41 junctions. It is partly funded, but currently requires contributions to fund the western section proposed, so contributions towards this are likely to be a consideration in terms of mitigating the Bicester Business Park proposals. Other future developments in the area would also be expected to contribute.

The cumulative impact of development in Bicester will be severe if appropriate contributions are not secured from all development sites towards the strategic transport infrastructure required to mitigate the increased transport movements.

Strategic transport modelling demonstrates the benefits that the SEPR will bring to the A41 (Oxford Road):

- The A41 Oxford Road is a key corridor in Bicester where junctions along its length are impacted significantly as a result of the growth of Bicester, including Bicester 10. The Application Site is estimated to increase the proportion of peak hour traffic at the A41/Vendee Drive junction by between 7% and 8% in 2024.
- The SEPR has been identified as a key piece of strategic infrastructure that will bring direct relief to the A41 corridor, thereby facilitating improved operation of junctions directly impacted by Bicester 10.

- Modelling has demonstrated the benefits that the SEPR would bring to the A41. In the AM peak:
 - Over 1000 vehicles (pcu's) that would otherwise use the A41 Oxford Rd northbound through Vendee Dve would route via SEPR (eastbound)
 - Around 930 vehicles (pcu's) that would otherwise use A41 Boundary Way and turn left on A41 Oxford Rd southbound past Bic 10, would route via SEPR (westbound)
 - Therefore, over 1930 vehicles (pcu's) would use the SEPR that would otherwise route along A41 past the Bicester 10 site.

It is acknowledged however, that the capacity released on the A41 by the SEPR will itself encourage some traffic that might otherwise choose NOT to use the A41, to divert along the corridor. When taking diverted traffic into account, the net reduction in traffic on the A41 in the vicinity of the Bicester 10 site would be around 1130 pcu's.

Car parking

Sufficient car parking will need to be provided to ensure that there is no overspill onto surrounding roads or inappropriate use of the Park and Ride site. Designs and provision should take into account areas within the development that may be subject to inappropriate parking such as on green verge areas or turning heads. OCC requires 2.4m x 4.8m parking bays and 6m width of manoeuvrable space between parking rows. OCC parking standards for B1 Office developments also require 1 parking space per 30sqm GFA, to include about 6% of DDA per development unit.

Consideration of the interaction of car parking with other sites in the area e.g. acting as an overspill car parking area for Bicester Village (rather than Bicester Village visitors using the P&R) must also be made. A robust car parking management plan should be included in the Travel Plan.

Cycle parking

The county's cycle parking standards sets out how developers should provide sufficient secure and covered cycle parking for staff and visitors. Cycle parking should be easy to locate and as close to the buildings as possible, not only to make it as attractive to potential users as possible but also to allow natural surveillance from the building itself.

Drainage

A surface water drainage scheme for the site will need to be submitted with a planning application. This will be based on sustainable drainage principles and an assessment of the hydrological and hydro-geological context of the development, The scheme will need to include:

- Discharge Rates
- Discharge Volumes
- Maintenance and management of SUDS features (including details of who will be responsible maintaining the SUDS & landowner details)
- Sizing of features – attenuation volume
- Infiltration tests to be undertaken in accordance with BRE365
- Detailed drainage layout with pipe numbers (to include direction of flow)
- SUDS (list the suds features mentioned within the FRA to ensure they are carried forward into the detailed drainage strategy)
- Network drainage calculations (to prove that the proposals will work)
- Phasing plans

- Flood Risk Assessment

Travel Plan

A Travel Plan Statement meeting the requirements set out in the Oxfordshire County Council guidance document, Transport for New Developments; Transport Assessments and Travel Plans will be required for this application. It would need to be produced and agreed prior to first occupation.

Additionally, a Travel Information Pack would need to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to first occupation. The first occupants of each development unit shall be provided with a copy of the approved Travel Information Pack.

Officer's Name: Rashid Bbosa

Officer's Title: Transport Engineer

Date: 09 May 2017

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Having considered the proposal's impact against criteria set out in National Planning Practice Guidance (EIA) it is concluded that the proposed development, as submitted, would only amount to an increase in GFA to the previously approved scheme and would not trigger the requirement for an EIA from a county council perspective. Any impacts on transport and county council services can be assessed at the full application stage.

Officer's Name: Rashid Bbosa

Officer's Title: Transport Engineer

Date: 03 July 2017

District: Cherwell

Application No: 17/00001/SCOP

Proposal: Scoping Opinion for the construction of a commercial scheme

Location: Land North Of Bicester Avenue Garden Centre Oxford Road Bicester

Archaeology

Key issues:

The applicant's documentation states that a desk based assessment (DBA) will be prepared assessing the archaeological potential of the site. If an EIA is required then this DBA should be included within it. If an EIA is not required then the DBA will need to be submitted along with any planning application.

Legal agreement required to secure:

Conditions:

Informatives:

Detailed comments:

The applicant's documentation states that a desk based assessment (DBA) will be prepared assessing the archaeological potential of the site. If an EIA is required then this DBA should be included within it. If an EIA is not required then the DBA will need to be submitted along with any planning application.

This desk based assessment should be undertaken in line with the Chartered Institute for Archaeology standards and guidance including the submission of a written scheme of investigation to ensure that the scope of the assessment has been agreed.

It is likely that a programme of archaeological investigation will need to be undertaken ahead of the determination of any planning application for the site.

Officer's Name: Richard Oram

Officer's Title: Planning Archaeologist

Date: 26 June 2017

District: Cherwell

Application No: 17/00001/SCOP

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Economy and Skills

The socio-economic assessment should include all the main elements contained in the outline scope:

An assessment of the temporary socio-economic effects to include:

- Temporary employment created during the construction phase of the redevelopment;
- Gross value added to the local economy by the temporary construction employment; and
- Construction training opportunities.

An assessment of the permanent socio-economic effects to include:

- Employment generation, including direct jobs created on site and associated indirect/induced employment created through multiplier effects;
- Gross value added to the local economy by the net additional employment created;
- Training and skills development opportunities;
- Additional local spending by office workers; and
- The provision of amenity space for office users.

It would also be useful to see an assessment of apprenticeship opportunities both in the temporary and permanent socio-economic effects as well as the skills levels of employment opportunities.

Officer's Name: Sarah Beal

Officer's Title: Economic Development Coordinator

Date: 29 June 2017
