UPPER HEYFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Jack Goodman Jr, Clerk to the Council,

Hillside Cottage, High Street, Upper Heyford, Bicester OX25 5LE

12 June 2018

Mr Paul Feehily

Interim Director for Planning and Regeneration

Cherwell District Council

Ref: Planning Application 18/00825 Hybrid (Heyford Park Masterplan)

Dear Mr Feehily,

The Upper Heyford Parish Council has carefully considered the proposals in subject application referred to as the Heyford Park Masterplan and submits the following comments for the record.

The Council supports this application. The proposals provide much needed clarity on the future development of Heyford Park, and in our judgement provide a very good mix of residential, recreational and commercial provision. In particular we are pleased to see a large public park, allotments and a community orchard. The provision for expanding the school network should help to alleviate the movement problem with split campuses and provide for secondary school places for local feeder schools. There is also an adequate provision for amenities to serve the community in most respects. However, the Council has specific concerns :

* The early development of Chilgrove Drive to provide commercial access to the site is essential. The volume of traffic generated by the building of developments, added to the traffic already being experienced will overwhelm Camp Road and the surrounding village roads.
* Provision of a cemetery is not included in the plans: A cemetery provision is essential as there is no capacity in the surrounding villages to accommodate the needs of over 6,000 residents in 2,700 homes, including housing specifically for the elderly.
* Provision of amenities, to include provision of space for medical and retail premises needs to be phased using planning conditions so as to be available by the time residential properties are being occupied. Public space for dog walking and recreation should be phased in early as well.
* Map shows “maintenance access” to the western extremity of Heyford Park directly off Somerton Road. This is totally unnecessary as there is nothing at that end of the site to maintain and would be an extremely dangerous entrance off of the Somerton Road. Opening up this access also brings the possibility of further upgrade of the entrance to serve the site. This could lead to additional traffic on the Somerton Road and degrades the principle of non-coalescence contained in the emerging Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan.
* Parcel 17 provision for residential housing: This site is directly adjacent to the sewage works and depending on the number of houses, development may breach the health and safety distance criteria for residential property adjacent to sewage works. It also appears that development of this parcel is not necessary to provide the number of dwellings proposed for Heyford Park. We also question whether these aging sewage works will have the capacity and resilience to service a community of the size proposed, e.g. 2,700 houses current business park, plus a further 1500 jobs, Heritage Centre and tourism Finally, the site proposes access to all of the houses from the existing Heyford Leys entrance. Entrance should be provided from both the western and eastern boundaries of the plot.
* Parcel 23: This area is isolated from the other residential areas of Heyford Park and will consist of over 450 homes. Detailed plans must ensure that this area does not develop into a ghetto without a vibrant mix of residential offerings. Also easy walkway, cycle and bus access to the Heyford Park amenities must be ensured along with adequate provision for playgrounds and recreational space for residents.
* The Masterplan map is unclear as to the extent of the Heyford Park landscaping buffer within the site at the western boundary. The Upper Heyford Parish Council has secured agreement from Dorchester Group that a 20 -28 metre buffer zone will form the western internal boundary of Heyford Park along the line of the historic Portway path.
* The proposed public right of way paralleling Somerton Road at the western extremity of Heyford Park needs to be carefully considered to ensure that it is sufficiently clear of the busy road and that the point at which Somerton Road is to be crossed is safe. It is felt to be safer to leave the end of the footpath as it is at present, the view is good both ways for walkers. However, if the footpath was linked up as suggested in the plan, the hump in the road, as you enter Upper Heyford Village, reduces the view along the Somerton Road for walkers and could prove a safety issue. We would recommend leaving the footpath as it is now.
* The Masterplan envisions Camp Road with wide verges and avenue tree planting. This vision is contradicted by the plans for the Village Centre North comprising tall buildings directly on the Camp Road. Building 103 (Heritage centre) is a dignified little building, and building 100 is historically valuable. The proposal for 2 large blocks, between these buildings, set forward in a manner that will dominate the street scene, whose architectural style is totally out of keeping with their surroundings, and has no respect for the heritage of the site, is highly inappropriate We would suggest that the buildings should be set back behind the building line of 103 & 100 and their architectural style should not compete with 103 or 100.
* The Masterplan does not mention bus routing beyond the confines of Heyford Park. It is essential that service through the Villages en route both to Bicester and Oxford be maintained. Frequent and appropriate bus services are the sole initiative to ameliorate the massive amount of traffic that will be generated into and out of Heyford Park. The bus services need to be frequent to both Bicester and Oxford, service outlying villages, provide night and frequent weekend service, and link with train service from Lower Heyford.
* Light pollution is a major concern. The maximum use of shielded low level and light colour technology should be required in both residential and commercial development.

Please ensure that our comments are included in the consultation documents for this application. Thank you for your consideration.

With regards,

Jack Goodman Jr

Clerk to Upper Heyford Parish Council