

Response from Cherwell District Council's Economic Growth Service

Application No.: 18/00825/HYBRID-2
Applicant's Name: Dorchester Living Limited
Proposal: Demolition of buildings and structures as listed in Schedule 1; Outline planning permission for up to 1,175 new dwellings (Class C3); 60 close care dwellings (Class C2/C3); 929 m2 of retail (Class A1); 670 m2 comprising a new medical centre (Class D1); 35,175 m2 of new employment buildings, (comprising up to 6,330 m2 Class B1a, 13,635 m2 B1b/c, 9,250 m2 Class B2, and 5,960 m2 B8); 2.4 ha site for a new school (Class D1); 925 m2 of community use buildings (Class D2); and 515 m2 of indoor sports, if provided on-site (Class D2); 30m in height observation tower with zip-wire with ancillary visitor facilities of up to 100 m2 (Class D1/A1/A3); 1,000 m2 energy facility/infrastructure with a stack height of up to 24m (sui generis); 2,520 m2 additional education facilities (buildings and associated external infrastructure) at Buildings 73, 74 and 583 for education use (Class D1); creation of areas of Open Space, Sports Facilities, Public Park and other green infrastructure; Change of Use of the following buildings and areas: Buildings 357 and 370 for office use (Class B1a); Buildings 3036, 3037, 3038, 3039, 3040, 3041, and 3042 for employment use (Class B1b/c, B2, B8); Buildings 217, 3102, 3136, 3052, 3053, 3054, and 3055 for employment use (Class B8); Buildings 2010, 3008, and 3009 for filming and heritage activities (Sui Generis/Class D1); Buildings 2004, 2005 and 2006 for education use (Class D1); Buildings 366, 391, 1368, 1443, 2007, 2008 and 2009 (Class D1/D2 with ancillary A1-A5 use); Building 340 (Class D1, D2, A3); 20.3ha of hardstanding for car processing (Sui Generis); and 76.6ha for filming activities (Sui Generis); the continuation of use of areas, buildings and structures already benefiting from previous planning permissions, as specified in Schedule 2; associated infrastructure works including surface water attenuation provision and upgrading Chilgrove Drive and the junction with Camp Road.

Location: Heyford Park, Camp Road, Upper Heyford.

Summary

The proposed Masterplan has great potential to support both the balanced economic growth of Heyford Park and employment opportunities for residents, including those from nearby villages. It appears to envisage and guide the creation of a more integrated settlement through a significant enhancement of existing infrastructure, space and developments, whilst adding new facilities and housing. As such, the Masterplan would appear to provide the basis of a more attractive place for businesses, investors, residents and visitors alike.

Proposal

The inter-relationship of land uses is considered, and the lessons learned over recent years appear to have been incorporated into the proposals. The proposed Chilgrove Drive, for example, would relieve Camp Road whilst opening access to the heart of the Masterplan's proposed development. Additional mitigation of any adverse effects of growth will be needed and my comments below focus upon the key economic aspects of the proposal.

Creative City

The 'Creative City' is proposed as a cluster of commercial occupiers of six refurbished buildings to provide the basis for new, highly skilled jobs. This would be supportive of the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy and, indeed, is already recognised by the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) as a potential key development site for the County's knowledge economy to be further enhanced.

The site's unique combination of location, history and atmosphere has proven to be popular and the identification of filming zones recognises the real value of high quality, built heritage to business and the economy. The creation of permanent facilities in support of filming and creative activity would be likely to support a range of additional employment on site and in the vicinity. Multiplier benefits could be expected to arise through co-operation with a range of businesses and other clusters of creative activity within and beyond the district's boundary.

It would be helpful to understand the supply-chains and links to education and skills in more detail, potentially through a skills and employment plan.

Visitor Destination

The profile gained through the media of film can itself enhance its attraction to visitors and the potential jobs and income to an area. The existing heritage centre and proposed open space, viewing area and attractions at the heart of the site should prove attractive to residents and visitors, providing reason to 'dwell' and support the viability of businesses and services at the nearby village centre.

Employers & Skills

The new employment sites and premises indicated could provide the source of valuable new job opportunities at Heyford Park. It would again be helpful to understand the interrelationships between new and envisaged employers in and around the community to support the targeted attraction of further commercial occupiers.

Meanwhile, the value of the existing businesses should not be underestimated as important sources of employment through businesses of various size and activity. The proposed Masterplan should be capable of providing for the on-going needs of those employers.

The relationship with the Cherwell (Heyford Park) Innovation is also fundamental for the Masterplan to consider in the development of enterprises, including those bio-science activities at the on-site Diagnox Laboratory.

The enhanced educational provision is also supportive of the future local economy. Skills provision could be enhanced further through the presence of, or at least relationship with, the Further and Higher Education sectors. This may also be usefully detailed in a skills and employment plan.

Contact

Please let me know if any further information is required.

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