

KIRTLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL RESPONSE ON HEYFORD PARK MASTERPLAN APPLICATION

(Ref: 18/00825/HYBRID)

Date: 30th July 2020

Kirtlington Parish Council (KPC) has provided previous responses dated 27th May and 3rd June 2020 on the submitted documents for the Heyford Park Masterplan application lodged by Dorchester Group.

KPC's objection to the application on the basis of highway matters still stands. We remain convinced that the effect on our village of traffic generated by the proposed development at Heyford Park will not be negligible, as is being suggested. Section 106 money is being offered to villages in the vicinity of Heyford Park (though not to Kirtlington!) in order to implement traffic calming measures aimed at alleviating the effects of increases in traffic through those villages arising from the proposed development. However, in one of those villages, the modelled traffic figures predict a decrease in traffic flows (Lower Heyford is predicted to have a 33% reduction in the 2031 PM peak with mitigation measures in place, yet is proposed to receive Section 106 money for traffic mitigation) and in others, whilst the increases may be 37-42% of baseline 2031 traffic flows, those traffic flows would still be less than a third of the traffic currently passing through Kirtlington. We therefore question whether the proposed distribution of S106 money is proportionate and equitable, and request that this matter be properly addressed.

This updated response comments upon the following:

1. The response received from Joy White, Oxfordshire County Council's Principal Transport Planner, dated 18th June, with her answers to the thirteen questions posed in KPC's 3rd June response, together with OCC's response to the application (dated 4th June);
2. A Technical Note prepared by Stantec regarding a 'Reassessment of the Impacts of Heyford Park and Associated Mitigation on Local Villages' (TN035 Rev C) dated 29th June 2020.

Each of our previous questions, together with Joy White's response and our further analysis, are set out below:

Q1 – Request for baseline data – We note the offer of obtaining traffic surveys from OCC's Transport Monitoring Team. We consider that OCC should be undertaking counts to verify the applicant's baseline data, and thus we would have hoped that such data could be made freely available to Parish Councils for ongoing monitoring. We have compared modelled traffic figures in the Stantec report with traffic counts from two locations in Kirtlington undertaken in June 2017 (the first monitoring point was on the Portway, north of its junction with the A4095 and the second monitoring point was on Heyford Road (A4095) in the vicinity of the village pond opposite North Green). Even though our 2017 figures are now 3-years old, they have revealed some anomalies which cast some doubt on the validity of the figures in the Stantec report (please refer to response to Q3 below).

Q2 – Use of Jersey Cottages application (ref: 17/01688/OUT) traffic counts. We have also compared Stantec's figures against those in the Transport Statement prepared by Abington Consulting Engineers (October 2017) for that refused application at the northern end of Kirtlington. The traffic counts covered the period Wednesday 4th January to Tuesday 10th January, thus during a period when many people would still be on their Christmas break. Even though these January 2017 figures have lower overall traffic counts than those from June 2017, they still demonstrate anomalies with the Stantec figures (refer to Q3 below).

Q3 – Estimated increase in traffic passing through Kirtlington arising from the proposed development at Heyford Park. The Stantec report predicts (Table 2) that in the AM peak in 2031 (AM Peak assumed to be the 3-hour period between 6am and 9am) without the Heyford Park development, 801 vehicles will enter Kirtlington from the north (monitoring point taken as south of the junction between the A4095 and Portway (referred to as Junction 19 in the Transport Assessment)). Our June 2017 figures state that an average of 1,139 vehicles travelled southbound by the pond during the AM peak. Even our January 2017 figures (by the 30mph sign) counted 842 vehicles entering Kirtlington. Whilst we recognise that the monitoring points are not in the same location, we find the disparity in these figures incomprehensible. The additional 338 or 41 vehicles between the Stantec point and our locations cannot be attributable just to Akeman Street traffic and vehicle movements generated within the village. Furthermore, the Stantec figures should be allowing for 11 years of growth. We are not highway engineers and do not have the expertise to run our own SATURN traffic models, but where the modelled baseline traffic counts are lower than two sets of actual counts from three years ago, then we must call into question the accuracy of the model presented by Stantec.

The Stantec report estimates that increases in traffic passing through Kirtlington arising from the proposed development, and without mitigation in place, would rise by 12% in the AM peak and 10% in the PM peak (assumed to be the 3-hour period between 4pm and 7pm). With mitigation in place, the AM peak would result in only a 0.2% increase in the AM peak and a 6.6% increase in the PM peak. With the predictions for Lower Heyford being a reduction in traffic flows of 3% in the AM peak without mitigation in place, and a reduction of 21% with mitigation in place, we have difficulty comprehending how traffic travelling south or south-west out of Heyford Park in the AM peak has been accounted for and how the mitigation measures proposed will have the predicted effects of reducing traffic flows through Kirtlington (and Lower Heyford).

It seems inconceivable that the introduction of the bus gate on the B4030 to the west of the B4030/B430 junction will not force more southbound traffic through Kirtlington. Using a route planner, such as that promoted by the AA, the route between Heyford Park and the Park and Ride facilities at Water Eaton or Peartree suggests the use of this western arm of the B430/B4030 junction. If traffic travelling south or westwards is predicted to reduce going through Lower Heyford and the B4030 is blocked by the bus gate, then it seems logical to us that such traffic would divert through Kirtlington.

Q4 – Origin and destination data. Again, without being provided with the original assumptions that have been made regarding the predicted origin and destination of people going to/from Heyford Park, we have no means of challenging those assumptions. There appears to be an over emphasis on travel between Heyford Park and Bicester, with little consideration of travel into Oxford as the principle destination, nor of other traffic southwards or westwards (e.g. to join the A40, which already generates traffic through Kirtlington). Whereas it has not been possible to choose any one survey site to show the traffic from Heyford Park, which leaves eastward, turns south on the B430 and then west through Kirtlington on the A4095, it is a logical route to the west and the south west (e.g. to join the A40), and lack of proof by survey should not be taken to mean lack of such traffic. Yet, that traffic appears to have been ignored in considering the effects of the proposed development on Kirtlington.

Q5 – Understanding the apportionment of Section 106 money for traffic calming measures to the surrounding villages. We note OCC's response that negotiations have not been concluded regarding the S106 monies for traffic calming measures and that the sums of money involved have not been agreed upon. We therefore request that a realistic solution be found linked to the extra load anticipated to use the A4095 through Kirtlington, and that the predictions in the latest Stantec

report TN035 are treated with caution and subject to further checks and verification of baseline evidence. The total sum of £200k had certainly been suggested previously, and whilst we would obviously prefer for this amount to be greater, so that we can implement our aspirations for place-making measures, it should certainly be no less, and should be safeguarded from any economic viability argument that may be lodged by Dorchester at a later date.

Q6 – Distribution of available S106 money – Distribution between parishes for traffic calming measures should be reconsidered in the light of a realistic concept of the increase of traffic through Kirtlington. With the amount of money that is likely to be made available by Dorchester for traffic calming measures in surrounding villages being limited, a correct analysis would show that a share of it should be allocated to pay for Kirtlington’s place-making plans, which have already been drafted, following discussion with OCC officers.

Q7 – S106 money from 1st phase of Heyford Park – The scheme discussed with OCC for the junction outside the Barley Mow pub in Upper Heyford should be progressed as a testing ground for the implementation of traffic calming measures throughout the MCNP area as was originally envisaged. Once the processes for approval from OCC are understood by the MCNP group working on this, then future schemes should be much easier to implement.

Q8 – Reallocation of S106 money if Upper Heyford scheme implemented – As Upper Heyford would already have benefitted from S106 money, it seems only correct that that amount is noted when further S106 money is to be shared.

Q9 – Improvements to junctions on the A4260 – We understand that improvements to the junction between the A4095 and A4260 at Bunker’s Hill are proposed, though these will not be funded by Dorchester. We also note that the timing of improvements to the Hopcroft’s Holt junction (between the B4030 and A4260) is triggered by the number of dwellings occupied in Phase 9. It is imperative to Kirtlington residents that we understand the timing of the improvements to Bunker’s Hill and at Hopcroft’s Holt, therefore we seek reassurances from OCC that KPC will be kept informed of the expected dates for the works at these two junctions?

Q10 – 250 bus service Oxford – Heyford Park – Bicester. KPC thanks OCC for receipt of the 2019 bus patronage figures. Whereas this had demonstrated the preference of many residents to rely upon their cars, there is already a recognised change in attitude to this taking place (although not helped by the current pandemic). We appreciate that funding for the current 250 service has been secured by OCC until 2022, but we also believe that there should remain some ring-fenced funding for further years. After that, the future of a bus service through Kirtlington is to be reassessed. KPC would, however, like to reiterate that a bus service is essential for some residents and the need is now more acute following the recent closure of our village shop. The economic viability of a doctor’s surgery and other leisure facilities at Heyford Park should take into consideration potential additional patronage from Kirtlington, particularly if accessible by bus (neither Islip nor Woodstock surgeries can be accessed by bus from Kirtlington). Also, we do not believe that a Heyford Park resident commuting to work in Oxford by public transport would take a bus to Bicester and then change on to a train to either of the Oxford stations and then a further bus into the centre, whereas the 250 service goes into Oxford city centre with designated bus lanes beyond Water Eaton.

Q11 – Routes used by employment users of Heyford Park. KPC notes OCC’s response that only HGVs will be monitored going to/from Heyford Park.

Q12 – Routeing agreements for employment users of Heyford Park. KPC looks forward to receiving an updated index of routeing agreements as promised by OCC.

Q13 – Construction Traffic Management Plan– KPC had assumed that Construction Traffic Management Plans (CTMPs) would already be in place to regulate the current construction works not only at Heyford Park, but also for ongoing developments around Bicester. How can KPC obtain copies of current and future CTMPs? The quantity of HGVs carrying aggregates and other products through Kirtlington is already significant throughout the day. KPC would like to obtain information on the CTMPs in order to understand what is legally passing through the village, as this is already a key concern of KPC and its residents.

In summary: As stated in its previous responses, KPC would like to support the application being put forward by Dorchester Group, but still considers that traffic-related issues have not been resolved with sufficient understanding of the situation to satisfy the concerns of Kirtlington residents. KPC will be presenting to the village its far-advanced place-making plans (mentioned above) in October which will justify our request for S106 funding to counter the inevitable increase in traffic generated by the proposed development at Heyford Park.