

HEYFORD PARK MASTERPLAN - 18/00825/HYBRID-2

SUBMISSION TO CDC PLANNING COMMITTEE: NOVEMBER 5TH 2020

1. This submission is made on behalf of a large number of local parish and community organisations, as members of the Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan Forum, which has Statutory Consultee status. Nine parish councils, parish meetings, or residents' associations - representing thousands of people affected by the Heyford Park scheme - have registered their unhappiness with the proposals for traffic mitigation that accompany this application. There are many components to the proposed mitigation, and different communities are impacted in different ways by them. What we all agree on, though, is that the package is unsatisfactory in some way. Much of the unhappiness focuses on the proposal for a bus-gate at Middleton Stoney, designed to remove queuing traffic on one arm of the traffic junction. Yet Middleton Stoney parish council itself is one of those that rejects the proposal - one reason being that the diversion simply puts all the traffic back on to one of the other arms of the junction. The bus-gate effectively pushes existing and projected traffic onto totally inadequate roads and through the heart of existing communities elsewhere in the vicinity. We have asked the applicants to drop their proposals for the bus-gate.

2. We appreciate that the applicants, and Oxfordshire Highways officers, have put a lot of work into some aspects of the traffic proposals, but unfortunately very little regard has been had to their knock-on effects on the wider community. We think that in the modelling work there has been too little, if any, consideration of the indirect routes used by vehicles. While the application documents acknowledge that the parishes surrounding Heyford Park will receive increased traffic flows, the offer of a payment to affected parishes of £50k will not, in our view, make a useful impact on safety in the villages concerned.

3. We do not wish to see the application itself fail, supportive as most of us are of the development of Heyford Park. The Dorchester Group's updated traffic mitigation paper shows a willingness to look at alternatives to the bus-gate, and to collect new data on which to base potential options. We are also reassured by a statement made by OCC in a recent online meeting that they have no wish to impose a solution that the community does not want.

4. **PROPOSED CONDITIONS:** we ask the Committee, therefore, to give approval to the Masterplan conditional on further work being done, jointly with us, on the traffic mitigation aspects of the proposals. Our initial wishes are as follows:

a) We wish to engage constructively with the Dorchester Group and with OCC Highways over the coming months, in order to convert the present high level of dissatisfaction in the community regarding traffic proposals to one of general acceptance.

b) We ask that MCNPF be permitted to engage with the process of obtaining new data on traffic flows around the neighbourhood plan area and beyond, to increase confidence in the quality of the

data, which is currently in serious doubt.

c) We want to engage with the expert team to consider options. These might include a Weight Restriction on Rousham Bridge, at the same time as the one proposed at Middleton Stoney. This will require completely new traffic modelling. The proposal has several distinct advantages over the bus gate: it would deter HGVs from the area; vehicles could remain on the B4030 and not divert through other villages; it would greatly improve the viability of the cycle route from Heyford Park to Bicester (as cycles would not have to compete with HGVs), and it would be cheaper. We also want to review and support other ways to ensure that buses are well used by local people.

d) A clear time framework must be agreed for all this work. We understand that the Middleton Stoney S278 scheme and TRO for weight restrictions can proceed 'early in the delivery of the planning permission and independently to a decision being made on the full package at Middleton Stoney'. While this is welcome, the wording is vague, particularly as the new two-year monitoring will only begin after the implementation of the weight limits. Only after the completion of monitoring can a decision be made about options to the bus gate, and only after this decision can S106 monies be properly reviewed and allocated. This all points towards a very long wait for traffic calming.

e) Therefore, the initial works at Middleton Stoney and Rousham Bridge should be agreed quickly, and proceed as soon as possible and before any new house-building begins. If it is left to trigger points on new housing numbers, there will be no guarantee that parishes will receive traffic-calming money within a reasonable and specific time period. This period should be stipulated as a condition of planning permission in the S.106 agreement.

f) If there is no bus gate, there is an overwhelming case for the hamlet of Caulcott to also receive S106 monies, as it lies on the B4030, the main route from the west not only to Chilgrove Drive but also to Bicester. The "Caulcott dip" is well-known as a speeding hot spot and has been the scene of fatalities in the past. Caulcott and Lower Heyford are physically separate and both in great need of traffic calming.

g) Sufficient S106 funding should be distributed on the basis of the viability of individual schemes, including place-making schemes, and the potential scales of impact locally and across the neighbourhood plan area, rather than on arbitrary sums. The agreed sums must also be firmly protected against later reduction by 'viability assessment'.

h) There is also still an outstanding S.106 payment from the previous Heyford Park approval which the MCNP Forum requested be spent on a demonstration project of traffic calming and place-making at Upper Heyford village, which we still wish to see implemented.

i) Finally, we ask that the Committee receive a further report on progress on this matter in due course, in order to be assured that the above conditions requested have been implemented in a satisfactory manner.

Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan Forum on behalf of local parishes

October 2020