Planning Application 18/00825/HYBRID

Tue 22/05/2018 13:03

Dear Sir/Madam,

PLANNING APPLICATION 18/00825/HYBRID

Thank you for providing the opportunity to comment on the above planning application.

It is quite clear that a lot of effort has been made to try and improve upon previous plans and, in my opinion, the overall plan and concept being put forward is good. Within the plan there appears to be a balanced approach to providing opportunities for the local community, whilst supporting growth. It is also reassuring to see that the cold war heritage of the area will continue to be maintained and become more open to the local community and visitors from farther afield.

The approval of the masterplan also presents an opportunity to address a number of concerns.

Aves Ditch

It is proposed to relocate the ancient trackway of aves ditch around the Eastern end of the site. As much as I am in favour of a new bridleway being created along that part of the perimeter it should:

• Be done so in order to provide a link between the disjointed ends but not become Aves Ditch.

• Be given a name that reflects the local area, again not Aves Ditch, and

• The section of Aves Ditch that was lost under the expansion of RAF Upper Heyford, should be marked in some manner within the new development, that would indicate its course.

Connectivivity with Bicester and Lower Heyford I would like to see more work undertaken to improve connectivity with both Bicester and Lower Heyford.

• Consideration should be given to a safer cycling environment between these destinations, for the purpose of encouraging rail use and environmentally friendly forms of travel.

• Consideration should also be given to the prospect of reopening Ardley Railway Station.

Eco-Energy

There appears to be no measures within the current or proposed development that take in to consideration or provide for renewable energy. No solar panels or PV Cells on the new houses, no mini or micro wind turbines, or any other means of harvesting energy. This I strongly feel needs to be addressed.

Parcel 17

Parcel 17 is currently an actively farmed field, located near the Eastern entrance to the area. The field is directly visible from Camp Road, Hart Walk, Wellington Road, Raven Close, Wellesley Close, Williams Road, Heyford Park Free School, the Duvall Park Homes area, the Village Green, and from a number of properties near the field. In this way, the field is today a significant asset for the local community, and significantly contributes to maintaining the rural character of the area.

In spite of being a valuable “greenfield” asset, Parcel 17 was earmarked for development in the 2015 Cherwell local plan. As per the local plan, Parcel 17 was “allocated in the context of meeting the full objectively assessed housing needs of the District”.

Subsequent events have however demonstrated that the benefits which were foreseen when the field was earmarked for development in the 2015 local plan would in fact be significantly less than expected:

1. Alternative "brownfield" development land on Heyford Park has been identified in the masterplan. At the time the local plan was approved, no further development of brownfield land was foreseen. The new master plan includes proposals for development of a number of brownfield areas, which will provide housing far in excess of the approximately 200 houses which were originally believed to be required on Parcel 17. In other words, the new masterplan will enable the area to exceed its previously planned contribution to meeting the “full objectively assessed housing needs of the District” without having to develop this field.

2. The detailed analysis in the masterplan demonstrates that the benefits (in terms of housing supply) of developing Parcel 17 are much smaller than originally foreseen. Due to its proximity to the sewage works, approximately 70% of the field is unsuitable for development. As a result, the number of houses which can be built on the field is only around 60. In other words, the benefit (in terms of housing supply) of developing this field are now less than one third of the benefits foreseen when the 2015 local plan was developed.

3. The community engagement events conducted to date by Dorchester Group have also demonstrated unanimous local opposition to the “greenfield” development of Parcel 17 (also known as the area south of Field Views/Hart Walk). Please refer to sections 4.31 to 4.33 in the “Report of Community Engagement” for a summary of community concerns.

The new masterplan will enable Heyford Park to make an even greater contribution to meeting Cherwell’s housing needs without having to develop Parcel 17; the benefits of developing Parcel 17 are much less than previously foreseen; and the local community is strongly opposed to this element of the master plan. Parcel 17 should become a protected greenfield area for the benefit of the local community, and should therefore be excluded from further development plans for the area.

With this important change, and notwithstanding the other items addressed for consideration, the proposed masterplan should be approved.

Yours faithfully,

Timothy Moore

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