

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON THE FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

District: Cherwell

Application no: 15/01736/OUT

Proposal: Erection of a building for retail use within Class A1, along with related access, parking, servicing, landscaping and other works

Location: Land North of Bicester Avenue Garden Centre adj to Oxford Road Bicester

Purpose of document

This report sets out Oxfordshire County Council's view on the proposal.

This report contains officer advice in the form of a strategic localities response and technical team response(s). Where local member have responded these have been attached by OCCs Major Planning Applications Team (planningconsultations@oxfordshire.gov.uk).

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Location: Land North of Bicester Avenue Garden Centre adj to Oxford Road Bicester

Strategic Comments

This response supersedes that dated 26 October 2015 and contains an updated Transport response.

This retail proposal is contrary to the Cherwell Local Plan as it falls within land allocated for class B1a (office) employment use (Policy Bicester 4: Bicester Business Park). The Inspector's report on the Local Plan (June 2015) states that **“there is no justification for changing the policy to permit further retail and/or leisure uses on the [Bicester 4] site”** (para 144).

Economy and Skills Officers and Local Members have raised concerns about the loss of land allocated for B1a (office) employment use and the impact of the retail development on the town centre.

Officer's Name: David Flavin

Officer's Title: Senior Planning Officer

Date: 04 November 2015

District: Cherwell

Application no: 15/01736/OUT

Proposal: Erection of a building for retail use within Class A1, along with related access, parking, servicing, landscaping and other works

Location: Land North of Bicester Avenue Garden Centre adj to Oxford Road Bicester

Transport

Recommendation

No objection subject to conditions

Key issues

- A contribution will be required towards the improvement of transport infrastructure in the Bicester area.
- The traffic impact of the proposals will be negligible.
- Parking and servicing provisions are acceptable.
- The Travel Plan Statement will require amendment.
- The drainage plan will require amendment.

Legal agreement required to secure

Section 106 contribution of £27,348 towards the improvement of transport infrastructure in Bicester.

Conditions

D4 Access: Full Details

D14 Turning Area and Car Parking

A travel plan statement which meets OCC criteria should be submitted before occupation and then updated within 3 months of full occupation when adequate survey data become available.

Development shall not begin until a surface water drainage scheme for the site, based on sustainable drainage principles and an assessment of the hydrological and hydro-geological context of the development, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall subsequently be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the development is completed. The scheme shall also include:

- Discharge rates.
- Discharge Volumes.
- Maintenance and management of SUDS features (this maybe secured by a Section 106 Agreement).
- Sizing of features – attenuation volume.
- Infiltration in accordance with BRE365.
- Detailed drainage layout considering the use of a porous pavement.
- SUDS (list the suds features mentioned within the FRA to ensure they are carried forward into the detailed drainage strategy).
- Network drainage calculations.

- Condition of outfall ditch condition and final outfall.

Detailed comments

Transport Strategy

The A41 from which the site is accessed is heavily trafficked. This was recognised by Bicester Village in their application for Phase 4 of their development, where they have proposed major highway improvements at and between the Esso roundabout and Pingle Drive junctions, as well as the provision of a Bicester Park and Ride facility.

The Cherwell District Planning Obligations SPD suggests £824 per 42m² of A1 floor space towards transport infrastructure requirements. The proposed 1,394m² of floor space equates to £27,348 that could be used to contribute towards transport infrastructure requirements in Bicester. It is suggested that this figure be used to contribute towards cycle improvement schemes on the central corridor between Bicester Town and the site.

Transport Development Control

This proposal was the subject of pre-application advice offered by OCC in March 2015 under planning application No.15/00051/PREAPP. This planning application is accompanied by a supporting Transport Statement as suggested by the pre-application advice.

The Transport Statement (TS) determines trip generation estimates for the site using the TRICS database and separates them into linked, pass-by and new/diverted trips. This is an acceptable practice in line with previous Government guidelines. The TS then argues that the resultant trip generation “*would not result in any noticeable changes in traffic conditions*”. The argument is accepted.

The TS presents details of a car park occupation survey together with proposed parking and cycle parking provisions. These provisions are considered acceptable.

The TS presents details of the service provisions at the rear of the building together with a swept path analysis for service vehicles. These service provisions are considered acceptable.

Travel Plans

A travel plan statement has been submitted with this application. However, a small amount of information must be included or expanded upon before the statement meets the criteria and can be approved. This includes the following items.

- The number of anticipated site occupants (staff, visitors) should be included in the document, as should information about the number of, and arrangements for, deliveries.
- Location map and a map of the site layout showing pedestrian and cycle routes is required.
- Reference to the fact that the cycle parking will be covered.
- The following objectives have been chosen by the travel plan statement author for the site. Three measures for each objective should be included in the document. These measures should be specific to the objective and outline how it will be achieved.

- *“To raise awareness and increase the attractiveness of alternative modes of transport available to and from the Unit and, in particular the benefits associated with walking and cycling for short journeys;*
- *To introduce a package of physical and management that will facilitate travel by sustainable modes;*
- *To reduce unnecessary or unsustainable use of the car for the journey to and from the Unit.”*

Further information and clarification regarding Travel Plan Statement requirements can be found in Appendix 4 of the OCC Travel Plans Guidance Document.

It is encouraging to see that there is a commitment to undertake a baseline survey within 1 month of the unit opening. The production of welcome packs for employees and visitors is also welcomed.

Drainage

A surface water drainage scheme for the site, based on sustainable drainage principles and an assessment of the hydrological and hydro-geological context of the development, has been submitted. The scheme shall subsequently be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the development is completed. However, the scheme should be amended to include the following additional items:

- Maintenance and management of SUDS features (this maybe secured by a Section 106 Agreement).
- Infiltration in accordance with BRE365.
- Detailed drainage layout considering a porous pavement system.
- SUDS (list the suds features mentioned within the FRA to ensure they are carried forward into the detailed drainage strategy).
- Condition of outfall ditch condition and final outfall.

Officer's Name: Chris Nichols

Officer's Title: Transport Development Control

Date: 04 November 2015

District: Cherwell

Application no: 15/01736/OUT

Proposal: Erection of a building for retail use within Class A1, along with related access, parking, servicing, landscaping and other works

Location: Land North of Bicester Avenue Garden Centre adj to Oxford Road Bicester

Economy and Skills

Recommendation:

The Local Planning Authority should consider the following:

- The loss of land allocated for employment (use class B1a (office)) in the Cherwell Local Plan (Policy Bicester 4: Bicester Business Park)
- The impact of the development on the town centre and robustness of the sequential test

The developer will be required to prepare and implement, with local agencies and providers, an Employment & Skills Plan (ESP) that will ensure, as far as possible, that local people have access to training (including apprenticeships) and employment opportunities available at the construction and end user phases of this proposed development.

Detailed Comments:

Loss of Allocated Employment Land

The current retail proposal falls within land allocated for class B1a (office) employment use in the Cherwell Local Plan (Policy Bicester 4: Bicester Business Park). The Inspector's report on the Local Plan (June 2015) states that **"there is no justification for changing the policy to permit further retail and/or leisure uses on the [Bicester 4] site"** (para 144).

Bicester is identified as a key location for employment growth on the Oxfordshire Knowledge Spine through the City Deal and Strategic Economic Plan (SEP). The SEP looks to support significant increases in employment at Bicester through infrastructure improvements and land availability.

The supporting statement for the current retail proposal estimates that around 16 jobs would be created; few of which are likely to be highly skilled. In contrast, a proposal in accordance with the allocated B1a office use class could make a valuable contribution to the generation of quality, high tech employment opportunities and provision of a comprehensive range of employment opportunities in the town.

The Impact of the Development on the Town Centre and Robustness of the Sequential Test

The Local Planning Authority must be satisfied that the impact of the development on the town centre has been fully considered and that sequential test accompanying the application is robust.

Officer's Name: Dawn Pettis

Officer's Title: Economic Development Strategy Officer

Date: 23 October 2015

District: Cherwell

Application no: 15/01736/OUT

Proposal: Erection of a building for retail use within Class A1, along with related access, parking, servicing, landscaping and other works

Location: Land North of Bicester Avenue Garden Centre adj to Oxford Road Bicester

Archaeology

Recommendation:

No objection subject to conditions

Key issues:

The site is located in an area of archaeological interest and a staged programme of archaeological investigation will be required ahead of any development on the site. This can be secured through an appropriately worded condition.

Legal agreement required to secure:

None

Conditions:

- F6** Prior to any demolition on the site, the commencement of the development and any archaeological investigation, a professional archaeological organisation acceptable to the Local Planning Authority shall prepare a first stage archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation, relating to the application area, which shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason - To safeguard the recording and inspection of matters of archaeological importance on the site in accordance with Policy BE6 of the South East Plan 2009 and Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

- F11** Prior to any demolition on the site (other than in accordance with the agreed Written Scheme of Investigation) and prior to the commencement of the development and following the approval of the first stage Written Scheme of Investigation referred to in condition [F6], a programme of archaeological evaluation, investigation and recording of the application area shall be carried out by the commissioned archaeological organisation in accordance with the approved first stage Written Scheme of Investigation.

Reason - In order to determine the extent, character and significance of the surviving remains of archaeological interest and to safeguard the recording and inspection of matters of archaeological importance on the site in accordance with Policy BE6 of the South East Plan 2009 and Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Informatives:

If the applicant makes contact with us at the above address, we shall be pleased to outline the procedures involved, provide a brief upon which a costed specification can be based, and provide a list of archaeological contractors working in the area.

Detailed comments:

The site is located in an area of archaeological interest 650m north of the site of the Roman Small Town of Alchester and the proposed site is located along the line of the Roman Road heading north from this town. Iron Age and Roman settlement evidence has been recorded along the route of this road, immediately south of the proposed site. A further Iron Age and Roman settlement has also been recorded 280m north of the site.

Prehistoric archaeological deposits have been recorded in the area and the proposed site is located immediately to the south west of an area of Bronze Age settlement identified through archaeological evaluation and excavation. This excavation recorded at least seven Bronze Age roundhouses as well as archaeological features dated to the Roman period. Two Bronze Age barrows are recorded 280m north east of the proposed site.

It is therefore likely that this development will encounter further archaeological deposits related to these periods and a programme of archaeological investigation will be required ahead of any development.

We would, therefore, recommend that, should planning permission be granted, the applicant should be responsible for ensuring the implementation of a staged programme of archaeological investigation to be maintained during the period of construction. This can be ensured through the attachment of a suitable negative condition as suggested above.

Officer's Name: Richard Oram

Officer's Title: Planning Archaeologist

Date: 15 October 2015

District: Cherwell

Application no: 15/01736/OUT

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Minerals & Waste

No comment

Officer's Name: Peter Day

Officer's Title: Minerals & Waste Policy Team Leader

Date: 07 October 2015

District: Cherwell

Application no: 15/01736/OUT

Proposal: Erection of a building for retail use within Class A1, along with related access, parking, servicing, landscaping and other works

Location: Land North of Bicester Avenue Garden Centre adj to Oxford Road Bicester

Ecology

Recommendation:

Key issues:

The District Council should be seeking the advice of their in-house ecologist who can advise them on this application.

In addition, the following guidance document on Biodiversity & Planning in Oxfordshire combines planning policy with information about wildlife sites, habitats and species to help identify where biodiversity should be protected. The guidance also gives advice on opportunities for enhancing biodiversity:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/planning-and-biodiversity>

Legal Agreement required to secure:

N/A - For the District Council to comment

Conditions:

N/A - For the District Council to comment

Informatives:

N/A - For the District Council to comment

Detailed Comments:

Officer's Name: Tamsin Atley

Officer's Title: Ecologist Planner

Date: 21 October 2015
