

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

District: Oxford City

Application no: 16/02745/CT3

Proposal: Extension to the existing Seacourt Park and Ride to accommodate new car parking, a single storey building to provide a waiting area and toilets for customers, cycle parking, lighting, CCTV, ticket machines, new pedestrian and cycle access, landscaping together with reorganisation of the layout of existing car parking spaces, repositioning of turning circle, bus pickup and drop-off and other works incidental to the development.

Location: Seacourt Park And Ride Botley Road Oxford

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: Seacourt Park And Ride Botley Road Oxford

Strategic Comments

Comments: Strategic comments are provided under transport key issues below, since they all relate to transport policy and strategy matters.

Officer's Name: Martin Kraftl

Officer's Title: Principal Infrastructure Planner

Date: 06 January 2017

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Location: Seacourt Park And Ride Botley Road Oxford

Transport

Recommendation:

Objection

Key issues:

The county council supports the expansion of Oxfordshire's Park & Ride capacity, with proposals put forward in the Local Transport Plan (Oxford Transport Strategy) to develop new remote Park & Ride sites that could provide almost twice the number of existing Park & Ride parking spaces by 2035. It does not however support longer term expansion of the current city-edge Park & Ride. Expansion in locations within the ring road such as Seacourt Park and Ride would add substantially to traffic levels on already congested routes, which is particularly counter-productive given the need to *reduce* the amount of traffic approaching the city. Furthermore it would not help meet objectives to encourage a greater share of travellers to use mass transit and cycle for their entire or a longer part of their journey.

Evidence submitted in support of this application confirms that queueing and journey times on both the southbound approach from Botley Interchange to the West Way/Botley Road junction and on the Botley Road westbound approach to the Park and Ride access junction would increase. This is as a result of proposals to rephase the signal timings at the Park and Ride access junction to allow for increase traffic volumes needing to exit the site. This is not considered acceptable given the Botley Road/West Way corridor is already under significant pressure with congestion impacting on a wider area including Frideswide Square and roads connecting to this. Worsening this would not only impact on general traffic but also the many bus services and bus passengers that travel on Botley Road.

The county council therefore objects to the proposed expansion of Seacourt Park & Ride for two reasons:

1. The proposal is permanent and therefore in conflict with our transport strategy
2. The proposals will worsen congestion on Botley Road and on the Botley Road to A34 link road

It is however recognised that small scale expansion of some existing sites, including Seacourt, may be necessary on a temporary basis as demand increases in the short term, especially in relation to developments in Oxford city centre. The county council therefore recommends that if the city council is minded to approve the scheme, that the consent is time-limited for up to a maximum 15-year period. It is the county council's view that this

would help demonstrate compliance with the county's Local Transport Plan and also the city council's own Core Strategy policy.

This time limit would not remove the need to find a more acceptable junction solution to deal with the increase in vehicles exiting the Park and Ride site to prevent increases in congestion on Botley Road.

Legal agreement required to secure:

Section 278 Agreement

The applicant is required to enter into a Section 278 Agreement (of the Highways Act 1980) linked to proposed changes at the Seacourt Park & Ride access and any other highway changes required to mitigate the impact of the proposed development. As part of the Section 278 Agreement, the applicant is required to submit drawings for technical approval from the Highway Authority.

Conditions:

Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP)

A Construction Traffic Management Plan should be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and agreed prior to commencement of works. This should identify;

- The routing of construction vehicles and management of their movement into and out of the site by a qualified and certificated banksman,
- Access arrangements and times of movement of construction vehicles (to minimise the impact on the surrounding highway network),
- Details of wheel cleaning / wash facilities to prevent mud, etc from migrating on to the adjacent highway,
- Contact details for the Site Supervisor responsible for on-site works,
- Travel initiatives for site related worker vehicles,
- Details of times for construction traffic and delivery vehicles, which must be outside network peak and school peak hours,
- Engagement with local residents and neighbours.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to mitigate the impact of construction vehicles on the surrounding network, road infrastructure and local residents, particularly at peak traffic times.

Drainage

Development shall not begin until a SuDS maintenance plan has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority and agreed prior to commencement of works.

Reason: To prevent flooding affecting the highway.

Informatives:

None.

Detailed comments:

Park & Ride Expansion – Remote / City Edge

It is the county council's intention, as set out in the Local Transport Plan (adopted July 2015), and specifically the Oxford Transport Strategy, to develop remote Park & Ride sites given the need to reduce the amount of traffic approaching the city, and to meet objectives to encourage a greater share of travellers to use mass transit for their entire journey.

The Botley Road and West Way corridor is already under significant pressure during peak periods with long queues forming on a daily basis. This can have much wider impacts affecting the operation of Frideswide Square, Oxpens and Thames Street, and as far back as Abingdon Road. The ability to reallocate road space without having a disproportionate impact on the operation of the local and strategic road network is therefore already severely compromised. West Way is also a stretch of road where the existing provision for walking and cycling is particularly substandard and where further (outbound) bus priority measures would be extremely beneficial.

The Oxford Transport Strategy sets out a timetable for the implementation of remote Park & Rides with all sites expected to be in place by 2035. Furthermore, the county council is already consulting on proposals for a new Park & Ride on the A40 near Eynsham including inbound bus priority on the A40 towards Oxford, which could be completed by 2020.

The county council does however recognise that small scale expansion of some existing sites may be necessary on a temporary/interim basis as demand increases in the short term. It is therefore strongly recommended that the Seacourt application is time-limited for up to a maximum 15-year period (when all but one remote Park & Ride should be completed) at which point Oxford City Council could apply for an extension if insufficient progress has been made delivering remote sites, or decommission the extension if there has been sufficient progress. It is the county council's view that this would help demonstrate compliance with the county's LTP and also the city council's own policy:

“The City Council will continue to seek progressive, long-term approaches to maintaining and enhancing Oxford's overall accessibility. In particular, support will be given to further development, or investigation, of the following long-term measures:

- *remote Park and Ride sites at locations closer to journey sources, which connect where appropriate to new development....”*

Oxford City Council's Core Strategy (Para. 5.1.8)

Alterations to Seacourt Park & Ride Access

The county council has serious concerns about proposals to alter the phasing of the West Way/Seacourt Park & Ride junction. In particular, the network capacity assessment work undertaken of the proposed junction and as reported in the submitted Transport Assessment, confirms that proposals would result in the westbound arm of the junction operating at 87.0% and 90.1% saturation assuming the Park & Ride is operating near capacity (84% and 100% occupancy respectively). This is at the very upper level of saturation that is considered to be acceptable and therefore the junction is unlikely to be able to operate very efficiently or have sufficient capacity to deal with any fluctuations in traffic flow or if demand at the pedestrian crossing is called more frequently.

Updated microsimulation modelling also confirms the proposed junction design “*produces increased delays at the West Way/Botley Road junction due the increase in demand on the westbound approach. This is due to additional vehicles being able to exit the Park and Ride site as a result of the revised layout. Accordingly, journey times on the southbound approach from Botley Interchange to the West Way / Botley Road junction and on the Botley Road westbound approach to the Park and Ride access junction also increase*”.

Given Botley Road/West Way road network is already under significant pressure this would not be an acceptable situation and could result in more frequent and severe queuing back towards the city centre and the A34. Furthermore, this proposal would impact on buses and bus passengers leaving the city as there is no outbound bus priority to protect services from congestion which is counter to the proposal’s objectives which as the Transport Assessment confirms is to “*strengthen and enhance the ability of sustainable transport to provide a long term alternative to the car*”.

Unfortunately, the county council was not made aware of proposals to alter the Botley Road/Seacourt Park & Ride junction until the planning application was submitted and so there has been limited opportunity to discuss the proposal in detail or to find a more acceptable solution that has no impact on the Botley Road/West Way corridor. To be clear, the county council fully understands the desire to limit the time Park & Ride buses are held within the site but is of the view that this should not be to the detriment of the many more buses and bus passengers that travel on Botley Road. We would welcome working with the city council on finding a more acceptable solution.

Layout of an expanded Seacourt Park & Ride

The proposal is to relocate the bus turnaround and provide new waiting facilities further into the Park & Ride site. As a result there is a longer length of the Seacourt Park & Ride access road where buses mix with vehicles and so the potential for these services to be delayed is increased. Furthermore, if a more acceptable junction arrangement cannot be found then this is likely to result in Park & Ride buses being significantly delayed and so reducing the attractiveness of this Park & Ride site.

It is recommended that sufficient space is provided at the waiting area so that two buses can park, as typically a bus will laying-over/picking-up when another bus arrives that needs to drop-off passengers. This could be easily overcome by extending the bus stop and removing a proposed tree north of the building.

The proposed cycle parking area whilst in a central location means cyclists will have to travel north into the site and around the car park to get to the pedestrian/cycle and emergency access, which then connects directly onto the shared cycle path on Botley Road. A more direct route would pass the waiting facility but this is likely to be busy with pedestrians and the stepped/ramped area is narrow so pedestrian-cyclist conflicts are more likely so is not considered convenient. Cycle parking might be better located nearer to the proposed cycle/pedestrian path for easier/more convenient access to Botley Road.

The application form states that a total of 30 cycle parking spaces are proposed, whilst the Transport Assessment and masterplan states that 50 will be provided. The TA confirms that a Park & Pedal scheme already provides 40 spaces, although no evidence is put forward on how well spaces are used. Regardless, an increase in 10 additional cycle parking spaces is not considered to be very ambitious and more should be provided. The masterplan confirms cycle parking will be sheltered which is welcome given bicycles will be parked overnight.

Drainage

The proposed design for the Park & Ride expansion meets with Oxfordshire County Council's Drainage and SuDS guidelines, and so is considered acceptable.

A SuDS maintenance plan does not appear to have been submitted and so the county council's Drainage team need to see this before further comments can be provided.

Officer's Name: Stewart Wilson

Officer's Title: Principal Transport Planner

Date: 23 December 2016
