

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

**District:** South Oxfordshire

**Application no:** P17/S3719/SCO

**Proposal:** Scoping opinion request in support of an outline planning application for a residential led mixed use development at Culham Science Village.

**Location:** Land at Culham Science Village, Culham, Oxfordshire.

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## **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](mailto:planningconsultations@oxfordshire.gov.uk)).

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## **Strategic Comments**

### **Comments:**

This scoping opinion relates to a site proposed for allocation in the South Oxfordshire Proposed Submission Local Plan. The County Council is responding to the Local Plan by the response date of 30th November 2017.

Not all the infrastructure elements which are likely to be necessary are specifically mentioned in the Scoping report. Contributions to infrastructure to enable the following community needs to be met (amongst other things) may be necessary:

- Children's & Family Intervention and support
- Children's Homes
- Early years' education
- Schools
- Learning disabilities
- Adult day time support (elderly)
- Library & Culture
- Leisure
- General community facilities including adult learning and youth
- Extra Care Housing
- Supported Housing
- Fire & Rescue
- Public Health
- Registration
- Waste & Recycling
- Highways
- Countryside services such as public rights of way improvement

The site was included in the last consultation stages of the Local Plan preparation. The County Council's comments in May 2017 at the last consultation stage noted amongst other things that: there are sand and gravel deposits in the area and consideration should be given to extracting them prior to development; significant transport mitigation measures will be required; additional schools capacity will be required; and the costs of infrastructure should be borne by the development. We noted that the proposed scale of development would significantly strengthen the business case for accelerating investment in rail capacity upgrades between Didcot and Oxford, including at Culham station, together with more frequent rail services. Any land needed for rail capacity improvements must be made available.

Phasing of development will have to be decided on in respect of infrastructure improvements, such as the Clifton Hampden bypass and Didcot to Culham Thames Crossing, and the provision of new schools.

As the site is not in the existing Core Strategy, it has not been assessed as part of the CIL contributions framework. The County Council would seek that this site is included in an updated CIL Regulation 123 list and Charging Schedule, recognising the need for contributions through S106. It may be that the site needs to be excluded from CIL in order to gain the maximum amount of contributions and direct delivery of some infrastructure through an appropriate S106 agreement.

**Officer's Name: Lynette Hughes**  
**Officer's Title: Senior Planning Officer**  
**Date: 16 November 2017**

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## Transport

A comprehensive Transport Assessment (TA) will be required to inform any Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). Oxfordshire County Council has entered into some discussion with regard to the requirements of such a TA and welcomes further dialogue. The applicant should be aware of the need for residential and non-residential Travel Plans (TP) and for a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP). This response refers to both the submission and previous correspondence with the County Council and whilst it is provided in response to the formal EIA scoping it also includes more general commentary with regard to considerations for the potential development.

The addition of 3,500 new homes in this location is likely to have a significant impact on the local transport network as well as further afield. Detailed work will be needed to assess the impacts of these development proposals and put forward appropriate mitigation.

Oxfordshire County Council's 4<sup>th</sup> Local Transport Plan (LTP4) focuses on key growth areas, including Science Vale, in which this site is located, and stretches to the south west of the development site, as well as Oxford. It is anticipated that the proposed site will generate trips to Oxford and also to Science Vale as key centres for employment, as well as further afield. Given the scale of the development, the County Council expects any proposals and transport mitigation to meet with the objectives and aspirations set out in LTP4.

Science Vale transport proposals within LTP4 include a number of schemes such as Clifton Hampden bypass, Didcot to Culham Thames Crossing, as well as public transport improvements and cycle routes to key employment areas such as Milton Park, Culham Science Centre and Harwell Campus.

Oxford's Transport Strategy within LTP4 includes proposals for rapid transit, remote Park and Ride and a network of cycle super routes and premium cycle routes that connect different parts of the city and nearby settlements.

It is noted that up to 3,500 residential dwellings are proposed and a net increase of employment land (including existing businesses). Assumptions will need to be agreed for the proportion of different types of employment use proposed. Different categories of employment land use have different impacts on the transport network.

Section 4 of the EIA scoping note identifies the approach that will be undertaken to assess the transport impact of the development proposal on the local area and upon the strategic highway network. Pre-application discussions for this site proposal have been ongoing in the preparation of the forthcoming transport submission for this site. This transport document will be expected to demonstrate the affect the development proposal will have upon the local and wider highway network by analysing:

- the site's access arrangements
- local and strategic road junctions
- all committed developments within the local area; and
- undertake appropriate junction sensitivity tests within the local area.

The scoping report does not propose a study area - paragraphs 4.14, 4.15, 4.16, 4.36 and 4.37 outline the applicant's intention to utilise the new microsimulation model currently being developed by OCC and SODC. Further discussions will be required to investigate the usage, including methodologies, timescales and associated costs. The County Council cannot provide exact timescales of when the model may be available for use in relation to this site proposal, and as such cannot be held responsible for any delays in the planning application progress. It should also be noted that the transport impacts of this development are likely to reach further than the extent of the model, therefore the applicant may have to extend the model, or utilise additional assessment methodologies. Detailed analysis will be required for a number of junctions, and additional surveys may be required as mentioned in para 4.13.

Multiple assessment scenarios will be required including but not limited to: base year, site build out at Local Plan year 2033, interim years up to 2033, full site build out in a future year, and interim years between 2033 and the future full site build out year. Assessments will also include scenarios with differing highway schemes in the area i.e. with/without New River Crossing, Science Bridge etc.

Due to the strategic nature of the site proposal, the study area for traffic modelling work will require further discussions and agreement with County Council officers, prior to a detailed planning application being submitted. The key strategic junctions that will require consideration (but not necessarily limited to) are listed below:

- Signal controlled junction of Abingdon Road (A415) / High Street / Oxford Road (B4015)
- Signal controlled river crossing (High Street)
- B4015 / A4074 Golden Balls roundabout
- A4074 / A415 Berinsfield roundabout
- A4074 / Wallingford Road / New Road roundabout
- A4074 / A4130 roundabout
- B4105 / B480 junction (Chiselhampton)
- B480 / Thame Road / Newington Road junction (Stadhampton)
- Thame Road / Milton Road / B480 roundabout (Stadhampton)
- Heyford Hill (A4074 / Eastern By-Pass-Road) roundabout
- Bridge Street/ High Street / Stert Street junction (Abingdon)
- Ock Street / Stratton Way signal junction (Abingdon)
- Stratton Way / Vineyard / Stert Street signal junction (Abingdon)

Paragraph 4.5 highlights B1 office consents or permitted development rights to change to offices on this site. The County Council accepts the principle that actual existing trips generated by the site today will be netted off in the trip generation calculations for the site. However, we will not accept theoretical trips from the B1 Office consents or permitted development rights to change to office to be netted off from the trip generation calculations for the site.

Paragraph 4.29 states "delays are only likely to be significant when the traffic on the network surrounding the development is already at, or close to, the capacity of the system". This is

the case for the road network in this area, therefore it is expected that additional development generated traffic would create severe delays if not mitigated.

The TA should set out a clear role for public transport, expressed in terms of modal shares for different types of journey. Any expressed modal share should relate to a series of clearly stated assumptions. This Council will expect public transport to be directly available to residents via bus stops within suitable walking distances of the new residential units. The normal criteria for walking distance to bus stops should be a maximum of 400 metres. However, any bus route or routes through the residential areas should be as direct as possible, so as to be attractive to users.

Target modal shares for public transport use will differ, according to destination and the quality / frequency of the bus service. At present there is no bus service serving the site. Interchange represents a risk to public transport users, that connection times may on occasion be lengthy and unattractive. Generally speaking, this concept works well only for interchange from a very frequent service to another very frequent service. Thus modal share for any flow involving interchange should be adjusted to account for this deterrence.

Financial support will be required to pump-prime the initial bus services to and from this development site. Additional vehicles will be required in the local bus network, specifically providing a new bus service, which will require pump-priming towards commercial viability. Any proposed connection with rail passenger services should reflect the extended hours of operation required to cover the journey to work in Oxford, Didcot, and London, and back, also the costs of such a service and the likely revenue attributable to a bus operator.

The eventual network of public transport routes serving the area should be capable of operating without financial support, once the development is fully built out, following a period of pump-priming support. The developer should provide a costed bus strategy which demonstrates how this can be achieved. The County Council does not have any funds available to maintain bus services following a period of developer funding.

Further work is required with potential bus routeing and stops within the proposed site / along the A415, including intensification of activity around bus stops and siting parks and green spaces away from public bus stops. Any future bus stops within the site / along A415 will be expected to be provided with hard standing areas and ducting ready for real time information infrastructure to be installed. The delivery of bus stop flags, poles, bus shelters can be by either the developer or via a financial contribution to the County Council as part of a S106 Agreement.

Although there are some facilities within Culham village, they are limited and therefore people will have to travel to Abingdon, Didcot and Oxford to access larger shops and facilities. Furthermore, current options for sustainable travel by bus, walking and cycling are lacking due to the rural location of Culham Science Centre. Due to this, there is a risk that car use from a development site in this location will be high without extensive measures to support sustainable travel modes. This would have severe environmental impacts. As part of a future transport submission it is considered essential that the development proposal provides opportunities to improve sustainable travel options and provide employment opportunities, shops and facilities to help reduce the need to travel.

Information around on-site infrastructure for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport should be provided, as well as how this new infrastructure will link with any existing infrastructure in the local area. Direct and convenient pedestrian and cycle connections to Abingdon, Didcot,

Oxford, surrounding Villages and other proposed development sites in the area are essential. There is some cycle infrastructure in the area (para 4.8), however improvements will be required due to the increased usage from this site. Options to improve cycling connectivity to National Cycle Network Route 5 should be investigated, the most direct route being north out of the site towards the River Thames. Residents should be able to access key amenities on foot or by bike e.g. schools, church, village hall, pubs, employment, bus stops etc. The County's own design guidance should be considered along with national guidance such as Manual for Streets and Inclusive Mobility.

There are Public Right of Way footpaths near the site, and a restricted byway within the site. The potential usage and improvements of these should be analysed. It is considered essential that measures are put in place to provide internal connections for those public rights of way.

All school sites need to be provided with suitable access onto the site and the County Council has standard requirements which can be provided. Staff parking, coach parking, and parent drop-off parking will be required. Safe and convenient walking and cycling routes to the schools also need to be identified, with pedestrian and cyclist crossing points provided as appropriate.

Section 6 states that the impact of the proposed development on the Abingdon Air Quality Management Area will be fully assessed due to the close proximity to the site. Other AQMA's as well as areas with air quality concerns may also require assessment, depending on the agreed trip generation and distribution of this site.

Paragraphs 4.40 and 5.13 of the EIA scoping report covers the construction phase – as part of this, consideration needs to also be given to the impacts of construction traffic, such as any damage incurred during the construction of the site is to be put right / addressed by the development, alongside appropriate delivery routeing and peak hour restrictions.

**Officer's Name: Michael Deadman / Harry Davis**

**Officer's Title: Principal Engineer / Senior Transport Planner**

**Date: 16 November 2017**

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## **Education**

Oxfordshire County Council has a statutory duty under S14 of the Education Act 1996 to secure sufficient school places to meet the needs of local population, including as a result of housing developments such as this proposal. Under Section 7 of the Childcare Act 2006 and extended by the Childcare Act 2016, the Council has a responsibility to ensure that there is sufficient childcare and early education provision.

As recognised in paragraph 1.16 of the scoping report, the proposed development will have a significant impact on demand for pre-school, primary and secondary education – this includes on demand for special education places across all sectors.

Education provision needs would be expected to be mostly met within a development of this size, through new schools. Paragraph 1.16 of the Scoping Report states that the proposed development will include up to 3,500 Residential Units, a neighbourhood centre / community hub, new primary school(s) and secondary education provision. The county council can confirm that for this scale of housing, in this location, new primary schools and a new secondary school to serve this development and the surrounding area, plus off-site expansion of SEN provision would be required.

3,500 homes would typically be expected to result in approximately 4-5 forms of entry in pupil generation. However, this would need to be fully assessed based on proposed housing mixes and timescales.

While all new primary schools in Oxfordshire are commissioned to provide Nursery classes, additional early years education and childcare provision could be through a mixed market of private and voluntary providers, including pre-schools, day nurseries and childminders. The inclusion of suitable accommodation within the development, for example within any neighbourhood centre / community hub, could be considered.

Secondary education would be provided by a new school on the development site, the size of which would need to take into account the wider picture of population growth in and around Abingdon.

SEN education provision would be expected to be delivered off-site.

The EIA needs to include consideration of travel patterns from the development to local schools. This includes to existing schools during any period between occupations commencing and the new schools opening, and in the longer term to the proposed new schools. For secondary schools, the likely direction of travel prior to the new school opening would be towards Abingdon.

It should be noted that demand and supply of school places in this area is going through a period of rapid change, and will continue to do so in response to planned housing developments, including this one. The Education Sufficiency team at Oxfordshire County Council is able to advise as required on appropriate data regarding school place planning. In the first instance, the OCC Pupil Place Plan (available from [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk)) should be referred to. Data on the current situation and past trends needs to be supplemented with information about future plans and forecasts. The School Organisation team at Oxfordshire County Council will base its response to any future planning application on the latest available information.

**Officer's Name: Barbara Chillman**

**Officer's Title:** Pupil Place Planning Manager

**Date:** 13 November 2017

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## **Archaeology**

### **Recommendation:**

Comments

### **Key issues:**

- The desk based assessment produced in 2016 will need to be updated to include recent HER information and the Historic Landscape Characterisation completed by the County in 2017.
- The geophysical survey report will need to be submitted and agreed with ourselves as set out in the January 2016 written scheme of investigation.
- No discussion regarding the appropriateness of these reports or the scoping of any further surveys has been discussed with County Archaeological Services.
- A programme of archaeological investigation will need to be undertaken across the site ahead of the determination of any planning application but the scope of this cannot be agreed until the results of the previous surveys have been agreed.

### **Detailed comments:**

The Archaeology chapter (8.0) of the scoping report states that a desk based assessment and a geophysical survey has been undertaken for the site. A written scheme of investigation was agreed for the geophysical survey in January 2016 which included a requirement to provide us with a copy of the survey report for our comments before a final copy of the report was produced. We were never sent a copy of this geophysical survey report however and so it was not undertaken in line with the agreed written scheme of investigation. We therefore cannot comment on its appropriateness for this assessment.

The results of an appropriate and agreed geophysical survey will need to be included in the assessment.

A desk based assessment (DBA) has been undertaken by CGMS in 2016 but we have again not seen a copy of this assessment and therefore cannot comment on its veracity but an updated DBA will need to be included in the EIA. This desk based assessment will need to include the up to date historic environment record information along with an assessment of the Lidar data for the site.

The proposed site has been covered by the Thames Gravel Survey National Mapping Programme and the results of this will need to be obtained from Historic England and included in the DBA. In addition the aerial photographic archives at Historic England will need to be consulted and any new features plotted. We have previously set out what would be required in the DBA in January 2016 and since then the County has completed its Historic Landscape characterisation and the results of this will need to be included in any assessment for the site.

The results of the DBA and geophysical survey should therefore not be taken as having been agreed with ourselves as archaeological advisors to the Local Planning Authority.

Section 8.10 of the scoping report states that a discussion on the scope of any future archaeological assessment has been held with myself. This is factually incorrect. No such discussion has been held and we would not have been in a position to discuss future requirements for archaeological investigations on the site until the DBA and geophysical survey reports had been agreed as set out in the written scheme of investigation.

A programme of archaeological investigation will need to be undertaken across the site ahead of the determination of any planning application but the scope of this cannot be agreed until the results of the previous surveys have been agreed.

**Officer's Name: Richard Oram**  
**Officer's Title: Planning Archaeologist**  
**Date: 09 November 2017**

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