

OCC RESPONSE TO INDEPENDENT TRANSPORT CONSULTANT'S REVIEW OF OCC'S CONSULTATION RESPONSE TO APPLICATION 17/02534/OUT

District: Cherwell

Application No: -17/02534/OUT

Proposal: OUTLINE - The construction of a business park of up to 60,000 sq.m (GEA) of flexible Class B1(a) office / Class B1(b) research & development floorspace; parking for up to 2,000 cars; and associated highways, infrastructure and earthworks

Location: Land North Of Bicester Avenue, Garden Centre, Oxford Road, Bicester.

Response date: 22nd August 2018

This update responds to the independent review of OCC's consultation response of 7th August 2018¹ commissioned by CDC.

Detailed technical comments are provided at Appendix 1. OCC respectfully request that the following paragraphs in bold are read out to planning committee on Thursday 23rd August:

OCC have reviewed the findings of the consultant's report. The findings are generally supportive of OCC's recommendation that Members defer this application until such time that evidence is available to determine whether or not it is possible to overcome the highway objection.

Whilst the principle of this development is supported, OCC continue to object on highway grounds as the Transport Assessment does not adequately assess the impact of the development or demonstrate that it can be adequately mitigated.

In particular, OCC wish to draw attention to the fact that the consultant's review:

- 1) recommends that amendments are made to the applicant's modelling in line with OCC's response (para 3.3); and**
- 2) states that there is a very sound argument in favour of S106 developer contributions to fund the transport infrastructure required to support Local Plan growth (para 5.1a).**

Whilst the consultant does not believe the suggested amendments to the modelling will fundamentally change the results, no justification is provided for this statement, and there is no estimation of how inaccurate the results as submitted might be.

Officer's Name: David Flavin

Officer's Title: Senior Planning Officer

Date: 22nd August 2018

¹ Review of County Council's Response to Consultation on Planning Application No. 17/02534/OUT Relating to Land North of Bicester Avenue, Garden Centre, Oxford Road, Bicester for Cherwell District Council (Edwards & Edwards Consultancy Ltd, 20th August 2018)

Appendix 1:

Response to Technical Points Raised in Independent Consultant's Review of OCC's Consultation Response of 7th August 2018

Paragraph no.	OCC response
3.3	Report says that OCC comments on the inadequacies of the LinSig are valid and recommends that Motion should review the input and produce updated outputs. However, report says ' <i>I do not however believe that these updated outputs will fundamentally change the conclusions I reach in the remainder of this report.</i> ' No justification is provided for this statement, and there is no estimation of how inaccurate the results might be due to the incorrect LinSig inputs.
3.5	Correctly states that the junctions operate under Microprocessor Optimised Vehicle Actuation (MOVA), and says that this (my italics) ' <i>may</i> have a positive effect on the operation of the junctions, <i>potentially</i> reducing the underutilised green time at the junctions.' 3.6 goes on to state, correctly, that the LinSig software is not able to model the benefit of MOVA as it assumes that signal times remain fixed throughout the assessment period. It goes on to state that 'In reality, junction operation <i>may</i> be better due to the adaptive MOVA control already in place'. I would accept this, otherwise there would be no benefit in installing MOVA at junctions. However, there is no evidence presented here, and none that I am aware of, that conclusively demonstrates how much additional capacity can be gained from MOVA. Hence the cautious wording and use of 'may'. It is perfectly possible that any benefits from MOVA are easily outweighed by the modelling inaccuracies mentioned above at 3.3.
3.7	Para. 3.7 focuses on the 90% capacity threshold Degree of Saturation, and advises that consideration should also be given to predicted queues and delays. OCC's response does indeed comment on the queues. Interestingly the tables do not summarise the delay, which is significant on several arms, but particularly on Lakeview Drive where the delays with mitigation in the pm peak are 72 seconds average per PCU. The tables also do not include the Pioneer Way junction (labelled as Saxon Fields), where delays reach 85 seconds average per PCU in the pm peak, with queues of over 40 vehicles.)
3.10	I disagree that the proposed mitigation brings about an improvement on the entire LinSig network (I am assuming this means compared with the 'with development' scenario without mitigation). In fact the mitigation scheme increases the degree of saturation slightly at the Pingle Drive junction, and at Pioneer Way in the pm peak.
3.13	<p>a) It is standard practice that LinSig analysis is for am and pm peak hours only. This does not detract from the severity of the impact. This is the critical period on the network which is used to assess the congestion impact of any development. In fact, the peak could spread and impacts approaching the level of the peak impact could be felt for a much longer period.</p> <p>b) The blocking in the base scenario is acknowledged, but this is a mean maximum queue which varies over the peak, and adding 21 more vehicles would put the back of the queue on average 27 as opposed to 6 vehicles beyond the roundabout, which would mean fewer incidences when the queue would clear or be sufficiently moving to allow vehicles to exit Tesco's.</p>

	<p>c) LinSig does not take account of the benefits of MOVA – this is acknowledged, but see above, the benefits cannot be quantified and may well be outweighed by inaccuracies in the modelling.</p> <p>d) It is very difficult to prove or disprove whether cars queueing within the car park to exit would sufficiently reduce access to car parking spaces to cause a queue on entry to the car park. The author says he doubts whether this would occur, but neither of us can prove it one way or the other. However, I firmly believe it is a significant risk. Many of us will have witnessed queueing to get into a supermarket car park at peak times when the aisles are blocked by cars waiting to exit. In this situation there is only capacity for 15 cars to back up from the Tesco roundabout before the queue backs up to the A41, blocking exits and severely affecting this complex series of junctions in close proximity. The McDonalds drive through could also increase this risk.</p> <p>e) The argument that Lakeview Drive is private and therefore this is not a matter for the highway authority is completely spurious. It is an arm of a junction that the highway authority maintains and manages, it is publicly accessible and provides the only access route to key local services.</p>
3.14	<p>b) This supports our argument for not accepting highway schemes where the predicted DoS exceeds 90%.</p> <p>d) To clarify, the unsafe manoeuvres that OCC said may occur, would be drivers proceeding just after the signal has turned to red, out of impatience and not wanting to wait through another cycle, having already experienced significant delay in the queue. However, I accept that this is unsubstantiated by hard evidence.</p>
3.15	It is noted that the author considers that the LinSig models must be updated to validate his views about the proposed mitigation being acceptable. This supports the highway authority view that the item should be deferred to a later date.
3.17	OCC adopts the practice of treating RFC values over 0.85 as being above theoretical threshold for capacities at roundabouts. This is an industry standard, based on the fact that delay begins to increase exponentially above this level.
3.23	The author considers that Motion should have provided a rationale for modelling the Middleton Stoney Rd/Oxford Rd junction as a conventional rather than a mini roundabout, and supports OCC's objection, saying that it should be modelled as a mini roundabout also. This supports the highway authority view that the item should be deferred to a later date.
3.24	This suggests that the mitigation scheme cannot be confirmed to be deliverable at this stage, and strongly urges a Stage 1 RSA to be completed for the junction. I am not aware that one has been carried out. This is another reason for deferring consideration to a later date.
3.25-3.29	We welcome the support for our justification of the strategic highway contribution towards the SEPR.
3.30	The report confirms that the stops on the A41 are not easily accessible, and that enhanced public transport should be considered. This would appear to support OCC's request for a contribution towards bus services. I confirm that we would not anticipate any reluctance on the part of a bus operator to use Lakeview Drive. In many cases buses operate along private roads, for example Milton Park.
3.31	I note that the report also supports the request for a contribution towards monitoring the travel plan.

4.1	I note that the report supports OCC's position on the timing of the highway works, in that it is not justifiable for the trigger to be 45000 sqm, and that in the absence of further detail, the works should be required prior to first occupation.
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Officer's Name: Joy White

Officer's Title: Principal Transport Planner

Date: 22nd August 2018
