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Sent: 22 September 2021 23:30

To: Development Brief <developmentbrief@cherwell-dc.gov.uk>

Subject: Response to consultation on development briefs for LPPR sites PR9 and PR7b

Please find attached my response to this consultation

Kind regards

Ian Middleton

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Cherwell District Council Member for Kidlington East Ward
Kidlington Parish Councillor (Exeter Ward)
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Comments on PR 9 and PR7b

In relation to the consultation on development briefs for both of these sites I would like firstly to endorse the responses submitted by Yarnton and Begbroke Parish councils on site PR9 and Gosford and Water Eaton and Kidlington Parish Councils on site PR7b.

I would also add the following personal comments as parish, district and county councillor for both areas.

Sustainable building standards

I note on both sites there are numerous nods towards low carbon building standards, although there are no firm commitments towards any of the recognised standards on either domestic or commercial properties such as BREEAM and Passivhaus.

In view of the fact that these developments will largely be undertaken during the period covered by the climate emergency motions of all associated councils at all levels of local government, it would seem appropriate for these standards to be adopted.

I'm aware that the policies within the current local plans are relatively weak on these matters and are largely advisory, but I still feel it would be reasonable for the council to hold developers to a higher standard in terms of sustainable development.

This could also include aspirations towards car free environments as well as a more focussed approach to active travel and modal shifts. These are all things that are usually included in planning applications, but it would be good to actually see them acted on.

Biodiversity

Likewise the proposals regarding biodiversity enhancement should be more stringently applied, along with ongoing monitoring of these aspects. It is often the case that biodiversity improvements are aspired to, but very little is done to ensure that they are maintained long term. It would be good to see some sort of program included in the brief to remedy this.

Joined up developments

These sites represent two parts of the overall development scope of the LPPR and as such there should be an effort to ensure that the infrastructure enhancements are made contiguous between each area. These should include health and education provision as well as transport.

Health and education

It's notable that local health agencies are not actively included as consultees on these briefs which is surprising. Equally there seems to be a lack of an overall vision for education provision on both sites with regards to the popularity of existing local schools.

It's clear from my discussions with local parish councils that they would rather see existing local schools enhanced and improved than have new schools provided. Whilst it's likely that some new provisions will be required in strategic locations, schools like Gosford Hill should receive a good proportion of any developer contributions to ensure that it is able to cope with increased intakes. Likewise in Yarnton there should be additional funding for the expansion of the William Fletcher school.

Traffic management

It's clear that this is going to be significant challenge both during the development phase and afterwards. Local roads are already over-capacity and the closure of the Sandy Lane crossing is likely to increase congestion on the A44. A great deal more thought needs to be given to these aspects, again as part of a joined-up plan.

Considering the likely length of the building phases on both these sites, more consideration should be given to the handling of delivery of materials and manpower, as well as the likely impact on local roads as a result. Particularly in areas like Yarnton where there are proposals to remove large areas of the sloping section of the PR9 site to accommodate a playing field, there needs to be careful planning and management for the removal of spoil. This should be backed up with monitoring of these arrangements to ensure that local roads are not impacted by the spreading of debris as a result.

Pedestrian Crossings

These are vital pieces of infrastructure and should respond to local need.

Particularly in Begbroke, a crossing over the A44 should be an essential element in any local walking and cycling plans. The village has been lobbying for such a crossing on what is a dangerous road for many years. The new development both increases the need for this as well as providing a potential source of funding via S106 contributions. It's notable that there is no mention of such a crossing in the PR9 brief and this should be remedied as a priority in the document.

Sports facilities

There appears to be no indoor sports facilities planned for the PR9 area. This seems to be predicated on the idea that people from that area will go to Kidlington to use facilities there, possibly enhanced and improved as a result of developments in areas like PR7b and other surrounding projects.

It would be preferable for more comprehensive indoor sports and recreation facilities were provided around the Yarnton and Begbroke areas to balance out the offer and demand for these. This is particularly important given that the closure of Sandy Lane is likely to increase journey times to Kidlington and divide these communities further.

Flooding

This is a vital consideration in both areas, but moreover on site PR9 where Yarnton is now seeing regular flooding events, often associated with run off from Spring Hill. The Yarnton Flood resilience group has produced and submitted a detailed response on these matters and I would endorse this wholeheartedly. The group has done an amazing amount of valuable work in the area since being formed last year and I would hope that their views would be fully incorporated into the final brief.

I am also aware that Thames Water have considerable concerns about the impact in their network that the development on PR9 is likely to have. I understand they are not statutory consultees on these projects, but I would urge the council to seek their views on these matters as part of the final drafting of these briefs.

Ongoing consultation and engagement

Given that the development phases are likely to be prolonged on both sites (and others within the area) I would urge the council to set up a local forum to include councillors at all levels of local government, as well as resident representatives to provide feedback to local authorities and the developers about any issues that may arise.

Such arrangements should ideally be enshrined in the development briefs to ensure that developers commit and engage with them at all stages with the expectation that they will respond to any local concerns.

Whilst local councillors will of course be the ultimate touchpoints for residents in many cases, it would be a valuable resource to have such a forum to allow direct and responsive contact between the existing local community, the developers, the local authorities and new residents as these communities evolve and ultimately become vastly different environments.

I would suggest that these arrangements are formalised as part of the development briefs on all sites within the LPPR.

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