

## OCC.5: Oxford City Council updated modifications following IC.5 - Inspector's direction regarding SP10: The Oxford Science Park (TOSP)(Littlemore & Minchery Farm) following letter from Savills (PSD 12)

November 2019

### **Introduction**

1. This document responds to the latest correspondence from the Inspectors set out in IC.5. This latest correspondence from the Inspectors set out further recommendations and guidance as to how a supporting paragraph to SP10 at paragraph 9.84 of the plan should be modified.

### **The Plan's approach**

2. The City Council acknowledges that at present there is a limited public transport offer to the Eastern Arc to support a reduction in private car use. As such the wording of SP10 has been amended to state 'Opportunities should be sought to enhance and promote sustainable travel to and from the park'. The need for a modal shift away from the private car not only has health and environmental benefits but Oxford's capacity is so constrained that there is simply not sufficient road capacity for individuals to all drive to and from work. This is particularly important as the site is further developed. The proposed modifications to Policy M3 mean that proposals should be informed by a transport assessment that includes proper consideration of sustainable modes and a travel plan.
3. It is essential that the opportunities sought to enhance and promote sustainable travel to and from the park needs to be comprehensively undertaken. Our support for the "Pick Me Up" service is set out in Tom Bridgman's letter (26 July 2019) set out in Appendix 1 and referred to in Savills Further Statement on behalf of the TOSP. This letter went on to emphasise a much broader context as to issues around travel and transport at the Oxford Science Park *'I hope it can continue to be supported [PMU], but also think it has to be viewed as part of a suite of measures to help reduce single car journeys. The park's location has lent itself to a heavy dependency on the private car and we will need to continue to develop ways where both the current and future increase in movement patterns is managed as sustainably as possible. A comprehensive travel plan may be an appropriate mechanism for this to ensure it is looked at in the round.*
4. Paragraph 9.84 of the Plan states that 'Access to the site is heavily dependent upon the private car... the County Council's measures to improve bus services to the

Eastern Arc. These alternative transport opportunities will increase sustainability and reduce need for cars’.

5. The Inspectors raised concerns about the narrative in the paragraph 9.84 about enhancing bus services by stating that ‘this policy should not confine itself just to the County Council’s measures to improve bus improvements, since there may be other suitable alternatives which should not be precluded’. They have invited us to modify this paragraph. Our proposed changes are set out below. These are put forward in the context that Oxfordshire County Council are the highway authority and any measures would need to be agreed by the LPA following consultation with them to ensure they are appropriate. Appropriate measures will need to demonstrate that they adequately mitigate the impact of development in accordance with the CIL Regulations and the highway authority is a key consultee in understanding that. Also, we believe alignment of mitigations to wider strategies may achieve best value in achieving modal shift although we accept that we cannot preclude other options.

#### Suggested modification

6. We suggest the following changes to paragraph 9.84 to address the concerns identified. We have also suggested that the final sentence is deleted as it repeats the first sentence.

#### **Paragraph 9.84**

Access to the site is heavily dependent upon the private car. Opportunities to enhance transport links to the site to provide an alternative from the private car will be encouraged. This will include ensuring that any opportunities to re-open the Cowley Branch Line are pursued and supported by the County Council’s appropriate measures, as agreed by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highways Authority to improve bus services to the Eastern Arc. These alternative transport opportunities will increase sustainability and reduce need for cars. ~~This is very much a place driven by the motor car.~~

## Appendix 1 Letter from Tom Bridgman to Rory Maw

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26<sup>th</sup> July 2019

Dear Rory

### **Plot 16, Oxford Science Park**

Thank-you for your letter dated 13<sup>th</sup> June 2019 providing further thoughts on the discussions at our meeting the previous day. Please accept my apologies that it has taken me some time to reply.

I firstly want to underline that the City Council fully recognises the contribution that the Science Park makes towards employment within the city and continues to support your aims by allocating the park as a key employment site within its development plans.

I also want to be clear that we appreciate your proposals for Plot 16 have been put forward to cater for predicted growth from occupants within the park and beyond and that we wish to support that aim. However, I would reiterate the broad concern, raised at our meeting, that your programme for delivery, including taking it through the planning system, is ambitious. This is also considering the plot has more constraints than others you have recently developed. I do though welcome the commitment you made at our meeting towards positive engagement on the issues raised to date and trust that this will move on in a manner where we can both assist in delivery of this scheme.

The work you have done with regards to the Oxford Bus Company's demand responsive 'Pick Me Up' service is excellent. I also think it is a good example of us working together though the S106 process. I hope it can continue to be supported, but also think it has to be viewed as part of a suite of measures to help reduce single car journeys. The park's location has lent itself to a heavy dependency on the private car and we will need to continue to develop ways where both the current and future increase in movement patterns is managed as sustainably as possible. A comprehensive travel plan may be an appropriate mechanism for this to ensure it is looked at in the round.

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Your support and contributions to the on-going effort to secure the Cowley Branch Line is also greatly appreciated. Clearly, because of its proximity to the future station site, Plot 16 is important in future proofing the potential for a shift to more sustainable travel. To this end we discussed the need for careful consideration of public connections and while I understand your concerns over allowing access through the Science Park, we will need to consider what type of links can be provided to support connections to the station, including movement through to the surrounding suburbs. I know that our planners will also need to see the details of the discussions you have had with Network Rail and Chiltern Railways with regards to the proposals to be comfortable that the development works with the delivery of the branch line.

I note your comments regarding the Design Review and have raised this with officers. I understand that Plot 16 is the first development on the Science Park to be taken to design review and was recommended for panel particularly given the future prominence of the building and its relationship with the Cowley Branch Line. Officers consider each case on its own merits before referring to the panel. In your case we had not taken the Schrodinger Building or Magdalen Centre extension to the panel because we did not consider the schemes raised specific issues that would need specific design advice.

Thank you for your comment that the engagement with officers through the pre-application process has been constructive and fulfilling and will pass that on to those concerned.

I trust that the contents of your letter provide a suitable response to the points raised in your letter, but please do contact me should you wish to discuss in further detail. I look forward to continuing to work with you to help realise the on-going success of the park.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Tom Bridgman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Tom Bridgman  
Executive Director – Development  
Oxford City Council