creating a better place

Environment Agency

	Our ref:	WA/2023/130616/02-L01
Cherwell District Council Planning Policy Bodicote House White Post Road Bodicote Banbury OX15 4AA	**Your ref:**	23/01233/OUT
	Date:	06 June 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

Outline application (with all matters except access reserved for future consideration) for the demolition of existing buildings and the erection of up to 800 dwellings (Class C3); a two form entry primary school; a local centre (comprising convenience retailing (not less than 350sqm and up to 500sqm (class E(A))), business uses (class E(G)(I)) and/or financial and professional uses (class E(C)) up to 500sqm, café or restaurant use (class E(B)) up to 200sqm; community building (class E and F2); car and cycle parking); associated play areas, allotments, public open green space and landscaping; new vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access points; internal roads, paths and communal parking infrastructure; associated works, infrastructure (including sustainable urban drainage, services and utilities) and ancillary development. Works to the Oxford Road in the vicinity of the site to include, pedestrian and cycle infrastructure, drainage, bus stops, landscaping and ancillary development

OS Parcel 4347 east of Pipal Cottage, Oxford Road, Kidlington, Oxfordshire

Thank you for re-consulting us on the above application following the submission of additional information. Please accept our apologies for the delay in responding.

Environment Agency position
We **object** to this application as submitted because the proposed development would pose an unacceptable risk of pollution to surface water quality and recommend that planning permission should be refused on this basis.

Reason(s)
Oxford Sewage Treatment Works (STW) requires major investment in order to be able to serve additional flows from development within the Oxford area. Regulatory improvement schemes at the STW to increase treatment capacity, ensure compliance with Water Framework Directive (WFD) & Urban Wastewater Treatment Regulations (UWWTR), and protect the environment were due to be delivered by March 2025. We understand these improvements have been significantly delayed meaning additional

flows to the STW cause an unacceptable risk to water quality. Sufficient wastewater infrastructure is required to serve new developments to protect the water the water environment. This is line with paragraph 180 of the National Planning Policy Framework which states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by preventing both new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of water pollution.

In addition, the Thames River Basin Management Plan requires the restoration and enhancement of water bodies to prevent deterioration and promote recovery of water bodies.

Oxford STW discharges in the Northfield Brook (Source to Thames) at Sandford Water Framework Directive (WFD) waterbody. The Northfield Brook is currently failing to achieve Good WFD status for all but 3 (Ph, Temperature & Hydrological Regime) of the elements to make up Ecological Status. Each of the failing elements have Reasons for Not Achieving Good Status (RNAGS) linked to the continuous and/or intermittent discharge at Oxford STW. We believe that further flows into Oxford STW before improvements may lead to further deterioration of the WFD element status, and/or prevent elements and/or the waterbody achieving Good Ecological Status. In regard to the hydraulic capacity at Oxford sewage treatment works (STW), the site not being upgraded to meet regulatory commitments will have an impact on surface water quality.

Overcoming our objection
The applicant will need to liaise with Thames Water, the planning authority and Environment Agency to put plans and timescales in place to ensure improvements at Oxford STW to meet regulatory requirements and are delivered as soon as possible.

Closing comments
If you are minded to approve the application contrary to our objection, please contact us to explain why material considerations outweigh our objection. This will allow us to make further representations. Should our objection be removed, it is likely we will recommend the inclusion of conditions on any subsequent approval.

Should you require any additional information, or wish to discuss these matters further, please do not hesitate to contact me on the number below.

Yours faithfully

Miss Sarah Green
Sustainable Places - Planning Advisor

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