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Launton Parish Council

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Dear Councillors

Planning Application 21/04112/OUT – Land North West of Station Road, Launton

I write to you on behalf of our client, Richborough Estates, in relation to the outline planning application 21/04112/OUT at Land north west of Station Road, Launton.

Since the application was submitted, the Council has published a draft Annual Monitoring Report setting out its latest housing land supply position. In relation to this update, this letter provides a summary of the benefits the scheme can bring to Launton and which are important when considering the planning application.

The draft AMR states *“The District presently has a 3.8 year housing land supply for the period 2021-2026 and a 3.5 year housing land supply for the period 2022-2027 (commencing 1 April 2022).”*

As set out within the Planning Statement, where the Council cannot demonstrate a 5 year housing supply, as required by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), those local policies relating to housing are out of date and afforded less weight. In short, the Council is currently failing to meet the housing needs, (both market and affordable) of its residents and needs to urgently redress this shortfall.

In the context of this site, Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states that where policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in NPPF taken as a whole. This is commonly termed the “tilted balance” i.e. the balance is tilted in favour of an application being approved before the benefits and any adverse impacts are factored in.

This letter seeks to set out the benefits of the scheme to assist in your discussions about the planning application.

The proposal includes a policy compliant level of affordable housing at 35% (24 dwellings) which will be a significant benefit to the local area, as there is a significant need for affordable housing in the district as evident by the number of households on the Cherwell housing register. In addition, eight live-work units are proposed providing flexible living along with a range of house types to support a balance and inclusive community.

Vegetation on the site will be retained wherever possible and enhanced. Public open space and areas of play are proposed which will be welcoming to existing and future residents and connect into the local footpath network. The field between the proposed housing and railway line will be enhanced and managed to provide biodiversity offsetting. This will ensure that across the site, a 10% net gain in biodiversity is achieved, going beyond the policy requirement. The proposal also includes the demolition of unsightly buildings and areas of hardstanding which will create a more attractive entrance to the village.

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The following financial contributions will be secured through the S106 agreement:

- Primary school contribution for the expansion of Launton CE Primary School (including nursery)
- Secondary school contribution towards the building of a new secondary school planned for NW Bicester
- Special school contribution towards special school expansion
- Public transport contribution to maintain the operation of the bus service connecting Launton to Bicester and Aylesbury and provision of a new bus shelter at either of the stops in Launton village
- Improvements to Public Rights of Way in the vicinity of the site including improvements to public footpaths 272/10 and 272/12
- New 1.8m wide footway between the site access and Grange Mews
- Relocation of the speed limit terminal signs and village entry feature
- New site access
- Modifications to the Bicester Road/Station Road/Blackthorn Road/West End junction
- Household waste recycling centres contribution
- Healthcare contribution as requested by Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group
- On-site open space and play area provision

Richborough Estates would be open to discussions about any financial contributions within the village that the Parish Council consider necessary to make the proposed scheme acceptable in planning terms.

The new development would also result in an uplift in Public Sector Revenues, including Council Tax receipts, Cumulative Public Sector Revenues and New Homes Bonus Payments alongside Section 106 contributions which will aid the District Council in maintaining existing and providing new services within the district.

We acknowledge concerns have been raised about the works to the crossroads by residents and the technical team is looking into this. There has also been a lot of concern about traffic through the village. The Transport Assessment has been reviewed by the Highways Authority who has raised no objection to the application. The Transport Assessment demonstrates that the development will have a minimal impact on the operation of the local highway network and there will be no unacceptable impact on highway safety.

We also acknowledge there has been a lot of concern from residents about the foul water sewerage network infrastructure capacity and Thames Water has been consulted on the application. We have been advised that in the longer term Thames Water, along with other partners, are working on a strategy to reduce groundwater entering the sewer networks during certain groundwater conditions. However, the scale of the proposed development does not materially affect the sewer network and Thames Water has no objection to the planning application in terms of foul water and surface water. Richborough Estates are engaging with Thames Water in relation to clean water, and the inability of the existing water networks to accommodate the development. A suitable planning condition will be attached to any planning decision to ensure the required infrastructure is in place.

We continue to work with Officers at Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council to address comments that have arisen during the consultation period of the planning application and are working to resolve the objection received from the Lead Local Flood Authority.

The scheme offers numerous social, economic and environmental benefits, including 24 affordable dwellings, 10% net gain in biodiversity and public open space. These benefits outweigh the minor adverse impacts as a result of the proposed development, including in relation to landscape and heritage. Overall, the scheme provides much needed residential development and the benefits clearly outweigh any minor adverse impact. As a result, the titled balance is in favour of approving the planning application.



We would be happy to discuss the application with you further and join your next meeting on 4 February if that would be helpful. In the meantime we hope the above is useful when considering the application.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "RBacon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rebecca Bacon MRTPI
Senior Planner

cc. David Bainbridge, Savills
Nick Banks, Richborough Estates
James Kirkham, Cherwell District Council