

GLoucester City Council

COMMITTEE	:	PLANNING
DATE	:	1st DECEMBER 2015
ADDRESS/LOCATION	:	LAND NORTH OF INNSWORTH LANE, INNSWORTH (IN TEWKESBURY BOROUGH – ADJOINING AUTHORITY CONSULTATION)
APPLICATION NO. & WARD	:	N/A
EXPIRY DATE	:	N/A
APPLICANT		Robert Hitchins Limited
PROPOSAL	:	A mixed use development comprising demolition of existing buildings, up to 1,300 dwellings and 8.31 hectares of land for employment generating uses comprising a neighbourhood centre of 4.23ha (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, D1, D2, B1), office park of 1.31ha (B1) and business park of 2.77ha (B1 and B8 uses), primary school, open space, landscaping, parking and supporting infrastructure and utilities, and the creation of new vehicular accesses from the A40 Gloucester Northern Bypass, Innsworth Lane and Frogfurlong Lane.
REPORT BY		JON SUTCLIFFE
NO. OF APPENDICES	:	LOCATION PLAN

NB: This proposal is being determined by Tewkesbury Borough Council. Gloucester City Council has been consulted for its views as an adjoining planning authority. This report is to seek the views of Committee to enable comments to be sent to Tewkesbury Borough Council.

1.0 SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL

1.1 The application is on land to the north of Gloucester City Council's area. The site covers 105.6 hectares of land north of the residential area of Innsworth. The site is bound to the south by Innsworth Lane beyond which lies the established residential area of Innsworth. Innsworth Technology Park and the A40 also form part of the sites southern boundary. Frogfurlong Lane forms the site's eastern boundary and beyond this sits Imjin Barracks; to the west the site is bound by Horsebere Brook beyond which lies agricultural land

separating the site from Longford; and to the north the site is bound by the Hatherley Brook. Tewkesbury application number 15/00749/OUT.

- 1.2 The application is in Outline, with all matters reserved for subsequent approval.
- 1.3 The proposal is for a mixed use development, the main elements of which are up to 1300 dwellings, and 8.31 ha of land for employment generating uses which comprise a neighbourhood centre of 4.23 ha (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, D1, D2, B1 uses); office park of 1.31 ha (B1 uses); business park of 2.77 ha (B1 & B8 uses); primary school; and new vehicular accesses from the A40, Innsworth Lane, and Frogfurlong Lane.

2.0 PLANNING POLICIES

- 2.1 The site currently lies in the Green Belt. This application relates to an area of land that is proposed as Strategic Allocation A1 in the Joint Core Strategy which the Council is progressing with Tewkesbury and Cheltenham councils. The JCS is currently undergoing an examination in public with the Inspectors report not expected until the summer of 2016.

3.0 PUBLICITY AND REPRESENTATIONS

- 3.1 As the application lies in an adjoining Borough, all publicity is undertaken by that Council.

4.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 As the application lies in an adjoining Borough, all consultation is undertaken by that Council.

5.0 OFFICER OPINION

- 5.1 As stated previously, the City Council is being consulted on this proposal as a neighbouring Authority. This report therefore seeks to establish the comments that the Council is to make to Tewkesbury Borough Council for consideration by them when they reach a decision on the application.
- 5.2 The site is currently identified as Green Belt. As such, the proposal constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt, and policy indicates that inappropriate development should only be approved in very special circumstances. However, this needs to be considered in the context of emerging policy through the Joint Core Strategy.
- 5.3 The policy assumption within the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) is for the strategic allocation to be released from the Green Belt in order to deliver 1,250 dwellings and to provide an employment area of 9.1 hectares. The delivery of this quantum of development is critical for the contribution to the 5 year

housing land supply for Gloucester, and also the provision of sufficient land for our future economic and community needs.

- 5.4 The application proposes up to 1,300 dwellings (slightly higher than the JCS figure) and an area of 8.3 hectares for employment generating uses including the local centre (slightly lower than the JCS figure) and a site for a new primary school. It is noted that of the 8.3 hectares, 4.23 hectares is within the neighbourhood centre and is mainly retail/leisure uses, so the level of B1.B8 employment uses is only 4.08 hectares. The application is therefore broadly in line with the expectations of the JCS plan, albeit providing lower employment land provision than envisaged in the JCS.
- 5.5 An area of 4.23 hectares is proposed for a new neighbourhood centre which would accommodate up to 2,500 sqm of gross internal retail floorspace (no more than 2,000 sqm in one single retail unit is proposed). Whilst this could accommodate a medium sized food store, the JCS retail update work recognises the need for further retail provision in the area arising from all three strategic allocations in the Churchdown area. On balance therefore, it is suggested that no objection be raised to the indication of up to this level of retail provision. This is with the proviso that the retail provision is for A1 (food and convenience) and not A1 (comparison) stores. This would not be an appropriate location for a significant level of A1 comparison provision, which national planning policy seeks primarily to focus in town/city centre locations.
- 5.6 The strategic allocations of the JCS provide an opportunity to contribute towards the significant local need for gypsy and traveller provision as specified in Policy SA1 of the JCS. A figure of 7 pitches is currently being proposed for Innsworth as part of the JCS additional homework, which is to be discussed at the EiP in January 2016. The application however does not appear to contribute at all to this need, and a site is not shown on the composite masterplan for gypsy provision. The application should address the issue.
- 5.7 The JCS recognises that the other key issues and constraints at Innsworth are:
- The site's relationship with the functional flood plain.
 - The need for the creation of a new access from the A40, and that this was likely to be a significant cost associated with the delivery of the strategic allocation. We note that this is included in the application.
 - The need for a new primary school on site. We note that a site is included in a central location in the application.
 - The location of the proposed new employment area being in close proximity to the Innsworth Technology Park, therefore helping these businesses to potentially expand or new local businesses to relocate there, so providing new jobs in close proximity to the northern boundary of the City.
 - There is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) adjacent to the developable area which is in a poor condition and the delivery of this strategic allocation is expected to contribute to its improvement.

- There will be loss of soils (lime-rich loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage) but the land is not classified as important agricultural land (grade 2 and 3) and as such the loss is considered to be of only minor significance.
- A significant component of strategic allocation A1 is dedicated to Green Infrastructure and the land surrounding the SSSI to the north and west can be promoted for its habitat and access to the countryside potential and ensuring its future longevity.

5.8 The site does contain a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which has unimproved grassland within it. While the masterplan shows the scheme to provide a large amount of 'green infrastructure' within the site along the flood plain of Hatherley Brook, there is little indication of any proposed management to enable a more ecologically positive habitat to be created from what is currently intensively managed farmland. It is considered that this proposal provides an opportunity to prevent continuing decline of the SSSI by creating a wider ecological network. It is suggested for example that SUDS features in the development could be utilised to become 'green corridors' within the wider development, which would enhance the ecological connectivity of the site. The floodplain area could be managed as grazed wet grassland which would enhance its ecological interest. It is considered that the proposal raises the potential to manage the SSSI and wider area to improve ecological habitats, and this should be explored and secured if consent is granted.

5.9 Other potential issues which may impact on residents of the City Council area include matters such as transport and highway issues. These will be assessed in the consultation process with the relevant technical experts and be taken into account by the Borough Council.

5.10 It is noted that the extent of objection arising at the JCS Examination in Public for this strategic allocation was relatively limited when compared to the objections arising from the other strategic allocations in the JCS.

5.11 Releases of land from the Green Belt through individual planning applications would not normally be supported. However, in this particular instance, this should be viewed in the context of JCS work currently going through Examination. Given that the above strategic planning policy issues are broadly aligned with the JCS intentions for development at Innsworth strategic allocation A1, it is recommended that Gloucester City Council supports the principle of the development proposed in the outline planning application, but also raises a number of key issues which need to be given further careful consideration by the Borough Council.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE DEVELOPMENT CONTROL MANAGER

6.1 That Tewkesbury Borough Council be advised that Gloucester City Council supports the principle of the development proposed in the outline planning application, but requests that careful consideration be given to the following issues either by requiring further information before a decision is reached, or

securing the objectives by means of Planning Obligations and Planning Conditions (as appropriate)

1. That the A1 retail floorspace should be for the provision of local food/convenience expenditure, not for comparison spending, as this would impact unduly on other retail centres in Gloucester.
2. That the issue of gypsy and traveller provision should be properly addressed at this outline stage.
3. That if possible the employment land provision should be increased to match the aspirations set out in the JCS.
4. That the opportunities to enhance ecological connectivity in the development site be explored and secured through management agreements.

Decision:

Notes:

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Person to contact: Jon Sutcliffe
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LAND NORTH OF INNSWORTH LANE INNSWORTH

Planning Committee 01.12.2015

