

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON THE FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

District: Oxford City

Application no: 13/02557/OUT

Proposal: Westgate Centre re-development

Location: Oxford

This report sets out Oxfordshire County Council's view on the proposal.

Annexes to the report contain officer advice and the comments of local members.

Overall view of Oxfordshire County Council:-

- In the context of the issues below, support subject to the conditions, legal agreement and informatives in the annexes

Comments:

This is an application for redevelopment of the Westgate centre in Oxford. The proposed development is for demolition of the southern part of the Westgate centre, retention of the library, refurbishment of the retained part of the existing Westgate centre, and construction of a retail-led mixed use development with associated car and cycle parking, alterations to the public highway, public realm works and landscaping. The application is outline for all matters except for access. The proposed development represents a potential increase in retail floor-space in Oxford of 50% above the existing provision. A small number of residential units are also proposed as part of the development.

The county council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the proposed development. Extensive pre-application discussions have taken place between the county and city councils and the developers on aspects of this application and the county hopes to continue this constructive dialogue in future months.

Given the scale of this development, the county council's Cabinet were presented with a paper on the 25th February 2014 outlining its strategic response to the application. That paper and this detailed officer comments represent the authority's response to the application.

Officer's Name: Daniel Round

Officer's Title: Locality Manager (Oxford)

Date: 04 February 2014

ANNEX 1
OFFICER ADVICE

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON THE FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

District: Oxford City

Application no: 13/02557/OUT, 13/02258/FUL, 13/02563/FUL

Proposal: Westgate and associated applications

Location: Westgate shopping centre and car parks, Oxford City

EDUCATION

Recommendation

- No objection subject to the following conditions, legal agreement and informatives

Key issues:

- The application relevant to Education is in outline and proposes between 22 and 127 residential units. The housing will be in one and two bedroomed units. Without a number and mix of dwellings, education infrastructure requirements cannot be quantified, but it is noted that paragraph 8.224 of the Planning Statement notes that the application is expected to result in a net additional increase in up to 8 additional school aged children. Education infrastructure requirements will be reassessed when more detailed information becomes available.
- This development lies within the school planning area of Oxford City and within the current designated areas of St Ebbe's CE (A) Primary School and Cheney School (academy), The Cherwell School (academy) and Oxford Spires Academy, which are all secondary schools.
- Expansion of permanent primary school capacity in the area would be necessary as a direct result of this housing development. The scale of expansion will be determined once the number and nature of dwellings are known.
- Expansion of permanent secondary school capacity in the area would be necessary as a direct result of this housing development. The scale of expansion will be determined once the number and nature of dwellings are known.
- The development would also be expected to result in an increased demand upon special educational needs (SEN) schools, and expansion of permanent school capacity would be necessary as a direct result of this housing development. 1.11% of children across Oxfordshire are educated in SEN schools.

Detailed Comments:

- Para 8.224 of the Planning Statement asserts that there is local provision of primary and secondary schools with adequate surplus capacity. The County Council does not agree with this assertion. Expansion of primary school capacity in the city has been underway for a number of years in response to existing pressures, and will continue in

order to respond to the housing development including in the Oxford City Core Strategy, of which this development forms part. Secondary school capacity will need to expand to meet the needs of children already in primary school, and therefore also needs to expand further to meet the needs of housing development such as this.

- Rising demand for primary school places in Oxford has required a phased strategic programme of primary school capacity across the city through expansion of existing schools and the establishment of new schools where appropriate and feasible. Any housing growth will need to contribute to this programme of expansion in a way that is fairly and reasonably related to the scale of each development's impact. St Ebbe's Primary School is already expanding to 2 form entry as part of this programme.
- The City Council sets out in its Core Strategy (paragraph 3.4.20) the need to make suitable provision for a primary school to meet the need generated by the total number of dwellings planned for the West End at a school in the West End community; the City Council's Sites and Housing Plan allocates a site for a new school in New Hinksey at Bertie Place.
- Through CIL, the Westgate development should therefore expect to contribute towards the land acquisition and construction costs of a new school at Bertie Place at a rate proportionate to its impact. It will also need to contribute funding proportionately towards expanding secondary school and SEN school capacity.
- The impact of the increase in primary rolls since 2008 will start to affect secondary schools in 2015/16, and will gradually remove all currently spare places in the city's secondary schools. The county council has therefore started discussion with the city's schools with a view to commissioning additional places through school expansions. Total admission numbers into Year 7 are expected to need to start increasing in 2015, with an additional 2 forms of entry required on these forecasts. In the first instance this can be accommodated within existing capacity, but overall capacity across the city's schools will need to increase from 2017/18 onwards. As the need for expansion is already being triggered by existing pupil numbers already in primary school, any additional growth from housing development will clearly need to contribute towards further expansion of capacity.

Officer's Name: Diane Cameron/Barbara Chillman

Officer's Title: School Organisation Officer/Place Planning Manager **Date:** 9/10/13

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON THE FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

District: Oxford City

Application no: 13/02557/OUT

Proposal: Westgate demolition and reconstruction

Location: Westgate Centre,

ECONOMY, SKILLS & TRAINING

Recommendation

- Support subject to the following conditions, legal agreement and informatives

Key issues:

- The proposed development could generate around 182 permanent FTE construction jobs during the demolition and construction phase. This could equate to an average of circa 600 jobs annually in the supply chain over the three year construction period
- The total new additional employment created by the operation of the proposed Westgate redevelopment would be between 3,440 and 3,760 FTS. Given that these jobs will be mainly part-time; this could result in up to 5,040 to 5,520 jobs in total.
- 5,498 Oxfordshire residents are currently claiming Job Seekers Allowance, 1.3% of the working age population (aged 16 to 64) as at September 2013. A total of 74,000 residents were 'economically inactive'¹ between July 2012 and June 2013, of which 10,400 are seeking employment.
- The likely number of additional 'head count' new jobs in the centre of Oxford could put significant strain on public transport modes into the city, especially at peak times. Potential employees who live in more remote areas of Oxfordshire will drive into work, therefore adding additional strain on Park and Ride provision on the edge of Oxford, and on car parks within the city boundaries.
- The redevelopment of the Westgate Centre and the new jobs it will create provides an opportunity for local residents to access employment, especially those that are furthest away from the labour market. As much effort as possible must be put into employing local people as opposed to employing people from further afield to avoid adding additional strain on Oxfordshire's congested road network and already very tight housing market.

Conditions:

- 1) The promoters of the proposed development should enter into early discussions with the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and two local councils with a view to

¹ Economically inactive residents include: students, those looking after family/home, those who are temporarily sick, the long-term sick, retired and 'other'.

agree the preparation of a **Westgate Skills and Employment Action Plan** that aligns with the vision and priorities of:

- The Oxford Economic Growth Strategy (January 2013)
- The Oxfordshire European Structural Investment Fund (ESIF) Strategy (January 2014)
- The Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan (March 2014)
- The Oxfordshire Skills Strategy (November 2013)

The action plan will be commissioned and led by the Oxfordshire Skills Board under the auspices of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership. The action plan should be prepared by a suitably qualified person and shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority and Oxfordshire County Council. The action plan shall;

- i) address the local employment situation, identify the areas of need and opportunity for the site to address them.
- ii) provide an assessment of the temporary, contract, part-time and full time employment opportunities for the site from the initial constructions phases to the employees that would work within the final development.
- iii) address the City, County and Local Enterprise Partnership economic and employment priorities and the opportunity for the site to contribute to these aims.
- iv) Provide details of the proposed project management plans and timetables for recruitment of local individuals within the Oxfordshire County area in partnership with local employment organisations and providers.
- v) provide a community consultation strategy including the development of internet and website opportunities in order to attract a wide range of individuals and details of projected timetables and local venue locations for recruitment exhibitions

Reason: To secure sustainable economic growth in order to create jobs, reduce unemployment and to increase prosperity within Oxfordshire in accordance with Government advice contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

- 2) The promoters of the proposed development should liaise with the Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Service to ensure that training and apprenticeship opportunities can be made available to local young people during the demolition and construction phase of the redevelopment.
- 3) The developers should fund a full-time Westgate Skills and Employment project manager on a temporary basis for three years from 2015 to 2018. The project manager will implement the action plan by working closely with a range of partners, including potential retail employers, local training providers, schools, the public and community & voluntary sector and others to ensure that as many local people as possible have the right skills in place to be able to access the job opportunities on offer.

Detailed Comments:

The Economy & Skills team notes the socio-economic section of the Environmental Statement and in particular paragraphs 9.99 and 9.113 where it states that the local benefit of construction and end user jobs could be maximised by targeted employment and training initiatives to increase the number of local people, especially local unemployed people or people with low skills levels, who can access these jobs. The applicants state that they have a proven track record in running successful employment and training schemes in similar project in other locations and would seek to maximise the local employment benefit of the net increase in employment at the Westgate Centre as much as possible.

Given Oxfordshire's tight labour market (unemployment is currently at just 1.3% of the working age population) it is imperative that those not in employment gain the right skills to be able to access the jobs on offer. This would have positive impacts in Oxfordshire's more deprived communities where unemployment is higher than the Oxfordshire average. For example the percentage of working age residents in Blackbird Leys on the edge of Oxford City claiming Job Seekers Allowance is 8.5%.

Emerging strategies related to skills

The Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership is preparing its European Structural Investment Fund (ESIF) Strategy that sets out how it intends to allocate its notional allocation of €19.4 million. Half of this allocation is European Social Fund and the LEP will prioritise the following:

- 4) Using ESF primarily to bring together labour market supply and demand, addressing sectors with the greatest skills shortages and targeting those with the potential to fill them
 - 5) Specific provision for young people at risk of becoming NEET (Not in employment, education or training), focused transitions between different stages in education, training and employment.
- The Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan and the Skills Strategy will prioritise using real-time labour market intelligence to understand the needs of Oxfordshire present and future employers and using this to influence education providers to align their courses to what local employers need; and to provide impartial careers information, advice and guidance for young people.

The need for a Westgate Skills and Employment Action Plan

The West End Area Action Plan was adopted by Oxford City Council in 2008. At the same time, the West End Partnership commissioned the Oxford West End Skills Study which was published in October 2008. The Study investigated the likely impact of the West End project (including a redeveloped Westgate centre) in terms of the demand for, and provision of, retail and customer service skills in Oxford. The recommendations of the Study were never implemented due to the economic turndown and its impact on delaying the plans for the West End.

The proposed redevelopment of the Westgate centre and other sites in the western corner of the city centre will bring a range of new commercial, shopping, cultural and leisure offers to the centre of Oxford and is likely to mean a step change in the demand for retail and customer

service skills within Oxford. It will also result in increasing retail competition across Oxfordshire as a whole, and indeed in some surrounding areas such as Swindon, Reading and Milton Keynes.

The proposed redevelopment of the Westgate centre means that there is a need now to review a strategic approach to addressing retail and customer service skills within a changed policy environment. The strategic direction for this is provided in the emerging strategies outlined above, and these will form the framework for a more detailed Westgate Skills and Employment Action Plan, to be implemented via the Oxfordshire Skills Board and the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership by a dedicated project manager on a three year contract from 2015 to 2018. This would ensure a robust and joined up approach to skills and employment provision centred on hugely important development in Oxford city.

Officer's Name: Dawn Pettis

Officer's Title: Economic Development Strategy Officer

Date: 18 October 2013

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON THE FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

District: Oxford City

Application no: 13/02557/OUT

Proposal: Westgate demolition and reconstruction

Location: Westgate Centre, Bonn Square.

TRANSPORT

Recommendation

- No objection subject to the following conditions, legal agreement and informatives

Key issues:

- Outline application with all matters reserved except access.
- The development generates a significant increase in trips to the city centre however the majority of these will be by non-car modes. The county council is satisfied that the additional vehicular traffic can be accommodated by the proposed highway layout and the wider road network, though Community Infrastructure Levy funds may be sought for improvements to roads and junctions affected by the development, including Frideswide Square and its approaches.
- Existing road network will be reconfigured in order for the site to be redeveloped. A Highways Layout Plan has been submitted for approval, which officers support.
- The proposals include major investment in the transport network around the site including public realm improvements, new bus infrastructure, additional cycle parking and cycle routes, improved pedestrian permeability and a new underground car park.
- Between 900 and 1100 car parking spaces will be provided – a reduction of at least 100 spaces when compared with existing provision. The county council considers 900 spaces to be acceptable as an absolute minimum because the site is considered to be easy to reach by other modes, but has a strong preference for at least 1000 spaces to be provided.
- Demand for car parking will frequently exceed supply. The developer must develop and implement a car parking management system, which will be part of a citywide parking management system.
- The closure of Queen Street to buses is not part of the development proposals but the proposals take account of the county council's aspiration for this and are future-proofed for this.
- Construction period will last approximately 3 years and during this time there will be no on-site car parking provision. However alternative city centre parking is being proposed (through separate applications) as part of an overall city centre access strategy for the construction phase.
- The interim car park must be fully operational *before* car parking levels are reduced in the existing on-site car park at Westgate and Abbey Place.

Legal Agreement required to secure:

- 1) Section 106 Agreement – to include private structures under the highway (Trill Mill Stream and underground car park), permissive path agreements, contributions towards public transport infrastructure (if not delivered as part of section 278 works) and securing appropriate levels of car parking during the construction phase.
- 2) Section 278 Agreements for alterations to the existing public highway.
- 3) Section 38 Agreements for the adoption of new highway land.
- 4) Cycle access times for east-west route at Turn Again Lane;

CIL Requests:

- Contribution to primary, secondary and special needs education provision
- Contribution to the expansion of the Oxford Park & Ride system
- Reconfiguration of city centre bus & passenger waiting facilities, including real-time information
- Traffic management schemes, including Frideswide Square and its approaches
- Contribution to a city-wide parking management system
- Contribution to public realm enhancements, including wayfinding
- Contribution to Oxpens cycle/pedestrian bridge
- Contribution to a freight consolidation network

Conditions:

- 1) Pennyfarthing Place proposals (if not resolved);
- 2) Car parking layout;
- 3) Car Park Management System Plan– to include details of the use of variable messaging systems (VMS);
- 4) Details of Car Park Management System
- 5) Cycle parking provision and cycle hub;
- 6) Design of pedestrian crossings;
- 7) Facilities for the mobility impaired;
- 8) Details of northern servicing area access arrangements;
- 9) Servicing Area Management Plan;
- 10) Demolition Management Plan;
- 11) Construction Management Plan to be linked to an overarching Framework Construction Management Plan (FCMP) covering Westgate, Oxpens and Redbridge;

Informatives:

- Stopping Up Orders (Section 247 Agreements);
- Alterations to existing Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs);
- Creation of new TROs

Detailed Comments:

Location

The Westgate Centre is in a highly accessible location in the centre of Oxford, with excellent access by non-car modes.

The site benefits from an extant planning permission for the redevelopment of the Westgate centre (application reference 06/01211/FUL) which was approved in 2007 (and renewed in 2013) subject to a number of conditions.

Public realm and highway works

Public realm and highway works in the vicinity of the site are required to provide accessibility to the site for all modes and to integrate the site with the rest of the city centre. The county council requires a detailed schedule of the proposed works to be carried out at the developer's expense.

The application site boundary excludes some of these works from the application site. Whether inside the application site boundary or not, these improvements must be designed and built wholly at the developer's expense and delivered as part of the development so they are fully available before completion. This requirement will be enforced through a S106 and S278 agreement.

It is vital that the quality of public spaces outside the development matches the quality of the spaces "within" the site (e.g. Middle Square and South Square). This will help ensure the development enhances its immediate surroundings and integrates well with the rest of the city centre. In this context, it is disappointing that Pennyfarthing Place is still missing from the proposed list of highway and public realm works. Pennyfarthing Place is a key arrival point to the Westgate centre for pedestrians and cyclists and must therefore be improved to a similar standard to the other site entrances (e.g. the Bonn Square entrance). The county council requires proposals to be submitted for Pennyfarthing Place; a condition should be applied requiring this..

Access and highway proposals are submitted in full for detailed approval, whereas the public realm and landscaping (which is vital to the success of the development) is a reserved matter. This approach is acceptable but it should be noted that the county council may require changes to the submitted highway layouts if needed to implement a high standard of public realm and landscaping design.

Parameter Plans

Parameter plans were submitted as part of the application. Revised parameter plans were submitted in January 2014, addressing a number of points raised in the consultation.

The revised parameter plans improve the level of active frontage on some of the key elevations. The proposals are acceptable (with one exception – see below), but the county council will continue to push for active frontages to be further improved as the scheme develops to reserved matters.

The maximum footprint of Block 1a has been altered since the original submission. If this building were built to the maximum footprint, it would meet the western edge of the loading bay, leaving no usable footway when a vehicle is using the loading bay. This is not acceptable. The county council requests that a condition is applied requiring the developer to address this.

Elsewhere, if the maximum building footprints are applied, the remaining footway width is acceptable although narrower than ideal in places. It is vital that the block architects' proposals and the public realm and landscaping proposals are developed jointly to ensure

there is sufficient footway width to accommodate the required planting, street furniture, cycle parking and other features. The county council will need to see these proposals together to ensure the design is acceptable and reserves the right to object to a building footprint at the reserved matters stage (even within the parameters approved at the outline stage) if that footprint will not subsequently accommodate the required public realm and landscaping features.

Highways Layout Plans

The submitted Transport Assessment indicates that in order to redevelop the site it will be necessary to reconfigure the existing road network, by stopping up sections of existing public highway and creating new sections of adoptable highway.

A Highways Layout Plan has been submitted for approval.

Thames Street design

The application as originally submitted included a coach link as part of the car park access junction, and coach stops on Speedwell Street and Thames Street. Although these facilities may have given some benefit to coach passengers, they resulted in a complex and unusual highway layout which compromised the quality of pedestrian routes and the urban environment at this important arrival point to the development.

A simplified plan has now been submitted, which the county council supports. The coach link at the car park access junction has been removed, and the coach stops have been relocated to Oxpens Road, adjacent to the Ice Rink. Coaches will access Thames Street via the existing link between Speedwell Street and Thames Street next to the former Wharf House pub.

Although the revised plan is a great improvement, Thames Street remains a challenging area to get right. It is encouraging that the revised parameter plans specify a higher level of active frontage on Thames Street than originally proposed, but the level is still low and the county council will continue to push the Westgate Oxford Alliance and potential future retailers to maximise active frontage on Thames Street.

Pedestrian crossings

It is noted that the proposed pedestrian crossings in Castle Street, Norfolk Street and Abbey Place have not been designed in detail. The detailed design of these crossings will need to be agreed with the county council as part of the public realm and landscaping design..

Road Safety Audit (RSA)

A Stage 1 RSA was undertaken on the preliminary design of highway works as indicated on the initial highways layout drawing. This audit examined the safety implications of the proposals as indicated on the drawing and also as observed on site. Observations from the auditors and recommendations for improvements were identified where appropriate. Whilst the highway authority is satisfied with this initial audit, it is noted that a further Stage 1 audit has not been undertaken of the revised highways layout. As the revisions propose a more simplified highways layout scheme to that originally submitted (following the removal of the coach link at the car park access junction), the highway authority is satisfied that these changes can be considered in the Stage 2 audit.

Stopping Up and TROs

The Highways Adoptions/ Stopping Up Plan is included in the submitted Transport Assessment (Figure 4.3). The county council is aware that further minor alterations to this drawing are likely as part of the ongoing design process. The proposed stopping up of existing public highway will require separate Stopping Up Orders (Section 247 Agreements). These are separate applications to the planning application process. It should be noted that Stopping Up Orders cannot be made retrospectively. Section 38 Agreements will be required for the adoption of new highway land and Section 278 Agreements will be required for any works undertaken on the public highway. The requirement for these agreements should be secured either by legal agreement or through the use of conditions as appropriate. The highway authority is aware that the applicants have already begun the process of applying for Stopping Up Orders and have been in discussion with the highway authority 's Road Agreement Team to discuss S.278 agreement.

In addition to the above, the TA indicates that TRO changes will also be required to make Paradise Street and Abbey Place 2-way and also to extinguish vehicle rights to exit from Abbey Place to Norfolk Street. The process of changing a TRO is separate to the planning application process.

Further TROs may also be required during the process of the application. Any applications must be at the applicant's expense.

Transport Assessment

The Transport Assessment (TA) submitted in support of the application was scoped and agreed in advance with the county council. This outlines national and local policy considerations, considers the site's location, accessibility and existing transport infrastructure, describes the proposed development, general site layout, access strategy and car and cycle parking, describes the estimated trip generation associated with the proposed development and distribution profile of these trips; describes the traffic assessment methodology, outlines the results of junction assessments, provides an assessment of public transport and the P&R network, provides details on the site access, layout and servicing and summarises the likely construction activity required.

Car Parking

The existing 1200 space Westgate Shopping Centre multi-storey car park and surface car parks (including Abbey Place) will be replaced with a new basement car park over two levels providing up to 1100 spaces. The new car park will include provision for disabled and parent and child parking and also designated 'click and collect' spaces. The exact details of the parking layout including parking space dimensions will be assessed as part of future reserved matters applications and a condition should be added to secure this.

The Transport Assessment does not specify a minimum number of parking spaces, but the Design and Access Statement refers to a minimum of 900 spaces. At least 1000 spaces must be achieved if at all possible; the county council considers that 900 spaces is the absolute minimum acceptable, and is only acceptable because of the site is so easy to reach by non-car modes. The condition relating to the detailed parking layout should specify the minimum (900) and maximum (1100) number of car parking spaces to be provided.

The Westgate centre is in a highly accessible location, with excellent access by non-car modes. The county council therefore considers that the level of car parking proposed is appropriate for the site and helps minimise traffic generation and congestion.

There will be an overall reduction in public city centre car parking spaces as a result of this development. The county council, working with the city council, may seek to replace these lost spaces at other city centre car parks and on-street locations in the longer term.

The car park will need to be carefully managed as an integral part of the city's overall car parking stock to achieve a "smart" parking system that provides live car park occupancy information and guides visitors to available spaces. This system will need to demonstrate how periods of very high demand will be managed to minimise traffic congestion. It is recommended that a condition be added requiring the preparation of a car parking management plan and providing details of a car park management system for the Westgate car park to be implemented at the developer's expense.

Car parking during construction is dealt with below under 'Demolition and Construction'.

The proposed car park access barriers are acceptable.

Cycle Facilities

The TA suggests that a total of 1,528 cycle parking spaces (764 stands) may be required as part of the proposals (based on the City Council's existing cycle parking standards and the proposed floor areas). These spaces are to be provided both on and off site. The county council supports the developer's proposed approach to the provision of cycle parking – i.e. to disperse the provision around the site close to the main entrances and attractions. Further details are not provided in the current application and therefore a condition should be added requiring cycle parking provision to be considered at the reserved matters stage.

The TA states that there is an aspiration to create an integrated cycle facility which could comprise a cycle shop, cycle parking and other facilities. The county council strongly supports this aspiration. The purpose and role of any such facility would need to be clearly defined in relation to other similar facilities provided elsewhere in the city centre – for example at Oxford station. Further details on this are to be provided at the detailed design stage and it is recommended that a condition be added to secure this.

In addition the TA suggests that there is an aspiration to create an off peak (outside core retailing hours) east-west cycle route along the section of Old Greyfriars Street that is proposed to be stopped up. This is welcomed by the county council however the proposed times of cycle access (before 9am and after 8pm) seem unnecessarily restrictive. The county council would like to see cycle access between before 10am and after 6pm and will continue to push for this as more details of the design of Turn Again Lane and Middle Square emerge at the reserved matters stage.

Further details on the legal procedures that will need to be followed to secure cycle access must be provided and agreed with the county council at the detailed design stage. It should be noted that TROs may also be required to secure this.

The county council may seek funding from Oxford City Council's Community Infrastructure Levy fund for cycle route improvements outside the application boundary.

Pedestrian Improvements

The proposal includes the creation of a number of new public spaces and pedestrian routes. The routes have been created to improve pedestrian permeability through the site to other areas of the city centre. All publicly accessible routes will need to be covered by permissive path agreements.

It is noted that the proposed pedestrian crossings in Castle Street, Norfolk Street and Abbey Place have not been designed in detail. The exact location, type and design of these crossings will need to be agreed with the county council as part of the landscaping and public realm design at reserved matters stage..

The city centre pedestrian wayfinding system will need to be updated to include the new centre; some additional signs may be needed. The county council may seek funding from Oxford City Council's Community Infrastructure Levy fund for these changes and other improvements to pedestrian routes outside the application boundary.

Queen Street pedestrianisation

The county council supports the objective to pedestrianize Queen Street, but as stated in the TA, this is not part of the development proposals. However the proposals take account of the county council's aspiration for this are suitably 'future-proofed' for this.

The county council will develop detailed proposals for the closure of Queen Street to buses, and consult on these proposals in due course. Additional infrastructure for bus turning, stopping and layover will be required away from the site. The county council may seek funding from Oxford City Council's Community Infrastructure Levy fund for these changes.

Facilities for the Mobility Impaired

The proposed development will be fully accessible. Disabled parking spaces are proposed in the new car park and a replacement Shopmobility facility will also be provided to replace that which exists in the existing multi-storey car park. Further details of these facilities are to be provided at the reserved matters stage and it is recommended that a condition be added to secure this.

Servicing and Access Arrangements

Two servicing areas are proposed to be integrated with the new development, a northern servicing area which comprises the existing Westgate Centre servicing area which will be retained and rationalised, and a new southern servicing area accessed off Speedwell Street. The northern servicing area will be accessed from Old Greyfriars Street. It is noted that some management of vehicle movements will be required at the narrow section close to the service yard. This will either be through priority signing or a form of signal control. Further details must be provided at the reserved matters stage and it is recommended that a condition be added to secure this. The southern servicing area will be accessed from the new signalised junction on Speedwell Street. Further information on the service yard operations are to be provided at the reserved matters stage and it is recommended that a condition be added to secure this.

Limited servicing and refuse vehicles will be permitted to make use of the bus only link outside peak hours to service the proposed residential block (Block 1A) as well as the commercial units on the ground floor of this block. A loading bay has been incorporated into the design of this bus link. A TRO will be required for this.

Taxis

The proposed taxi provision in Old Greyfriars Street is acceptable.

Trip Generation & Traffic Distribution

Section 5 of the TA sets out the methodology used to assess future trip generation. Traffic surveys were carried out on the highway network around and adjacent to the proposed development site and questionnaire surveys were undertaken in the city centre in order to establish baseline data. The scope of these surveys was agreed in advance with the developer. In addition to this data from Automated Traffic Counts (ATCs) was also reviewed along with ticket sales data from the existing Westgate car park. The county council is satisfied with the methodology.

The anticipated future trip rates for network peak periods have been assessed using a 'first principles approach' and also using traffic generation estimates derived from the TRICS database. The following are considered:

- The anticipated additional visitors likely to use the retail and leisure facilities;
- The anticipated staff employed at the proposed development
- The new residents
- Anticipated servicing trips
- Anticipated taxi trips.

The results indicate that the proposals are likely to give rise to an increase in the number of trips to and from the City Centre during the weekday peak periods. It is anticipated that the vast majority of these new trips will be by non-car modes. In the AM peak, 24% of all trips arriving and leaving the city centre are by car (including passengers) with 76% being by non-car modes. In the inter peak period, 17% of all trips arriving and leaving the city centre are by car (including passenger) with 83% being by non-car modes. In the PM peak 18% of all trips arriving and leaving the city centre are by car (including passengers) with 82% being by non-car modes. These results are to be expected given the existing parking restraints in the city centre and also given that the number of parking spaces available on the Westgate site will be reduced as a result of the proposed development.

At the weekend, due to constraints on car parking and occupancy, it is assumed that there will be no further car trips into the Westgate car park. There is however likely to be an increase in the number of additional trips into the city centre by local bus or by Park & Ride. The TA estimates that during the Saturday inter peak period 95% of all new trips arriving and leaving the city centre will be by non-car modes. The remaining extra trips are assumed to be as passengers in cars.

Vehicle trips

The county council has agreed the methodology for the traffic assessment included within the TA. As noted above, the limited capacity of the car park means the traffic generated by the development is limited. The following points should be noted:

Following analysis of this chapter and Appendices 14, 16 & 17 the county council is satisfied that the modelling has been carried out correctly.

- The roads and junctions immediately adjacent to the site – with the proposed improvements – will be able to accommodate the predicted additional traffic
- The county council has assessed the traffic impact of the scheme with the Oxpens and Frideswide Square developments also included: again, the extra traffic can be accommodated. However it should be noted that the Oxpens development *removes* existing trips from the network which offsets some of the effects of the Westgate development.
- The increases in traffic on the radial routes are acceptable given the size of the development and its strategic economic and transport benefits. However they may nevertheless require mitigation, so the county council may seek to use Community Infrastructure Levy funding to improve roads or junctions affected, including Frideswide Square and its approaches.
- The traffic effects of the development will be greatest during peak shopping times, such as Saturdays in December. As stated above, the developer will be required to produce a car park management plan to show how traffic congestion will be avoided at peak times and must implement a car park management system for the Westgate car park. We will seek Community Infrastructure Levy funds to deliver a citywide parking management system of which the Westgate car park will be part.

Public Transport trips

The Transport Assessment shows there will be a substantial increase in the number of Park & Ride, regional and local bus trips to the city centre as a result of the development. The addendum to the transport assessment provides additional information on this in response to queries raised by the county council and other consultees. The analysis is considered to be robust and the county council is satisfied with the conclusions reached for the reasons below.

The county council considers that the proposed highway layout provides an appropriate level of bus stop provision, both to meet the demands of the development itself and to future-proof it for the closure of Queen Street. Indeed, the bus stopping space proposed is considered to be the maximum that can reasonably be provided as part of the development.

Changes to bus services are largely commercial decisions and will be influenced by additional demands arising from other developments in Oxford and outside the city.

Additional bus infrastructure (including new stops) are likely to be required elsewhere in the city centre to help accommodate future growth in bus usage arising from Westgate and other

developments and to allow Queen Street to be pedestrianised. The county council will seek funding from Oxford City Council's CIL fund for these changes.

Bus real-time information and bus shelters are provided through (separate) long-term contracts. These facilities will be required as part of the highway works delivered at the developer's expense, but the contractual arrangements may mean these works cannot form part of the S278 agreement. If this is the case, the county council may need to seek a specific S106 contribution for these items.

The increase in the use of Park & Ride will use up capacity in the city's five Park & Ride car parks, adding substantially to cumulative growth pressures that will require extra car parking spaces to be provided in future. The county council will seek funding from Oxford City Council's CIL fund for improvements to Park & Ride car parks and facilities.

Oxford's thriving bus market and recently introduced Low Emission Zone have given the city one of the cleanest bus fleets in the country, and the high level of investment seen in recent years will continue as the bus market expands further. The county council will continue to work with the city council and bus operators to explore new initiatives and technologies to reduce emissions further.

Demolition & Construction

The TA indicates that the construction period is expected to last between 30 – 36 months. It is noted that a preliminary construction programme has been prepared which identifies indicative construction access points, anticipated vehicle movements, hours of work and mitigation measures. Further details of the construction (and demolition) works must be provided and it is recommended that a condition be added to secure this. As part of the construction management strategy, the developer must nominate a network manager to take overall responsibility for managing movement to, from and near the site during the construction phase and to liaise with the county council's network management team.

It is noted that there will be no car parking facilities for construction workers during the construction phase with an expectation that these workers will be transported into the site from satellite car parks outside the city centre. It is also noted that pedestrian and cycle routes are to be maintained throughout the construction period. These routes are likely to change during the phasing of works and therefore these routes may need to be secured via a legal agreement.

It is important that access to the city centre is maintained during the construction phase. The car parks on the Westgate site will be closed throughout the construction phase, so the two councils, Westgate Oxford Alliance and transport providers will need to put in place a strategy to maintain accessibility and ensure visitors know that the city centre remains open for business as usual.

As part of this strategy, planning applications have been submitted on behalf of the city council for temporary car parking at Oxpens and visitor coach parking at Redbridge Park & Ride. The county council has responded separately to these applications.

The council's policy is not to increase city centre public car parking provision. Any temporary parking must not result in the overall level of city centre car parking exceeding the current provision, even for a short period. Legal agreements may be required to enforce this.

Travel Plan (TP)

An outline TP has been submitted in support of the application. This sets the framework under which a full Travel Plan (or Travel Plans) will be developed making reference to interim modal shift targets and providing details of the measures that future occupiers will undertake. Whilst reference is made to the residential element of the development, the targets focus primarily on the two main groups of people that will travel to and from the proposed development: the workforce and retail and leisure customers.

The outline TP indicates that A Travel Plan Co-ordinator will be responsible for the management of the TP and a working group established which will include representatives from different site occupiers. In addition to those based on the site, there is also reference to the involvement of other key stakeholders (including both councils and the bus operators) in the implementation of the TP.

Given the submitted TP is outline the county council recommends the inclusion of a condition requiring submission of a full travel plan (s) prior to the opening of the new development. The submitted Travel Plan(s) should cover the residential, retail and leisure elements of the proposal.

Flood risk and Drainage

The underground car park raises the ground water up to 480mm above the current level, which is 1.8m below the surface. The Developer has checked for basements upstream of the underground car park, which may be susceptible for ground water flooding, four basements have been located, one of which is the existing car park. The Ground Water Model shows a potential rise of between 100 – 200mm in the ground water at these locations which is acceptable within the parameters of the model, therefore the Developer believes the development is unlikely to affect the basements of any existing neighbouring properties. Although the Developer has located existing basements in the area they have not indicated whether these basements flood at the present time in high ground water.

The surface water discharges from the development will discharge to the Castle Mill Stream and the Trill Mill Stream but at reduced rates.

The diversion of the Trill Mill Culvert will be an improvement as the new culvert will have better flow characteristics and be generally larger than the existing culvert.

The county council and Oxford City Council will be discussing the improvement of the Trill Mill outfall in Christ Church Meadows with Christ Church College as part of general works to improve the flow through the culvert.

The county council recommends the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage techniques where possible.

Basement Car Park and Trill Mill Stream

The new basement car park and Trill Mill Stream will be major private structures under the highway. The county council has already outlined the implications of this and legal agreements will be required as previously identified.

Officer's Names: Rachel Nixon & Martin Kraftl

Officer's Title: Senior Transport Planners

Date: 28 January 2014

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON THE FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

District: Oxford City

Application no: 13/02557/OUT

Proposal: Westgate demolition and reconstruction

Location: Westgate Centre, Bonn Square.

PROPERTY

Recommendation

- Support subject to the following conditions, legal agreement and informatives

Key issues and conditions

The Central Library is an essential community facility that is located in the centre of Oxford City and currently forms part of the main primary entrance to the Westgate Centre. The library also functions as an essential strategic facility serving the whole county and beyond. The library is accessed via this ground floor entrance and the main library is located on the upper floors of the building.

As owner of the freehold of the library, the county council is continuing to have discussions with the developer as to the impact of the development on the county council's freehold interest in the central library and the operation of library services. These discussions are on-going. Whilst they do not need to be completed at this stage (as they relate to matters for the reserved matters planning application) the developer is looking for certainty as soon as possible in order to fix costs.

Conditions

- Development must ensure that suitable and convenient access provisions for deliveries to and from the Central Library are included within the service area at basement level to the satisfaction of the County Council. The need to include storage provisions in the immediate vicinity of the storage bay must be addressed.
- All works must be phased to ensure that safe and convenient access to and from the library are maintained at all times.

Key Issues

The planning statement (paragraph 4.1 and paragraph 8.39) proposes demolition of the existing entrance to Central Library facing on to Bonn Square.

The library is the second busiest library in terms of number of books issued in the country. The library is one of the key focal points of the city centre and generates a high footfall to the city centre and therefore would be a complementary facility to the proposed new Westgate development. The existing presence of the Central library facing Bonn Square reinforces the vitality of the immediate public space.

The county council would not agree to the demolition of the library facade unless satisfactory alternative provisions are included as part of the development that continue to maintain a strong public presence within the frontage and compensatory measures to the satisfaction of the County Council were agreed in recognition of the land / building exchange required

The county council would welcome the provision of a high quality replacement facade to improve the aesthetic appearance of the entrance to the Library and the wider Westgate main entrance.

The county council would object to the relocation of the library entrance to Castle Street as the quality of the public realm is significantly lower to that on Bonn Square. It is of paramount importance that the library maintains a central position in the overall development.

Officer's Name: Nigel Cunning
Officer's Title: Property Asset Manager
Date: 31 October 2013

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON THE FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

District: Oxford City

Application no: 13/02557/OUT

Proposal: Westgate demolition and reconstruction

Location: Westgate Centre.

ECOLOGY

Key issues:

- The redevelopment of the Westgate Centre provides an opportunity to enhance the quality of the environment for visitors and local residents and also for biodiversity.
- It is difficult to assess the full impacts on ecology at this stage and there will be a site meeting with the City Council's ecologist and the applicant's ecological consultant to discuss how the ecological value of the Castle Mill Stream would be retained.
- There are records of protected species on the site and the City Council will need to assess the impact on protected species that use the site, in particular the Castle Mill Stream and its banks.

Legal Agreement required to secure:

- For the City Council to comment.

Conditions:

- For the City Council to comment.

Informatives:

- For the City Council to comment.

Detailed Comments:

- The proposals would substantially increase the number of visitors to the site and an attractive environment could enhance their experience of the site. Biodiversity enhancements could form part of this and buffer the impact of the increased levels of disturbance on species and habitats on the site.
- As proposed in the Ecology chapter of the EA (Chapter 10), the development should seek to protect valuable habitats and provide enhancements. The recommendations of Chapter 10 of the EA include a suitable buffer zone with dense vegetation adjacent to the Castle Mill Stream, brown and green roofs and bird and bat boxes. In addition, these could include proposals for biodiversity enhancements on the Castle Mill Stream down-stream of the site.
- The City Council should seek to secure long-term management of the habitats and biodiversity features that would be created.
- The City Council's Ecologist will comment on the detail of the planning application.

Officer's Name: Tamsin Atley

Officer's Title: Ecologist Planner

Date: 15 January 2014

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON THE FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

District: Oxford City

Application no: 13/02557/OUT

Proposal: Westgate demolition and reconstruction, temporary use of Oxpens for car parking and temporary use of Redbridge Park and Ride for coach parking.

Location: Westgate Centre, Bonn Square.

ARCHAEOLOGY

Recommendation

- No objection

Key issues:

- The site is located in an area of archaeological interest however archaeological advice will be provided by the Oxford City archaeologist.

Detailed Comments:

We are aware of the archaeological sensitivity of the site however archaeological advice for this development will be provided by the City Archaeologist at Oxford City Council.

Officer's Name: Richard Oram

Officer's Title: Planning Archaeologist

Date: 09 October 2013

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON THE FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

District: Oxford City

Application no: 13/02557/OUT

Proposal: Westgate demolition and reconstruction

Location: Westgate Centre, Bonn Square.

MINERALS & WASTE POLICY

Recommendation

- No objection

Key issues:

- Sustainable construction and use of materials.
- Sustainable management of waste.

Detailed Comments:

Sustainable construction and use of materials and the sustainable management of waste are addressed in the application, including a commitment to prepare a site waste management plan.

Officer's Name: Peter Day

Officer's Title: Minerals & Waste Policy Team Leader **Date:** 30 October 2013

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON THE FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

District: Oxford City

Application no: 13/02557/OUT

Proposal: Westgate demolition and reconstruction, temporary use of Oxpens for car parking and temporary use of Redbridge Park and Ride for coach parking.

Location: Westgate Centre, Bonn Square.

PLANNING OBLIGATIONS

The city council adopted the CIL development funding mechanism in September 2013, so this development will be required to pay the levy. The sum payable will be finalised at the reserved matters stage. Under the terms of the working protocol with the city council the allocation of CIL monies is discussed in advance with the county council.

The county council acknowledges the major investment proposed on the transport network, including part of the underground car park, new bus infrastructure, additional cycle parking and public realm improvements. In addition, further infrastructure will be required to mitigate the wider impacts generated by this development. The county council is working to agree, with the city council, the timings and priorities of investment in the context of other developments coming forward.

The county council's CIL priorities arising from this development are:

- Contribution to primary, secondary and SEN education provision
- Contribution to the expansion of the Oxford Park & Ride system
- Reconfiguration of city centre bus & passenger waiting facilities, including real-time information
- Traffic management schemes, including Frideswide Square and its approaches
- Contribution to a city-wide parking management system
- Contribution to public realm enhancements, including wayfinding
- Contribution to Oxpens cycle/pedestrian bridge
- Contribution to a freight consolidation network

Officer's Name: Lois Partridge

Officer's Title: Senior Planning Officer

Date: 07 November 2013
