

SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL

Swindon Parish Council
Morris Hill Crossing
Swindon Lane
Cheltenham
GL50 4PE

Cyber Central Team
Cheltenham Borough Council
Municipal Offices
Promenade
Cheltenham
GL50 9SA

17th February 2020

Dear Sir or Madam,

Cyber Central Garden Community Consultation

1. The proposed Cyber Central Garden Community represents a significant development that will impact wide areas of West Cheltenham, including the Parish of Swindon. As a council we have carefully considered the proposed scheme and its impact on our Parish. We believe that the scheme's lack of acknowledgement and integration with significant neighbouring developments in North West Cheltenham will, on balance, result in a detrimental impact on residents of our Parish. To ensure the scheme realises its potential, it is essential that the combined impact of these developments are considered by the proposal. Such an approach will ensure the benefits of the Cyber Central Garden Community span far wider than the development itself.
2. ***Lack of Road Integration***
 - 2.1. The proposal includes only two connections with the existing road network; one connecting Fiddler's Green / Telstar Way and one connecting to Old Gloucester Road (B4634). The B4634 is the primary route providing direct links to South Cheltenham and North Gloucester from Swindon Parish and the proposed Elms Park and Cheltenham Meadows developments. Considering this, we believe the combined impact of the Cyber Central development, will result in the B4634 experiencing traffic far beyond its designed capacity, resulting in heavy congestion which will have a considerable negative impact on Swindon and Uckington parishes.
 - 2.2. The approach of managing out cars by design does not reflect the current or near future situation. The approach that relies on incorrect assumptions regarding modal shift (see 2.6) and ignores the impact of the proposed Elms Park and Cheltenham Meadows developments. This will result in significantly greater congestion and result in the undesired increase in emissions (see 3.2). Furthermore, we believe that this will limit the potential uptake of employment opportunities by residents in neighbouring North West Cheltenham due to the difficulties in community by car. With the UK's government recent announcement of the acceleration of the ban for the sale of new petrol and diesel cars, we believe that this ambition is not only unrealistic, but also short sighted.
 - 2.3. We note specifically that Appendix A2.6.22 states: ***"A considerable amount of transport work was done in order to promote the site through the JCS process. Modelling was undertaken, junctions designed, and a network of roads was envisaged to provide access across the site as [sic] whole."*** However, we voice concern as we are aware of the issues in the compilation of the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) Transport Plan. Given the lack of confidence in this essential underpinning assessment, we expect that the updated traffic modelling and assessments will be subject to full public and independent scrutiny, including all modelling assumptions that are made.

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- 2.4. We note that Appendix A2.6.21 with reference to the Elms Park proposal states **“the key focus of their transport strategy is to encourage sustainable travel and a modal shift to alternative modes for existing users. The majority of mitigation proposals are therefore for sustainable transport improvements”**. This statement makes assumptions which are highly speculative and very sensitive. This cannot be assumed to be accurate with regard to road use impact in this wider area. It is our view that the proposed infrastructure does not meet the combined impact needs of the three developments, and will result in a significant increase in congestion and journey times while reducing journey reliability.
- 2.5. We also note that A2.6.17 states **“The Arle Court roundabout scheme does not, however, deliver any improvement in capacity on Fiddler’s Green Lane. Traffic management measures will be required to direct traffic to access the site via Telstar, although this may have implications on the capacity at the Telstar Way / A40 junction.”** This route is proposed as a key trunk route for traffic originating from the Elms Park development. As such, it is vital that the combined impact of the traffic from all developments. It is our view that to avoid worsening the already significant congestion it will be necessary to provide direct access from the A40 Golden Valley to Cyber Central without utilising existing infrastructure.
- 2.6. While, as a Parish Council, we fully support and endorse efforts to achieve net-zero emissions, we are concerned by the proposals unrealistic assumptions regarding modal shift that experience has shown are unlikely to be achieved. We note that the recent experience of increased congestion as a result of the expansion of Bishops Cleeve. North West Cheltenham has experienced a marked increase in through traffic (travelling from Bishops Cleeve to south Cheltenham / Junction 11 of the M5). The anticipated modal shift has not been achieved resulting in significantly worsen journey times and journey reliability, while also impacting local air quality. The scheme must include robust traffic modelling that considers the combined impact of all neighbouring developments and includes realistic sensitivity analysis to endure incorrect assumptions regarding modal shift do not result in cliff-edge congestion effects.
- 2.7. We fully support the proposal for a dual direction junction at Junction 10 of the M5 to provide direct access to the Cyber Central Development and alleviate congestions from Elms Park. We emphasise that this scheme is vital to support the increased traffic as a result of the proposed developments.
- 2.8. We note the proposed development provides limited links to neighbouring areas including Swindon Parrish and the Elms Park and Cheltenham Meadows developments, except for a pedestrian link to the new school at Elms Park. We believe this is a missed opportunity. The scheme should consider the routes beyond the immediate vicinity to ensure interconnectivity with other local neighbourhoods.
- 2.9. A significant opportunity to provide effective links to Elms Park, Bishops Cleeve and beyond has been missed. A new transport corridor, originating from the proposed dual carriageway to Junction 10 of the M5 / B4634 intersection, would head north to an intersection with the Tewksbury Road. It would continue through the proposed Elms Park development, providing direct links to Cyber Central, and then head east towards Bishops Cleve. This corridor would provide opportunities for high-frequency mass transit solutions as well as private commuters. Such a scheme would provide the necessary infrastructure to support both developments, as well as alleviating existing congestion in the area.

3. Air Quality

- 3.1. Appendix A27.4 is far too vague a statement on Air Quality. A detailed assessment considering the wider area, specifically adjacent areas of low air quality (e.g. Princess Elizabeth Way) must be provided and subject to public and independent scrutiny.
- 3.2. We are concerned that the existing infrastructure plan will lead to significant congestions that will have a detrimental impact on already highly polluted transport corridors, both within our Parish and those surrounding it. We note that many of these transport corridors are densely populated by residential dwellings.

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4. Drainage & Flooding

- 4.1. We request that drainage plan is designed in conjunction with Elms Park and Cheltenham Meadows to consider the wider impact of all schemes on the existing water courses, particularly the River Chelt.

5. Schools

- 5.1. We request further clarity regarding the two proposed primary schools including their sizing and scheduling of construction and opening.
- 5.2. We understand that the proposal includes no provision for a secondary school. The proposal makes references to the new proposed secondary school at Elms Park, which will serve the development. However, we understand that the Elms Park development (including the school) will not be completed in time to support the needs of this development. This will put additional strain on neighbouring schools including All Saints Pitville and Bishops Cleeve which in turn will create additional traffic through Swindon Parish. The proposal must include well planned provision for students. Suitable mitigations of the resulting additional traffic must be demonstrated.

6. Other Infrastructure

- 6.1. There is no specific mention of Doctors' surgery provision and other local amenities. Such provision must be specifically included within the proposal and subject to proper public scrutiny.

Regards,

Shaun Cullimore
Clerk to Swindon Parish Council

CC: Cllr Flo Clucas,
Cllr Bernie Fisher,
Alex Chalk MP,
Ucklington Parish Council,
Bishops Cleeve Parish Council