

## Chilton Parish Council

The Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> August 2018 at 8.00pm in the Village Hall

<u>Present</u>	Mr C Broad	Chair
	Dr S Druce	
	Mr F Dumbleton	
	Mr R Girling	
	Mr J Lewis	
	Mr B Morris	
	Mr K Roots-Petty	
	Mr M Urso-Cale	
	Mrs M E Morris	Parish Clerk
	6 members of the public	

1. Apologies for Absence – none. Mr Roots-Petty was welcomed as a new Councillor
2. Declarations of Interest - none
3. Minutes of the last meeting – to be signed at a later meeting
4. Open Forum  
The public raised the following objections to the application for the Petrol Station. Increased noise and traffic, pollution, extra litter. No assessment of the cars and the impact of pollution on the environment, there will be extra traffic coming off the sliproads, HGV's should not use the petrol station. There is no need for 24 hour opening, the pedestrian access is very poor, will not be easy to cross. Don't need more green land covered in concrete. Not needed as there is Milton, Berkshire Downs and Rowstock. More traffic across the Village exits. This is yet more urbanisation in our rural Village.
5. Application for road side service area comprising petrol filling station, retail shop (class A1), drive-through-unit (Class A3/A5), parking and associated works. Land at A34 Chilton interchange, Chilton. P18/V1755/FUL

### Comments

### Chilton Parish Council Objections to Application P18/V1755/FUL

Chilton Parish Council is unanimous in its strong objections to this application The application fails on three main levels, **AONB**, **district** and **local**;

- **AONB**- The application sits in an AONB and it is borderline whether it is major or not. The impact makes it major but it's size is borderline;
- **District** – Local plan clearly states no further petrol stations needed on A34
- **Locally** – not meeting a village need but primarily for passing traffic and the subsequent impact on road safety.

These considerations and the **resultant Parish Council decision to unanimously object to this application** are enlarged upon in the following sections.

## **1. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) & N Wessex Downs AONB**

1. The proposed site is located within the N Wessex Downs AONB. NPPF 2018 policy is clear on the special status of AONBs in the planning of developments:

*Para 172.*

*Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited.*

***Planning permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:***

- a) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;*
- b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
- c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.*

## **2. No Exceptional Circumstances in this case**

Given the existence already of nearby A34 retail and fuel filling facilities both within and adjacent to the AONB (see above section A) there are no exceptional circumstances present to support this application.

## **3. Application is a Major Development.**

With regard to whether this can be regarded as a major commercial development or not, the comprehensive nature of the proposed development speaks for itself (fuel filling 24 hrs/day 7 days/week, food, retail and meal services, supplementary parking). The limited area of the site is irrelevant, as it would be when considering a commercial development such as the London Shard which also has a small footprint (but is 95-storeys high!). It is the planning context that matters.

In the Councils view this proposal is for a major development in the AONB.

The applicant claims that the site area is less than 1.0ha but the area of the site was assessed using GIS methods and plans supplied with the application. It was found to occupy just over 1,0 ha, not 0.9 ha. This is contrary to comments in the Application Planning Statement and means the application should be assessed as a Major Development in an AONB (NPPF 2012) The application is therefore misleading, as is the reference to an out-of-date policy document.

There is no evidence in the application showing that this application meets any identified need of the A34, nor does it offer potential safety improvements. Members of the A34 Action Group were critical of the proposal when it was first raised.

## **4. Local plan Transport Policy**

The relevant transport policies in both the extant 2011 Local Plan & the not-yet-approved-or-in-place 2031 Part 2. Local Plan are set out in Appendix 1.

- (i) The proposed site is not one of the 3 service facility sites identified in both plan versions. Moreover, it is only 6km south of one of these, the extensive and comprehensive Milton Heights facility, which is <4 mins drive away from Chilton on this national dualled trunk route.

- (ii) There is already a Murco services facility comprising filling station, shop and toilets at the Berkshire Downs Filling Station. That Murco station is a 7-day facility on the southbound carriageway that is accessible to northbound traffic via the newly extended and improved full Chilton interchange <1km ( 1 min travel) to the north.

There is therefore no justification for further transport services provision on the A34 in this parish.

## **5. Competition with existing businesses in Chilton Parish**

This development represents unnecessary and unreasonable competition with the existing businesses in Chilton

Para 172 (a) of NPPF 2018 requires that applications are assessed in terms of their impact on the **local** economy. Furthermore, in the adopted 2031 VWHDC Local Plan Part 1, Chilton is classed as a 'smaller village' under Core Policy 3 Settlement Hierarchy. This policy states that *"any development should be **modest and proportionate in scale and primarily be to meet local needs.**"*

It is the view of Chilton Parish Council that the proposed development would be used mainly by traffic coming off the A34 and not by local users. And configured to meet the needs of the passing motorist, not the local community.

This development represents unnecessary and unreasonable competition with the existing businesses in Chilton. Specifically, the Murco service station referred to above, the Rose and Crown pub and also the restaurant at Wyevale Garden Centre which offers coffee and a good range of food close to the proposed site.

## **6. Perceived need for a local shop and actual availability of local retail.**

Although there are now extensive retail facilities in Didcot, Abingdon and Wantage and much improved road and public transport facilities to access them. It has been said Chilton lacks a shop. Yet the village shop closed 15 years ago when it became financially unviable (too few actually used it) and a shop unit on Chilton Field was dropped from that development by the VWHDC Planning Committee for the same reason (insufficient footfall to attract a tenant).

In its stead, the advent of online food + delivery services now provided by all the main supermarket chains has been a retail revolution. They are extensively used by Chilton residents. For others, local small-shop/supermarket needs are already met by McColls on the Harwell Campus<sup>1</sup> (Curie Avenue by bus or on foot) and the Murco Service Station ( by car or on foot).

Together these satisfy local need from a small rural village like Chilton. This Council does not identify a local need that this proposal has to meet.

It is therefore clear that the overwhelming amount of business for the proposed services station would come from outside Chilton, primarily passing trade from the A34 This means the development is not appropriate for a small village like Chilton as it it not primarily meeting the needs of the village.

## **7. The proposed site design**

The site is unreasonably constrained for the proposed scale of services. This is because the applicant is intent on picking up business from both carriageways but on a site that is impracticably small for that objective.

The application is of particular concern for traffic management and highway safety reasons:

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<sup>1</sup> The Harwell Campus vision (<https://www.harwellcampus.com/vision/>) aim to further enhance local amenities with the provision of a new café and additional shops, which will be of direct benefit to the residence of Chilton.

(i) the shared entry and exit is not in accordance with good practice for Service Stations and is potentially dangerous particularly when used by HGVs whose presence is inevitable<sup>2</sup>.

((ii) Specifically, the roundabout which the shared Entry and Exit joins was NOT designed to accommodate anything more than a simple field entrance and does not meet the needs of this proposal. Traffic management proposals are not just unsatisfactory- they are hazardous;

*Northbound traffic:*

Vehicles leaving the A34 on the northbound carriageway need to circle the slip roundabout (along with other traffic exiting to the A4185/Harwell Campus) in order to enter the proposed development . Occupants, after using the toilets, the shop, the restaurant, the filling station, the rest area or the charging points ALL have to re-navigate the same roundabout to rejoin the A34 on the northbound slip. So ALL vehicles circle the same roundabout twice.

The increased number of vehicles entering the north bound A34 carriageway via the 'new' northbound slip will have to contend with a short acceleration lane leading into an uphill section of carriage way with vision impaired by the proposed site. It is the view of the Parish Council that this will have a significant adverse effect on road safety.

*Southbound traffic:*

Vehicles leaving the A34 on the southbound carriageway circle the slip roundabout (along with other traffic coming from the Didcot exit roads, cross the road bridge and at this point meet all the northbound traffic referred to above that also want to access the proposed facility. Again that traffic also has to use the same roundabout to regain access to the southbound slip.

*Dangerous tailback risk on to northbound carriageway:*

The result of the multiple repeat recourse for all A34-origin traffic plus that from the A4185 plus that from Didcot to the same roundabout is an unnecessarily heavy concentration of traffic movements which during peak times will lead to major congestion and tailback along the exit slip back on to the A34 carriageway. This would be highly dangerous.

Traffic backup along this slip already occurs at morning peak times from commuter traffic to the Harwell Campus, and this is certain to increase as the various Campus employers continue the planned expansion of business activities on the site.

*Uncontrolled crossing exacerbates problem:*

The introduction of an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing immediately adjacent to the affected roundabout further aggravates the problems. There is no easy / safe walking access for residence of Chilton to access the site and the safety problems will be exacerbated by the increased traffic flow.

## **8. Other Site design problems**

(i) The proposed layout does not meet accepted criteria for petrol filling station design, construction and operation standards as described in the standard health & Safety Executive publication HS(G)41 publication, 1998.e.g “ p16 Location of road tanker delivery stands:

*“The location chosen should allow the tanker to be positioned so that it has a clear and unobstructed escape route in a forward direction”* The proposed design does not meet this criterion.

## **9. Public engagement requirement not met in unbiased way**

Unlike the one-sided public engagement effort referred to in the application’s Design and Planning Statement (which specifically only invited support responses), the Council was open prior to and at

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<sup>2</sup> Whilst the planning statement states (6.39) that “HGVs and lorries should not use the service station” it is, as stated above, inevitable that HGVs they will use the service station. This view is reinforced by the fact that the Murcodo filling station that used to exclude HGVs is now ‘open’ to their use, see pictures - <https://berkshire-downs-service-station-samed-petrol.business.site/>.

the public Planning meeting to all comments. The public engagement claim by the applicant is flawed because people were only asked to approve the proposal: there was no invitation to object. There was no representation from the developers at the Chilton Parish Council planning meeting.

All written comments submitted and all members of the public speaking at the meeting were opposed to the application and the PC has received no support for the application. The Parish Council was also unanimous in its objections to the application.

The additional comments below were made by members of the public and councillors at the 8 August public Planning Meeting held to consider this application;

*Public;*

- All objected to application,
- the additional noise, traffic, pollution;
- litter from takeaway;
- 24 hours not needed;
- HGV's using v.limited access & turning space will be a problem;
- loss of a green space;
- more traffic across the Village exits both sides of A34;
- further urbanisation of the village/rural area in AONB

*Parish Council:*

- There is no need for the development as there will be improved shops at the Harwell Campus site in the next two years as part of VWHDC-endorsed Local Plan policy;
- major concerns re safety entering the site, also the petrol station will block the view on the northbound slip which is very short;
- safety audit not comprehensive enough and done at wrong time of day gave misleadingly light traffic-flow results;
- Traffic noise;
- Foul drainage plan and potential impact on the site and surrounding area;
- electric charging points insufficient;
- there is not a great need for jobs in the area;
- Concerns about all the extra traffic on the roundabouts;
- The public engagement claim is flawed because people were only asked to approve the proposal-there was no ability to object;
- There will have to be an oil, petrol interceptor put into an AONB-located site- inconsistent with protection of status, as well as setting a planning precedence;
- A 24 hour development will attract young people to gather there; but is unstructured as suitable meeting up place for the younger generation.
- It is a major application because of its size
- Documentation implies that there is a need but this has not been shown;
- Service station is not compatible with our small village status because it is not primarily to meet local village need but for passing traffic on A34;
- Desire to capture business from both carriageways has led to impractical and hazardous-in-safety-terms design on too small a site; Litter will be a big problem;
- If agreed will we get HGV's parking around the area.;
- At peak times there will be the possibility of traffic for the petrol station queuing back to the roundabout;
- The entrance into the Site is impossible, shared entry and exit point is inappropriate with a service station;
- Concerns re tankers and service lorries being able to get in and out safely;

## Appendix 1

Until the 2031 Part 2 Local Plan is formally accepted the relevant policies in the 2011 Local Plan remain extant. These are:

Transport Policy TR10 of the 2011 Local Plan refers to service facilities along the A34 and A420. Policy TR10 states:

### POLICY TR10

THE PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL SERVICE FACILITIES (INCLUDING FACILITIES FOR REFUELLING, CAR AND LORRY PARKING, TOILETS, REFRESHMENT FACILITIES AND PICNIC AREAS) ALONG THE TRUNK ROADS A420 AND A34 WILL NOT BE PERMITTED OTHER THAN WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF THE FOLLOWING SITES IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP AT:

- i) MILTON HEIGHTS;
- ii) BUCKLAND; AND
- iii) PARK ROAD, FARINGDON.

The proposals for policies to be adopted in the 2031 Part 2 Local Plan are at an advanced state of development and currently under the process of examination in public. Transport Policy TR10 from the 2011 Local Plan is due to be succeeded and replaced by Development Policy 19 in the 2031 Part 2 Local Plan. The published proposed Development Policy 19 states:

Development Policy 19: Lorries and Roadside Services.

The provision of additional service facilities (including facilities for refuelling, car and lorry parking, toilets, refreshment facilities and picnic areas) along the A420 and A34 will be permitted within the boundaries of the following sites identified on the Adopted Policies Map:

- i. Milton Interchange
- ii. Buckland, and
- iii. Park Road, Faringdon.

In line with Core Policy 34: A34 Strategy, the Council will continue to work with Highways England, the County Council and others on assessment of proposals for any new lorry and / or roadside service areas along the A34 and A420 in the Vale of White Horse where these are seen as required as part of the on-going development of the Route Based Strategy and / or other highway safety reviews.:

<http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/local-plan-2031-part-2>

- 6. Application for two-storey extension to the existing research building to provide additional store rooms and laboratories. Building R92 RAL. P18/V1784/FUL  
Comments  
The Parish Council fully supports this application for development at the Harwell Campus.
- 7. Application for erection of a Plant Room for scientific use. Building R92 RAL. P18/V1477/FUL  
Comments  
The Parish Council had no objections to this application but wish to be reassured that the noise from the plant complies with national standards.
- 8. Application for single storey front and rear extension. 29 Crafts End P18/V1905/HH

Comments

The Parish Council is unable to reach an opinion because of the inadequacies of the application and the lack of a design and access statement.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.30pm