

**THE OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (DIDCOT GARDEN TOWN HIGHWAYS INFRASTRUCTURE –  
A4130 IMPROVEMENT (MILTON GATE TO COLLETT ROUNDABOUT), A4197 DIDCOT TO CULHAM  
LINK ROAD, AND A415 CLIFTON HAMPDEN BYPASS) COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER 2022**

**(“THE CPO”)**

**AND**

**THE OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (DIDCOT GARDEN TOWN HIGHWAYS INFRASTRUCTURE –  
A4130 IMPROVEMENT (MILTON GATE TO COLLETT ROUNDABOUT), A4197 DIDCOT TO CULHAM  
LINK ROAD, AND A415 CLIFTON HAMPDEN BYPASS) SIDE ROADS ORDER 2022**

**(“THE SIDE ROADS ORDER”)**

**HIGHWAYS ACT 1980**

**AND**

**ACQUISITION OF LAND ACT 1981**

**SUMMARY PROOF OF EVIDENCE OF**

**STEVEN J SENSECALL DIP. T.P. MRTPI**

**ON BEHALF OF CEG**



**JANUARY 2024**

**Carter Jonas**



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 CEG is the promoter of the land comprising adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan Policy STRAT9: Land Adjacent to Culham Science Centre. This is an allocation relating to the 217 hectares of land immediately to the west of Culham Campus for circa 3,500 new homes and new employment-generating development in the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011–2035.

### Culham No.1 Site

1.2 Carter Jonas is in the process of submitting the first outline planning application for Culham Science Village (the STRAT9 site), on the area of land between the Culham Campus, and the railway line; known as Culham No.1 Site.

1.3 The Culham No.1 Site comprises approximately 22.8ha of brownfield land which currently accommodates a range of primarily employment businesses. The lawful use of all of the buildings on the Site is for Class B1, B2 and B8 uses.

3.1 The Site is located to the north of the A415 Abingdon Road. The only vehicular access to the Site is from the A415.

3.2 In summary, the outline proposals are seeking to achieve:

- Up to 115,000sq.m of employment floorspace [Use Class B2, B8 and E(g)];
- Up to 2,500sq.m of hotel floorspace (equating to approximately 100 hotel bedrooms) [Use Class C1];
- Up to 600sq.m of retail floorspace [Use Class E(a) and (b)];
- Up to 500sq.m of health club / gym floorspace [Use Class E(d)];
- Up to 500sq.m of creche / children's nursery floorspace [Use Class E(f)]; and
- Up to 800sq.m of restaurant / public house floorspace [Sui Generis].

3.3 Given that the Culham No.1 site already accommodates occupied employment development, development at the site can proceed before any transport interventions are completed. This point has been agreed with South Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council as part of pre-application discussions pursuant to the Culham No.1 application. There is a need to ensure that any strategic highway works do not impede such development or delay its delivery.

## 2.0 CEG'S CASE

2.1 As is set out in the statement of case [**Core Doc. M3**], CEG's position regarding the HIF Scheme and the CPO, can be summarised as follows:

1. CEG does not object to the CPO or the Scheme 'in principle.'
2. CEG is therefore supportive of the Scheme in principle, particularly as the proposed highway works offer an opportunity to assist in the realisation of the

significant social and economic benefits that the STRAT9 allocation (of which Culham No.1 is the first phase) will provide.

3. However, the current terms of the Orders extend beyond what is necessary to successfully deliver the Scheme. In their current form, the Orders could adversely affect elements of the Culham No 1 development and which could come forward in advance of the Scheme being completed.

### **The HIF Scheme in principle**

2.2 As can be read in CEG's third party statement to the 'called-in' inquiry: its position on the issues identified by the Secretary of State is that the HIF Scheme:

- (1) will support significant economic growth and investment;
- (2) will support the delivery of a substantial amount of much needed new homes; and
- (3) is directly supported by – and in accordance with – the development plan, and other material considerations, including the Local Transport Plan, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

### **Built form and layout of Culham No.1 site**

2.3 CEG, and its consultant team has produced an indicative masterplan for the Culham No 1 site and which will form the basis of the forthcoming planning application for development of the same. This indicative masterplan is the result of significant amounts of technical work.

2.4 The indicative masterplan anticipates built development at the southern end of the Culham No.1 site, fronting the road. This part of the development is directly affected by the extent of the land currently proposed to be acquired through the CPO.

### **Drainage**

2.5 OCC is seeking to permanently acquire land compulsorily which is expected to be utilised in the delivery of the first phase of the Culham No 1 development. That development is capable of being delivered in advance of the HIF Scheme being completed. As Mr Swann explains in his evidence, alternative drainage solutions that would not involve the land proposed to be acquired are not optimal to the efficient delivery of significant employment development on the Culham No.1 Site.

2.6 Supporting the delivery of housing and employment growth at allocated strategic sites is central to the HIF Scheme's defined objectives (paragraph 5.1 of OCC's Statement of Case). It is therefore acknowledged by all parties that the specific terms of the Orders and the extent of land proposed to be compulsorily acquired should not unnecessarily impede development at such sites that could otherwise proceed.

### Planning policy implications

- 2.7 Culham Science Village (and its first phase on the Culham No.1 site) is allocated for development under Policy STRAT9: Land Adjacent to Culham Science Centre, of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan.
- 2.8 The STRAT9 site is proposed to be retained in the emerging Joint Local Plan as a development allocation, and land for the HIF roads schemes continues to be safeguarded for its delivery. The drafted policies are very similar to those in the extant Local Plan:
- Proposed Policy AS2 – Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre
  - Proposed Policy IN3 – Transport infrastructure and safeguarding
- 2.9 I note that there is a revised criterion in proposed Policy AS2 which states:
- “...2) Proposals for the development must demonstrate:*
- ...
- ... b) how the site will retain and optimise the employment use of the Culham No.1 site...”*
- 2.10 Culham Science Village (and increasingly the Culham No.1 Site) is a vital part of the overall strategy of the development plan (both extant, and emerging) for the area. The objectives of the HIF Scheme are proposed, in part, to support the delivery of development at Culham.
- 2.11 Allocated development at Culham (both in STRAT8 and STRAT9) and the HIF Scheme should not then be mutually exclusive. The extent of land acquired through the CPO and the proposed timings for acquisition should therefore align with the proposed layout and delivery programme for the STRAT 9 allocation. In its current form, the CPO unnecessarily proposes to acquire land involved in the delivery of the early phases of the Culham No.1 scheme, and which could result in less preferable design solutions needing to be pursued. Such an approach would not be conducive to comprehensive strategic planning and would undermine the objectives of the Orders in wanting to (amongst other matters) facilitate employment growth at strategic sites.
- 2.12 Policy EP4: Flood Risk requires all development to be assessed against a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, provide a drainage strategy, and seek to enhance water quality etc. The proposed development scheme for the Culham No.1 Site includes all these elements. The currently envisaged drainage strategy would involve land that is currently included within the CPO boundary. Such land would be permanently acquired through the CPO, notwithstanding the fact that OCC would only require the use of such land temporarily during the construction stage of the HIF Scheme.
- 2.13 Mr Swann explains in his evidence that there are other drainage strategy options. However, these are all less preferable in terms of cost and delivery timings.

**Alternative locations for the works compound.**

- 2.14 CEG has proposed to OCC an alternative location for its works compound which would avoid the Council needing to compulsorily acquire plots 16/6a, 16/6b, 16/c and 16/6z.

**Residential-Led Development within the STRAT9 Allocation**

- 2.15 Land forming part of the STRAT 9 allocation and which is located to the west of the railway track is intended to be brought forward for residential-led development through later phases (**the Residential Led-Development**). A planning application has yet to have been prepared for the Residential-Led Development. However, it is noted from Sheet 14 of the CPO Map and Sheet 4 of the General Arrangement Plan that the CPO proposed to acquire a large area of land upon which Scheme works would not be delivered (plot 14/1a).

**Objections to the Side Roads Order**

- 2.16 CEG's objections to the Side Roads Order are discussed in section 5 of its Statement of Case and are maintained. As is discussed above, phases of the Culham No 1 development will be able to proceed in advance of the HIF scheme being completed. It is therefore important to ensure that enforceable arrangements are secured at this time to provide occupiers of the Culham No 1 site with rights of access to the public network at all times, both during the HIF scheme construction phase and following. Sufficient private rights must also be granted over proposed private access routes. Completion of an appropriate private agreement with the relevant landowner(s) would enable the proposed north-easterly access towards Culham Science Centre to be removed from the CPO and Side Roads Order.