



Planning Inspectorate
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Hearing Transcript

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SPEAKERS

Speaker 10, Speaker 14, Speaker 1, Speaker 9, Speaker 6, Speaker 8, Speaker 2, Speaker 11, Speaker 13, Speaker 12, Speaker 4, Speaker 5, Speaker 15, Speaker 3, Speaker 7

Speaker 1

Good morning, everybody. It's now 10 o'clock, and it's time for this hearing to begin. So, I'd like to welcome you all to this issue-specific hearing for the Oxfordshire Strategic Rail Freight Interchange Project. Can I just confirm that everybody can hear me? And can I just confirm with mr. Schneider that the live stream has commenced? Thank you very much. My name is Adrian Hunter, and I'm a chartered town planner. And I've been appointed by the Secretary of State, the lead member of the panel, to examine this application. Just before I go through some housekeeping matters, I'm just going to ask the rest of the panel to introduce themselves, please.

Speaker 2

My name is Alex Oyeade. I'm a chartered transport planner, and have been appointed by the Secretary of State to be a member of the panel to examine this application.

Speaker 3

Good morning, everyone. My name is Guy Rigby. I'm a chartered civil engineer, and I've also been appointed by the Secretary of State to be a member of the panel to examine this application.

Speaker 1

Thank you, both. Together, we constitute the examining authority for this application. We're also supported by other members of the Planning Inspectorate, some of whom you may well have already met when you were registering. Our case manager is mr. Matthew Shard, and he's supported by mr. Stephen Parker and Miss Lulu Pantalana. They can be found at the back of the room, and we're happy to assist with any questions that you may well have. We also have a number of other inspectors and pin staff who are attending the venue today to observe, and they're observing here purely for training purposes as well. I'm now going to run through some housekeeping matters. Apologies for those who were here yesterday. These may well sound familiar, but just in case there are people who weren't here yesterday, I just need to run through those. So just bear with me, if you could. If I could just ask everybody to make sure their phones and devices are on silent, that'd be much appreciated. Toilets are located at the end of either corridor. We are not expecting a fire alarm today, so if one does go off, the escape routes again are at either end of the building, and the point that we congregate in is in the car park round at the very front of the building. So moving on to the agenda today and how it will run. The meeting will follow the agenda that was published on the National Infrastructure Planning website on

the 22nd of September. The examination library reference number for which is EV2002, and it will be really helpful if you do have a copy of this in front of you. In terms of the agenda, we've had a couple of requests in from parties to possibly rejig the order. I know the the council made a request to us in terms of one member of their team that may need to disappear off, and the environment agency, who I think are probably online, have also sort of asked if we could sort of move some of the matters just so it they are together to sort of ease their participation, and we've considered those. And actually, it seems to to sort of make sense to us to to do that. What we're suggesting is that minerals and waste, which is 3.5, moves up, so it comes after socio economics, and then we do groundwater and flood risks together, which seem to be the two environmental, so the EA topics that they're they're wanting to sort of do, and it just means that we cover those together. But before we confirm, can I just check if that fits okay with the applicant? Because I appreciate we didn't give you a chance to for sort of forewarning on that.

Speaker 4

Good morning, Sir Alexander Booth. On behalf of the applicant, so I'm sure we can make that work. Thank you. Thank

Speaker 1

you. Yeah, thank you very much. So, in terms of the way the hearing will run, it will be very much a structured discussion, which I and other members of the XA will lead based on that published agenda, we'll conclude the hearing as soon as all relevant contributions have been made and all questions asked and responded to. But if the discussions can't be concluded, then it may be necessary for us to prioritise matters and defer other matters to written questions. It is, however, important that we get the right answers to the questions we are going to ask, therefore, I would remind you that the examination process is predominantly a written one, so that if you are unable to answer the questions or require additional time to get the information requested, rather than giving a restricted or potentially wrong answer, in the interest of the smoothening of the examination, please indicate that you may need extra time in your responding writing. Alternatively, we can defer it to written questions or the next round of hearings if that would help. Just thinking of timings today. Our aim will be to take a mid-morning break around about 11:15-ish, adjourning for lunch for an hour at 1o'clock, and then we'll also look to take a break mid-afternoon as well. And we can aim to conclude the hearing around 5:30 this afternoon. But again, we'll keep those timings under review and look to do that. But we'll try and find convenient points in the agenda to break to take suitable breaks. Just before I move on, does anybody have any questions on how we're looking to run the meeting today and the agenda items? Not seeing anything in the room and nothing online. Okay. Today's hearing is being undertaken in a hybrid way, which means some of you in the room and also some of you are joining us on Microsoft Teams. However, you have decided to participate today, we will ensure that you are given a fair opportunity to participate and give us your views. A recording of today's hearing will be made available on the project page of the National Infrastructure website as soon as practicable after the close of this hearing. The transcript will also be made available. With this in mind, please ensure that when you do speak, speak clearly into the microphone, and if you could also say your name and who you represent each time. If you are not at a table and wish to speak, there is a roving microphone that will come to you. But please do wait for that to come to you before you do speak, so that we can pick that up on the on the audio. For those joining virtually, if you wish to speak, please use the the team's hand up function, and we will come to you. But again, just bear with us as we finish off sort of discussions in the room, and then we will come to you on online if needs be. If you are attending virtually and you don't want to be recorded, by all means, please switch off your camera, and then we can we can hear you that way. If you are in the room, if you do wish to to speak, but again you don't, we're sure and it should be recorded. There's space at the back of the room where the cameras won't won't pick you up. A link to the planning inspector's privacy notice was provided in the notification for this hearing. We've assumed that everybody has read that and familiarised yourself with the document, which establishes how the personal data of our customers is handled in accordance with the principles set out in the data protection laws. Again, if you have any

particular questions or issues on that, the case team are happy to help with those. In terms of the purpose today, is for the XA to examine the information that has been submitted by the applicant and also the details that have been provided by interested parties to date. This issue-specific hearing is being held to explore a number of matters in respect to various environmental issues. We are also going to look to explore specific matters in respect to the applicant's DCO as well.

Speaker 1

I'd like to reassure you that we are familiar with all the documents that have been set in, so in answering a question, you don't need to repeat at length something that has already been submitted. But if you do want to refer documents, please do give us the appropriate PINS examination library reference Number. This is a public examination, therefore, even if you haven't registered to speak and you do wish to sort of make a point, please feel free to indicate that you wish to speak either raising your hand in the room or using the Microsoft Teams button if you're online, and we will come to you when when the time is right to contribute. Our aim is to conclude the hearing as soon as all relevant contributions have been made and all questions responded to. However, we are conscious that it's quite a full agenda today. So, if it looks like discussions can't be concluded, we may decide to prioritise particular matters, defer others to written questions or to later examination issues. We will, however, keep this under review. So, as the XA will review again at lunchtime and see how we're doing against that agenda and advise accordingly. Are there any questions around the procedural matters of today's hearing and how we're proposing to run it? Not seeing anything in the room or online. Thank you very much. What I'd like to do is move on to those parties who've registered to speak, and go through the introductions if I could. So, when I state your organisation's name, if you could just state your name, who you represent, and if there are particular agenda items that you do wish to speak on, that would be helpful. If you're not representing an organisation, just confirm your name and what you're interested in as well. And if you could just let me know whether any particular ways you wish to be addressed, Mr. Miss, Misses, or anything like that, would be helpful to us as well. So, working through my list, if I could start with the applicant, please.

Speaker 4

Good morning, sir. My name is Alexander Booth, King's Counsel, and I appear on behalf of the applicant in this matter, and I am happy to be addressed as Mr. So I was just going to introduce very briefly those sat to my right, because you'll appreciate that a number of witnesses will assist the examination today on behalf of the applicant. What I have at the table now are those individuals who may speak in relation to the first matter at 3.1 transport. So, to my immediate right is Ms. Laura Beth Hutton, who is the partner at Eversheds, who is promoting the application. To her right is Mr. Ben Holmes, and beyond him, Mr. Steve Harley, both of Oxalis Planning. Beyond them is Mr. Stuart Duncan. Of ADC and Mr. Simon Hilditch of BWB, both of them will be speaking to highways and transport related matters. And beyond them is Mr. Ian Kapoor, who you heard also from yesterday from GB Railfreight.

Speaker 1

Thank you, sir. Brilliant. Thank you.

Speaker 5

If I could now move on to the host authorities, please. Thank you. Yes, my name is Mr. George Gurney, speaking on behalf of Oxford County Council, and I'm a lead strategic planner. And on my left is Mr. Raúl Chalvaraja Lopez, senior ensit planner. Like the applicant, we'll have multiple specialists coming up throughout the day, but I'll follow their example and introduce those speaking at agenda item 3.1. So, for 3.1, we're joined online by my colleague Joy White, who is a team leader in transport development management, and we also have Mr. Tony Cahill from SLC Projects.

Speaker 1

Great, thank you. So, if I could now move on to a number of statutory bodies and organisations, if I could start with national highways, please.

Speaker 6

It's well, yeah. Sorry.

Speaker 1

Oh, apologies. Sorry, because you're under host authorities. I just assume. Apologies.

Speaker 7

Good morning, sir. I'm Sean Fleet from Cherwell District Council, principal planning officer, working on this project, referred to as Mister. Thank you.

Speaker 1

Thank you. Apologies for that. If I could, yeah, National Highways, please.

Speaker 6

Yes, it's Mrs. Vicky Fowler. I'm a partner and solicitor at Gowling WLG, and I'm joined by Mr. Jeremy Bloom, who's third-party DCO National Highways lead for the East Region, and I can be referred to as Mrs. Fowler. Thank you.

Speaker 1

Thank you. If I could then move on to the Environment Agency, who I think are joining us virtually.

Speaker 8

Good morning, sir. My name's Alex Hazel. I'm a planning specialist in the Environment Agency's National Infrastructure Team. With me, I have a number of technical specialists representing groundwater and contaminated land and flood risk topics. So they are Susie Bateson, who is online, and she is the groundwater and contaminated land specialist, and Sean Holland, who is the flood risk specialist, also online. We were due to have a water quality specialist join us today, but they're not available, unfortunately. So, any related questions to do with water quality, we will pick up and respond in writing. Our interests primarily relate to items 3.4 and 3.6, and the technical specialists coming in me today will respond to any questions from the XA directly at the appropriate time, as and when relevant.

Speaker 1

Thank you, Mr. Hazel. Appreciate that. If I could then go into Mr. John Broad, please.

Speaker 7

Good morning, sir. My name is John Broad, and I'm representing CPRE. I realise that, of course, you've got CBRE as something to do with the warehouse organisations. So I'm just emphasising the P. Thank you.

Speaker 1

Thank you. Thank you. If I could then go into Midshewell Neighbourhood Plan Forum, please.

Speaker 9

Yes, my name is Mr. Jonathan Boyce, representing the Chairwell Neighbourhood Planning Forum in 12 parishes that are represented in that forum. Mr. Lipson is the JR today, but he will be joining us online a

little bit later on. The areas of interest we have today are 3.1 transport, 4.3 rail, and 3.3 socio economics. Thank you.

Speaker 1

Thank you, mr. Boyce. If I could then move on to mr. James Stewart Irvine from Biffa, I think.

Speaker 10

Yes. Good morning. Yep, James Stewart Irvin. I'm a planning manager at Biffa and a chartered town planner, and I'm here primarily with interest in relation to agenda item 3.5, minerals and waste. But I believe that's now moved up the agenda, so I'm not quite sure which number that is now. But that's my primary interest.

Speaker 1

That's fine, thank you. We'll make sure everybody knows as we get to those points on the agenda when we're when we like to pick that up for you. But thank you. Next on my list is mr. Greg Elphick. I think he's appearing on behalf of a Ms. Charlotte Harris. I think.

Speaker 11

Yes, thank you. My name is mr. Greg Elphick, appearing on behalf. Of the Gallus Brook residents collective, Charlotte has asked me to deputise because she and her colleagues are not available today. Our interest is the waterways emanating from the former airbase plateau, notably Gallusbrook, from which the name derives, and our interest is PFAS contamination in the groundwater and surrounding area.

Speaker 1

Thank you very much. I also have Gallusbrook Group as well, but is that yourself as well? One

Speaker 11

and the same.

Speaker 1

Excellent. Thank you. And then, mr. mr. Norstrand.

Speaker 12

Good morning. Good morning. My name is mr. Philip Nordstrand, and I am the founder of Stop the Trojan Horse, the community group that represents over 100 residents in the local area around Hayford and Artley. Good morning, mr. Nostrand. Can I just ask a quick question? Did you leave a document on our desk? Was that from yourself? Yes, I just just

Speaker 1

to be clear, we cannot take anything from anybody, so that's why it disappeared to the back of the room, and we haven't seen it. If you do want to submit it, please submit it through the the portal, and then we'll see it. But we can't take documents of this. So I don't want you to see it disappearing and think we won't get it. You need to submit that in a formal way to us. Then everybody will get to see those. Absolutely. So yeah, thank you. And then I have a representative from Network Rail. Good

Speaker 9

morning, sir. Gregory March, Freight Business Development Manager with the Rail Freight Team at Network Rail.

Speaker 1

Thank you. And then, finally, on my list, I have a mr. Kwasim Azzam, who I think is online. No, I can't see mr. Azam joining us. Okay. Well, that's everybody I have on my list. But just before we carry on, can I just check if there's anybody else who wishes to speak whose name I haven't mentioned? Nobody in the room and nobody online. Okay, that's fine. So I think that's the end of the introductory remarks that I've got to make. So I think I now pass over to mr. Abaya, who's going to take us through item number three.

Speaker 2

Thank you, mr. Hunter. The item 3.1 traffic and transport. Before I start asking questions, it might be useful for me to provide some context in relation to the key documents that form the basis of my questions under this item. These are the planning statement APP-161, ES Appendix 2.3 Construction Environmental Management Plan APP 189, ES Appendix 3.1 Transport assessment AS dash 055, Appendix eight of ES Appendix 3.1 transport assessment AS dash 056, ES Appendix 3.2 framework travel plan APP dash two. Rail Report APP-312, Oxfordshire County Council Submission RR-109, and finally written representations submitted by several IPs and APs. I will now turn to Appendix One, Sustainable Transport Strategy of ES, Appendix 3.1, Transport Assessment, AS-055, and ES Appendix 3.2, Framework Travel Plan, APP-203. Could the applicant explain the proposed travel plan for the development, including the measures that will be implemented to encourage travel by sustainable modes? That's the First question, there, which I'd like the applicant to answer, please.

Speaker 4

Thank you, Sir Alexander Booth, on behalf of the applicant. You'd like us to, as I understand it, explain the framework travel plan to you. That's, I think, the travel plan that's been agreed with the county council. I think the best. Persons to speak to that matter really are mr. Dunhill and mr. Hilditch. So I'm going to ask them to step in.

Speaker 13

Good morning. Yeah, Stuart Dunhill, Director ADC, Chartered Civil Engineer for the applicant. The The sustainable transport strategy that you've referred to, say ASO five five, is the examination document that sets out the significant package of connectivity improvements that will be delivered by Occass RFI, and those measures have been designed to provide high-quality, healthier active travel, and lower-carbon transport options as an alternative to the use of the private car. The sustainable transport strategy details the modal share targets that have been agreed with Oxfordshire County Council based on those connectivity improvements, and it benchmarks those modal share targets against experience at other SRFI sites and experience at the adjacent Hayford Park site; those modal share targets are, as I said, agreed with Oxfordshire County Council as being ambitious, but achievable and realistic. The framework travel plan, reference APP 203, that. agreed with Oxfordshire County Council, and it incorporates those agreed modal share targets. And set out within the travel plan are the measures that will be implemented at the site to promote the use of those active travel routes and lower carbon transport options. The travel plan includes objectives and specific targets in relation to each of those main modes of travel, and it includes an action plan for the implementation of the measures, along with monitoring and reporting requirements. And they are in accordance with Oxfordshire's guidance on travel plans. The secured via the DCO requirement six, each of the occupiers at the site will be required to produce a subsidiary full travel plan that will align with the objectives and targets and measures set out in the framework travel plan, and those subsidiary travel plans are subject to review and approval by Oxfordshire County Council as the local highway authority. The travel plan, the framework travel plan, sets out a target for a 26% reduction in car trips, so we can equate that to daily traffic flow reduction. So that's a reduction of some 4,100 cars compared to the baseline position. So that reduction in traffic translates directly to reduced traffic impact off-site, but it also reduces the the need

for car parking at the proposed development. Noting that in the agenda item there is a point around how that relates to car parking needs. So consistent with the reduced car parking demand, the applicant is proposing to commit to a maximum car parking ratio that will be that will restrict car parking in comparison to other SRFI sites. So, for example, the applicant proposes a maximum ratio of one car parking space per 200 square metres, and that compares, for example, with a minimum car parking ratio at Northampton Gateway of one car parking space per 120 square metres. So that one in 200 maximum ratio represents an appropriate and proportionate balance. It's sufficient to accommodate the forecast residual parking demand and suitable to prevent harmful potential harmful overspill of parking, while remaining constrained enough to support the travel plan objectives of reducing car use and increasing travel by sustainable modes.

Speaker 2

Thank you. Could you give us a breakdown of the travel modes? Because you just mentioned sustainable travel, but we like to know the travel modes that have been agreed within the travel plan.

Speaker 13

Yep, sure. Stewart Duncan for the applicant. So at completion, the the agreed targets are a 68% car driver, 20% car share, 8% public transport, and 4% walking and cycling. And that's set out at paragraph 3.7 of the framework travel plan.

Speaker 2

Within the public transport, what types of modes within the public transport?

Speaker 13

So, Stuart Duncan for the applicant. So the the the public. transport strategy for the site has been developed in consultation with OCC and has had significant input from officers there. The agreed strategy is to focus on a bus service for the site to provide the public transport connectivity. Bus services are flexible and can work well with shift patterns, and they allow employees to travel more directly from their place of residence to outside the development plot that they are working at the a key part of that strategy is that the bus service will link with the rail stations in in Bicester, so rail travel multimodal journeys will be facilitated by by the the bus service and that that connection. So the so the the public transport modal share includes for potential multimodal journeys by rail as well. So that 8%

Speaker 1

Sorry, if I could just just ask a quick question. Yesterday we went through the phasing, which was really helpful to sort of go through the phasing. How does the 26% relate to that phasing? Are we saying 26% upon completion of everything, or would that be 26% as each unit comes on stream?

Speaker 13

So, the Stewartdown Health for the applicant. So. table at paragraph 3.7 of the framework travel plan sets out the target modal splits for the opening year, and then the way that it's it's monitored in accordance with OCC's travel plan standards is biannually. So it sets out the targets at year one, year three, year five, year seven, and year nine. So, on completion, which will be year four, the target is to achieve those modal splits that I referred to earlier. On opening, as you quite rightly point out, there are the highway works and some of the connectivity improvements are phased. So there is a specific modal split target for year one. So in year one, on opening, that is a 82% car driver, 10% car share, 5% public transport, and 3% walking and cycling. I can provide some further background behind that, if if that's helpful.

Speaker 1

No, that's fine. It was just to understand and to get those references. Thank you.

Speaker 2

Thank you. Would the applicant agree that there's a missing part of the public transport here, which will be the use of passenger rail, for instance? That's missing. This public transport distribution here is predominantly buses. Would the applicant agree that if there's passenger rail travelling to this site, it might not be for now. It might be in the near future. This 68% travel by car will reduce. Would the applicant agree to that,

Speaker 4

Sir Alexander Booth, on behalf of the applicant? I'm going to pass to mr. Dunhill in just a moment. But in terms of the overall position, and speaking for the applicant with the I suppose umbrella term, so I don't think we would accept that there is a missing piece in that puzzle. I mean, the first point to make is that the focus on a bus grounded strategy is one that has been agreed with the county council. Secondly, in terms of passenger rail, as mr. Duncan has already alluded to, the bus strategy is one that is embedded alongside existing rail stations in Bicester. And thirdly, as I think mr. Duncan come on to speak to in a moment, I don't understand. Certainly, my view of the analysis is that were hardly passenger stations to come online, and I have to say that is still a big if. Were that ever to happen, that would not be a game changer in terms of transport patterns. When one notes the location of that facility, where it would be, as compared to, for example, the southern parts of this site, it's a significant distance from them. But I think the implications of that are probably best spoken to by mr. Duncan. mr.

Speaker 13

Duncan, thank you. Yes. So obviously, in the context that the passenger rail station hardly isn't a commitment. That doesn't form part of the sustainable transport strategy for this site, and it's it's our view that whilst there could be some use of that station, perhaps particularly for units located at the northern end of the site, the site itself is some 1.6 kilometres from from the site of the station, and therefore journeys to predominant parts of that site would be multimodal journeys. So it would perhaps be cycle or a bus link, a shuttle link, or so forth. The frequent of the rail service is also a factor in comparison to a more regular bus service, and the the strategy agreed with OCC is to provide that connectivity to the Bister rail station. So, at the moment, if someone was travelling by rail, they could get a connection to Bicester and then use the the bus service, which will be service timing will be timed to link with the rail station at Bista, and then travel to the site and be dropped directly outside their place of work. The alternative in a potential future scenario with the passenger rail station open would be that someone would travel to the the rail station at Ardley, but then they've still got a one potentially a 1.6 kilometre journey to get to their to their warehouse. So that is again a multimodal journey, and it would depend again on the frequency of services. So our view is is that it's not a game changer in terms of in terms of modal share, and certainly isn't sufficient. There isn't a sufficient demand to justify the the reopening of the station as part of as part of this this scheme. In in saying that, the the proposed development will provide high-quality pedestrian links between access RFI and Station Road, which is where you would get the likely access for a potential reopened Ardley railway station. We're also providing bus stops at the principal access, which would be a short walk from the station, and the scheme will provide a mobility hub within the northern part of the site that will provide covered, secure cycle parking. So again, enabling those multimodal journeys. So, should the station plans come to fruition, the scheme is providing improved connectivity between the site, or providing high-quality connectivity between the site and the potential reopened Ardley station, which would facilitate those multimodal journeys. But it's our view that that wouldn't represent a significant uplift in the in the public transport modal share at the site.

Speaker 2

Thank you. I think the next, sorry,

Speaker 9

Jonathan Boyce Mitchell, Neighbourhood Plan Forum. Just a point of clarification: the 1.6 kilometres was it you said distance between the potential Ardley station and the rail freight facility. Is that for reason of security of the rail freight site?

Speaker 1

Sorry, just before you answer that, I should have reminded yourself: questions not to the applicant, but through to us. I do. So please, it's not a there's not a cross examination situation. So if you if you could direct your questions to us, sorry, I should mention it in the opening. I probably did yesterday, but yeah, anything through to us would be, and then we can take it from there. Yeah. Okay.

Speaker 9

Fine. That was my point. Thank you.

Speaker 2

Could the applicant answer that, please?

Speaker 4

Yes, sir. Certainly, mr. Duncan, if you can clarify that position in relation to the 1.6 kilometre distance.

Speaker 13

Certainly. So the 1.6 is the. As the crow flies, distance between the the site of the the former Ardley station and the the southernmost units at the the site, as shown on the illustrative master plan, approximately.

Speaker 2

Yes, I think, mr. Broady.

Speaker 7

Thank you, Sue. John Broad, CPRE. I just find that we've started this conversation from the wrong end. Surely we need to know where are all these employees going to come from. We seem to have jumped into the fact that they're going to come by rail or road or bus or something, without actually understanding where these employees are coming from, and the reason I'm asking this is, I was also at the appeal for the warehouses on the eastern side, and the the numbers of employees there was being queried as to where those employees were going to come from, and the idea that they might come from Bicester or from Upper Heyford, you're talking about several 1000. Well, I think it's going to be something like 12,000 people are going to be going into the, if it gets approved, the warehousing that is at the moment on appeal. Plus, you've got the Boodi Foo, which was also going to employ some more people, which obviously would be during the summer months. But the issue really is: this is supposed to be for what? Another 9,000 people employed here, and so we just wonder where where are these people coming from? Now that question was asked at the appeal for those warehouses, and one of the answers that came was okay. They're not all going to come from Bicester, they're not all going to come from Aberhayford, or from the local villages, they're going to come from a long way away, and that's why we end up with this sort of conversation we've just been hearing, which is to bus them in or rail them in into Bistonor Station. So you're talking about people coming from a long way away in order to be employed at this site, two things about that: one is it's not cheap to go on the railway, and the second thing is at the moment there's two trains an hour going into Bistonor Station, so timing is going to be awkward for somebody trying to get on a train from wherever, Birmingham, London. I don't know,

because that's where the run, the rail route runs at the moment, and they're going to then have to try and catch the bus which goes to this new SRFI site. The timing is just patently mad. Now, if you want to try and get the employees from Bista, then you put a bus service in, and you might have a cycleway, and you might also have a few people going by car. But that the unemployment level in Bicester is very low, so we are talking about people coming from a long way away, which comes back to the basic question: Is this site in the right place? Because if you look in the local plans for Chowwell, the idea is to have major employment sites Close to the high conurbations, and this one

Speaker 2

is not. Sorry, mr. Broad. I think, in terms of location, that's the item we covered yesterday in the ISH1, and this is predominantly related to transport issues. If you have any question relating to transport, I did pick the one about not cheap to to go on railway. That's related, but in terms of the location itself, it's not that relevant to the discussion of today.

Speaker 7

Well, it's the transport of the employees which is I'm talking about.

Speaker 2

Yes, yes, I did get that. I think if you allow me to go through the next question, the applicant might be able to provide a comprehensive answer to that. And I'm aware that the applicant actually did a reporting on the origin of the staff coming to work at this Location, so back to the applicant. I will now turn to ES Appendix 3.1 Transport Assessment AS-055. Paragraph 3.1 states that the proposed development would get. Generate approximately 9,600 full-time equivalent jobs. Paragraph 3.8 further indicates, based on 2011 census data, just because there's problem with the 2021 census data due to Covid-19, so we we accepted the 2011 census data. So just to clarify that, so the census data that 60% of employees within the Chowel district travel to work by all modes, including the rail passenger rail. So, I have also noted in paragraph 5.162 of the planning statement APP 161 that the applicant recognises the strategic aspirations of Oxford Oxfordshire County Council for a future new passenger rail station, railway station around the disused Adley station. It might not be exactly at the same point. It might be juggled around. Then paragraph 4.33 then states that a new passenger rail station does not form part of the Oxfordshire strategic rail freight interchange development proposals. Although the OX XRFI scheme will not prejudice the future provision of such at the former atlas station at this station site, should proposals be brought forward by others, I will also draw the applicant's attention to paragraphs 2.33 to 2.41 of Appendix 1 to AS 055, AS-055, which identify several committed and imagined developments in the vicinity of the proposed development. This includes a further 1,500 dwellings at Hayford Park, a recently submitted mixed-use development on the same site that is expected to deliver approximately 9,000 homes, the potential provision of 7,500 homes at Northwest Vista, and two substantial warehousing and distribution centres, with a combined gross external area of approximately 580,000 square metre. So, in light of the significant employment and associated travel demand anticipated from the proposed development, then combined with the cumulative developments in the area, could the applicant explain how the scheme will safeguard and facilitate the potential future reopening of Adelaide Railway Station, including any measures incorporated into the design, layout, and transport strategy to support its future delivery and use.

Speaker 4

Thank you, Sir Alexander Booth, on behalf of the applicant. Just to clarify, because you referred to a number of documents and a number of references within those documents, as I understand it, what those references build to is your request for clarification from the applicant as to the fact that the development does indeed safeguard future provision of Ardley Station and any particular measures which we would wish to draw to. Sorry,

Speaker 2

mr. Booth, all these items are listed. I can read them again. They need to be taken in single entity, you know, combined, not separate in any, because they are related. They have association with each other.

Speaker 4

No, I understand all of those references feed into this central issue, but the issue is the safeguarding of the passenger station. I've understood that correctly. Thank you. Well, mr. Well, it's probably I think one for you, mr. Harley. Is it? Thank you. So, mr. Harley of Oxalis Planning, if you can speak to that. Thank you very much.

Speaker 5

Thank you,

Speaker 14

Alex. Thank you, sir. Steve Harley for the applicant. So we discussed this a little bit yesterday, but I think there are a few references that might help in terms of a comprehensive place to go for answers to many of the issues you've just raised and that came up yesterday. So the relationship with the site of the former Radley Rail station, which, as you've said, is looking likely as the preferred potential location for a reopened station has been something we've considered directly in a number of ways throughout the preparation of the application, or certainly in the latter part of the preparation of the application. I think it's fair to say the aspirations for the station have come relatively recently, but of something we've talked actively to a number of parties about, and that feasibility. Or the feasibility of that station, as you know, as discussed, has been explored and promoted primarily by the county council. So the passenger, the passenger station note, which I don't think was one of the documents you referred to, but apologies if it was. Planning statement appendix three, which is referenced in your library, APP 164. That's called the passenger station note, and that provides details of the consideration given to how Oxfordshire Railfree interchange would coexist with and complement potentially the reopening of a future station. That note demonstrates that the proposals would not prejudice delivery of a new station in its former location, and identifies a number of works forming part of our proposals that would or could assist proposals for a new passenger station if, if brought forward ultimately by other parties. So, for example, sir, there are rail signalling elements to our scheme that we will deliver on consent, clearly, that would, if delivered, actually be beneficial to a new station in that location from a rail operations point of view. And I think there was a little bit of discussion about that yesterday. Other benefits, and you'll find all of this in that report. So this is a bit of a summary. Other benefits delivered through our works that would be of relevance to a new station there include benefits around drainage. So quite localised issues clearly, but around drainage, and also we close a level crossing further east on the Chilton line, which is seen as a wider benefit. So you'll find those points, other other points, and some illustrative plans in that document, sir, that give you a sense of what we've assumed about what a station might look like and the form it might take. Clearly, we've had to sort of make some assumptions there, but it includes buildings, parking, bus interchange, etc. You'll also find similar information about our relationship with the station in the signed statement of common ground with Network Rail, which is before you in the library AS 092. And I'm pleased to say there is a well advanced statement of common ground with Oxfordshire County Council on rail issues, and there are a number of topics covered in that which are directly relevant to the new station and the relationship with the Oxfordshire Rail Freight Interchange, and I think at deadline one, sir, our statement of commonality should be able to update you on progress with that statement and some others, but it's in a well-progressed and very positive state. Does that cover it for now, sir?

Speaker 2

To ask, what about because I read from I think it's Oxford County Council submission about walking, cycling to the potential train station. So, does that document cover that?

Speaker 14

Steve Hartley, for the applicant, it does, sir. Can I bring in my colleague, mr. Hilditch, who's got some information? He's been involved. There are there are there is information on that we can give you now as well, if that would be of help.

Speaker 15

Thank you, mr. Harley. Yes, Simon Hilditch, for the for the applicant. In terms of more sort of highways access and public sort of connectivity, in terms of cyclists and pedestrians, the existing access. I don't know if you saw it on your unaccompanied site visit. The existing access in the former station is quite poorly served off the existing road. It's very very tight and has poor visibility. So actually, by the wider scheme proposals to provide the RD bypass, it effectively assists with the reopening of the of the higher access into the former station site. In terms of pedestrians and cyclists, and I'll come to the specific point of Oxfordshire that they that they raised in a little bit, but the wider connectivity we're providing, the existing B430 will therefore be downgraded and be able to provide a good quality cycle connection. First of all, north into into our day, pedestrian cyclist connection can then use the existing road, and then south towards the Oxford RFI site, connecting into the facilities which mr. Dunhill referred to. In terms of the discussions we then had more recently with the county council, what and this will form part of the change request, and it was referred to in the in the detailed letter that the applicant provided for procedural deadline A, and you may have clocked it on the administrative master plan. There is an informal route on the administrative master plan going sort of east-west with the middle of the main site, connecting the main site spine road over to the perimeter bridal way that will run along the western side of the of the site, and we are therefore in discussions with the county council proposed for that to be formalised as a as a shared use footway cycleway designed to modern appropriate standards, therefore, enabling that potential further connection into the wider Hayford Park development through access RFI site, and therefore providing a wider linkages to the site, and that will be form part of the change request documentation that will be submitted in due course. There's also connectivity around the far western side of the site into the sort of northern part of the proposed paper park development via the quarry cottages and into the bridleway network that we're providing as well.

Speaker 2

Okay, thank you. I just like to. Thank you. I just, given the various developments around the site, I I would like the applicant, you know, possibly agree with me that there's what we call shared responsibility here. So we are not saying particularly the this development should single-handedly have something to do with the reintroduction of the station. So, the various developments here points to various bodies that have responsibility here, shared responsibility, and when we look at in association with the relevant policy NN 5.286. which actually asks that development must maximise opportunities for all journeys to be done via sustainable transport modes. So we are having a missing part here. However, the policy NN5.286. 286 does give the applicant an avenue to resolve this problem. The applicant is guided by a statement within the same policy indicating that, provided the applicant is willing to commit to transport planning obligation, the consent should not be withheld. That's took it in verbating from the policy, so that's now pointing to an action on the part, not just on the part of the proposed development, in conjunction with other developers in the area handling all this proposed Development, so I would like the applicant to confirm if it's going is going to consider certain action to enable this in association with Oxford County Council and the and the potential applicants for the other developments have listed. What sort of action would the applicant be prepared to? You might you don't have to answer it now, but you might need to consider it and give us an answer at a later stage.

Speaker 4

So, Alexander Booth for the applicant. Just to be clear, I was taking some notes whilst you were putting that proposition to the applicant. So, was that a reference to paragraph 5.286 in the National Networks NPS? Yeah. Nm five. Well, as I understand it, what's being put to the applicant is that it is one of a number of developments which has shared responsibility, Potentially for effectively facilitating the delivery of the Ardley passenger rail station is that yes,

Speaker 2

maximising the development forward as well. Each of them has to maximise opportunities for all journeys.

Speaker 4

Yes.

Speaker 2

So, if all these development I've listed here, they are in the vicinity of the proposed development. So, Adley Station is potential Adley Station reinstatement is in the middle of all these developments. Yes. So, it's just the shared responsibility. What would the proposed development offer in terms of future reopening of the Adley Station.

Speaker 4

Well, so I think we will take that away and give that proposition some consideration. But I would say this, sir: we are seeking a development consent order for the delivery of a strategic rail freight interchange. That is the development which we bring forward for consideration by the examination. It is no part of our scheme to deliver a new passenger railway station, and. I have to say I struggle currently to see on what basis we could legitimately do significantly more than we are doing, and the reason I say that is as follows: we have a sustainable transport strategy, we have a framework travel plan. Those documents have been drawn up in consultation with the appropriate authority. In this case, Oxfordshire County Council, and there is a very considerable degree of agreement between ourselves and the County Council in relation to the correct approach and the contributions that should be made and strategy that should be pursued. So, so we have engaged with the correct authority, and we've reached agreement with them, as I indicated yesterday. And were we to seek to go further and to say, well, notwithstanding it's not part of our scheme, we are going to seek to deliver that railway station by, for example, compulsorily acquiring land in order to deliver to assist in its delivery, we could not do that, and I couldn't sit before this examination and make out a compelling case. And the reason I couldn't do that is because it's not necessary in order to deliver our development, and therefore a compelling case couldn't be demonstrated. So we will take this proposition away, and what I would say in regard to the relevant guidance in the NPS is provisionally to draw the examination's attention to paragraph 5.287, which states in terms consideration should also be given to whether the applicant has maximised opportunities to allow for journeys associated with the development to be undertaken via sustainable modes, and so we say we've done that in terms of the framework travel plan, and we say we've done that also on the basis of the measures that mr. Harley has summarised and pointed to in relation to our note, because insofar as Arby passenger station does come forward, and we have maximised the opportunities for that such facility to integrate with commuter patterns to the SRFI. So I'll leave matters there for present. But we hear what you say, and we will take that away. I don't think I can say any more at present.

Speaker 2

Thank you. Just to clarify, I'm not saying that this development. I think I did mention it should be solely responsible for reinstatement, and I've clarified various developments in the vicinity of the proposed

development, so it's a joint effort in association with Chawai District Council, Oxfordshire District Council, County Council. So this is a joint action. So it's everybody has to do His debate to make sure in the future this the new Adley the Adley station will be reinstated.

Speaker 1

Thank you. I want to take us off Ardley Station, if we could, and move back to the point that mr. Broad made in terms of where employees were going to come from. I think that's probably something that we will pick up on socioeconomics because there's an item there, but I wanted just to flag that. But it triggered in my mind sort of a conversation that perhaps we haven't had in terms of the operation in terms of shift pads, and how that might work in terms of the travel plan, I'm guessing and presuming that we're talking a 24-hour operation. So how that works in terms of shifts for staff that they will be arriving to in the morning, leave it, whatever it might be. Those probably the relation and how that's going to work for sort of out of hours is probably more pertinent than sort of in ours in terms of how that travel plan would work. Thank you, Sir Alexander Booth, on behalf of the applicant. Yes, that was i.e. the origins of the workforce was an issue which we anticipated being discussed in the context of socio-economics, in relation to shift patterns and so on. I think perhaps mr. Dunhill is the man to address that.

Speaker 13

Stuart Duncan, for the applicant. so correct. So the the scale of the development, size of the units, the expectation is yeah 24/7 working, and that will therefore include shift working, particularly in the the warehouse elements of the of the units, those shift patterns will depend on the occupiers. Typically, in the industry, there's three shifts. Some some operators work two shifts. On top of that, there is then your your more general kind of nine to five. Office management staff working more traditional kind of hours, so that all builds into the the public transport strategy for the site, and again is one of the reasons why a bus-based public transport strategy is is the agreed and preferred strategy. The strategy which set out in the public transport strategy document, which is Appendix Five of the TA examination library reference AS o5 six, that describes how the the funding that the scheme is going to commit to has been arrived at has been sufficient to build upon the existing funding associated with the adjacent Heyford Park scheme, and a key part of that strategy is extending the the bus services to cover those early morning shift and late shift change times. So the funding is sufficient to provide a bus service between Hayford Park, the OxFRFI site, and Bicester, running between four in the morning and 11 at night, seven days a week.

Speaker 1

Okay, so if I'm a sort of an early morning worker at 2o'clock in the morning, how how just sort of what would be my route if I wanted to travel in a sustainable way to just to sort of help me visualise how that how that would work?

Speaker 13

Stuart Duncan. the for the applicant, there's there's a number of options available. You could cycle. You might choose not to at that time of night. So so I think that's perhaps a lesser option for for an early morning shift change time. Lift share is a real strong option. There's good evidence at other at other rail freight sites that car share or lift share is very well taken up. And Again, the section find relevant reference. So, section five of the sustainable transport strategy provides, as I was referring to earlier, it looks at and benchmarks and provides a comparison of modal share at other SRFI sites and includes good examples showing that car share is is a very strong option at these these types of facilities, and then there is bus share. Sorry, bus from either Bista or potentially Banbury, which is another service that we would be funding.

Speaker 1

Thank you. Yeah, that's that's helpful to explain. Just one more, if I if I could. Sorry. I suppose, in my experience, one of the things I'm trying to understand is if you have a unit that's just opened and your mode share is 82% I think it was, in terms of car for those first one that's opened until the measures come into place, the travel plan is going to have to encourage people who've perhaps already been working at the site for a good number of years to suddenly start to shift their mode of transport. I.e. you know, people who start sort of work before the bus is in or whatever it might be may well sort of commit themselves to a car, and that that's where they do. That's where they locate. What measures you looking to? Because presumably you're going to have to achieve more than the 26% at some point to bring those people into line in terms of that sustainable travel plan that you're looking to implement,

Speaker 13

Stuart Duncan for the applicant. So the the phasing strategy for the site, the the Hayford Park Oxsus RFI Vista bus services in from from day one, so that's a that's a commitment from day one. And yesterday we were talking about the the phasing of the highway works, and part of what governs that is providing the the connectivity for the bus route through the site. So so the bus. This is in from from day one, in terms of

Speaker 1

so no sorry day one being

Speaker 13

from occupation of the

Speaker 1

any of of the first of the first unit. Correct.

Speaker 13

Yes. Yeah. So so that will be in place from day one. Similarly, the the walking and cycling improvements, the the phasing plans that are included in the transport assessment, so in the drawing section of the transport assessment, there are drawings that show the phasing of the walking and cycling routes, and again making sure that there is that cycling connectivity from day one. The bus service To Banbury, that is a commitment that is expected to come in later on, when we start to get more of a critical mass in terms of size of the development. So that is partly what contributes to that increase in, or decrease, if you like, in in terms of car driver as you move forward. Similarly, as you develop critical mass in terms of employees at the site, the the opportunities for lift share increase because you've got you've got more people from different locations, so there's more opportunity for overlap, commonality, and hence lift share. So, the the key infrastructure and bus services in place from occupation of the site, and then those other measures develop as you get the the critical mass, which is why you see that, or why we will are confident that we will get that that shift in in modal share.

Speaker 2

Thank you. I will now ask that we turn to ES Appendix 3.1 Transport Assessment AS Dash o5 Five Paragraph 3.91 states that funding was secured via the section 106 agreement to provide this service with an initial 30 minutes frequency, increasing to 20 minutes and then 15 minutes as the Hayford Park development is built out. This will be a Monday to Saturday daytime service, 600 or 600 hours to 200 hours, 6 a.m. to 8 o'clock at night, with a lower frequency early service provided on Sundays between 8 o'clock in the morning and 6 o'clock in the evening. Could the applicant provide us with an overview of the proposed bus improvement measures and the extent to which this will complement, enhance, and integrate with the bus service improvements secured through the adjacent Hayford Park, Section 106 Agreement.

Speaker 4

So, Alexander Booth, the Atlant. Again, I think that's probably one for Mr. Dunhill. Is that right, Mr. Dunhill?

Speaker 13

Stuart Dunhill for the applicant. So the the public transport strategy, as we've discussed earlier today, has had significant input and consultation amid the verlot with with OCC. It is purposefully intended to complement and enhance the Hayford Park services to ensure that we cover the shift working at the site. The strategy is to provide funding that would extend the core Hayford Park service, diverting two of the bus services to to run through the site, so extending to cover that 4 a.m. through to the existing 8 o'clock service, and then from 8 o'clock through to 11 o'clock, the the funding is also sufficient to improve or double the frequency of the service on Sundays, which currently hourly, and again that would cover the o4 100 right through to 11 o'clock at night. The the cost revenue model that's been agreed with Oxfordshire County Council is a is a gross contract cost revenue model, so it's it covers. The cost of providing the service without taking into account the revenue, so ensures that that Oxfordshire will have sufficient funds to implement that service, with the revenue being returned to the applicant. So again, there's a virtuous circle there in terms of promoting and incentivising use of the the bus via the travel plan. In in general, the the services, the Hayford Park Service and the Oxs RFI patronage, are complementary in that the Hayford Park is is predominantly a residential development, and therefore commuting is outward bound in the morning. For example, so people are travelling to work, say to Bicester, but that means that there's there's less patronage on the return leg, so coming from Bicester to to Heyford Park. So having the employment scheme there clearly in the morning, again, for example, actually there's a there's an outward commute from Bicester as people living in Bicester are coming to to the site. So the the the patronage is complementary, and again that helps maximise revenues. The proposed Middletonstonley relief road also will have a positive impact on on journey times. So, so currently within the centre of Middleton Stoney, at the crossroads there between the the B4030 and the B430, that crossroads is is point of congestion on the network, and that can lead to delays and bus journey unreliability. So, the Middletonstonley Relief Road addresses that congestion by providing an alternative route and reduces reduces the congestion at the cross road. So that enhances the the bus journey reliability of that that bus service. In addition, the proposal is because of the new diverted route, we can provide bus stops outside the Ardley Energy from Waste facility, where currently there aren't any bus services or bus stops. So, again, providing extra opportunity to facilitate journeys by sustainable transport to that employer, the the Banbury service that is proposed, so that would be a peak hour and shift change service, and that would route to and from the west of the site, passing through Heyford Park, Lower Heyford, Deddington. and hence again that provides opportunities not only for the OxSRFI users but also residents of those villages to to use the a new what would be a new entirely new bus bus service.

Speaker 2

Thank you. The only observation I had, I have here is on paragraph 3.93 is quoted that is stated that Oxford County Council have confirmed that it should not be assumed that Hayford Park bus team will be operating at its 15-minute target, 15-minute target frequency in the social strategy rail freight interchange opening year. OCC have advised it is reasonable to assume that the service will be operating every 30 minutes, Monday to Saturday, and early on Sunday, when OXSRFI opens in 2031, 31. I'm just thinking the applicant explain, confirm whether this will be improved instead of the 30 minutes that OCC mentioned. Could it be halved when this development is operational to 15 minutes?

Speaker 13

Stuart, I hope for the applicant. So the the 106 funding for the Hayford Park Scheme is sufficient to provide that that 15-minute frequent service, but the the way the 106 is structured for Hayford Park is that that funding is is is very backloaded, so it's it's small initial payments and then it's it's more significant payments as the housing is built out. So Oxfordshire are are mindful that actually that that 15-minute service is dependent on the build-out of houses and those funds coming in because of the way it's it's backloaded. So the the cost-revenue model that we've agreed with Oxfordshire is is based on it it it not being at 15 minutes and assuming that it is 30 minutes. So those. Services would be diverted into the Occass MRFI site, and we would extend the services as we've discussed to include the early morning shifts and the evening and the Sunday service. So yeah, that's all taken account in terms of that contribution, the bus service contribution as well for Occass MRFI. Yeah, that's a front-loaded contribution. So again, learning from I think there's learning from the the situation at Athens Park where it was where it was backloaded.

Speaker 2

Thank you.

Speaker 1

I'm just thinking now might be a reasonable time for a break because I think gender-wise, I think we're probably just about to move on to the the final bullet point on the first page, which is the loading gauge issues. Yeah. So it seems a sort of a logical place then to take a break. However, I've just been pointed. There's something they have to hand over in that

Speaker 2

direction.

Speaker 5

George Gurney speaking at Oxfordshire County Council. I'm just wondering if after the break we might have a chance to come back on some of those points that have been discussed by the applicant.

Speaker 1

Absolutely, yeah. I think that's that's that's absolutely the case. Yeah.

Speaker 5

Thank you.

Speaker 1

I'm thinking that it's 16 minutes past now, but probably if we come back at half past 11, so sort of 40 minute comfort break, that'd be great. Okay, this hearing is adjourned till 11:30.