



Ref: GH/AO

Amanda Rendell
South Oxfordshire District Council
135 Eastern Avenue
Milton Park
Abingdon
OX14 4SB

23 January 2018

Dear Ms Rendell

Land North of Rycote Lane, near Thame.

Application P17/S4441/O - .The erection of up to 180,000 square feet (up to 16,722 square metres) of B2 / B8 with ancillary B1(a) and B1(c) together with parking, drainage, landscaping (structural and incidental) and highway works.

The above application was discussed at the Council meeting held on Tuesday 16 January 2018. As the application falls outside the parish of Thame the Town Council agreed to submit comments rather than make a recommendation.

The Town Council's comments are as follows:

- **Traffic / A329**

The proposal would result in increased traffic movement along the A329, including heavy lorries, vans and cars. The A329 is already a busy, dangerous road.

The width of the A329 reduces in places making it difficult for large lorries travelling in opposite directions to pass.

Particular attention should be given to the safety of traffic accessing and egressing the proposed site, turning right onto the A329 and the effect on the junction to Moreton village. Villagers already report difficulty in accessing the A329.

- **Employment Land**

There was a need to provide employment land in the town to replace that lost through permitted development rights and to ensure existing companies had the opportunity to expand and remain in the town.

If the application is approved a condition must be placed on the units that removes permitted development rights, to avoid a housing development by the back door.

Employment space is needed now, if not provided there is a danger that Thame could lose its character and become a dormitory town with residents having to travel further afield to work.

Concern regarding the creep of employment sites along the A329 into the countryside.

- Planning Policy

The proposal represents unplanned industrial development. It is a pity that development of the site could not wait until a proper consultation has taken place and be included in the next Thame Neighbourhood Plan.

- Landscaping

The buffer zone running along the edge of the site adjacent to the A329 must be widened to lessen the impact of the proposed development.

- Parking

Provision for parking on site must be increased to avoid overspill onto the surrounding verges, which already occurs from the existing premises.

- Sustainability

How easy will it be to walk or cycle to the site?

During the public participation item of the Council meeting representatives of the Moreton Residents Association, officially recognised by the Town Council and part of the parish of Thame, together with a resident of Rycote Park addressed the Council to voice their concerns against this application, in summary the reasons for this are as follows:

- The proposal represented unplanned major industrial development, with no reference in the Thame Neighbourhood Plan or the District Local Plan
- The arguments for more employment land did not stack up – South Oxfordshire has the second lowest unemployment rate. The 3ha of employment land provided for in the Thame Neighbourhood Plan was immediately occupied by two companies relocating from Long Crendon Industrial Estate implying that the vacated space was available to backfill.
- There are already industrial areas in Thame, Haddenham, Long Crendon and Milton Common.
- The Accident and Traffic Survey submitted with the application only covered a small portion of the A329. The application would have an impact on the whole road not just immediately around the development site.
- The A329 is a dangerous road, with blind bends and the scene of 2-3 accidents per year. Despite the 50mph speed limit motorists drive too fast.
- The A329 requires major maintenance work on the surface and areas of subsidence in order to cope with the extra heavy lorries.
- The proposed usage on the site would increase the number of heavy lorries, vans and cars using the A329 and local roads. Added to this the proposed cattle market site and possible development at Harrington, congestion would only increase. A

number of lorries already back up along the A329 when entering the established industrial area which includes ASM, Gregory's, Thame Cars and David Einig.

- The application site appears overcrowded with little buffer provided between the first buildings and the road. There is insufficient parking, people already used the grass verges opposite the existing industrial site to park.
- There are better pre-existing industrial areas in the town that could be developed.
- Careful consideration is given to the lighting of the development so as not to add to the already considerable light pollution caused by the existing industrial area.

The applicants were also present and their comments can be read in the published minutes of the meeting.

Yours sincerely

Graham Hunt
Town Clerk