



North West Bicester Eco-Town

Bicester

Role

Quod is providing ongoing strategic advice on this employment-led mixed use site. The scheme forms part of an eco-town proposal for 6,000 new homes, strategic and community infrastructure, and employment development to the north west of Bicester.

Quod was instructed on the project following refusal of planning permission by Cherwell District Council in 2016. Key issues to be overcome related to the proposed mix of commercial uses at the site (which was not in full accordance with the Development Plan), the scale of development and its associated landscape impacts, access arrangements, and the delivery of strategic infrastructure to support the wider eco-town.

Quod coordinated the successful planning appeal process and provided expert witness planning services at the Public Inquiry. We were responsible for the instruction of Leading Counsel and management of the appeal, including the preparation of evidence and management of the multi-disciplinary consultant team.

Alongside the appeal, Quod led the preparation and successful negotiation of two further planning applications at the site. These were both deemed EIA development by the Council; Quod coordinated the preparation of the Environmental Statements to support the applications and prepared the Socio-Economics chapter. Through strategic engagement with the local planning authority, we were able to minimise the scope of the EIA.

The locally granted planning permissions were used to establish a planning “fall back” for the appeal. By the time of the appeal, Quod had established common ground with the local planning authority on all matters apart from the scale of contributions required in connection with the delivery of strategic infrastructure and CIL compliance. Through the appeal, Quod secured more commercially

Description

Employment-led mixed use development

Client

Albion Land

Planning Authority

Cherwell District Council

Expertise

Planning	✓
CIL	
Environmental Planning	✓
Development Economics	
Socio-economic	✓
Infrastructure	
Strategic Land Promotion	
Regeneration	
CPO	

Project Type

Infrastructure	
Major Mixed Use	✓
Residential	
Industrial & Logistics	
Retail & Commercial	

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preferable planning obligations and conditions compared to the locally granted consents, which had the effect of reducing the cost of planning obligations by circa £1 million.

We have subsequently negotiated further flexibility in the outline planning consent granted at appeal via a minor material amendment and secured reserved matters approval for the first phase of employment development at the site. Quod have been responsible for coordinating the design team throughout. We engaged the local planning authority and other key stakeholders in a series of pre-application discussions to ensure that the scheme was deliverable but accorded with their aspirations for the site.

We were also instructed to lead on the discharge of conditions and planning obligations in advance of commencement of development and, through our coordinated and focused approach, ensured these were all addressed in a matter of weeks to enable early delivery. Work on reserved matters for the second phase of the commercial development will begin soon.