

Notes on Warehouses – COLD (Committee on Logistics Developments)

Introduction

The COLD group represents the Parishes within MCNP. COLD is essentially a sub-committee of MCNP Forum), these Parishes are:

- Lower Heyford Parish Council
- Upper Heyford Parish Council
- Steeple Aston Parish Council
- Middle Aston Parish Meeting
- North Aston Parish Meeting
- Somerton Parish Council
- Middleton Stoney Parish Council
- Fritwell Parish Council
- Ardley with Fewcott Parish Council (lead parish for legal purposes)
- Kirtlington Parish Council
- Duns Tew Parish Council
- Heyford Park Residents Association
- Dorchester Group

COLD was set-up to address the concerns of the parishes regarding the erection of multiple warehouses at and around Junction 10 of the M40. The following is a short report on the status of these applications.

OXSRFI

- The Strategic Rail Freight Interchange is referred as an “NSIP” - Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project, this application would have ultimately been assessed by PINS the Planning Inspectorate and then referred to the then Secretary of State for Transport. Yet it has been proposed by a speculative developer with a registered business in a tax haven.
- This project has officially been placed on hold in April (positioned as a “slight pause”) ostensibly because of costs associated with improving highways at Junction 9 and 10 of the M40. I suspect other motives. COLD have suspended work on this until it is restarted - if ever. A COLD colleague has done some work based on his expertise, evaluating the payback the developers could expect to get back from this development over time – early operating margins were very low when calculated over a year ago. Capital costs are rising as interest rates increase, this makes the project look less viable for the medium term.
- We have also identified a government consultation on Freight and Logistics Reform. With the research we have done on the OXSRFI, we feel in a good position to make a good contribution to this consultation, which we shall draft and submit by the October 2023 deadline.
- In summary, we have assembled some very good arguments and research we feel can be used against this development. We continue to monitor and will get back to work if the project is reactivated.

Baynards Green Applications

- Albion Land and Tritax multiple warehouse applications are still ongoing, the only posts to the CDC Planning Portal have been a tentative junction improvement plan at the A43 Baynards Green roundabout. COLD did comment on as inadequate. There has been some archaeological survey work in the form of a report posted, which I have a local historian looking at to assess its significance and importance.
- The main hurdle to progress we see, is the need for junction improvements and the withdrawal of the £18.8m funding originally earmarked from the OCC Growth Deal to improve the junction has given these developers a headache. We do know that National highways continue a dialogue on junction improvements and have asked them to re-model traffic based on the Bicester Traffic Model. At least Three, 3 Month delays to Highways approval have been issued, the latest was June 2023.
- The response from Parish Councils and residents was overwhelmingly against these proposals. When new documentation is lodged, COLD will evaluate and assess our response and if necessary, communicate with Parish Councils. It is true to say that both Tritax and Albion Land have invested significantly in these applications, so it is fair to say they are not going to give up easily.
- COLD will continue to monitor these applications. If anyone wants to join the COLD committee, please let me (jon.boyce@fritwell.org.uk) know.

Jon Boyce
Chair COLD Group
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