

Special Report: Speculative development applications in the Cherwell Valley-Bicester area – December 2025 updates underlined

This is a live document I'm using to brief affected parish councils on the current situation regarding the speculative planning applications affecting the area between the River Cherwell and the edge of Bicester, particularly:

- Heyford Park planning applications
- The parallel New Towns Task Force-recommended project
- OxSRFI Ardley
- Puy du Fou
- Warehouses by Albion Land and Tritax at Baynards Green.

I've also included Great Wolf and the Mullin project at Enstone Airfield, as they have come up in discussion.

The aim of this is to ensure that parish councils have access to current information regarding the status of these giant projects. Feel free to share this document.

Context

As of 18 December there are planning applications live for Puy du Fou and Heyford Park growth; however, Heyford Park has also been included in the Government's New Towns Task Force report. The rail freight interchange at Ardley forms part of a different process. Comments can be made on planning applications at any stage until determination. The Albion and Tritax applications are to be taken back to Planning Committee for redetermination on 15th January.

Timescales are less clear; a decision on Ardley would be expected in mid-2027. Based on the time taken to determine significant planning applications, a decision on Puy du Fou might be expected in a similar timescale, although CDC will be encouraged to bring it to a Planning Committee sooner. As things stand, as all these applications are speculative, each of them has to be considered solely on their own merit. However, there is highways work ongoing to determine the effect of cumulative impacts, a Strategic Environmental Assessment is to be produced by the Government's New Towns workstream, and the County Council is working at pace to develop a Movement & Place Plan [now due to be brought to Cabinet in March 2026 in amended form] which will help clarify key infrastructure requirements for the area.

The Government's Oxford-Cambridge Growth Commission, headed by former Olympics advisor Neale Coleman, published its interim report in December.

***NEW* Hawkwell Village: NW of Bicester**

Promoters Hallam Land Management has submitted a significant update on its application ref 21/04275/OUT for 3,100 homes between Bicester and Bucknell. This is again a speculative application.

Heyford Park

On Sunday 28 September the Government published its New Towns Task Force report identifying Heyford Park as one of twelve New Town sites. In response, the Government has commenced work on a Strategic Environmental Assessment [SEA]. The SEA is due to be published for consultation in Spring 2026.

The Task Force has recommended Development Corporations are set up for New Towns. The Planning Bill currently progressing through Parliament amends existing legislation to give these structures additional powers.

There is an existing live planning application ref 25/02190/HYBRID for the Heyford Park 'Masterplan' development, submitted in September 2025. The working assumption has to be that this application will remain live until such time as it is determined, withdrawn or in some way set aside. The Housing Secretary has the power to call-in decisions on applications in the interim period following the New Towns report being published but before delivery vehicles are in place.

To the east of the area controlled by Dorchester Living, construction has started for around 90 homes being built by Barratt David Wilson; there is existing outline permission on land North of Camp Road for a further 230 houses, and an outline application by Richborough Estates for a further 475 houses is expected to be submitted very early in 2026. It is likely but not confirmed that these parcels of land would be incorporated into the New Town land area. Other live Heyford Park planning applications include a new school as part of the 2018 'hybrid' application and to expand car breaking operations on the runway. Planning permission has now been granted for the long-awaited HGV access route via Chilgrove Drive.

Puy du Fou

The theme park proposal is now an outline planning application ref 25/02232/OUT on Cherwell's planning portal.

OxSFRI (Ardley Rail Freight Interchange)

The Oxfordshire Strategic Rail Freight Interchange – OxSFRI for short – has concluded its pre-submission [Stage 2] consultation. This is not a planning application as this is designated a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project. The project website contains a large number of detailed documents. By law, issues raised during the consultation have to be addressed and responded to before the application for a Development Consent Order is made; there would then be an inquiry before a Government planning inspector, before a final decision is made by the Secretary of State for Transport.

I am [campaigning for the reopening of Ardley station](#), the site of which is adjacent to the project site; the promoters say reopening wouldn't be affected by the development, but this is one of the issues needing to be tested at the enquiry.

Baynards Green warehouses

The Albion Land application received a resolution to grant planning permission in July; a Section 106 agreement is now being negotiated. The Tritax application was refused, but the Albion and Tritax applications are to be taken back to Planning Committee for redetermination on 15th January.

Great Wolf

My current understanding is that Great Wolf's US owners have paused construction (which has started) while they explore the feasibility of two additional UK sites. They

remain committed to constructing the Chesterton resort using the planning permission already granted at appeal.

Mullin Museum project

I am told by West Oxfordshire District Council colleagues that this site (which has planning permission) is now owned by the owners of the Soho House group. They are looking to take it forward, pending modifications to the scheme approved by WODC, with construction due to start some time in 2027.

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