



Canterbury City Council

Highways and Transportation

Ashford Highway Depot

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Date: 21 May 2019

Application -	CA/17/01866/FOS
Location -	Land at Hillborough, Sweechbridge Road, Herne Bay
Proposal -	Planning application for a mixed use development including up to 955 dwellings comprising: Detailed proposals for the erection of 194 new dwellings, 1 no. Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP), a new vehicular access (via priority junction) onto Sweechbridge Road (north), provision of realigned vehicular access to Sweechbridge Road (south), new westbound on slip to, and modified westbound off-slip from, A299 Thanet Way to Heart in Hand Road, upgraded alignment of May Street, associated internal roads/footpaths/cycleways, sustainable drainage system, earthworks, public open space, landscaping (inc woodland) and street lighting. Outline application for up to 761 additional dwellings with all matters reserved except access (excluding internal circulation) also including: up to 33,000 sq.m. of employment/commercial floorspace with associated parking spaces comprising employment units (within Use Class B1(a), B1 (c) B2 and B8) (27,000 sqm) and a 65 no. bed care-home (Use Class C2) (4,500 sq.m.

Thank you for consulting the Highway Authority on the above application for which we have the following observations and comments on the revised Supplementary Transport Assessment.

Development proposals

Sweechbridge Road Priority Junction- The updated drawing ITB8344-SK-36 REV D includes additional kerb radius to accommodate the 12m bus and 11.4m refuse vehicle as requested. The arrangement as revised is now agreed.

It is acknowledged that the junction will be completed prior to the first occupation.

Sweechbridge Road/May Street/Heart in Hand Roundabout – The principles of this junction arrangement are agreed as outlined on drawing number ITB8344-SK-20. The arrangement had previously been tracked for a 16.5m long HGV's and a 12m rigid bus and are agreed to operate effectively.

A condition will be required to ensure that the junction will be completed prior to the first occupation of land to the South of the railway and that a Road Safety Audit would be completed at the time of any reserved matters applications.

The Boulevard Access - The principles of this junction arrangement were agreed as outlined on drawing number ITB8344-SK-026 however the applicant has sought to amend this with

disagreement from the Highway Authority. It is however agreed that the link and point of access are required. In their latest submission the applicant is suggesting that the vehicular link to Altira will be pursued by best endeavours prior to the completion of phase 3 of the development. None of the phasing figures provided demonstrate acceptable access to the adjoining supermarket, employment and other amenities in the Margate Road area. This approach demonstrates that the combined landowners for this application are not working in a co-ordinated fashion and it is unacceptable to consider the elements of an allocation in isolation. The Site 3 Local Plan policy requires a link to Altira and limited access to Sweechbridge Road. Further to that it is assumed that the Southern parcel would not comply with Kent Design Standards which requires two vehicular points of access for developments greater than 300 units. The breakup of land within the allocation is clearly unhelpful. Our position remains that limited development of the Southern Parcel should be considered without assurance that the policies can be met. It is recommended that a suitably worded condition restricts any development on land South of the railway to 50 units or until such time as a publicly available link to "The Boulevard" West of the application is provided.

There are a combination of issues caused by the landownership breakup of the land within the allocation. As such the following conditions approach is suggested so as to protect the existing highway network and residents.

1. That a condition be placed on the Kitewood application CA/19/00557/OUT that they must construct a publicly accessible highway from the Boundary West, to the boundary of the Taylor Wimpey land, prior to commencement. Reason: Sustainable access from the development must be provided to the Altira Business Park and ensure the allocation meets its site specific policy requirements. Without such a link, an unacceptable increase in additional traffic would be expected to route along the Sweechbridge Road resulting in significant safety and congestions concerns.
2. That a condition be placed on this "Taylor Wimpey" application, that they must provide a suitable access for construction of the adjoining Kitewood land, prior to any occupation. Reason: The residential streets through Beltinge are unsuitable for construction traffic and access will be required for the entire allocated site through the Taylor Wimpey land.

Traffic generated by the development to the store and other amenities at Altira Park and employment should not be reliant on vehicular access via the A299 or Beltinge. Such action would necessitate vehicle only access and fail to comply with National and Local planning policy.

Internal Site Layout –The internal site highway layout parameters submitted in the phase 1 masterplan are agreed.

The updated street lighting plan T306/40 Rev G includes full illumination for the May St NMU link which is welcomed however the following comments have been received from our lighting engineer. *"The proposed lanterns are not to KCC requirements as we do not use Philips luminaires. Attached for reference is a copy of the most recent approved materials list. Any lighting proposed for adoption needs to adhere to this document. This drawing shows lux level contours, but there is no indication of the proposed or achieved lighting levels in terms of average and minimum lux values or uniformity values.*

The key on the above mentioned drawing denotes that the columns on The Avenue North are 8 metres tall, whilst the rest are 5 metres. This suggest to me a higher lighting level and uniformity requirement for this section of road, though I don't understand why the lighting does not extend as far as the junction with Sweechbridge Road.

There are no details of column specs, service provider, secondary isolator specs etc, though these are usually submitted at the 'detailed design' phase so I would expect them to be provided further along during the formal S38 / S278 submission. Attached for the developers reference is a list of items required as part of the S38 formal submission."

The TRO strategy drawing T306/41 Rev E is now correct and includes a Southbound only restriction for D-G along with a weight restriction between points H-I to prevent HGV use of the Southern Boulevard.

The adoptable surfaces drawing T306/69 has been reviewed and is agreed.

Junction Assessments

The updated junction assessments at 2024 using the KCC sensitivity rates have all been reviewed. It is accepted that the correct rates have been applied and all junctions, save for the Sweechbridge shuttle workings, are acceptable once the mitigations proposed are in place.

Sweechbridge Road Shuttle workings

The applicant has provided a detailed review of the shuttle workings and attempted to answer the three main questions raised by the Highway Authority. These being;

1. Why can the Sweechbridge Road not be widened to remove the need for the shuttle working.
2. What alternative to increasing vehicular flows on Sweechbridge Road can be identified?
3. At what level of development will the Sweechbridge Road shuttle working reach operational capacity?

A review of each questions response is taken in order below.

1. The applicant has acknowledged that the lane narrows to as little as 3.88m at the point the shuttle workings are proposed to 6.79m over the bridge. It is agreed that the bridge itself is not therefore the constraining factor to vehicular flows along the Sweechbridge Road. The TA presents information regarding a peak two way flow of 619 vehicles. A further count at the location was completed in 2018 and the results confirm that the stated peak flow figures are appropriate. The flows of the 2024 AM peak with development demonstrate two way flows of 1114 movements, demonstrating an increase of 80%. This is clearly a severe impact on the lanes two way flows. Using the Kent design Guides standards this road serves a greater number than 300 dwellings and should therefore be capable of meeting Local Distributor Road standards. This has a mandatory minimum width of 6.0m. Given the location of the site it is imperative that a bus service is maintained, and this would ordinarily be expected to increase to a 6.2m width to meet with Stagecoach guidance. The applicants response confirms that no approaches have been made to landowners either side of the road for fear of a high ransom being required. As no approach has been made there is no evidence provided to confirm this assumption. The question has therefore not been answered to our satisfaction and again suggest that evidence of land value be demonstrated.
2. An alternative route has been proposed, upgrading the existing May St bridge within the development to allow for one-way Southbound movements. The impacts of this introduction have not been demonstrated, however it can be assumed that introducing

this would reduce the developments AM peak Southbound movements. Whilst reducing movements some Southbound flows the Northbound increase will remain a significant impact. The applicant has suggested that widening or installing new bridges across the railway would introduce ransom and further prejudice the sites viability. Again though no evidence of ransoms has been demonstrated.

3. The applicant acknowledges that a junction is considered to be at operational capacity with a degree of saturation of 85% although the modelling demonstrates this is exceeded. Whilst the applicant demonstrates that the flow clears within one cycle of the lights it cannot consider the queues and interaction with Sweechbridge Road queues that would build at the sites Northern access. The applicant has therefore reviewed the impact to consider at what point a trigger would be required for the May St bridge to be implemented to avoid queueing across the Northern site access. In section 4.2.2 of the summary note it is explained that the site access is 45m North of the stop line so that the 10th vehicle would block vehicles egressing the site or those arriving southbound to right turn into the site. However in paragraph 4.3.2 the trigger requirements are assumed as being either the 85% or the queue extending to 12 vehicles where the Northern access is blocked. Having already identified that 10 vehicles would block the junction our opinion is that a 10 vehicle queue should determine the trigger. This is reached at the point of full occupation of the 194 phase 1 development.

Sweechbridge shuttle summary.

The proposed lights continue to cause concern in terms of both modelling capacity and delay, being of severe impact compared to that of the base tests. Whilst the applicant claims viability issues and ransom issues, they have at no point demonstrated any evidence to suggest that this is the case. The road width on approach reduces to 4.8 metres for a significant 60m section and therefore does not comply with Kent Design road width standards for the main access to development of over 300 units. Nor does it meet with requirements from the bus operators which, given the sites relatively remote location, must be taken into account. The applicant is again requested to suggest an approach that could result in the widening of Sweechgate Road to comply with standards, avoiding the installation of traffic lights. The Highway Authority would be willing to discuss this issue further with the applicant with a view to finding alternative solutions to the road width issues. The original assessment submitted also concludes that with full development of the allocation that saturation of the Southbound lights reach 99% with a queue of 30 vehicles. The Northbound lights would reach a saturation of 96% with a queue of 17 vehicles. As both approaches reach saturation levels above the operational capacity it is can be gauged that queueing vehicles would not clear in each cycle leading to increasing delay and queue lengths. The Northbound queue is demonstrated to reach 17 vehicles or 85 metres making it close to impacting on the proposed Southern May St/A299 exit roundabout. The Sweechbridge Shuttle workings have not been proven to operate effectively without causing significant delays. On the evidence presented, the Highway Authority cannot therefore accept them as acceptable mitigation.

Hoath distribution and Herne Relief Road

In my representation of August last year it was agreed that the proposals outlined in Appendix G of the Transport Assessment, combined with the improvements to the A299 slips and Herne Relief Road were sufficient so as to comply with the Local Plan site policy. That stance remains dependent on the mitigation being in place by early occupations to discourage early

development of habitual use of the Hoath Road route. To date it is unclear as to how the combined owners of the allocated site intend to pay for contribution as agreed in the Herne Relief Road Heads of Terms. As two of the applications have been submitted, we request that a combined Section 106 agreement is prepared covering the full allocations required £2,249,000.00. It has been suggested that partial payments of this requirement be made which would result in full receipt not occurring until the 750th dwelling. This approach would only encourage traffic through the villages of Hoath and Herne and therefore not meet with the sites policy requirements. Additionally it would introduce significant traffic generation with uncertainty of delivery of the Herne Relief Road. It should be noted that the inspectors report on the Strode Farm application found that the severity of impact on Herne village due to expected increases in traffic was beyond acceptable levels. Subsequent to that the applicant of the Strode Farm application has agreed to make payment of their contribution by occupation of the 250th dwelling. Using the Planning Authorities latest Annual Monitoring Report this is predicted to be in the year 2023. Having reviewed the earlier representations and inspector direction from the Strode Farm application it is calculated that full payment of the site contribution is paid before occupation of the 350th Taylor Wimpey occupation. Assuming occupations are as predicted by the Annual Monitoring Report, at that point the A291 would be just over the 750 acceptable flows determined at the previous public inquiry. It is therefore deemed that the most appropriate condition is that full payment of the allocation is paid by the end of the fourth annual anniversary of any signed Section 106 or occupation of the 350th dwelling, whichever is the sooner. It will be for the Planning Authority or applicant to ensure that equalisation of the additional Relief Road contribution across the allocation occurs through any individual Section 106 agreements.

Thanet Way on slip

The applicant has sought to demonstrate that the on slip improvements would not be necessary until the occupation of the 250th dwelling based upon the predicted capacity. At 250 dwellings the number of turnings towards this junction from the development would be 47 in the AM peak. At the same point in time the modelling suggests that the average time waiting to exit would be 65 seconds and a queue of 4 vehicles. However the flows placed through the junction assessment include a scenario when all other mitigations are in place. As proposed, access to the West via "The Boulevard" would not be available. It should therefore be considered that the analysis presented underestimates the expected movements. The recently submitted Kitewood application demonstrates that an increase of 38% of traffic generated from the allocation as a whole may have to use this junction without "The Boulevard" link in place. Conversely, with the Boulevard in place the adjoining supermarket would be expected to generate link trips which could reduce flows at this junction.

The Highway Authority are therefore willing to accept the 250 occupational trigger for these improvements subject to "The Boulevard" being open and available at our above mentioned (50 units South of the railway) trigger. It is considered that driver choice would be significantly influenced by an expected 65 second delay at this junction, causing unacceptable impacts on the rural lanes of Broomfield, Herne and Hoath.

Phase 1

Following the response on the detailed element on 25th January, the HA wishes to make the following additional comments:

Shared surfaces:

Shared surface 4 has now been changed to Street 3 with a 2 metre wide footway on one side. The applicants revised approach to shared surfaces is acceptable.

Private Drives:

The access width of all private drives and side roads on to The Avenue North have now been increased to at least 4.8 metres.

Parking:

The level of visitor parking on Street 2 is still insufficient and it appears as though additional parking bays can be provided in the following locations with some minor layout amendments:

- 1 space outside plots 138 and 139
- 1 space outside plot 142

Due to visibility constraints and other physical issues, such as the presence of ditches, it is accepted that provision of additional on street parking is not possible on The Avenue North, Street 1 and Private Drive serving plots 96-100. Additional on street parking is available on Street 1 and other side roads to provide some visitor parking facilities in areas of The Avenue North which are lacking parking.

The highway authority wishes to maintain its stance in regards to electric vehicle (EV) charging point provision as outlined in our comments on 25th January. All allocated parking bays should have access to a charging point.

Tracking:

The revised tracking is acceptable.

Access to foul pumping station:

The revised turning area to facilitate access to the pumping station is acceptable.

Surface treatments:

The hard-surfacing plans have been updated and granite setts have been removed.

Temporary turning head:

The turning head has been relocated as suggested.

Visibility:

The applicants have noted comments regarding trees not being placed within access visibility splays. There are some areas where trees seem to be placed in close proximity to street lights, the KCC street lighting engineer is currently assessing these plans and will provide detailed comments shortly.

Bus service infrastructure:

The revised plans (drawing ref: T306/85) show the bus turning area and bus only markings as requested. No details have been provided in regard to the remaining bus stop infrastructure. A hard standing with footway connection must be provided at every bus stop within the phase 1 development, along with a shelter and bus stop flag.

Pedestrian / cycle links:

The applicants have shown a system of street lighting along the May Street cycle route as requested.

In general, the HA are satisfied with the amendments made following our comments on 25th January, however matters relating to parking and bus service infrastructure still need to be addressed.

Yours faithfully

Colin Finch

Principal Transport & Development Planner