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Response to Planning application from Hertfordshire County Council (T and CP GDP Order 2015)

Director of Planning	District ref:	6/2020/2248/OUTLINE
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council	HCC ref:	WH/3568/2020
The Campus	HCC received:	28 September 2020
Welwyn Garden City	Area manager:	Matthew Armstrong
Hertfordshire	Case officer:	Lindsay McCauley
AL8 6AW		

Location

ROUND HOUSE FARM LAND OFF OF BULLENS GREEN LANE COLNEY HEATH ST. ALBANS AL4 0PP

Application type

Outline

Proposal

Outline permission for the erection of up to 100 dwellings, with all matters reserved except access

Decision

Notice is given under article 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 that the Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority recommends that permission be refused for the following reasons:

- 1) Insufficient information is provided to demonstrate that the impacts of development would not have a severe impact on the wider operation of the network, contrary to Hertfordshire County Councils LTP4 Policy 5 (Development Management). Junction modelling is required to demonstrate that junctions in the vicinity of the development would not be severely impacted by the development.
- 2) Detailed design of the access is required to demonstrate that safe and suitable access is achievable.
- 3) The applicant should provide swept path assessments for the proposed access which demonstrate the safe access of a refuse vehicle of L:11.375m, W:2.550m can be achieved into and out of the site in a forward gear. The swept path assessments should demonstrate that a refuse vehicle can either enter or depart when there is opposing traffic (i.e. enter as a vehicle is stopped to depart the site).
- 4) Insufficient information is provided to demonstrate that necessary changes to local speed limits are achievable, in accordance with Hertfordshire County Councils LTP4 Policy 15 (Speed Management)

5) Visibility from the access, without speed limit changes is insufficient. The proposed access shall be prejudicial to the safety of users of the highway contrary to Hertfordshire County Councils LTP4 Policy 5 (Development Management)

Description of Proposal

The application seeks outline approval for the construction of up to 100 residential dwellings comprising a mix of detached, semi-detached and terraced properties. The development proposals also include associated parking, landscaping and open space.

Site Description

The site is located in the Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council planning district. The site is currently arable farmland located on the eastern fringe of Colney Heath and is bordered by Fellowes Lane to the south and Bullens Green Lane to the east. It is proposed that only one vehicle access point for the site be provided. Access would be gained from Bullens Green Lane.

Bullens Green Lane is an unclassified road subject to a 60mph speed limit adjacent to the site, reducing to 30mph north of the site near the residential dwellings.

Analysis

The following documentation has been submitted in support of this application:

- Outline Design Plans
- Transport Assessment (TA)
- Travel Plan (TP)
- Planning Statement

History

A review of the Council's online record of planning applications has identified no significant planning applications of relevance at this site.

Pre-application advice was held with HCC Highways on the proposals, the advice provided is appended to the TA.

Planning Policy

The applicant has provided evidence that the Welwyn Hatfield Draft Local Plan (2016) policy has been reviewed. Due to the nature of the application, this is considered acceptable. For future reference, the applicant should also provide evidence of consideration of the following policy documentation:

- National Planning Policy Framework (2019);
- National Planning Practice Guidance (2014);
- Town and County Planning General Permitted Development (2015);
- Welwyn Hatfield District Plan (2008);
- Welwyn Hatfield District Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance Parking Standards (2004);
- HCC's Roads in Hertfordshire: Highway Design Guide (3rd Edition); and,
- HCC's Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4).

Trip Generation

The proposed trip rates were agreed at the pre-application stage with HCC. The resulting trip generation as agreed with HCC is 48 two-way morning peak hour trips and 49 two-way evening peak hour trips.

This is therefore considered acceptable.

Trip Distribution

The TA identifies census data for key employment areas and google maps was used to identify the trip distribution. However, the data is not presented in the TA for review. The raw data, assumptions and network diagrams distributing the trips across the network need to be supplied in the TA for HCC to review.

Impact on the Highway

Junction Assessment

Whilst pre-application advice, and the general conclusions of the TA are that, in principle the HA are satisfied with the principle of development, it is important to clarify that the TA conclusions (by its' own recognition) are incomplete. The HCC Highways has identified junctions for assessment to ensure transport impacts are not severe. Such assessment is not yet available and would be predicated on traffic counts yet to be undertaken.

Highway Safety

Bullens Green Lane is a Local Access Road within the hierarchy of Hertfordshire roads. Vehicle speeds past the proposed site access are subject to a 60mph limit.

A review of CrashMap for the past five years identified a serious incident on Bullens Green Lane. The incident resulted in serious injuries to a pedestrian whom was walking in the highway and struck by a vehicle from behind. The TA identifies there is no pattern to the incidents; however, incorrectly references the one serious incident as the pedestrian being in the carriageway but not at a crossing. The incident record identifies the pedestrian was not crossing, it does not refer to a crossing point. At this location there is no dedicated separated pedestrian walkway and vehicles park on the roadside constraining the space available for road users. Therefore, this incident needs to be investigated further, correctly referenced in the TA and the applicant should identify suitable mitigation to ensure safety is not hindered further through the potential intensification of pedestrian movements associated with the development.

Further to this, the development proposals require the change of the speed limit to 30mph, and as a minimum would require limits to be changed to a maximum of 40mph to suit the visibility splays shown as able to be provided within land within applicants control and / or highway. The County Council sets out its' approach to speed management within its' Speed Management Strategy.

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/highways/transport-planning/local-transport-plan-live/speed-management-strategy.pdf>

Critically, the application provides no evidence that the proposed speed limit change is in accordance with these provisions. No speed survey data is available for Bullens Green Lane to evidence that the proposed change in speed limit is achievable, nor are any measures to introduce appropriate restrictions on speed proposed. Further, there is limited evidence within the Masterplan to the site that the frontage to Bullens Green Lane would be in accordance with the Speed Management Strategy. All development is well screened with no active frontage to Bullens Green Lane, contrary to the SMS - the introduction of a speed limit roundel alone will do little to communicate to a driver on this route that the environment is an urban area.

The failure to provide a scheme and evidence to enable the Hertfordshire Speed Management Group (involving members of the Police and the Highway Authority) prevents any confirmation of

acceptance of speed limit changes. Retention of existing limits (60mph) means that the proposed access is not provided with adequate visibility, and would therefore be contrary to LTP4 Policy 5 (Development Management).

Speed surveys, as well as a change to the masterplan principles to fundamentally change Bullens Green Lane at this location would be required in order for the HA and Police to consider changes to limits, alternatively visibility compliant with DMRB standards would be required for the proposed access, which is presently not the case. On the above basis the HA cannot approve or support the proposed access.

Refuse and Service Delivery

The TA does not provide details on refuse and service delivery, these should be included in the TA. As it is the intention of the applicant to offer the site entrance off of Bullens Green Lane for adoption, the swept path movements of a refuse service vehicle should be provided to ensure the vehicle can complete the movement into and out of the site without infringing on the operation and safety of the highway.

Highway Layout

Vehicle Access

The access off Bullens Green Lane (provided at 5.5m carriageway width) is acceptable, but should be provided with swept path details to identify adequacy of the kerb radii given the width of Bullens Green Lane.

Given Bullens Green Lane is proposed as the only site access, this would lead to a significant intensification of movements at this point and therefore the adequacy of Bullens Green Lane for its' length (4.8m minimum) would need to be assessed with any localised widening delivered through off-site highway improvements.

Pedestrian access

Pedestrian access is promoted via existing Public Right of Way (PRoW) running across the northern boundary of the site and connecting Bullens Green Lane. There are proposed internal footways that connect again to Bullens Green Lane at the north east tip of the site and also on to land adjacent to Admirals Close.

Pedestrian access internally is acceptable and details of which can be confirmed via a reserved matters application. However, the proposed external connection on to Bullens Green Lane without any off-site pedestrian facilities is not acceptable and presents a major safety risk to pedestrians which has already been identified through the collision data analysis. Further information is needed in support of pedestrian movements off site to promote that the site as a sustainable development and adheres to the policy standards on active travel as identified in LTP4.

Swept Path Assessment

The applicant has not provided swept paths as part of this application. Swept path analysis is required for a refuse vehicle and fire tender vehicle. Movements should be presented across the site but of particular interest to HCC Highways would be the proposed vehicular access and any potential conflict with the edge of the highway and movement to and from the highway and the site.

Parking

Car Parking

Car parking provision is in accordance with 2004 parking SPD with no departures from the standards identified. It is acceptable at this stage to confirm the standards to be adhered to and details to be presented as part of future reserved matters applications.

Cycle Parking

Cycle parking provision is in accordance with 2004 parking SPD with no departures from the standards identified. It is acceptable at this stage to confirm the standards to be adhered to and details to be presented as part of future reserved matters applications.

Accessibility

Public Transport

The TA states access to public transport can be obtained off Hall Gardens and Roestock Lane and identified these as being within five and 13 minutes walking distance, respectively. Census data from 2011 is used to identify existing bus patronage on the presented services, however no conclusion is derived as to current bus patronage or an assessment of the current level of service provision against demand in Colney Heath as the census data is near on a decade old.

It is identified that kerb improvements to existing bus stops was requested at pre-application and this would be brought forward by the developer. However, no specifics as to the improvements or where they would be are presented in the submitted documents.

Furthermore, no detail is provided as to how access to the bus stops would be made from the site. The main concern being the access to the Roestock Lane bus stops having to be made via Bullens Green Lane and the issue regarding safety along this route for pedestrians with no dedicated separated footway.

Further information as to the level of current patronage and proposed pedestrian access to bus stop facilities needs to be provided for HCC Highways to be satisfied the development proposals would not exacerbate existing safety issues and also overburden public transport facilities.

This also applies to proposed train service access; further clarity as to proposed sustainable access routes, facilities supplied between the development and Welham Green Train Station and current patronage levels of services are required. Furthermore, it is noted that only 32 car parking spaces are available at the train station and should this car park be over-subscribed during peak times, once the development comes forward this could lead to an increase in on street parking as an indirect result of increased commuter demand.

Walking and Cycling

Walking facilities in and around the development are detailed, including connections to PRoWs and existing facilities. As mentioned previously there is a concern as to pedestrian access via Bullens Green Lane and pedestrians at risk of using this road to access northern sections of Colney Heath or facilities on Roebuck Lane. Further consideration is required as to the lack of pedestrian facilities on Bullens Green Lane and the potential safety implications to increasing pedestrian movements at this location, given there has already been a serious incident involving a pedestrian and a car.

Cycling facilities are adequate with safe routes and access to the national cycle route network. No further information is required for this.

Travel Plan

The HCC Travel Plan team has provided the following amendments for the TP after their review:

The submitted Travel Plan would require additional information to be submitted within an amended Travel Plan, prior to occupation. The additional information required is as follows:

- . A full Travel Plan will be required prior to occupation, please also note that HCC no longer use the 'term Green Travel Plan' this should be called a 'Travel Plan'.
- . Interim TPC contact will be required
- . It should be noted in the TP that secondary contact needs to be provided to HCC once a TPC has been appointed.
- . A Statement from the developers/business stating that they are committed to implementing the travel plan
- . Time allocated to TPC role and frequency on site this can be an average amount of time per month
- . More measures required: e.g. cycle training for residents, Dr Bike
- . A minimum of £50 per flat and £100 per house is required in sustainable travel vouchers.
- . Baseline targets/data are Missing - Travel plan should have an interim/estimated baseline - this will then be confirmed after baseline surveys baseline survey should be undertaken at 75% occupation.
- . Surveys should be undertaken from first occupation until 5 years post full occupation.
- . Travel Plan should refer that it is expected to be secured via s106 with an evaluation and support fee.

Construction

A Construction Traffic Management Plan would be required to ensure construction vehicles would not have a detrimental impact on the vicinity of the site and a condition will be required to provide adequate parking for construction vehicles on-site to prevent on-street conflict and impacts to the highway safety.

Planning Obligations / Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council has adopted a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Contributions towards local transport schemes will be sought via CIL if appropriate.

Furthermore, a full travel plan will be required for the site to be in place 5 years post full occupation. A £1,200 per annum Evaluation and Support Fee should be secured by section 106 agreement in accordance with Hertfordshire County Council's Travel Plan Guidance. This should incorporate measures to promote sustainable transport, an appointed travel plan co-ordinator and an appropriate monitoring programme. Residential developments are also required to provide Residential Travel Vouchers for each unit (£100 per house/£50 per flat) to encourage the take up of sustainable modes

Full guidance is available at: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/travelplans, or for more guidance contact: travelplan@hertfordshire.gov.uk.

Conclusion

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) as highway authority has reviewed the application submission and wishes to recommend refusal of the proposed development until the above matters are resolved.

Signed
Lindsay McCauley

16 November 2020