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

Director of Planning
St Albans City & District Council
St Peters Street
St Albans
Hertfordshire
AL1 3JE

District ref: 5/2022/0599
HCC ref: SA/11502/2022
HCC received: 17 March 2022
Area manager: Mark Youngman
Case officer: Samuel Tearle

Location

Land To Rear Of 96 To 106 High Street Colney Heath Hertfordshire

Application type

Full Application

Proposal

Outline application (means of access sought) for up to 45 dwellings including new affordable homes, with areas of landscaping and public open space, including points of access, and associated infrastructure works

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:

- **Pedestrian Access Concerns**

The Highway Authority are concerned the footway network to the east of the site is unsuitable to support the proposed development. The proposed development is expected to result in an increase in vehicular trips, with all vehicles routing on the High Street, and therefore increasing the number of potential conflicts and severance for pedestrians whilst reducing the level of pedestrian comfort and attractiveness of walking.

The access bellmouths for both the High Street 96-106 and Park Lane are unnecessarily wide and represent a risk to pedestrian safety as the width allows vehicles to enter and exit and high speeds. Additionally, there is no formal pedestrian crossing on the High Street that falls on a pedestrian desire line to serve pedestrian trips which route to/from the east of the private access drive and wish to access the primary school entrance on the private access.

To make the planning application acceptable in-line with HCC Local Transport Plan Policies 1,2,5 and NPPF paragraphs 110(a, b) & 112 (a,b,c), the applicant must provide pedestrian infrastructure improvements to the off-site pedestrian network that resolve the above concerns.

- Vehicular Access Design

In order to provide a proposed access in line with HCC LTP Policy 1, the access arrangement must be updated to provide a continuous footway crossover instead of the currently proposed bellmouth arrangement.

The Highway Authority note that the 85th percentile recorded speeds slightly exceed the 30mph speed limit and therefore the (y) visibility splays must be updated based on MfS calculations.

It is noted that no Swept Path Drawings have been submitted at the access. A swept path drawing that shows a large car stationary at the give way line whilst a large car manoeuvres a left turn & right turn into the access must be submitted.

- Parking

The Highway Authority are concerned the proposed changes to the private access road will lead to a displacement of 'unofficial' parking for Colney Heath School & Nursery and football club. No details of current usage have been provided and therefore the Highway Authority are concerned the displacement of parking may result in inappropriate and unsafe parking occurring on sections of the surrounding highway and footway network.

The applicant must submit additional details, including a parking survey during peak school times, that demonstrates the loss of potential parking area will have a negligible impact to safety.

Once these issues have been suitably resolved, the Highway Authority will be in a position to raise no objection subject to planning conditions and obligations.

COMMENTS / ANALYSIS:

Description of Proposal

An outline planning application with access sought has been submitted for a proposed development consisting of 45 dwellings on land to the rear of 96-106 High Street in Colney Heath.

The proposals include changes at the private access road, including the provision of 2m footways on both sides.

Site Description

It is understood the site is currently used as agricultural land. The site is bound to the north by a path and Colney Heath Football Club, to the east by agricultural land, to the south by Public Right of Way 'Colney Heath 041', and to the west by residential property No.s 96-106 High Street.

Vehicular access is via a gate leading to a private access drive and parking area for the recreation ground and football club. The private drive joins the High Street via a footway crossover arrangement.

The private access drive also provides pedestrian access to Colney Heath Junior Mixed Infant and Nursery School.

The section of the High Street which the private access drive joins is subject to a 30mph speed limit, and is a unnumbered classified 'C' highway and falls within an 'L1 Local Distributor' category for HCC's Highways Hierarchy.

Traffic Impact

Trip Generation

The Transport Assessment has included a predicted vehicular trip generation and distribution. The Highway Authority are satisfied with the accuracy of the trip rates used and assignment methodology.

Junction Assessment

The applicant has undertaken a capacity assessment using LinSig of the High Street / A414 North Orbital signal-controlled junction.

The results have shown the impact of the proposed development will not have a nil-detriment effect and will worsen the degree of saturation, queues, and practical reserve capacity which are already approaching / exceeding theoretical capacity. To mitigate these impacts and encourage active travel trips, improvements are sought under subheading 'Pedestrian Access' and 'Planning Obligations'.

Highway Safety

The Transport Assessment has included a review of personal injury collisions over a five-year period. The results showed a high number of collisions had been recorded in the study area, and therefore to mitigate any potential impact, improvements are sought - details can be found under subheading 'Pedestrian Access' and 'Planning Obligations'.

Design Considerations

Vehicular Access

The proposals include the redesign of the existing private access drive and junction with the High Street, as shown on Drawing No. 23356-03 Rev B.

In order to provide an access in line with HCC LTP Policy 1, the access arrangement must be updated to provide a continuous footway crossover instead of the currently proposed bellmouth arrangement.

The Highway Authority note that the 85th percentile recorded speeds slightly exceed the 30mph speed limit and therefore the (y) visibility splays must be updated based on MfS calculations.

It is noted that no Swept Path Drawings have been submitted at the access. A swept path drawing that shows a large car stationary at the give way line whilst a large car undertakes a left turn & right turn into the access must be submitted.

As part of the S278 delivery, any faded lining ('slow' markings / Double Yellow Lines / line markings) and missing signing at the section of the High Street that approaches and fronts the access must be reinstated / or added.

Pedestrian Access

The Highway Authority are concerned the footway network to the east of the site is unsuitable to support the proposed development. The proposed development is expected to result in an increase in vehicular trips, with all vehicles routing on the High Street, and therefore increasing the number of potential conflicts and severance for pedestrians whilst reducing the level of pedestrian comfort and attractiveness of walking.

The access bellmouths for both the High Street 96-106 and Park Lane are unnecessarily wide and represent a risk to pedestrian safety as the width allows vehicles to enter and exit at high speeds.

Additionally, there is no formal pedestrian crossing on the High Street that falls on a pedestrian desire line to serve pedestrian trips which route to/from the east of the private access drive and wish to access the primary school entrance on the private access.

To make the planning application acceptable in-line with HCC Local Transport Plan Policies 1,2,5 and NPPF paragraphs 110(a, b) & 112 (a,b,c), the applicant must provide pedestrian infrastructure improvements to the off-site pedestrian network that resolve the above concerns. Once these improvements are submitted and found to be satisfactory, the Highway Authority will be in a position to raise no objection subject to planning conditions and obligations.

Additionally, it is noted that the 85th percentile speeds on the High Street exceed the stated 30mph speed limit and therefore improved pedestrian crossings on the section of High Street to the east of the site will informally act as a traffic calming measure.

Internal Pedestrian Access

The proposals as shown on Drawing No. 23356-03 Rev B include the provision of 2m wide footways leading from the site access and existing footway network into the site. The Highway Authority are satisfied with the private drive pedestrian infrastructure provision.

Refuse / Servicing / Emergency Access

A set of swept path analysis drawings must be submitted at the reserved matters stage once the layout has been fixed. The swept paths must demonstrate:

- An 11.2m length refuse collection vehicle can enter the site, manoeuvre within a 20m bin drag distance, and exit in a forward gear without having to reverse excessive distance at turning points.
- An fire appliance of 10.1m entering the site, accessing within 45m of all residential units, and exiting in a forward gear.

On-site Parking

The Transport Assessment States Car and Cycle Parking will be provided in accordance with local standards.

Once the above issues have been rectified, the Highway Authority will request that each dwelling is served by an active EV charging unit.

The Highway Authority will also request that each dwelling includes a space that is secure and covered for two cycles.

Parking Concerns

The Highway Authority are concerned the proposed changes to the access road will lead to a displacement of 'unofficial' parking for Colney Heath School & Nursery and football club. No details of current usage have been provided and therefore the Highway Authority are concerned the displacement of parking may result in inappropriate and unsafe parking occurring on sections of the surrounding highway and footway network.

The applicant must submit additional details, including a parking survey during peak school times that demonstrates the loss of potential parking area will have a negligible impact to safety.

Sustainability

The Highway Authority are concerned the site is in a location that is car dependent due to limited number of local amenities, employment opportunities, and public transport (rail) in close proximity.

It is noted in the Transport Assessment that the nearest doctor's surgery, secondary school, dental practice and employment opportunities are all 2km-5km from the site.

Therefore, to make the site acceptable in planning terms, mitigation through enhanced pedestrian improvements outlined under the 'pedestrian access' subheading is sought as this will help encourage trips by active travel modes. In addition to this, to help mitigate the impact of the development, S106 Sustainable Transport planning obligations are sought as set out below.

Planning Obligations

In line with HCC Local Transport Plan, a sustainable transport contribution (via a S106 agreement) is sought in order to mitigate the future impact of the site in terms of vehicle traffic and additional pressures to the active travel and public transport networks. The mitigation will focus on the enhancing and encouraging active travel and public transport use by improving facilities, walking and cycling environments, and improving the safety of trips.

In the absence of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) developer contribution are sought via S106 agreement/s using the HCC's Planning Obligations Guide (2021). HCC's Planning Obligation Guidance implements a two-strand approach to planning obligations in order to address the immediate impacts of the new development (first strand), and the cumulative impacts of all development on non-car networks (second strand).

In accordance with the HCC Planning Obligations Guidance (2021), second strand sustainable transport contributions are sought for residential developments on a unit rate basis of £6,826 per dwelling.

The total S106 sustainable transport contribution sought is £307,170. (note: this contribution may be reduced subject the level of requested improved off-site works detailed under subheading 'pedestrian access').

The Highway Authority will distribute the contributions to the associated schemes to mitigate the impact of the development, typically through schemes identified in the HCC's Local Transport Plan (LTP) and its supporting documents, South-Central Hertfordshire Growth and Transport Plan.

Mitigation to offset the highway and sustainable impact of the site will be sought from Package 30 of the South-Central Hertfordshire Growth and Transport Plan. Package 30 includes the following measures:

- Improving the A414 cycleway between London Colney and Hatfield to facilitate cycle journeys. [Improve the existing footway alongside the A414 to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists between the London Colney Roundabout and the A1001 Comet Way in Hatfield].

- A414 Colney Heath Longabout Improvements. [A safety and capacity related improvement to the existing longabout junction which includes introducing a signal-controlled right turn 'cut through' for traffic exiting from High Street towards A414 East].

CTMP

If the application is permitted planning permission, the Highway Authority request by way of planning condition that a Construction Traffic Management Plan is submitted prior to construction. Due to the sensitive location of the development site, a CTMP is needed to mitigate any adverse impact from the development on the operation and safety of the local highway network.

Conclusion

The Highway Authority have reviewed the development proposals and wishes to raise an objection. Once the issues outlined in this response have been suitable resolved, the Highway Authority will be in a position to raise no objection subject to conditions and obligations.

Signed

Samuel Tearle

11 April 2022