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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: 5/2022/2443
HCC ref: SA/14229/2022
HCC received: 17 October 2022
Area manager: Rosemary Chatindo
Case officer: Chris Carr

Location

Bricket Wood Sports And Country Club, Paintball Site & Bricket Lodge, Lye Lane, Bricket Wood AL2 3TF

Application type

Outline

Proposal

Outline application (access sought) - Demolition of existing buildings and construction of up to 115 dwellings and creation of new access

Recommendation

Notice is given under article 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 that Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority recommends that permission be refused for the following reasons:

- A review of the 5-year accident statistics presented as part of the Paul Mew Associates response dated 26 August 2022.
- Updated traffic flows matrices as used in the latest junction modelling, including the 2035 with and without development scenarios based on the updated trip generation methodology.
- Clarification regarding the future year used for the Tempro assessment.
- A feasibility study or similar that details how the proposed new footway on Lye Lane will be delivered in engineering terms. This would need to include detailed drawings on a topographical base and would need to include details of engineering solutions to mitigate the impact in term of matters such as drainage and trees. It would also require details of any third-party land (i.e. land outside of the public highway) that may be required and details of agreements that have been put in-place to secure use of this land.

- A copy of the original highway boundary plan for Lye Lane

Description of the Proposal

Demolition of existing buildings and construction of up to 115 dwellings and creation of new access.

Site Description

The site is in Bricket Wood, St Alban's, bounded to the west by Lye Lane, with Park Street Lane running east of the site and the M25 running south of the site.

The site is currently occupied by a paintball site, 30 dwellings and woodland.

Access to the site is currently provided from the Lye Lane on the western side of the site. As part of the proposed development a new vehicle access will be provided on Lye Lane further to the north of the existing vehicle access. The existing vehicle access will be closed as part of the development

Pre-Application Consultation

The applicant has undertaken pre-application consultation with HCC, including review of pre-application documents for schemes comprising 113 and 109 residential units respectively.

This included a pre-application meeting on 30 March 2022, at which various matters related to the proposal were discussed by representatives of HCC and the applicant's consultant team. These discussions were then referred to as appropriate in HCC's subsequent response of 4 April 2022.

The 4 April response commented on the following documents, with reference as appropriate to the 30 March meeting:

- Paul Mews Associates, January 2022, Bricket Lodge, Sport and Country Club and Paintball Site, Lye Lane, Bricket Wood, Feasibility Assessment ("the Feasibility Assessment");
- A set of sketch plans from Tom Gristwood Architects, dated 8 February 2022 and titled "Bricket Lodge - Developed Sketch Proposals" ("the Sketch Proposal").
The 4 April response included recommended matters for consideration as part of any Transport Assessment (TA) and Travel Plan (TP). Following this initial pre-application correspondence, HCC reviewed at pre-application stage a draft TA and TP provided by the applicant as follows.
- Paul Mew Associates, July 2022, Proposed Residential Development at Former Bricket Wood Sport and Country Club / Paintball Site, Lye Lane, Bricket Wood, Transport Assessment ("the TA");
- Paul Mew Associates, July 2022, Proposed Residential Development at Former Bricket Wood Sport and Country Club / Paintball Site, Lye Lane, Bricket Wood, Travel Plan ("the TP").

Comments on the TA and the TP were provided to the applicant by HCC on 2 August 2022. In summary the following amendments were recommended by HCC. This excludes matters that were suggested as being able to be addressed at the Reserved Matters stage.

- Base Traffic Conditions and Traffic Surveys. The MCC data may be under-estimating likely volumes part of the time, especially for Park Street Lane. The criticality of this will depend on the criticality of the junction modelling results (when all other modelling parameters are agreed). That is to say, if the agreed junction modelling reveals results close to capacity (or over-capacity), then this potential further variation in volumes could be a concern.
- Missing Tempo input data - to show the selection parameters applied to determine the resultant growth factors.

- The trip generation and distribution methodology accepted subject to correction of one minor error (the modal split percentages of all Census respondents have been applied to the total person TRICS outputs, including those who work at home. This would be incorrect because the TRICS rates would not capture these, as TRICS just determines actual trips to and from a site).
- Junction Modelling. A few errors have been identified in these models (details of which have been provided to the applicant), which will need to be addressed. Discussion on the conclusions of the assessment, as well as any potential need for other junction models, will occur when the models are agreed.
- Improvements to the West Riding/Oak Avenue junction. The 4 April response stated that these proposed improvements will need to be assessed in the TA including the junction modelling and that highway improvements should not seek to provide highway capacity that may induce additional traffic. This has not been assessed in the junction modelling.
- Road Safety Audit. The 4 April response stated that Road Safety Audits will be required as the design is progressed.
- Five-Year Crash Data Assessment. This assessment needs to be updated to include all users (not just accidents involving pedestrians and cyclists). It also does not cover all of the requested locations detailed in the 4 April response.
- Travel Plan. No specific amendments required for the planning application submission version.

The 2 August comments provided by HCC reiterated that, given the site's proximity to major roads, as well as the current lack of safe, convenient pedestrian and cycle provision, there is a significant challenge to make this site sustainable.

Improvements to pedestrian connectivity between the site and local amenities and public transport links, such as Bricket Wood rail station, were highlighted by HCC as being of particular importance. It was noted by HCC in the response dated 2 August that the proposed new footpath presented by the applicant (enclosed within Appendix G of the draft TA and in Appendix E of the TP) running along Lye Lane to link the site to West Riding would be required as a minimum.

It was also highlighted by HCC however that the implementation of this footway may be a significant engineering challenge given for example the presence of ditches and established trees on Lye Lane where the footway is proposed. This may affect its feasibility and in-practice deliverability and may require third-party land (outside of the public highway) in order to adequately mitigate these issues.

Planning Application Documents

The following transport related documents have been submitted with application 5/2022/2443:

- Paul Mew Associates, July 2022, Proposed Residential Development at Former Bricket Wood Sport and Country Club / Paintball Site, Lye Lane, Bricket Wood, Transport Assessment ("the TA").
- Paul Mew Associates, July 2022, Proposed Residential Development at Former Bricket Wood Sport and Country Club / Paintball Site, Lye Lane, Bricket Wood, Travel Plan ("the TP").
- Paul Mew Associates, 26 August 2022, P2584 Bricket Wood Development, Response to HCC comments of 2nd August 2022.

- Allen Transport Consultancy Ltd, September 2022, Lye Lane, Bricket Wood, Hertfordshire, Proposed S278 Highway Works, Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (“S1RSA”) -Appended to the S1RSA Response.
- Paul Mew Associates, September 2022, Lye Lane, Bricket Wood, Stage 1 RSA Response (“the S1RSA Response”).
- Paul Mew Associates, 29 September 2022, P258: Land North of Bricket Wood, Herts, Proposed Site Access Junction Layout Drawing.
- Paul Mew Associates, 29 September 2022, P258: Land North of Bricket Wood, Herts, Proposed New Footway to South (4 Parts).
- Paul Mew Associates, 29 June 2022, P258: Land North of Bricket Wood, Herts, Refuse Vehicle Swept Path Analysis.

Analysis

It is noted that neither the TA nor the TP have been updated since they were submitted for pre-application review. A response by Paul Mew Associates to the pre-application comments provided by HCC on the TA and TP has been submitted and this document has been reviewed by HCC further below. It is noted that this document refers a number of times to an “updated Transport Assessment” being provided. An updated TA is yet to be provided to HCC and it is requested that this be provided for review.

It is also noted that the assessments within the TA, and in the submitted response from Paul Mew Associates dated 26 August 2022, are based on a development quantum of 109 residential units, while the scheme submitted for the planning application seeks up to 115 residential units – i.e. the submitted documents underrepresent the proposed development by up to 6 units. Given that the vehicular trip rates used in the TA to assess the proposed development are robust (0.88 AM Peak Two-Way / 0.83 PM Peak Two-Way) it is considered that any potential discrepancy in terms of traffic impact is suitably offset, although it is again recommended that the TA be updated to reflect this change in unit numbers.

Review of Paul Mew Associates 26th August 2022 - Response to HCC comments of 2nd August 2022

Base Traffic Conditions and Traffic Surveys

The Paul Mew Associates response states:

“As part of this response document, new junction assessments have been carried out and are attached at Appendix A of this response document. These show that the junctions assessed operate within capacity and with minimal queuing. As such, the criticality of amending ATC data as set out in the HCC response is allayed, and therefore potential variations in volumes are not considered to be a concern.”

Updated HCC Response

The junction modelling (discussed below) is yet to be confirmed by HCC as being appropriate, due to additional information being required as discussed below. HCC will review this matter further once the junction modelling is confirmed and agreed.

Missing Temporal input data

The Paul Mew Associates response states:

“Tempro input data will be provided in the TA. Separate growth rates have been derived for AM and Interpeak periods to correspond with peak hours identified. In addition to TEMPRO growth data, fuel / income adjustment factors have been applied based on TAG Unit M4 and the TAG Data Book (May 2022 v1.18) Table M4 2.1.”

The subsequent Tempro Factors are stated as being 1.139 (AM Peak) and 1.186 (Interpeak).

Updated HCC Response

It is noted that Tempro input data is not ‘provided in the TA’ as no updated TA has been submitted. The Paul Mew Associates response also appears to show (bottom of page 2) the above Tempro Factors as relating to the ‘2025’ (opening year) as opposed to the 2035 assessment year. Clarification on this matter is requested.

It is also requested that full turning flow diagrams / matrices (including the future assessment year of 2035 with and without development) are provided, based on the latest Tempro and Census trip generation parameters applied so that the junction modelling inputs can be checked. Information of this type was included at Appendix J of the TA but this information appears to have now been superseded.

Trip generation and distribution methodology

The Paul Mew Associates response includes a revised trip generation assessment (Appendix B) such that ‘work from home data’ has been removed from the Census assessment and subsequent trip generations updated.

Updated HCC Response

This revised assessment is accepted.

As set out above it is requested that full turning flow diagrams / matrices (including the observed 2022 year and the future assessment year of 2035 with and without development) are provided so that the junction modelling inputs can be checked. Information of this type was included at Appendix J of the TA but this information appears to have now been superseded.

Junction Modelling

The required amendments to the junction modelling layout configuration parameters as advised by HCC in its 2 August response to the TA have been undertaken, as included at Appendix A of the Paul Mew Associates response.

Updated HCC Response

The revised junction layout configuration parameters appear acceptable.

In order for the junction models to be fully accepted and agreed however, full turning flow diagrams / matrices (including the future assessment year of 2035 with and without development) are required so that the junction modelling traffic flow inputs can be checked. Information of this type was included at Appendix J of the TA but this information appears to have now been superseded. It is recommended that the TA is updated and resubmitted to include this information.

Improvements to the West Riding/Oak Avenue junction

The Paul Mew Associates response states:

“The junction capacity assessment include in Appendix A of this response document shows that the junctions assessed operate within capacity and with minimal queueing and therefore no improvements to junctions are required. Had the junction assessments shown problems with junction capacities, mitigation measures would have been provided.”

Updated HCC Response

This approach is accepted, subject to the results of the finalised and agreed junction modelling assessments.

Road Safety Audit

A S1RSA and subsequent S1RSA Response have been submitted with the application.

The S1RSA raises the following issues:

- Potential restricted visibility for motorists seeking to emerge from the development site access.
- Inadequate swept path requirements of larger vehicles negotiating the proposed development site access.
- Lack of dropped kerb provision across site access junction and within proposed development site.
- Potential restricted inter-visibility for pedestrians transitioning from the footway to the north of the site and the carriageway.
- Potential restricted inter-visibility at the proposed crossing facilities on the proposed new footway south of the site.
- Potential swept path requirements of vehicles accessing and egressing the existing access junction and vehicular crossovers on Lye Lane with proposed new footway in-place.
- Narrowed section of proposed footway (on the eastern side of Lye Lane).
- Location of existing ditches in proximity to the proposed new footways on Lye Lane.

The S1RSA Response accepts the issues raised in the S1RSA and amended drawings are included as part of the S1RSA Response, and separately as part of the application submission, to reflect the S1RSA findings.

Updated HCC Response

The S1RSA and S1RSA Response is generally accepted by HCC, notwithstanding the potential issues in terms of the deliverability of the proposed new footway on Lye Lane.

It is also noted that the updated 'Proposed Site Access Junction Layout' Drawing (29 September 2022) includes a dropped kerb and tactile paving at the proposed short section of footway north of the site access (S1RSA 'Location F'). The tactile paving would need to be omitted (given that there is no footway on the western side of Lye Lane).

Furthermore, it is noted that some of the additional dropped kerbs and tactile paving that are now shown on the 'Proposed Uncontrolled Pedestrian Points with Dropped Kerbs' Drawing (29 September 2022) which is included at Appendix B of the S1RSA Response are not to standard.

Five-Year Crash Data Assessment

The Paul Mew Associates response states:

“Crash Map data for the following locations will be added to Transport Assessment and are attached for information in Appendix C of this response document. The locations on the crash data plan in Appendix B of the Feasibility Assessment and the below additional locations

• The area of Bricket Wood surrounded by the following roads, and including these roads themselves:

- *West Riding;*
- *Oak Avenue;*
- *Park Street Lane west of Station Road (also referred to as Lye Lane east);*
- *Station Road;*
- *Mount Pleasant Lane.*
- *Lye Lane up to and including the junction with A405 North Orbital Road.”*

Updated HCC Response

No review of the additional Crash Map data has been provided and this matter remains outstanding. The response states that this will be “added to the Transport Assessment” but an updated TA is yet to be provided to HCC.

From a review of the raw data at Appendix C of the response, it is noted that there was a serious accident recorded at the Park Street Lane / Station Road / Lye Lane junction and a further serious accident at the A405 North Orbital Road / Lye Lane Junction. The review of the data should pay particular attention to these Personal Injury Accidents.

Travel Plan

The Paul Mew Associates response states that “The Travel Plan will be updated in line with Transport Assessment and a range of additional initiatives”.

Updated HCC Response

No updated TP has been provided although a Full Travel Plan with the appropriate updates and additional initiatives can be secured by way of condition. The applicant is advised to review the 4 April and 2 August responses from HCC when preparing this document at the relevant stage.

Most importantly, we note that Section 6 of the TP includes a monitoring schedule with reporting to the Local Planning Authority to assess the progress of the TP towards meeting targets. This is vital as it will allow for remedial measures to improve the success of the TP. Furthermore, the monitoring schedule includes agreement of the targets with the Local Planning Authority.

We would require that the above discussions with the Local Planning Authority, on targets and monitoring and remedial measures, include HCC as highway authority also.

In the 4 April response, we stressed that, given the site’s proximity to major roads, as well as the current lack of safe, convenient pedestrian and cycle provision, there is a significant challenge to make this site sustainable and a robust and comprehensive Travel Plan is an important part of this.

Proposed Footway on Lye Lane

The latest plan dated 29 September 2022 of the proposed new footway on Lye Lane is enclosed within Appendix B of the S1RSA Response and also submitted separately with the application. The proposed footway as shown on the latest plan operates along Lye Lane to link the site to West Riding at a width of 2 metres.

In line with HCC’s previous responses, it is clear that a footway from the site to the existing footway provision at West Riding is an essential part of the non-car transport provision that is required to make the development acceptable, though it is only a part of the required improvements.

For example, the route has very little passive surveillance and no lighting, including existing parts of the pedestrian route between the southern end of the path and Bricket Wood station. The necessary improvements would need to be identified as part of a walking and cycling audit of the routes between the site and key local destinations. The exact scope of the audit would need to be agreed with HCC, along with the subsequent upgrades required, which would need to be delivered by the applicant through a S278 agreement.

Alternative non-car travel options would also be needed for those people uncomfortable with using the route due to security concerns and it is suggested that these measures would need to be incorporated and agreed with HCC as part of a robust Full Travel Plan.

As previously advised, implementation of the footway may be an engineering challenge due to the presence of ditches, gullies and trees located along Lye Lane where the footway is proposed. This may affect its feasibility and deliverability and there is concern that reducing the scale and / or form of the footway in order to overcome these engineering challenges would reduce the effectiveness of the footway and would not then meeting the necessary requirements for assisting in providing safe and convenient travel to and from the site for all users, at all times of day and year and in all conditions. Given the fundamental importance of the footway in assisting in meeting the required sustainability credentials of the site, additional information is required in respect to the design of this footway, including matters such as drainage and associated impacts on trees and how these matters would be resolved. Details of proposed lighting provision are also required.

In any design solution presented, the new footway needs to be continuous (occasional crossing points permitted), 2 metres minimum width, fully metalled, fully lit and fully kerbed between the site access and West Riding.

At the current time, the deliverability of this footway is not known. The drawings provided to-date do not providing sufficient detail to enable an informed view to be taken. Given the fundamental importance of the footway it is requested that a feasibility study or similar be provided by the applicant that details how the footway will be delivered in engineering terms. This would need to include detailed drawings on a topographical base and would need to include details of engineering solutions to mitigate the impact in term of matters such as drainage and trees. It would also require details of any third-party land (i.e. land outside of the public highway) that may be required and details of agreements that have been put in-place to secure use of this land.

It is also requested that a copy of the original highway boundary plan for Lye Lane be provided in order for this to be reviewed.

Conclusion

HCC as highway authority has reviewed the documents submitted with the planning application and requests that the following information be provided:

- A review of the 5-year accident statistics presented as part of the Paul Mew Associates response dated 26 August 2022.
- Updated traffic flows matrices as used in the latest junction modelling, including the 2035 with and without development scenarios based on the updated trip generation methodology.
- Clarification regarding the future year used for the Tempro assessment.
- A feasibility study or similar that details how the proposed new footway on Lye Lane will be delivered in engineering terms. This would need to include detailed drawings on a topographical base and would need to include details of engineering solutions to mitigate the impact in term of matters such as drainage and trees. It would also require details of any third-party land (i.e. land outside of the public highway) that may be required and details of agreements that have been put in-place to secure use of this land.
- A copy of the original highway boundary plan for Lye Lane

It is recommended that an updated Transport Assessment be provided to include the above matters. Following receipt of the above, HCC will provide an updated response accordingly.

Signed
Chris Carr

1 December 2022