

REPORT

Bloor Homes and the Sandleford Farm Partnership

Sandleford Park

07/04/2021

Planning Reference: 20/01238/OUTMAJ

APP/9 Summary Proof of Evidence of David Bird
On Transport Issues

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1 Summary and Conclusions

- 1.1 This is the summary proof of evidence of David Robert Bird on transport issues. Any figures and appendices referred to are those that are contained in my main proof of evidence.

Site Location

- 1.2 The Appeal Site is very well located for the proposed mixed-use development from a transport perspective for the following reasons:
- i) It is located within reasonable proximity of the town centre being a circa 30 minute walk, 8 minute cycle and 5-7 minute bus journey away;
 - ii) There are numerous local facilities within an easy walk of the site including: a health centre; nursery, primary and secondary education; food and non-food retail;
 - iii) There are good sustainable transport connections including: local walking and cycling routes (there are at least 5 connections to/from the site) with the options to improve them; and bus routes that run on the roads to the north, east and west of the site. The rail station is circa 2km to the north of the site;
 - iv) The site has good connections to the highway network at 3 locations. This means that traffic can access the main road network without rat running along unsuitable roads.

Sustainable Transport Strategy

- 1.3 Building on these locational benefits, a Sustainable Transport Strategy has been developed that has the following key benefits.

Masterplan

- 1.4 A mix of uses is provided on the site with a Local Centre and primary school. This will allow residents to walk to these facilities thus reducing external trips and promoting active travel and a healthy life-style. The Local Centre has a flexible use which would allow, for example, a work hub to be created allowing people to work remotely close to home but meet with other people.

Walking and Cycling

- 1.5 There are good local connections around the site which will be further enhanced by the proposals. In summary:
- i) East/west connections along Monks Lane using the shared footway/cycleway
 - ii) An upgraded Pinchington Lane/Newtown Road/A339 junction that incorporates Toucan (pedestrian/cyclist) crossings allowing pedestrians and cyclists to pass to the east of the A339 and the retail facilities that are available there;
 - iii) North/south routes towards the town centre using Newtown Road and Rupert Road/Wendan Road (which will have some enhancements introduced using funding from the Appeal Scheme);
 - iv) Upgrading of the existing PROW that runs through the southern part of the site providing a link to Andover Road to the west and A339 to the east;
 - v) Provision of wayfinding signage.

Public Transport

- 1.6 There are existing bus services in the vicinity of the site. This provision will be enhanced by a new service that will serve the site. Initially this is likely to terminate at the local centre but once the New Warren Farm development proceeds the route is likely to pass through the SSSA to Andover Road. Services will be provided to the town centre, rail station and Greenham Business Park. The service will become self-financing prior to full build out of the development. Appropriate funding will be provided by the Appellant and Donnington New Homes to pump prime the services.

Travel Plan

- 1.7 A Travel Plan will be implemented on the site which will strongly encourage residents and visitors to use sustainable transport modes for their journeys both on and off site.

The Effects of the Development and Mitigation Package

- 1.8 Extensive discussions have been held with WBC to determine an appropriate mitigation package that balances providing additional traffic capacity with a desire to control traffic movements outside the town centre and provide enhanced pedestrian and cyclist crossing facilities.
- 1.9 The agreed package of highway mitigation achieves the above objectives and provides a number of benefits. For example:
- i) enhanced pedestrian and cyclist crossing facilities in Pinchington Lane area;
 - ii) allows WBC to control traffic heading north towards the town centre;
 - iii) Diversion of traffic towards A34 and away from the town centre;
 - iv) Relief to A339/Pinchington Lane junction due to new A339/Newbury College access.
- 1.10 The Appellants propose to implement and / or fund the full cost of the junction improvements identified as necessary for the Appeal Scheme (Table 6.1) and those measures which arise from the combined developments (Table 6.3). This ensures that the necessary highway infrastructure is provided. Donnington New Homes draft Section 106 includes the principle of proportionate contributions towards the infrastructure in Table 6.3. The cost sharing for the combined works will be in the form of recompense or repayment from Donnington New Homes to the Appellants as part of its planning obligation and the hence the contribution control strip is proposed to ensure this.
- 1.11 With implementation of the mitigation package WBC have agreed that the traffic effects of the scheme are acceptable.

Reasons for Refusal

- 1.12 A number of Reasons for Refusal have a transport element and I have considered these fully in this proof of evidence. In summary:

RfR 1 – Comprehensive Development: In relation to transport and movement I believe the tests that should be applied to this RfR to see if it has any merit are as follows:

- i) Test 1: Is the appeal scheme acceptable in transport terms as a stand alone scheme or is it dependent on something forming part of or being delivered as part of the remainder of the SSSA? It has been agreed with WBC that the effects of the Appeal Scheme are mitigated by the mitigation package delivered by the Appeal Scheme and is not reliant on the remainder of the SSSA proceeding. It has also been agreed that the Appeal Scheme can be served from the three proposed access points (Monks Lane and A339)

- ii) Test 2: Does the infrastructure to be delivered as part of the appeal scheme prejudice the delivery of any of the infrastructure that will be delivered as part of the remainder of the SSSA? I have demonstrated that this is not the case. Where there is overlap in the mitigation required for the Appeal Scheme and the remainder of the SSSA then Bloor Homes have undertaken to initially fund that infrastructure if they reach the trigger point first;
- iii) Test 3: Does approval of the appeal scheme and its associated infrastructure put an unacceptable or unbalanced transport infrastructure burden onto the remainder of the SSSA. I have demonstrated that this is not the case. There is an agreed split in infrastructure provision between the Appeal Scheme and the remainder of the SSSA with proportional splits in the common infrastructure.

RfR 2 – Emergency Access. I have demonstrated, by reference to the Valley Crossing Study submitted as part of the Appellants Statement of Case (CD 5.1), that emergency access can be provided in a number of ways. It can be provided across the valley using any of the three potential options with dual structures thus allowing for the emergency access during maintenance. Option 3 has been agreed by WBC’s highways officer. Alternatively, emergency access can be provided using the cycle route to be provided alongside the existing PROW that links to the A339.

RfR 6 – DPC Access. There is a suggestion in this RfR that the DPC cannot be served by the single access that will be provided by the Appeal Scheme. This is not the position agreed with WBC within the Statement of Common Ground (CD 9.1) which states that a vehicular access to Warren Road is not required as part of the Appeal Scheme. Furthermore, the Reason for Refusal states that the issue is a lack of permeability and connectivity. However, I demonstrated in Section 7 of this proof that good quality connectivity can be achieved within the site and to locations off site using the valley crossing and the upgraded PROW.

RfR 14 Mitigation Package. The transport mitigation package has been agreed with WBC along with the split between the elements to be provided/funded by the Appeal Scheme and the remainder of the SSSA.

Overall Conclusions

- 1.13 To draw my overall conclusions, I have returned to the relevant policies, as summarised in my Section 3 of this proof
- 1.14 The starting point is the NPPF. I have set out the key policies from NPPF below with a summary of how the Appeal Scheme complies with them
- 1.15 Para 108: in assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that:

“a) appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location; A Sustainable transport strategy has been developed for the site which maximises the opportunities for use of sustainable modes. This allows access to local facilities by walking and cycling and access to local bus services.

b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users; and. The access points for the Appeal Scheme have been agreed with WBC and are available and suitable for all users including the mobility impaired.

c) any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.” A mitigation package has been agreed with WBC that cost effectively mitigate the impacts of the development.

Within the above context it is stated that all applications for developments should:

“a) give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second – so far as possible – to facilitating access to high quality public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use; The Sustainable Transport Strategy and site layout will give priority to walking and cycling and will enhance local bus services

b) address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport; The access points and internal layout (to the extent that it has been designed) address the needs of those with disabilities and reduced mobility.

c) create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character.” The on-site layout is a reserved matter but these principles will be applied at the appropriate time.

Para 109:

“Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe”. It is agreed with WBC that the impact of the Appeal Scheme does not have an unacceptable impact on safety or a severe impact on the capacity of the road network.

1.16 Turning to the adopted Core Strategy, Policy CS13 sets out the main requirements from a transport perspective. The policy, along with the way in which the Appeal Scheme complies with the different elements, is set out below:

Development that generates a transport impact will be required to:

a) reduce the need to travel. The Appeal Scheme provides a mix of uses on site including a Local Centre and primary school;

b) improve and promote opportunities for healthy and safe travel. The Appeal Scheme places an emphasis on walking and cycling within the site and provides connections to existing routes external to the site along with proposed improvements;

c) improve travel choice and facilitate sustainable travel particularly within and between main urban areas and rural service centres. Sustainable travel is facilitated, particularly between the site and local facilities including the town centre and rail station;

d) demonstrate good access to key services and facilities. Many facilities such as education, food and non food retail and health are within walking distance of the site;

e) minimise the impact of all forms of travel on the environment, A full Environmental Statement was submitted with the planning application. The location of the site close to local facilities and the emphasis on sustainable transport will reduce the residual levels of traffic and hence environmental impacts. Furthermore, the proposals allow traffic to be held on the outskirts of the town thus reducing impacts within the town itself;

f) mitigate the impact on the local transport network and the strategic road network: The proposed sustainable transport and highway mitigation package, that is agreed with WBC, mitigates the impact of the development on the local and strategic networks;

g) prepare Transport Assessments/Statements and Travel Plans to support planning proposals in accordance with national guidance. These documents were prepared and submitted with the application.

1.17 I have therefore demonstrated that the Appeal Scheme complies with national and local policies. The scheme offers considerable transport benefits and there are no unacceptable residual impacts. Therefore, there is no transport related basis for dismissing the appeal.