

MEMORANDUM

From: Chief Officer, Environment & Technical **To:** Chief Officer Planning & Regulatory
FAO: Matthew Phillips

Our Ref: **Your Ref:** P/2020/0354

Date: 20th August 2020

Land of Hillock Lane, Gresford, Wrexham LL12 8YN
Proposed residential development of 109 units with associated access and highway improvements.

Further to your consultation dated 31/07/2020 in respect of the above, I comment as follows:-

Traffic Surveys

Previous submissions had raised concern that the traffic surveys undertaken were limited to one day and did not provide adequate data to assess the development. I confirm that additional traffic data has been presented and it includes one week of ATC survey on Hillock Lane and additional junction counts. It is noted that the junction count data has been factored up to account for higher flows recorded on another day by the ATC survey and this has helped to ensure a robust assessment.

Future Traffic Growth

Future year traffic estimates have been provided for 2025, 2030 and 2035 as requested by WCBC. The growth rates used have been correctly extracted from the National Trip End Model using TEMOPRO. No additional committed development has been included as there are no major committed developments in the vicinity of the site.

Development Trip Generation Rates

The TA states that the development trips have been calculated using trip rates from Bryn ISA Section 78 Planning Appeal, as agreed with WCBC. The trip rates cited in the TA do not match those from the Bryn ISA development provided in the supporting document appendix, so it is not clear how these rates have been established. As the trip rates used are generally higher than the Bryn ISA rates, they should be accepted as providing a robust assessment of the likely trip distribution.

Trip Distribution

The use of observed turning movements, rather than 2011 census journey to work data, to allocate the distribution of development trips provides an appropriate robust assessment.

Junction Capacity Assessments

Three junctions have been assessed using Picady, as agreed with WCBC.

- Site Access/ Stancliffe Avenue/Hillock Lane
- Chester Road/ Hillock Lane
- Wynnstay Road/ Hillock Lane

That the Picady results show no capacity or queueing issues at any of the key junctions assessed in the base or future years even with development traffic added.

Hillock Lane/Wynnstay Lane junction

Visibility at this junction has previously been noted as inadequate in both directions. The junction is below the standard specified in Manual for Streets for a new junction, but as an existing junction it would not necessarily be expected to meet the full standard. However, a significant increase in traffic would not be supported at this below standard junction, particularly if there is a pre-existing collision issue on the surrounding. Further presentation and analysis of the existing collision situation is required.

The forecast increase of 13 two-way vehicles in the Weekday AM peak and 22 two-way vehicle movements in the Weekday PM peak. The assessment shows that the development will produce a 21% increase in traffic on the junction in the AM peak and 28% in the PM peak. Given that this junction is sub-standard and the applicant does not have control over the land to improve the junction and therefore it could only be delivered through a Grampian condition it is not acceptable.

Hillock Lane east of site access

Concerns have previously been raised by WCBC about the capacity of Hillock Lane to support new development due to its narrow width.

The section of Hillock Lane between the site access and Wynnstay Lane is used to access the villages of Holt and Farndon as well as the Wrexham Industrial Estate. The road narrows to 2.7m at its narrowest, such that it is difficult for two vehicles to pass and any substantial increase in traffic would not be supported. The future year traffic estimates provided in the TA suggest that the development would create a 31% increase in two-way traffic in the AM peak and a 41.5% increase in the PM peak. This is a significant increase in vehicle movements and this would not be acceptable.

As part of the proposal, improvements to the road alignment have been proposed which will enable the visibility requirements detailed in MfS2 to be met, improving the safety of Hillock Lane and potentially alleviating the concerns relating to increased traffic flows and SSD.

Further presentation and analysis of the existing collision situation is required as there is a substantial increase in traffic flows predicted if this development is allowed to proceed.

Hillock Lane west of site access

Between the site access and the developed section of Hillock Lane to the west, the developer has been required to widen the road in order that it can accommodate two-way traffic. In previous discussions there has been uncertainty as to whether the necessarily land can be obtained.

From Plan 2, it appears that the applicant does not have the land ownership to maintain the footway on the southern side of Hillock Lane while achieving the required road width. A footway will be provided only on one side of the road, with a requirement for pedestrians to cross. This will not be the preferred situation as vehicle and pedestrian movements should be segregated whenever possible. Given that the applicant does not have control over the land to improve the highway the required improvement could only be delivered through a Grampian condition, which is not acceptable.

Further presentation and analysis of the existing collision situation is required as there is a substantial increase in traffic flows predicted if this development is allowed to proceed.

Site Access Junction and Hillock Lane Improvements

It has previously been agreed that Access junction on Hillock Lane would require:

- widening carriageway to allow the simultaneous passage of vehicles,
- provide footways on both sides of the carriageway and
- improve visibility at the Stancliffe Avenue / Hillock Lane junction.

The proposal includes highway improvements at the site access linking it to the existing residential section of Hillock Lane and improving the Stancliffe Avenue/Hillock Lane junction.

Consideration has been given to a DMRB standard junction with right turn lanes at the Stancliffe Avenue/Hillock Lane/Site Access junction. As a 30mph road in a residential area, it is agreed that it is appropriate to apply the standards set out in Manual for Streets as the traffic flows and speeds are not high enough to require right turn lanes, as per DMRB requirement.

Concern had been raised that the applicant did not have sufficient land ownership to widen the full extent of the carriageway a short distance west of the junction with Stancliffe Avenue. However, the applicant has indicated that a 6m wide carriageway with 2m footway could be provided subject to acquiring 3rd party land (Broadlea). The plans submitted provide adequate highway width, although not with full width footways on both sides of the road.

Stancliffe Avenue/ Hillock Lane junction

Visibility at the existing Stancliffe Avenue / Hillock Lane junction is sub-standard. While it may not be possible to achieve the standard required of a new junction, betterment has been provided to improve the visibility at this junction.

Secondary Site Access

Consultation already undertaken with the North Wales Fire Service confirms that no secondary access is required as part of this development, although where possible one should be provided as previously requested during Pre application discussions.

Hillock Lane/Chester Road Junction

At Hillock Lane/Chester Road, pre-application advice recommended that a ghost island be considered. The current proposal is for a smaller development than was originally proposed and the expected traffic flows therefore do not indicate a need for a ghost island. The Picady assessment has shown that the junction has sufficient capacity to accommodate the expected development traffic.

Road Safety

It is agreed that there is very little history of road accidents in the vicinity of the site, which suggests no existing safety issues, however a full summary analysis of the collision information should be requested for the study area to encompass all the key junctions detailed above.

Footways

Previous advice has indicated that footways should be provided on both sides of Hillock Lane to the desirable minimum width of 2m and with the footway on the southern side of the road extending across the entire frontage of the development.

It is not clear that it will be possible to provide a continuous 2m footway on both sides, however, with the proposed pedestrian crossing, it is considered that this proposal provides adequate connection to the existing pedestrian network at Hillock Lane and Stancliffe Avenue.

East of the site access Hillock Lane does not have footways or lighting, however it does not link to any amenities that residents would walk to and any anticipated use by pedestrians would be for leisure journeys. While additional footways provision is welcomed they would not be expected on a route that is rural in nature where pedestrian movements are unlikely.

Sustainable Transport Options

The proposed improvements to footway provision on Hillock Lane connect the site to the existing footways along Hillock Lane and Stancliffe Avenue. Many of the village amenities on Chester Road would be accessible within a 10-15 minute walk from the existing edge of the site, although it should be remembered that the actual walking time from many properties will be greater than this.

There is no specific segregated provision for cyclists, which should be investigated further.

Bus stops are available on Chester Road, but at 900m from the site access they are more than double the 400m preferred distance recommended by the CIHT guidelines in 'Providing for Journeys on Foot'. While public transport use is possible for residents its inconvenience means that those with the option are likely to use cars.

An appropriate residential travel plan has been submitted and liaison with bus operators is recommended to ensure full information is provided.

Walking, cycling and public transport are reasonable options for residents, although the distance to Chester Road and bus stops mean that there is likely to be a high proportion of car use from this development.

Internal layout and car parking

Previous advice has asked that any proposed footway links through the site should take the form of shared footway / cycleway links. This has not been indicated on the site layout plan and should be investigated further.

The submitted site layout plan (Drg No. 4121 / SK17 Rev C) indicates that parking provision will comply with LPGN 16 maximum standards (excluding garage spaces) which would be considered an over provision, but is acceptable. Any proposed driveways will need to comply with WCBC Standard Driveway Requirements.

Previous advice stated that all proposed turning heads must comply with WCBC Standard Details and be capable of accommodating the turning movements of an 11.2m long refuse vehicle. It is important that any proposed bin store / compound proposed for shared private driveways are of adequate size / design to accommodate the required number / type of bins and are suitably located to serve such a development ie/ in close proximity to the adjoining adopted highway. Manual for Streets recommends that refuse vehicles reverse no more than 12m within residential estates.

Suitable swept path details still need to be provided to support this application.

Conclusion

Approval cannot be recommended because of the anticipated increase in traffic on Hillock Lane to the east of the site. This section of road, and Hillock Lane/Wynnstay Lane junction to the east of the site are narrow and cannot accommodate any significant increase in traffic.

In addition, the required highway improvements would require the acquisition of third party land and the use of Grampian Conditions which is not recommended.



Chief Officer, Environment & Technical