



**P15/S3228/O – 617**

**Amendment: No. 2 - dated 16th March 2016**

## **PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT**

This note of objection is supplemental to those previously submitted. It relates to two document sets that have been put forward by the Applicant. These relate to site access arrangements and road safety.

## **ACCESS**

The drawings contain additional details to those submitted in January.

The drawings indicate the following works:

- “New pedestrian link and emergency vehicle access.”
- “New bus stop.” (southbound)
- New bus stop (southbound) road markings.
- “New informal crossing” (with associated kerbing and paving)
- “New bus stop” (northbound)
- - New bus stop (northbound) road markings.
- “New zebra crossing” (with associated kerbing and paving)
- - New zebra crossing road markings
- Extended footway (southbound)
- Extended footway (northbound)

No information has been submitted regarding road side signage however this will be inevitable.

No information has been submitted regarding road and footpath lighting scheme. However, it is not unreasonable to assume this will be extensive given the “village style” lighting currently at the site.

These revised plans clearly urbanise the area transforming its current nature. Further, they serve to contribute to the coalescence of Didcot and East Hagbourne. Both are significant harms and contravene both local and national policy.

The Landscape Officer published this statement as part of the Pre Application advice:

*"Highway works: Some development on greenfield sites end up requiring a lot of highway works to accommodate the new access points. This can have a significant impact on the character of the receiving street, particularly if it includes new road markings, signage, vegetation removal, new kerbing etc. If it transpires highways works will be required for this development then this will need to be considered in a revised LVIA. If significant numbers of frontage trees had to be removed for instance, this could cause a problem in landscape impact terms."*

The Landscape Officer's advice was clear, reasonable and entirely accurate.

Unless and until this additional work is undertaken, it is impossible to evaluate the potential "harm" that these proposals may visit upon the site. As a result it is not possible, currently, for any reasonable person to reach a rational decision based on a fully considered 'planning balance'.

## ROAD SAFETY

The document posted on the application web site is titled "Supplemental Stage 1 – Road Safety Audit" ("Supplemental"). It indicates that there is a further, main Road Safety Audit document, to which this is a supplement. We have written to SODC asking for this document to be placed in the public domain, but at the time of writing we have yet to have either an acknowledgement or a response.

This clearly prejudices against our ability to respond in a full and complete manner to the proposals.

The following remarks are therefore provisional.

The Supplemental, strangely, makes no reference to the road safety context prevailing at the site. The Supplemental was conducted just two weeks after a fatal crash involving two cars on the immediate approach to the site. Three weeks after the report was submitted there was a further three-car accident at the point of the proposed main access to the site.

Given this context it is disappointing and damning that the Applicant's agent proposes the following measure as his number one safety recommendation: "ensure as far as practical that no manholes or inspection chambers are located where they are likely to be traversed by two-wheel vehicles during turning manoeuvres."

The Supplemental considers each element of the scheme in isolation. It fails to consider the cumulative safety impact of one feature on any other. For example is the positioning of the zebra crossing safe in relation to the right turn and the bus stop and the blind bend etc?

The Supplemental fails to consider whether the proposals are fit for purpose in the context of the volume of traffic, type of traffic, speed of traffic and the type of highway users present at the location.

An objective reader of the Supplemental cannot reasonably conclude therefore that the proposals ensure that all road users will be able to use the road safely in this area. The proposals therefore fail local policy: policy that is not made silent by any lack of five-year supply of housing land.

The NPPF states that applications must ensure that “safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people”. It is not possible for a reasonable person to conclude that this is the case of the current application. It is therefore not possible to conclude that the residual, cumulative impacts of the development would not be severe.” As a consequence the application manifestly fails the NPPF.

This conclusion has been supported by a number of appeal Inspectors. This was the conclusion of the Inspector at Benson of course. Whilst this decision was subsequently overturned, the Inspector’s conclusion was not challenged, merely the procedure by which he had arrived at it. More recently in 2016 an appeal at Yeovil was rejected on similar road safety grounds.

Safety is a fundamental issue. It is not conditional. This issue cannot therefore be left for any reserved matters stage.