WARRINGTON
Borough Council

Environment & Transport Directorate
Internal Memorandum

To: Alison Gough

From: Mike Taylor
X4086

Date: 19/5/2021

Ref: 2019/34799

Application: Land to the west of Junction 20 of the M6 Motorway, and Junction 9 of the M56 Motorway and to the south of, Grappenhall Lane/Cliff Lane (known as Six:56 Warrington) Grappenhall, Warrington

Outline Planning (Major) - Outline application (all matters reserved except for access) comprising the construction of up to 287,909m² (gross internal) of employment floorspace (Use Class B8 and ancillary B1(a) offices), demolition of existing agricultural outbuildings and associated servicing and infrastructure including car parking and vehicle and pedestrian circulation, alteration of existing access road into site including works to the M6 J20 dumbbell roundabouts and realignment of the existing A50 junction, noise mitigation, earthworks to create development platforms and bunds, landscaping including buffers, creation of drainage features, electrical substation, pumping station, and ecological works, accompanied by an Environmental Statement

I refer to your memo requesting highway comments and my previous memorandum of 15th August 2019.

Response:

No highway objections, subject to conditions and S106 obligations.

Comments:

The application is outline for 287,909sq.m of B8 and B1(a) use with all matters reserved except for access; access is to be taken from the B5356 Grappenhall Lane via two new roundabout junctions.

The application is accompanied by a comprehensive Transport Assessment (TA) that has been updated to reflect comment previously made in my memorandum of 15th August 2019.

Accessibility

The TA correctly identifies that there are issues in respect of accessibility by sustainable means given the location of the site remote from existing settlement; this is typical of sites appropriate for B8 logistical use where a key requirement is good connectivity to the Strategic Road Network.

The proposal involves the implementation of footway/cycleway infrastructure along the B5356 Grappenhall Lane from the A50 Cliff Lane roundabout to a point some 180m east of the Broad Lane roundabout. In addition agreement has been reached for a financial contribution to be made to extend this footway/cycleway within the adopted highway boundary west to the Broad Lane roundabout and then south to the junction of Grappenhall Lane/Barleycastle Lane; this contribution can be secured via S106 Agreement with the level of contribution to be agreed. The proposal also involves an improvement to the existing Public Right of Way No.23 running through the site and connecting to Barleycastle Lane the details of which can be addressed via condition.

It is acknowledged that to fully integrate into existing active travel infrastructure further connections would be required but these will emerge as a result of the Council's LTP4 aspirations and future development proposals. It is considered that the improvements proposed as part of the development offer benefit in providing active travel connectivity to the site.

The TA also highlights a lack of existing public transport provision in the area but agreement has been reached for the funding of a bespoke bus service to be provided. It is intended that the model of such a service will be similar to the successful B52 service connecting the Omega development with its workforce; with the final routing and operational details to be informed by employee data from Travel Plan surveys. This contribution can be secured via S106 Agreement with the level of contribution to be agreed.

Traffic Forecasting

The trip generation forecasts are based on traffic surveys undertaken at Omega North and are considered appropriate. The inclusion of the committed development sites and the background growth rates are also considered appropriate.

Traffic distribution of staff-related trips is based on journey-to-work data from the 2011 census and is considered appropriate.

The HGV traffic distribution assumptions are considered appropriate. It is noted that all HGV movements are assigned towards the M6 J20 which may mean that some localised movements to/from Warrington via the A50 are excluded; this is not considered material given the limited number of HGV movements that currently follow this routing and also allows for a more robust assessment of the locally critical junctions.

The even distribution of HGV movements between the two access points may not be realistic and will very much depend on the final internal layout, however, given that the modelling results of each access point highlights a free flow level of service and significant spare capacity it considered that the access principles are appropriate.

WMMTM Assessments

The Warrington Multi-modal Transport Model (WMMTM) has also been used to consider potential development impact throughout the wider area and there are some variations in potential route choice, primarily due to the nature of the WMMTM as a large strategic model. The use of the WMMTM route choice assumptions have been considered to identify potential impacts on junctions that have not been specifically identified for detailed capacity analysis. The findings of the TA in this respect are accepted.

Capacity Assessments

Detailed capacity assessments have been undertaken at the following six key junctions likely to be impacted by the proposal: A50 Cliff Lane/Lymm Services roundabout, M6 J20 dumbbell roundabout, A50 Cliff Lane/B5356 Grappenhall Lane roundabout, B5356 Grappenhall Lane/Broad Lane roundabout, Broad Lane/Church Road and A50 Knutsford Road/A56 Stockport Road.

Given the clear interaction between the A50 Cliff Lane/Lymm Services and A50 Cliff Lane/B5356 Grappenhall Lane roundabouts with the M6 J20 dumbbell roundabout, whereby the operation of one junction impacts on the others, the junctions have been assessed in one combined Linsig model.

The modelling has been undertaken with the premise of full development in the opening year of 2021. The results of the capacity assessments are discussed as follows:

A50 Cliff Lane/B5356 Grappenhall Lane/M6 J20/ A50 Cliff Lane/Lymm Services junctions

The modelling results highlight the issues that currently occur throughout the junction network with some arms operating above practical capacity with queuing and congestion occurring and highlighting the need for mitigation to address issues in both the proposed opening and future year scenarios.

An improvement scheme is therefore proposed (shown on Drawing No. 64076-CUR-00-XX-DR-TP-75011/06) which includes relocating the A50 Cliff Lane/B5356 Grappenhall Lane roundabout further to the west with full signalisation of the junction, partial signalisation of the M6 J20 dumbbell roundabout with carriageway widening and widening of the A50 Cliff Lane eastern approach.

Modelling of the proposed improvement scheme indicates that the scheme will offer benefit such that the junction network will operate more efficiently than the without development scenario. There can be no expectation that a development should mitigate existing issues but it is reasonable and expected that any proposal should not exacerbate an existing issue and that where capacity issues are already experienced the development should mitigate its own impact. It is considered that the improvement scheme achieves this nil-detriment impact scenario.

It should be noted that the Council are working with Highways England (HE) to explore alternative mitigation to improve operational efficiency throughout this network of junctions to address both existing issues and to support the Council's aspirations for development under the emerging Local Plan. Whilst the proposed mitigation addresses the impacts of the proposed development it is not considered to be the appropriate solution for the future operation of the highway network. Therefore, rather than pursue an improvement that will likely involve substantial abortive works, it is considered appropriate for the mitigation of the junction required by this development to be addressed by means of a financial contribution towards the implementation of the aspirational WBC/HE scheme. (This is consistent with the approach taken for the Stobart applications (2017/31757 & 2019/34739) that required mitigation intervention). This contribution can be secured via S106 Agreement with the level of contribution to be agreed.

B5356 Grappenhall Lane/Broad Lane roundabout

The modelling results confirm that the roundabout currently operates within capacity with minimal queuing; the primary movements through the roundabout are through the southern and eastern arms following the continuation of the B5356. The Grappenhall

Lane (south) arm operates close to practical capacity but queuing is not considered to be an issue. The modelling confirms that this arm will be over practical capacity in the future year of 2029 without the proposed development.

As a result of the development the Grappenhall Lane (south) arm operates over practical capacity in the 2021 opening year and over theoretical capacity in the 2029 future year. However, in both scenarios queuing is not considered to be an issue.

Wider alterations to highway infrastructure are likely as a result of development proposals within the emerging Local Plan and it is likely that movement patterns throughout the area will change. It is not considered that mitigation to improve capacity at the junction is necessary as a result of the proposed development.

Broad Lane/Church Road

The modelling results confirm no capacity issues at this junction.

A50 Knutsford Road/A56 Stockport Road

The modelling results confirm that some arms of the junction operate over practical capacity in the 2021 base year and over theoretical capacity in the 2029 base year. The proposed development does impact on the junction particularly in the future 2029 scenario, however, the number of movements added by the development is not considered significant. The TA highlights that an improved traffic signal controller such as MOVA would be beneficial and this is accepted; this can be secured via condition or via S106 contribution.

New access roundabouts

The new roundabout access points have been assessed. The results indicate that the new roundabouts will satisfactorily cater for all anticipated movements well within capacity. The distribution of movements through the junctions will be affected by the final internal layout however, given that the modelling results of each access point highlights a free flow level of service and significant spare capacity it is considered that the access roundabouts are appropriate.

<u>Mitigation/Improvement Works</u>

The roundabout access points will cater for the movements associated with the development and provide an additional benefit in regulating the speed and flow of traffic along B5356. Stage 1 Road Safety Audits have been undertaken and this process will continue throughout the detailed design stage. The access principles are considered appropriate.

The physical implementation of footway/cycleway infrastructure along the B5356 Grappenhall Lane from the A50 Cliff Lane roundabout to a point some 180m east of the Broad Lane roundabout combined with a contribution to allow this footway/cycleway to be extended through the Broad Lane roundabout to the junction of Grappenhall Lane/Barleycastle Lane offers benefit in terms of access by active travel modes. The improvement to the Public Right of Way No.23 offers similar benefit. The detailed design stage will address linkage into existing infrastructure.

The B5356 Grappenhall Lane along the site frontage is not currently subject to a system of street lighting other than at the junctions of the A50 and Broad Lane. The introduction of new roundabout junctions and pedestrian/cycleway infrastructure will require a system of street lighting.

The improvement scheme detailed on Drawing No. 64076-CUR-00-XX-DR-TP-75011/06 is considered appropriate to mitigate the impacts of the proposed development on the junctions at the A50 Cliff Lane roundabout and M6 J20. However, as outlined above, it is not considered to be the appropriate solution for the future operation of the highway network given the wider aspirations of the emerging Local Plan. A financial contribution via a S106 agreement is therefore considered appropriate with potential non-abortive improvements to be progressed throughout the implementation of the development.

The introduction of MOVA at the A50 Knutsford Road/A56 Stockport Road traffic signal junction will offer benefit to the operational efficiency of the junction.

Required public transport provision to the site will benefit the wider area and will be secured via S106 Agreement. It is anticipated that such a service will be similar to the successful B52 service connecting the Omega development with its workforce; with the final routing and operational details to be informed by employee data from Travel Plan surveys. Bus stop facilities will be required within the site but these can be ensured by condition.

As with the development of the Omega area, and identified within the submitted Framework Travel Plan, a Steering Group comprising of public and private sector representation should be established to address transportation issues and maximise sustainable transport initiatives through the development build-out period and beyond.

Notwithstanding the submitted Framework Travel Plan an overarching Travel Plan for the development will be required. Agreement has been reached for the Council's Smarter Travel Choices Manager to operate the plan which allows a co-ordinated approach to securing appropriate successful sustainable transport solutions throughout the area. Individual units would also be required to produce bespoke plans that would tie into this wider approach; this can be ensured by condition.

In light of the emerging Local Plan and the aspiration to accommodate future transport infrastructure to cater for long-term highway demands and support high quality public transport, walking and cycling provision a protected corridor along Grappenhall Lane, including land within the development site, is required. This needs to be identified in the parameters plan.

Existing field access points to the site will need to be closed.

Discussions will need to continue in respect of the level of S106 contributions to be secured and whether aspects of the necessary mitigation are secured by contribution, obligation and/or condition.

Future Reserved Matters Applications

Conditions will be required to ensure that future applications will address issues within the site such as level of parking, servicing arrangements, need for internal layout to be connected/linked to both access points, pedestrian/cycle infrastructure and public transport infrastructure,

The highway works will require the developer to enter into a S278 Agreement with the Council with all works being funded by the developer at nil cost to the Council.

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