

SCHEDULE A

APPLICATION NUMBER	CB/10/00859/FULL
LOCATION	Land at Derwent Road, Linslade, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 2XT
PROPOSAL	Formation of a secondary vehicular access on land off Derwent Road to serve development proposed within Aylesbury Vale District under an outline planning application for Mixed Use Development including Residential (C3)- some 900 dwellings, Employment (B1) Commercial (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5), Primary school, Health centre (D1), Leisure and Community (D2) Land uses and associated roads, Drainage, Car parking, Servicing, Footpaths, Cycleways, Public Open Space/Informal Open Space and Landscaping (revised application SB/09/00176/TP)
PARISH	Leighton-Linslade
WARD	Southcott
WARD COUNCILLORS	Cllr David Hopkin & Cllr Peter Snelling
CASE OFFICER	Mr C Murdoch
DATE REGISTERED	19 March 2010
EXPIRY DATE	14 May 2010
APPLICANT	Paul Newman New Homes
AGENT	DPDS Consulting Group
REASON FOR COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE	Call-in by local Members and in response to significant local interest in proposed Valley Farm urban extension development adjoining application site
RECOMMENDED DECISION	Full Application - Refused

Site Location:

Constructed in the 1960's and 1970's, the Southcott residential estate is in the western part of Linslade, south of the B4032 Soulbury Road and adjacent the boundary with Aylesbury Vale District in Buckinghamshire. Derwent Road is the main spine road serving the Southcott estate. It runs parallel to the county boundary for approximately 1km before turning 90° east towards Himley Green and Southcott Village. The northern section of Derwent Road has dwellings on both sides, whilst the southern section serves Greenleas Lower School and dwellings on the eastern side of the road. The existing speed limit on Derwent Road is 30mph.

An outline planning application has been submitted to Aylesbury Vale District Council for a residential led mixed use development referred to by the applicants as the 'West Linslade Urban Extension'. Such development would involve the use of 45ha of agricultural land at Valley Farm in the parish of Soulbury, adjacent the county boundary and immediately to the west of Linslade. The greater part of the proposed urban extension site, 41ha, is south of the B4032 Leighton Road between the Derwent Road/Malvern Drive/Cotswold Drive area of Southcott estate and the A4146 Linslade Western Bypass. The proposed urban extension site includes also

a 4ha parcel of land to the north of Leighton Road, opposite the dwellings and buildings at Valley Farm and to the south west of the Council-owned Linslade Wood.

The Valley Farm urban extension development would include 900 dwellings, an employment area, a primary school, a leisure centre, a health centre, community facilities and local shops as part of a local centre, small offices and professional service providers as part of mixed use blocks and a public open space area ('country park') incorporating a senior all weather pitch and three five-a-side/mini football pitches, trim trails and an all weather sprint track.

The proposed primary access to both parts of the urban extension site would be via a new signalised crossroads at a position on Leighton Road adjacent the existing entrance to Valley Farm. A secondary access is proposed off the western side of Derwent Road, opposite Nos. 130 and 132. This would involve a narrow strip of land in Central Bedfordshire, the site of the current application, and comprises hedgerow and highway verge. The land extends to some 205m in length, from a position opposite Nos. 110 and 112 Derwent Road in the south to a position opposite No. 142 Derwent Road and the southern boundary of Greenleas Lower School in the north. It is 10m in depth and has an area of 0.15ha, less than 1% of the total area of the proposed urban extension site.

A consultation letter dated 18th May 2010 in respect of the proposed urban extension was received from Aylesbury Vale District Council and the response to that letter dated 2nd June 2010 is reproduced as an appendix to this report. The details of any further response to Aylesbury District Council will be reported at the meeting.

The Application:

The proposed secondary access would be formed as a priority junction and a raised table would be constructed across the bellmouth to act as a traffic calming measure and to assist pedestrians crossing the new junction. Footways would be provided on both sides of the access and a controlled pedestrian crossing would be provided at a position some 20m north of the new junction to enable vulnerable road users to gain access to/from Greenleas Lower School. Traffic calming measures in the form of 'virtual road humps' and vehicle activated speed signs may also be provided to control vehicle speeds on the approach to the proposed pedestrian crossing and the access to the school. The applicants advise that the northern and southern visibility splays would be 4.5m x 60m and would therefore exceed the requirements of *Manual For Streets* for a design speed of 30mph.

The new priority junction would be positioned with a stagger distance of approximately 50m from the Lomond Road junction. The applicants advise that this stagger distance would ensure that additional turning movements would not affect the performance of the existing junction. They advise also that the stagger distance would be sufficient to enable a large refuse vehicle to travel from the proposed urban extension site into the existing residential area, although signage would be provided to prohibit other large vehicles from entering the secondary access, as this would predominantly accommodate small vehicles.

The applicants acknowledge that there is an existing problem with congestion and on-street parking along Derwent Road, particularly adjacent Greenleas Lower School during school drop-off and collection times. Yellow lines are proposed to be

implemented around the secondary access junction to reduce the chicaning effect that currently occurs along Derwent Road, south of the school, and to allow improved passage for the No. 36 bus along Derwent Road, thereby reducing delays. The applicants advise that parking restrictions could be imposed on Derwent Road in the vicinity of the school and additional parking could be provided in a more appropriate location within the proposed urban extension site.

RELEVANT POLICIES:

National Policies (PPG & PPS)

PPS1 - Delivering Sustainable Development.
PPG2 - Green Belts.
PPS3 - Housing.
PPS4 - Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth.
PPS9 - Biodiversity and Geological Conservation.
PPG13 - Transport.
PPG15 - Planning and the Historic Environment.
PPG17 - Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation.
PPS23 - Planning and Pollution Control.
PPG24 - Planning and Noise.
PPS25 - Development and Flood Risk.

Regional Spatial Strategy

East of England Plan (May 2008) Policies

SS1 - Achieving Sustainable Development.
SS2 - Overall Spatial Strategy.
SS3 - Key Centres for Development and Change.
SS7 - Green Belts.
SS8 - The Urban Fringe.
E1 - Job Growth.
E2 - Provision of Land for Employment.
H1 - Regional Housing Provision 2001 to 2021.
T2 - Changing Travel Behaviour.
T4 - Urban Transport.
T8 - Local Roads.
T9 - Walking, Cycling and other Non-Motorised Transport.
ENV1 - Green Infrastructure.
ENV3 - Biodiversity and Earth Heritage.
ENV6 - The Historic Environment.
ENV7 - Quality in Built Environment.
WAT1 - Water Efficiency.
WAT2 - Water Infrastructure.
WAT4 - Flood Risk Management.

Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy (March 2005)

Strategic Policy 3: Sustainable Communities.
Bedfordshire and Luton Policies 2(a) and 2(b): Luton/Dunstable/Houghton Regis and Leighton-Linslade.

Bedfordshire Structure Plan 2011

Policy 25 - Infrastructure.

South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review

Policy B8 - Design and environmental considerations.

Planning History

SB/09/00176/TP Withdrawn application for construction of vehicular access off Derwent Road, Linslade in conjunction with proposed development within Aylesbury Vale District under outline application for mixed use development - 900 dwellings, commercial A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, primary school, health centre (D1), leisure and community (D2) land uses and associated roads, drainage, car parking, servicing, cycleways, public open space/informal open space and landscaping.

(A.V.D.C)
10/00500/AOP Outline application submitted to A.V.D.C for 900 dwellings, commercial A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, primary school, health centre (D1), Leisure and Community (D2) land uses and associated roads - current application.

Representations: (Parish & Neighbours)

Leighton-Linslade Town Council Objection to Derwent Road vehicular access.

- Loss of amenity for local residents.
- Inappropriate siting near lower school.
- Too close to perceived traffic hazard - bend on Derwent Road.

Objection to development at Valley Farm, Leighton Road, Soulbury.

- Although not formal Green Belt, openness of site and current accessibility play important role as green buffer around town.
- Inappropriate urban extension when compared to existing size and market town nature of parish.
- Proposed development would place further unreasonable demands on already overburdened existing infrastructure - revised application does not make adequate allowances for this.
- Luton and South Bedfordshire Joint Committee rejected this area as growth area.
- Town Council's current policy is that land to west of Linslade should be excluded from any future development.

Neighbours

Greenleas Lower School Objection.
I am writing on behalf of the governing body to again express our considerable concerns regarding the proposed road access onto Derwent Road in very close

proximity to the school.

Parents and children access the school from 8am to 6pm daily, mostly via the side access pathway next to the bungalows. Parking and safety is already a major concern along Derwent Road, well beyond the Lomond Drive turn, as children are dropped off and collected throughout the extended school day.

Greenleas Lower School is a 2-form entry school with a nursery and wrap around care provision. The school has an excellent reputation, rated "outstanding" by Ofsted. Not surprisingly the school is very popular and operating at near capacity requiring us to build 2 new classrooms, which opened in January 09.

We provide morning and afternoon nursery sessions, 2 reception classes, 2 Year 1 classes, 2 Year 2 classes, 2 Year 3 classes and 2 Year 4 classes for over 300 children.

Since September 2009 we have also opened purpose built facilities for a local playgroup and our out of hours provision including holiday clubs. Access to this building is from the footpath at the 'bungalow' side of the school. The playgroup operates daily sessions in the morning and afternoon for 26+ children and a lunchtime club. Some of this increased footfall is pedestrian accessed but there is also additional traffic at drop off and collection times during the day. On any day there is considerable coming and going of vehicles along this stretch of Derwent Road. Parking space is always an issue.

Our out of hours provision operates a breakfast club for 40 children from 8am and after school care for 40+ until 6pm. In addition to this we provide a wide range of before and after school activity clubs, which are well attended.

A thriving youth football club uses our grounds on Saturday mornings. The site is used during school holidays for a range of sports activities and we anticipate that this will increase considerably in 2010.

More than 30% of our families travel from outside of the immediate catchment, from choice, partly because of the lack of schools on the newly built estates at the far side of Leighton Buzzard and also our proximity to the new bypass.

Derwent Road is already narrow and when vehicles are parked alongside the pavement to drop off children, the bend in the road restricts vision. Over many years the governing body have raised concerns about safety issues and the need for speed calming. We are currently pursuing some safety barriers at the end of the pathway due to the volume of very young children now using the school site.

This proposal to introduce a road between Lomond Drive and the school is ill-conceived and takes no account of the safety needs of large numbers of very young children accessing the school throughout the day and the current

traffic flow to this thriving popular school.

Southcott Management
Company Limited
(managing agents for
1,100 plus dwellings)

Objection.

- Question suitability of Derwent Road to handle new access and additional vehicles generated so close to Greenleas Lower School with its inherent danger to pedestrians including schoolchildren.
- Derwent Road is characterised by number of bends, especially in area of proposed access where it is almost impossible to have clear view of traffic using road and where there would be danger to any driver exiting development.
- Residents would not accept any foul or surface water from development entering private drainage system managed on their behalf. Such private sewers can hardly cope with current flows, so any additional usage would create insurmountable problems for residents.

Southcott residents

Objection.

Derwent Road access

- Large influx of vehicles entering road, particularly at peak movement times, would create significant congestion problems and greatly increase noise and air pollution levels.
- Position of new junction and extra traffic involved would increase complexity of navigating this section of road and increase risk of accident very close to school entrance.
- Visibility along this section of road is limited due to bends and vehicle parking for access to homes and school; parked cars turn road into single lane, obscuring bend and forcing traffic onto opposite side of road into path of oncoming vehicles.
- Traffic turning into and out of new access would be particularly dangerous in view of visibility problems and proximity of Lomond Drive junction and proposed pedestrian crossing.
- Pavements in road are too narrow for people to pass each other safely, let alone those parents negotiating with pushchairs and buggies; may have been acceptable 40 years ago, but not today; road therefore unsuitable for large amounts of traffic.
- Significant growth in traffic outside school over last 10 years; in past, vehicles were only parked in front of school, now parked 200m - 300m either side of entrance with side roads also being used; applicants' proposed double yellow lines along one side of road to clear road around new junction would lead to either parents parking further from school, thereby extending footprint of problem, or ignoring lines.

- Applicants' proposed yellow lines parking restrictions on west side of road would replicate current practice - drivers do not park on that side but on school and dwellings side.
- Applicants' proposed 'virtual speed humps' and 'raised table' to calm traffic is admission that new junction would be cause of problems associated with speeding traffic.
- Applicants refer to opportunity to mitigate existing parking problems by providing parking spaces within site, but there is no evidence of this or any alternative mitigation.
- Grant of permission would mean lorries and construction machinery using road to access site, increasing likelihood of accidents.
- Whilst recent closure of bypass due to accident and use of Derwent Road as diversion caused chaos during school run, it did indicate level of congestion caused by additional traffic in road.
- Speed cameras are needed on this stretch of road to slow down existing traffic, not even more cars to speed along it.

Soulbury Road and wider road network

- Town is already plagued by traffic congestion resulting from too many houses being built in small market town, road layout of which was never designed for level of traffic it now has to endure.
- Town's traffic problems were supposed to be alleviated by building bypasses, but these have only served to generate more housing.
- Applicants' own estimates recognise that additional traffic generated by development would exceed capacity of road system.
- Whilst Soulbury Road, C256, is now classified as minor road, it would still be obvious route for new residents to access station, main (Tesco) supermarket and town centre shops; alternative access to these destinations is even more restricted by traffic lights and single lane at Wing Road railway arch; these routes are difficult and time consuming without addition of average 2 cars per household from new estate - 1,800 vehicles.
- New bypass has already created greater traffic flows along Soulbury Road than was anticipated and this despite traffic calming measures being introduced at four locations to deter motorists from using road.
- Additional car journeys through pinch points caused by commuter parking would run counter to efforts and expenditure made by authorities to reduce traffic dangers in these areas and would be incompatible with attempt by authorities to restrain and improve

traffic flow in Soulbury Road.

- As well as traffic calming in Soulbury Road, there has been extensive re-working of Leighton Road and West Street - replacement of traffic lights by mini roundabouts; although changes have eased congestion, roads still prone to congestion at rush hour and weekends; new residents' journeys would increase congestion back to levels prior to re-working of road system.
- Applicants' assumption that increased use of buses, cycling and walking would mitigate increase in traffic to any significant extent is naive - bus services have actually decreased in Southcott area; small number of people may use alternatives, but most would always use cars - applicants argue that proximity to bypass is one of site's advantages.
- Applicants state that provision of facilities on site represents further mitigation, but convenience store would be used for minor shopping not larger weekly shop and would not mitigate traffic to larger Tesco supermarket and town centre at weekends; provision of leisure centre, should it materialise, may reduce traffic leaving site, but may equally attract further traffic into area, as there is already considerable demand for such facilities.

Valley Farm development proposals

General comments

- Rapid expansion of once small market town is destroying its character and identity.
- Contrary to both CBC and AVDC development plans.
- If scheme is approved, it would set precedent for more piecemeal unsustainable development in surrounding countryside.
- Site is not designated as Green Belt because such status is not issue for AVDC, as it has no urban area of its own nearby; if site was in CBC area, it would be designated as Green Belt in order to protect western side of town from development.
- Proposal is unnecessary for meeting Government housing targets and would lead to deterioration in quality of life for many existing residents and give sub-optimal quality of life for new residents because of infrastructure shortcomings.
- Although proposal could help AVDC meet Government housing targets, it does nothing for CBC targets - hope proposal is not means of AVDC fulfilling its quota for housing without having any impact on its residents.
- Any service or infrastructure supplied to development would be from Central Bedfordshire; boundary changes are therefore required to incorporate site

within this area.

- Site is too small to warrant applicants putting in adequate infrastructure.
- Sustainability requires employment opportunities that town does not have; expansion on other side of town has not created jobs for local residents; proposal would bring few new jobs to town, but instead would add to road and rail congestion as people commute to jobs elsewhere.
- Applicants propose to provide primary school, health, leisure and community centres and 'country park'; such amenities were also promised by developers of major sites on other side of town, but these promises have not been fulfilled.
- Town's schools, healthcare and leisure facilities are already overstretched and cannot cope with demands generated by another 900 households.
- Clearly, whilst new residents would use town's facilities, their council tax would be paid to AVDC and Buckinghamshire CC; CBC would receive no revenue to improve either infrastructure or facilities to accommodate this growth.

Environment

- Existing residents on Southcott side of brow of hill suffer traffic noise from bypass even at that distance and even with some protection from hill, trees and other housing; proposal would add to this noise if permitted.
- Site is unsuitable for housing because noise level from bypass is intense and although applicants propose some screening by trees, these would be ineffective even when fully grown many years ahead.
- Site would not be healthy living environment - proposed school, tiny 'country park' and other leisure facilities would be next to 'race track' (bypass).
- Applicants' proposal to include environmental area is ridiculous - it would be unsustainable in such close proximity to bypass, new homes and children's play areas.
- Applicants state that there would be deterioration in air quality resulting from additional traffic generated by new development, but that this would be within acceptable limits; any deterioration in air quality would be unacceptable to local residents with asthma or other breathing difficulties.

Landscape

- Quality of landscape prompted Joint Committee to reject site as potential development area.
- Although not Green Belt, site forms natural boundary to western part of town.

- Valley has already seen construction of bypass reducing its views and access to rural area.
- Current view from bypass is uninterrupted valley slopes to either side, as Southcott houses are hidden just beyond rim; new housing would be fully exposed on side of valley and ruin view from opposite side.
- According to survey carried out when bypass built, existing hedgerows are over 600 years old, put in before Enclosure Acts, especially prominent beside Derwent Road.

Countryside

- Applicants state that site is of poor agricultural value, although it has maintained dairy herd for many years; whilst applicants argue that farm is unsuitable for arable crops, adjoining fields have been used for this purpose for many years.
- Site is crossed by footpaths that enable local residents to enjoy town's rural setting; when surrounded by 900 houses in future, experience of walking them would be ruined.
- Green spaces proposed in new scheme would in no way compensate for losses.

Wildlife

- Unlike surrounding area, site has been traditionally farmed in recent times resulting in landscape with hedgerows and varied fauna and flora that is unique to locality having developed over several hundred years; some species are of significant local or historical importance; there are springs, wet areas and small ponds which are breeding areas for amphibians and dragonflies; applicants so-called 'country park' would not compensate for loss of this biodiversity.

Drainage

- Part of development would be on elevated ground running down towards lower part of Derwent Road and Coniston Road where work has been undertaken to improve water management to reduce flood risk in Coniston Road/Ullswater Drive area; new housing would increase run-off towards already threatened area.
- Drainage system on Southcott Estate, much of it privately owned, experiences considerable overloading; climate change is producing additional heavy rainfall events that cannot be handled by system leading to flooding of private and public areas of estate.
- Applicants state that most cost effective foul water disposal option would be Himley Green sewerage system which is already prone to blockages; extra

loading would only exacerbate problem and existing residents downhill would suffer, not new residents higher up; local residents would be faced with bill for upgrades to sewerage system for benefit of new non-paying residents.

- Anglian Water state that it would not be able to service all extra demands from development proposals within and adjoining town and there is no space for expansion at its sewage treatment works unless it encroaches onto protected water meadows which would be another blow to environment.
- Applicants advise that there are discussions with Anglian Water, but there are no definite solutions to drainage issues identified; development cannot be approved with such major issues left unresolved.

Water supply

- There is already lack of water pressure in higher parts of Southcott Estate which has to be boosted by electric pumps during periods of peak usage; several times each year water supply is either drastically reduced due to low water pressure or cut off altogether which is symptomatic of water infrastructure, pipework and pumping stations struggling to cope with existing demand; adding another 900 homes to load would exacerbate problem.

Education

- Buckinghamshire CC operates different two tier education system as opposed to CBC's three tier system; proposed primary school would be incompatible with town's existing schools.
- Three tier system considered preferable for pupils' development leading to new estate's residents using town's schools; their council tax would be paid to Buckinghamshire CC, but education costs would fall on Central Bedfordshire residents.
- Schools in area are already near capacity, especially Greenleas Lower School which has recently been expanded to deal with increased demand.

Rail commuting and station surrounds

- Many commuters already experience regularly overcrowded trains which suggests there is insufficient capacity now; proposed development would undoubtedly increase numbers wishing to commute to London adding not only more congestion on trains, but also increasing parking problems, as it would take over 30 minutes to walk to station from new estate.
- High cost of station parking means commuters are finding alternative parking places, often dangerously located, in surrounding roads causing significant

disruption; parking restrictions have been introduced in Himley Green and Soulbury Road to deter commuters parking where they would otherwise cause congestion.

Consultations/Publicity responses

Highways Officer

General Layout

The development proposes to provide access onto the existing highway network via two new junctions (Leighton Road and Derwent Road). It splits this traffic such that 482 would be via the Leighton Road junction and 206 via the Derwent Road junction. The 2018 flow on Derwent Road, without the development, would be 711(am peak).

Derwent Road

The percentage increase of traffic on Derwent Road would be from 810 to 963 to the NE and 761 to 1010 to the SW. This is an increase of 19% and 33% respectively. While Derwent Road is a distributor road, this flow would be a significant increase and it is questionable whether or not this is acceptable. Furthermore, with this type of flow it is also debatable whether or not a simple junction is appropriate to facilitate the movement and type of vehicles expected to use the access. Derwent Road is a 7.3m carriageway with only a 1m hard strip on the east side in the location of the proposed junction. This means that its junction with Lomond Drive has not got the driver to driver intervisibility specified in either the *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges* or *Manual for Streets*. Furthermore, the alignment of Derwent Road does not comply with the *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges*. The proposal includes a controlled pedestrian zebra crossing onto what is a 1m strip and this is not acceptable. Therefore, it cannot be considered to be a link to promote sustainable modes of transport. While the layout on the existing development off Derwent Road was to cater for pedestrian movements internally, the principle has now changed where pedestrians should be catered for within the corridor of the main road. As the placing of the zebra crossing would suggest, it is the applicants' intention that pedestrians should be catered for within this corridor which is (on a 1m path) clearly not appropriate. As part of the application I would expect, at the very least, a 2.0m footway on one side with a 3.0m shared surface on the other. This is not possible and would need further consideration before this element of the application could be considered for approval.

Leighton Road

While the Leighton Road traffic signal controlled junction would not be in Central Bedfordshire, its operation would affect traffic within the authority's area. The proposed

junction to Leighton Road would increase the AM peak such that it leads me to be concerned about the capacity of the junctions on the bypass, as well as the junctions within the town – see comments below. I am concerned about the 30mph speed reduction just for the junction and question if this is good design practice. Soulbury Road has been traffic calmed to discourage traffic from the bypass and this has not been considered in the layout. The removal of this traffic calming would be contrary to policy. The proposed footpath/cycleway would be reduced from 3m to 2m between the proposed junction and the Derwent Road roundabout. The alignment of Soulbury Road would even be changed to make way for this 2m path. Considering that Leighton-Linslade is a Cycle Town, I find a 2m shared surface unacceptable. This 2m path would be provided at the expense of reducing the verge on the opposite side to below standard which I could not support. Furthermore, since there is development on both sides of the road, there should be a footway/cycleway on both sides.

Trip Generation

I am sceptical regarding the trip generation submitted within the application and will revisit this and substantiate my findings, but in general the trip generation would appear to be a little low.

Highway network – main corridor

The application demonstrates that it has considered the West Street corridor as individual junctions and assessed them under the various recognised programmes such as LIGSIG and ARCADY. The roundabouts in question are mini roundabouts (with the exception of North Street and Hockliffe Street). While the programme ARCADY allows for the modelling of a mini roundabout, it is recognised that for this type of roundabout the results are unreliable. For that reason, and since the corridor from Old Road to North Street was considered problematic, the authority has produced a Micro Simulation Traffic Model (VISSIM). Due to this and the fact that the application identifies that there are problems along this corridor then there has to be further investigation. While I will not go through every junction detail, I will highlight those that give me the most concern.

West Street/Bridge Street junction

The application identifies that in 2020, with the increase in traffic from the application site, there would be RFC (Ratio of Flow to Capacity) in excess of 85% which also quadruples the queue length in the PM peak. Congestion would be unreasonable and this level of RFC (in design parameters) should not be permitted. The remedial works identified are to widen the carriageway and

increase the central island to 6m. In relation to roundabout design the island of a mini roundabout should not be greater than 4m. These alterations would not therefore meet that criterion. Furthermore, the alterations would just increase the entry width which, in reality, would not increase the through capacity, as the modelling programme suggests. The affect that this proposal would have on this junction has not been fully proven or mitigated against and for that reason the alterations as detailed should not be permitted.

West Street/North Street junction

The application identifies that in 2018, with the increase in traffic from the application site, there would be RFC in excess of 85% which also results in a doubling of the queue length in the PM peak. The remedial works identified would be to widen the carriageway and introduce a left 'filter lane'. This would have the disbenefit of reducing the entry angle below 20° and reducing the length of the zebra crossing on Leston Road. This is not only hazardous to pedestrians crossing on the zebra crossing, but would also be a hazard to motorists and vulnerable road users. The widening of North Street to cater for this would also lengthen the zebra crossing and this too would not be beneficial to pedestrians. The affect this proposal would have on this junction has not been fully proven or mitigated against and for that reason the alterations as detailed should not be permitted.

Hockliffe Street/Leston Road junction

The application identifies that in 2018, with the increase in traffic from the application site, there would be RFC in excess of 85%. The remedial works identified would be to widen the carriageway entry width and the circulatory carriageway. In turn, this would slacken the entry and exit radius and would therefore increase entry and exit speeds. Considering that there is an access onto the radius at this point and a commercial access quite near to the exit, this increase in speed would be hazardous to motorists and vulnerable road users. The affect this proposal would have on this junction has not been fully proven or mitigated against and for that reason the alterations as detailed should not be permitted.

As mentioned above, the method of assessment of this corridor has not been conducted in a manner that indicates that the full affect of the application has been adequately assessed or that the mitigation proposed is acceptable.

Highway network – Bunkers Lane/Wing Road

The application identifies this junction as a priority junction and that it already has an RFC in excess of 85%. It shows alterations which while not reducing the RFC to an acceptable level, demonstrates that there is no overall disbenefit to the highway network. However, since the application was submitted, the highway authority has introduced a junction improvement by way of a mini roundabout and hence improved the flow and reduced the queuing. Considering this implemented improvement, the proposal here would be detrimental and not beneficial to the highway network. The affect this proposal would have on this junction has not been fully proven or mitigated against and for that reason the alterations as detailed should not be permitted.

Sustainable Transport
Officer

Objection.

Cycling – Primary access off Leighton Road

- The shared footpath/cycleway on either side of the access would be discontinuous and a realignment of Leighton Road would be necessary to facilitate continuous length.
- The proposal does not indicate how cyclists would transfer from the cycleway to the highway, nor does it explain why cyclists wishing to go towards Soulbury would have to divert into the estate in order to go straight on.
- The cycleway should also extend down the hill towards the town, as well as providing a continuous link to the railway station.
- There appears to be a lack of connectivity to the north west
- If a signalised access is preferred, advance stop lines would be necessary to give cyclists the advantage. However, a 'continental' style roundabout with single lane entry and zebra crossings on all four arms would be more attractive to cyclists and pedestrians.
- Cyclists are allowed to use the road and it should be designed to allow this to happen safely. The junction design fails to incorporate features that result in naturally lower speeds and a safe environment for cyclists and pedestrians. The use of right turn lanes is one shortcoming.
- The separate bus access should also accommodate cyclists and may be a preferred option, although the discontinuous cycle route would remain.

Cycling – Secondary access off Derwent Road

- The design of the access should be revisited in the context of *Manual for Streets* which would suggest that the proposed visibility splays would be excessive in this location and would encourage higher speeds.
- In terms of promoting sustainable travel, Derwent

Road has the potential to be an extension to the site. Measures should be introduced in Derwent Road to encourage 20mph speeds, for example, actual road humps rather than the virtual option proposed and a school safety zone to facilitate safe and sustainable travel to the lower school and beyond.

- Given the site's proximity to the internal path network across Bideford Green to the railway station, cyclist and pedestrian access from the site should be a priority at the Derwent Road junction, although it is not clear whether the access would be of sufficient width to provide an attractive and safe opportunity for cycling and walking.
- There should be enhancements to the roadside footpath network, in particular to address the lack of an adequate footpath along Derwent Road. Financial contributions should be made towards upgrading the existing internal footpath network to cycle route standard. This network is not public highway, but the responsibility of the Southcott Management Company Limited, so some negotiation would be required.
- There is a lack of clarity about management of the secondary access, as it has the potential to encourage 'rat running' and cause problems at the Bunkers Lane/Wing Road junction which is now working well as a mini roundabout that supports cycling use and slows down traffic. The secondary access should be for sustainable travel modes only therefore facilitating these modes rather than the car.
- If the development is to maximise the opportunities available for sustainable travel, enhancements to the interchange facilities at the railway station should be considered. This would include improvements to the existing railway footbridge and bus facilities.
- With regard to on-site provision, whilst designs that encourage lower speeds are supported, the needs of more vulnerable road users, such as schoolchildren, must be taken into account. There is concern that whilst a number of routes through the development would be designated 'pedestrian only', only one would be a 'cycleway'. All segregated routes should be open to all in order to maximise the potential for cycling. The one off-road route is to the west of the site, ignoring the fact that all of the key destinations are to the east.

Public transport

- The bus strategy is inadequate due to the nature of the existing service which does not provide direct access to the town centre. It would likely discourage residents from using public transport.
- A direct, bespoke bus service is required, travelling

along the Soulbury Road corridor only, for commuters using the railway station and facilitating access to the town centre. The applicants would be expected to provide this service and it should run from 6.00am to 9.00pm with frequencies of 20 minutes in the peak and 30 minutes off peak from commencement of development and frequencies of 15 minutes and 20 minutes upon full occupation. The service would need to incorporate real time technology and financial contributions towards enhancing bus infrastructure along Soulbury Road would be required in addition to the necessary waiting facilities within the development.

Travel plan

- The framework travel plan falls short in terms of a commitment to provide everything that is deemed necessary to encourage sustainable travel from/to the site. The management of this is crucial to mitigate the traffic that would otherwise be generated and a more detailed travel plan should be submitted and secured as part of this planning application.
- The travel plan is also deficient in terms of the setting of targets in that this Council would expect a target of a 20% reduction in single occupancy car use over and above the baseline figure referred to in the Transport Assessment rather than a target to achieve that baseline figure only.
- There is a lack of clarity about how the different uses on the site would be dealt with in terms of travel plan obligations and about the role of the travel plan co-ordinator to manage the whole.

Tree and Landscape
Officer

Objection.

- In comparison with previous application for secondary access, whilst the length and position of visibility splays remain unaltered, their width would increase. Total length of hedgerow to be removed would be 110m. Hedgerow has been assessed against Hedgerow Regulations 1997 criteria in respect of woody species composition and is deemed to not be 'important' in terms of botanical criteria. However, hedgerow is of size and depth that contributes significant visual amenity and loss of such substantial length of hedgerow would have significant detrimental impact on streetscene.

Historic Environment
Information Officer

Were hedgerow to be subject of Hedgerow Removal Notice it would satisfy at least two of five historical criteria defined in Hedgerow Regulations 1997, that is criteria 1 - it marks historic parish boundary between Linslade and Soulbury parishes and, criteria 4 - it marks line of Anglo-

Saxon estate boundary described in charter of AD 966; moreover, it has been demonstrated that boundary described in charter equates almost exactly to what became Linslade parish boundary and it certainly coincides with stretch of hedgerow in question. Hedgerow is thus 'important' according to Hedgerow Regulations. It is rare for any hedgerow to meet two of historical criteria. Applicants' hedgerow survey (2008) labels hedgerow as H9 and describes it as one of those "not considered as 'important' under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997" which is clearly incorrect. Question whether survey was conducted on botanical/wildlife/landscape grounds alone. Hedgerows H5, H15 and northern two thirds of H14 all meet same historical criteria as H9, so all should be deemed 'important' according to Hedgerow Regulations.

Archaeological Officer

No objection.

Conservation and
Design Team Leader

Objection.

I am concerned regarding the visual impact of this development and do not consider that this proposal will relate sympathetically to the topography of the site and provide a positive urban edge to Linslade.

The current edge of Linslade is well defined green space and is set back from the new bypass by rising topography with mature trees and linear hedgerow field boundaries; the existing residential edge is screened from wider landscape view by a mature hedgerow along Derwent Road. The proposed development would breach this landscape edge and descend down from the ridge in terraces of buildings which will be highly prominent in wider views and from the recently constructed bypass.

Views of the development would be extensive and would be seen for many miles, for example, the southern edge of Bletchley and Milton Keynes, and from the greensand ridge. The development would also have a negative impact on the wider setting of Soulbury Conservation Area and will be detrimental to views from the Church tower. Views of the development would be particularly emphasised by the use of 3 storey buildings along the ridge and the higher topography of the site.

Whilst much of the existing landscaping is proposed to be retained on the periphery of the site, it is unfortunate that many of the internal linear field boundaries will be removed (which currently subdivide the landscape and shield much of the variation in site levels). This is to be replaced with avenue planting along streets which whilst attractive is somewhat alien to the surrounding landscape which is formed by hedgerows, mature trees and clumps

of trees. It is also unfortunate that the mature hedgerow along Leighton Road which provides a welcomed green entrance to the town is to be removed.

Regarding layout, it is unfortunate that the site is not better connected to the town and surrounding development. There is somewhat of a lost opportunity to provide a more cohesive centre by integrating the school closer to the mixed use centre. The centre is on one of the most elevated positions of the site and the mixed use area is unfortunately severed by the valley and hedgerow which may produce difficulties for disabled and pushchair users. The LAP in the southernmost corner has somewhat poor natural surveillance and is separated from much of the residential development by the water course. The LEAP near the sports centre has potential to also have little natural surveillance. Regarding the sports centre, it is unfortunate that the larger buildings are located at the periphery and on the most prominent edges with views from the bypass and from houses on the higher ground; the proposed rear parking area and that of the adjacent proposed employment uses potentially could create a very dead area of car parking courts with no surveillance or frontage development to break up the sea of vehicles. It is also an issue that the sports centre is severed from the playing fields located in the south of the development which restricts usage and the ability to share parking and changing facilities. I wouldn't support the housing area north of Leighton Road as this is severed from the proposed new community.

I am concerned regarding light pollution from this development particularly at night when the site will be visible from many vantage points within the wider landscape.

In conclusion, I am concerned at the allocation of this site for development since it forms a natural edge to the town and is highly prominent from the wider landscape. I do not consider that the stepped terrace form of development produced by the topography and the proposed layout will sit comfortably within wider views and am concerned about the lack of integration and connectivity to the overall settlement. I am concerned at the layout and form of the proposed mixed use centre and consider that this is too dispersed by topography and lack integration with the school.

Education Officer

The new scheme would incorporate the provision of a primary school on site to serve the development (that would have its own catchment area) and financial contributions, appropriate to the scale of the development, would be made to satisfy both secondary

and special education needs off site. There would be limited, if at all any, surplus capacity at any of the nearby middle or upper schools in Central Bedfordshire to accommodate pupils from the proposed development, as any existing surplus is expected to be absorbed by the additional pupil yield from both existing and future planned developments in the Leighton-Linslade area.

Play and Open Space
Officer

Outdoor Sports Facilities Issues

- The proposed amount of sporting space has been calculated using the NPFA standard rather than the SBDC Sports and Pitch Strategies (above). As this development would be part of Leighton-Linslade it would be more appropriate to use the standards applied for the rest of the town. Sport England supports this view. This should be reviewed.
- The range and type of outdoor facilities also does not reflect the former SBDC strategies which indicate the need for rugby, tennis, basketball, cricket and bowling facilities, as well as multi use games area (MUGA) provision, to meet the needs of the development and existing local needs. These needs must be considered when the mix of sporting facilities is decided.
- The spread-out locating of outdoor sports facilities is not logical for access, or primarily for management. Similarly, creating two separate buildings i.e. leisure centre and changing pavilion, will duplicate facilities and hinders cost effective usage and management.
- Also locating the pitches away from the leisure centre also means that letting and supervision of the outdoor pitches would be difficult, and users of outdoor facilities cannot easily benefit from indoor facilities.
- If on-site sporting facilities are to be provided, it is essential that both indoor and outdoor facilities be located together. This however would not be the preferred option (see below). This is with the specific exception of the all weather pitch which should be a third generation pitch which may be more sensibly located at a nearby upper school (Sport England proposes Cedars Upper).
- The potential flood area where the pitches are located is not appropriate. Usage can be severely limited and damage to both grass and artificial pitches can be significant and expensive to repair.
- Both Sport England and the Football Association identify the need to create large, multi-functional football sites which allow progression through the age groups, potential for expansion and attracting national funding, rather than single pitch sites. Local evidence confirms that single pitch sites offer limited benefit to

teams due to their inflexibility of use, the need to travel to various sites, duplication of changing facilities and the increased management costs associated with these issues.

Conclusions

- The provision of on-site outdoor sports facilities of this scale and in this manner is not supported by the requirements of the former SBDC Sports & Pitch Strategies, by Sport England or by the Football Association. Both local residents and sporting clubs would be better provided for by improving nearby facilities which provide more comprehensive and sustainable facilities, specifically:
- Sport England's proposal to locate a full size all weather pitch suitable for football (3G), on the Cedars Upper School rather than on-site, is supported subject to agreements.
- Sport England's proposal for a financial contribution to improve rugby pitches, and associated infrastructure quality at Leighton Buzzard Rugby Club which is the closest rugby club to the development. Such a contribution would be supported subject to agreement of relevant parties.
- In lieu of the provision of on-site pitches, a financial contribution towards improving football facilities at the Astral Park site be sought.

Indoor Sports Facilities

Issues

- As no detail is provided on the specification for the proposed leisure centre, its potential uses and therefore its adequacy to meet the needs of the development cannot be determined. The need, however, for an on-site indoor facility is questioned for a development of this size. Due to the management issues and costs associated with operating an indoor facility, its sustainability is questioned, especially in light of the above conclusions to remove all outdoor sporting facilities to other sites/operators.
- The former South Bedfordshire Sports Facilities Strategy 2008-2021 identifies the need for additional indoor sporting facilities to meet the needs of growth in this area. In particular it highlights the need for additional sports hall provision and swimming pools across the district, and within the vicinity of the development it identifies that the Tiddenfoot Leisure Centre is currently operating at over-capacity and in need of major refurbishment / replacement.

Conclusions

- As no on-site outdoor sporting facilities are supported for this development, and as the sustainability of an indoor facility for a development of this size is

questionable; no on-site indoor facility should be provided.

- Instead, in lieu of the proposed leisure centre and changing pavilion, a financial contribution should be sought toward improving indoor facilities at the Tiddenfoot Leisure Centre.

Children's Play Facilities

Issues

- The proposals indicate the use of the NPFA Six Acre Standards for calculating the number and age/type of play areas to be provided. The use of this standard's calculation would result in a requirement for the following play areas:
 - 4 NEAP play areas (trigger every 200 dwgs) (1,000sqm age 8-14yrs, 8+ pieces of equipment), plus
 - 9+ LEAP play areas (trigger every 50-100 dwgs) (400sqm age 4-8yrs, 5+ pieces of equipment), plus
 - 45 LAP play areas (trigger every 15-20 dwgs) (100sqm age 3-6yrs 3+ pieces of equipment)
- The above direct use of the NPFA calculation would result in far too many play areas, however, the 3 LEAP's and 12 LAP's proposed is too low a level of provision which relies too heavily on provision for 3-6year olds and completely ignores the 8+ age group. The omission of facilities for 8+ children would be unacceptable.

Conclusion

- A more sensible level of play provision would be something like:
 - 3 NEAP's, plus 3-5 LEAP's plus approx 9 LAP's. While individual LAPs should be located 'close to home', providing combined NEAP, LEAP and LAP sites offers an appropriate mix of play opportunities on one site which allows parents to take all their children to, whatever their age
 - In particular, the section of the site separated by the road must include a LEAP as well as a LAP.
 - Locating the majority of the older provision within the green area is logical, however, consideration should be given to locating one LEAP and LAP near the school.
 - While the application of the above standard establishes a guide for the quantity of play space required, it does not address the quality of the design. In conjunction with the provision of formal play equipment, the design of the play spaces must be carefully considered to incorporate more natural elements and play opportunities. The large green area gives scope to provide play facilities which could be fence-free, use natural landforms as boundaries and incorporate planting into the play experience.

Countryside Access
Officer

No comments on Derwent Road access.

Valley Farm proposal

General comments

- The proposed open space, country park, woodland planting and other informal spaces appear to be sufficient for a development of this size, although the masterplan is obviously locating these areas where there are considerable constraints rather than where there has been assessment of need/deficiencies.
- Development of this size would place additional pressure on the existing green infrastructure around Leighton-Linslade. I refute the suggestion in the '*Open Space and Recreation Technical Appendix*' that there would be only a 'minor' increase in residents using Linslade Wood. All user surveys and countryside data suggest that people want to use established landscape areas (due to their longstanding beauty, topography, etc.) for their informal recreational enjoyment and it would take time for users to change habits and to be attracted to newly laid out and planted provision. New residents may use the new 'country park', however, they are more likely (especially those in the north of the development) to use existing facilities – namely Linslade Wood and Stockgrove Country Park.

'Country park'

- In order for the applicants' 'offer' to be credible, the Council need to see much more detail on the quality of provision on this site. I would suggest that if the site is to be considered as 'country park' standard – they should be expected to conform to Natural England's 'Green Flag' standards.

Access routes and rights of way

- The access routes (footpaths and cycle ways) in some areas are sufficient. However, there is a need to provide more access, particularly bridleway access, which is an acknowledged deficit in the area. I would like to see the route to the north east into Linslade Wood to be provided to a full multi-user standard, that is, access should be sufficient for walkers, cyclists and horse riders. I would expect to see a Pegasus crossing provided on the B4032. Given appropriate highways design, this should be achievable.

Existing sites

- There are a number of important Council-owned countryside sites which are in close proximity (15 minute drive) to the proposed development – Linslade

Wood, Stockgrove Country Park and Tiddenfoot Waterside Park. Based on surveys, it is estimated that at least 30% of the new residents would visit these sites.

- I am particularly concerned about the impact this development would have on Linslade Wood (both the community woodland and the ancient woodland). The development proposes a number of properties to be built in the adjacent field and with access routes from the development into Linslade Wood. The applicants should provide a wider landscape buffer between the housing and the wood. Furthermore, substantial S106 contributions should be offered to enable the wood to deal with the increased demand.
- Stockgrove Country Park will come under increased pressure throughout the development (particularly until all elements of the proposed 'country park' are provided) and even once the development is complete. Stockgrove Country Park is an established country park which comprises 80 acres including a SSSI, lakes, marshes, ancient oak woodlands and meadows. It will always be popular and visitor forecasts suggest that visitor numbers, including visitors from the proposed development, will continue to grow.

S106 contributions

- PPG17 is clear that planning obligations may be used as a means to remedy local deficiencies in the quantity or quality of open space and countryside recreational provision. A suite of contributions would have to be provided to mitigate the impact that this development would have on the countryside and particularly those sites which would be under greater pressure. These improvements can only be achieved by means of S106 obligations to improve countryside access.
- If granted permission on appeal, the proposed 'Stoke Road' development (adjacent to the eastern boundary of Linslade Wood) would deliver significant contributions towards Linslade Wood and the Leighton-Linslade Green Wheel proposals.

Conclusions

- The proposed development would put the Council's countryside facilities under pressure. It would take a significant number of years before the proposed 'country park' could compare with the existing facilities at Linslade Wood and Stockgrove Country Park
- The open space and 'country park' would have to be provided early in the phasing. Delay in providing such green infrastructure should have a bearing on the

amount of funds provided through the S106 obligations to support the other sites.

Anglian Water

There are assets owned by AW or those subject to an adoption agreement within or close to the site boundary that may affect the layout of the development.

There is sufficient water resource capacity to supply the development. However, AW would wish to see measures taken by the applicants to ensure that the proposed buildings are constructed to high water efficiency standards to minimise growth in demand for water from the new development and help ensure sustainable use of the region's water resources.

The proposed development could not be supplied from the water supply network that at present has inadequate capacity.

The foul sewerage system could not accommodate flows from the development. AW is not aware when capacity will become available, but this is unlikely to be within the standard planning permission timescales. If development proceeds before further capacity is provided, it is possible that this would result in environmental and amenity problems downstream.

The foul drainage from the proposed development would be treated at Leighton-Linslade Sewage Treatment Works (STW) that at present has not got available capacity for these flows. Whilst the STW has sufficient consented dry weather flow capacity, process capacity is a constraint. As the STW is currently environmentally compliant, AW would have no plans for process upgrades during the next charging period.

Campaign to Protect Rural England: Bedfordshire

Objection.

- Proposals would have unacceptable adverse impacts on landscape of considerable attraction and value. Although applicants argue that landscape west of Linslade is not protected by any local landscape value designation, PPS7 (2004) indicates that use of local designations to protect valued local landscapes should be phased out in favour of criteria-based assessment processes such as landscape character assessment. Environmental sensitivity assessment report for JTU in respect of land in adjoining council areas potentially affected by delivery of growth indicates that application site is in Sensitivity Grade 1 with significant constraints such that it is not considered appropriate for development to take place. As for possibility of mitigation, report repeats that given high sensitivity of landscape, development is not

recommended. It should be noted that this assessment is reached notwithstanding presence of Linslade Western Bypass along valley floor and report advises that further development around bypass or to settlement edge would be inappropriate in landscape and visual terms. Such judgement is in response to role of land in containing settlement edge and providing rural approach to town.

- Proposals would involve significant unsustainable impacts on town. Unlike preferred growth option on eastern side of town, proposals for west of Linslade would bring no new road infrastructure to town. Scale of impacts is obvious from substantial programme of junction improvements proposed throughout town which, taken together with promotion of 'green travel' options, is seen as providing mitigation of problems. Applicants concede that even after mitigation proposals would have at least some ongoing level of adverse impact on town that is in no position to accept any further adverse impacts. Such impacts would be far greater than applicants calculate because they are based on totally unrealistic expectations of degree of mitigation to be obtained from enhanced walking, cycling, public transport and other 'green travel' initiatives proposed. Average car ownership at Valley Farm could be 1.5 cars per household (nearly 1,500 cars overall). Influence 'green travel' options would have on modal choice would be relatively marginal - vast bulk of movement for off-site shopping, employment, social, leisure and other purposes would be by car.

Central Linslade
Residents Association

Objection.

- Given its proximity to entrance to Greenleas Lower School, exit from new development in Derwent Road would represent considerable hazard to both schoolchildren and those who transport them to and from school.
- Number of traffic movements generated by vehicles serving 900 homes - conservative estimate of 1,400 vehicles - particularly during peak periods, would inevitably cause congestion and raise pollution levels in vicinity of school.
- Development would be detrimental to quality of life of all town's residents.

Environment Agency

No objection.

Applicants should ensure that surface water drainage from new section of road is taken to positive system, either into existing roadway (with approval of highways authority) or into site's surface water drainage system. Similarly, agreement should be reached with highways

authority that proposed 'raised table' on Derwent Road would not cause any drainage issues by blocking existing surface water drainage routes.

The Greensand Trust

The Greensand Trust is involved as part of the Ouzel Valley Park project with biodiversity, public open space and access around Leighton-Linslade. As such our comments relate purely to those offerings within the proposals and imply no endorsement or otherwise of development in this part of town which we see as policy issues for other parties. We have concerns at the level of provision of greenspace and access and there remains some disappointment that the new proposals do not markedly improve upon those presented in AVDC 09/00513/AOP and SBDC TP/09/0176 and commented on at the time. Our present comments are as follows.

Scale of development and impact on valley and landscape generally

- Whilst we acknowledge the comments that the area is not in an area of designated Green Belt, this reflects the lack of such a policy on the Buckinghamshire side of the boundary rather than a statement as to the basic lack of need. The area clearly links the two units of SBDC-designated Green Belt to the north and south of the development around the edge of the present urban development and obviously, had Linslade not been built up against the county boundary, the area of the proposed development would have been so designated.
- Whilst the area itself does not have a primary landscape designation, it is a clear crossroads linking neighbouring areas bearing designation. It is contiguous with the Brickhills Area of Attractive Landscape (AAL) (AVDC Policy RA8) and the SBDC-designated Area of Great Landscape Value (SBDC Policy NE3) around Old Linslade and Linslade Wood. It also provides the essential landscape link between those areas and the Quanton Hills AAL and Southcott areas to the south.
- Whilst significant mention is made of the existing visibility of the present Linslade houses at the top of the hill, these largely merge with the dense, mature hedge and tree boundary and, particularly in summer, the buildings are not a dominant feature in the landscape.
- As the proposed development not only sits on the flatter top of the hill, but also advances down the slope with buildings occupying slopes sometimes in excess of 10%, it will fundamentally change the landscape character of an essentially green valley and instead create an urbanised view to the east of the bypass.

Given the level of development down the hill slopes, we do not accept that relying on the bypass planting as screening is an effective mitigation to this urbanising influence of a rural corridor.

- We consider the number of proposed dwellings to be excessive for the nature of this site on sloping land; with significantly reduced numbers of dwellings the landscape impact could be markedly reduced.

Accessible greenspace and access routes

- Much is made in the documentation of the importance of green infrastructure, with references to the provision of elements of the Leighton-Linslade Green Wheel, linkages to surrounding paths and the provision of substantial public open space, particularly in the wetter flat bottom land, much of which is designated as a 'country park'. We believe that the reality of provision is substantially less than is necessary to justify the statements made.
- Proposals to create a joined up network for different users within the development is consistent with the ethos of a Green Wheel approach. However, the green corridor is absent, and the access network weaker, at the northern end of the site where the area of 'county park' is clearly separated from the Linslade Wood area by an area of urban development either side of the B4032 Leighton Road. We do not accept that a footpath and cycleway around the western edge of the development constitutes a fulfilment of the concept of a 'green corridor' continuing the 'Green Wheel' around into Linslade Wood.
- There is an improvement on previous proposals in that a new horse riding route links the bridleway at the southern end of the site with that being developed by Buckinghamshire County Council under the bypass at the north-western corner from the footpath (SU15). We assume that there will be some bridge provided over the stream at this point either by the applicants or through S106 provision. This remedies a lack of linkage at this point on the previous proposals. We do however challenge the lack of extension of this horse riding route to Linslade Wood. The latter has been purchased by Central Bedfordshire Council as part of the Ouzel Valley Park and contains permissive riding facilities. Whilst paragraph 5.25 of the Technical Appendix to Chapter 13 'Informal Open Space and Recreational Activity' notes the lack of hoof prints in this area, this is a function of the orphan nature of the site, poorly connected into a wider contiguous network. Work by the Trust with the regional committee of the British Horse Society clearly lays out the aspirations for wider, continuous off-road network.

Key in the area of the development is a requirement to link the equestrian properties along the Wing-Soulbury Road through the area to Linslade Wood and on to the permissive riding areas in Oak Wood and Rammamere Heath. The purchase last year of the 200 acres of Rushmere Park between Heath Wood and the Oak Wood – Stockgrove complex to create a 400 acre plus new country park clearly makes the onward linkage of this network viable and the link through the Valley Farm development to the now Central Bedfordshire-owned Linslade Wood, an essential provision down a corridor of appropriate width and green character.

- The comments regarding the efficacy of linkages down through Linslade to the station and town need review. They presently offer an at-best ill-defined and convoluted network which needs improvement to be effective. There would need to be clear marking of routes for pedestrians and cyclists so that they could access services and the wider green infrastructure network throughout Leighton-Linslade. To people who do not know the area, housing estates can appear quite impenetrable. All routes within and from the development to outside destinations such as shops, schools and the railway station should be clearly marked and easily followed, rather than lost in a network of alleys and cul-de-sacs.
- We are unhappy at the widespread and routine use of the term 'country park'. We feel this is a misrepresentation. Although there is no strict legal definition, the Country Parks Network, a Natural England supported initiative, sets out a series of essential and desirable criteria for country parks. To be considered a 'true' country park all of the essential criteria need to be met. This proposed 'country park' does not meet the criteria for size (a minimum of 10ha), facilities (toilets within the site or nearby) or management (daily staff presence). Using the typology and hierarchy recommended in PPG17 this development proposes a combination of amenity greenspace and accessible natural greenspace of only middle order significance.
- As the proposals stand, there is going to be an increased demand on existing green infrastructure facilities, particularly on Rushmere – Oak Wood – Country Park (the nearest strategic green infrastructure and 'true' country park) and also on Linslade Wood. Financial resources need to be provided to support the development of facilities in the new Rushmere area and in Linslade Wood to enable them to absorb the additional visitors generated by this development.

- Whilst it is important to secure and enhance green infrastructure when creating new developments, it is equally important to ensure that there is an appropriate mechanism for managing such areas in the long term, including revenue generation to fund such requirements. This key issue is left to later negotiation but is fundamental to the sustainability of the development proposal.
- In conclusion, this development is in a key crossroads area between the Quainton-Wing Opportunity area, the River Ouzel Corridor, and the Greensand Ridge and Brickhills Areas and we need a substantially better level of greenspace and access provision if the true intent of the Green Wheel is to be achieved in this area. We need a much stronger green corridor right through the site.

Ecological significance

- Whilst we appreciate the potential protection afforded to the existing Valley Farm Fen Local Wildlife Site, overall ecological impact will be significant. Though the fen would not be directly destroyed as a result of this development, there is a possibility that the springs that feed the fen could be affected or polluted by run-off, which could result in the loss, or otherwise have a negative impact, on the wetland plant communities that are the primary interest of the site. Although not designated, previous ecological surveys have indicated that wider parts of the site support areas of lowland meadow of county wildlife site standard, with a high botanical interest, including 3 Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) plant species and one county uncommon species. Lowland meadows are a priority habitat in the national and local BAP. One of the targets in the UK lowland meadows BAP is that there should be “no loss of the current extent of lowland meadows in the UK.” At least some of the fields support plant communities that are typical of lowland meadows, and these would be lost if the development went ahead. These fields are likely to be diverse enough to be identified as a county wildlife site and the only reason they are not identified is that they were not able to be assessed by the relevant county nature conservation panel. If they had been identified there would be a presumption against their development in the LDF Conservation Strategy.
- The impact and people pressure resulting from a housing development of this size far outweigh the benefits offered. Whilst we can see that some effort has been made to take on board green infrastructure planning principles and create networks for people and wildlife, the end result will be that areas of

ecological value will be constrained on all sides, subject to heavy visitor pressure and gradually degraded. It is not clear whether people will be excluded from areas of high ecological sensitivity – there is hatching across the existing LWS. Excluding people (and dogs) is an important part of managing some of the more sensitive habitats, but also means that such areas cannot be counted as ‘accessible greenspace’. Green infrastructure planning looks to establish a multi-functional network, but that does not mean every part of the network needs to be accessible – non-accessible green infrastructure is an important element of the network.

- The water bodies will be subject to significant run-off and significant fluctuations in water levels, reducing their ecological interest and also reducing areas that are accessible during wetter periods.
- The location of sports pitches to the lower flat land to the south of the development, contiguous with the fen, is noted. We do not believe that such manicured greenspace is conducive to wildlife transit to the wider environment. Moreover, the general claims that the development offers links for wildlife through a network of open spaces is not supported by the blockage of the green corridor at the northern end of the site. The impact of the latter, the bypass, the southern pitches and the development itself, will be to effectively create the area of ‘country park’ as a relatively isolated greenspace.
- We believe that the area is too small to effectively deliver all the ecological elements claimed in the proposals. The fen area, even if protected, will be isolated in the greenspace, the area of proposed wet woodland is little more than a hedgeline, and much of the wet-grassland areas will be also used for new balancing ponds, trim trails and general public access. The overall pressure of public use on such a restricted area, with the need for more manicured leisure areas, is not compatible with the more sensitive biological aspirations. The area needs greater space provision to enable better gradation between usage areas for the various elements to work effectively. We believe that a much better standard of biodiversity offering is required for this greenspace.

Historic environment

- There is a need to help preserve, enhance and interpret known historic features – these include earthworks, ridge and furrow and evidence of strip lynchets. Whilst the proposals reference the loss of ridge and furrow, little is made of this and we would particularly comment on the loss of the better

preserved areas to the higher, southern end of the site where the features are clearly visible but will be lost within the built environment.

Conclusions

- Our comments relate purely to matters of landscape, biodiversity, greenspace and access within the proposals. Significant issues of green infrastructure are referenced in the proposals indicating that its importance as a policy objective is well recognised, with the need to provide elements of the Leighton-Linslade Green Wheel, links to wider path networks and into town, in-development open space and clear biodiversity corridors, habitat improvement, hedgerow retention and the like.
- Nevertheless, the level of provision is disappointing in this regard. In particular, key linkages through to Linslade Wood and beyond are blocked by the built environment. Moreover, the areas of 'country park' are too small to be properly so designated and also do not offer the special separation to contain the level of diverse pressures of public use with the level of habitat retention and improvement claimed.
- Our belief is that the size of built development is larger than this site can bear to still deliver the greenspace and access objectives. Moreover, its level of extension down the steeper slopes will make serious impact on the existing green valley that provides a key link between the areas of Green Belt and otherwise designated land areas surrounding it.

The Leighton Buzzard Society

Objection to Derwent Road vehicular access:-

- It is in area designated in local plan both as Green Belt and/or as Area of Great Landscape Value.
- It is opposite to Greenleas Lower School entrance.

Objection to 900 dwellings etc:-

- This is Area of Sensitive Landscape, so should be safeguarded by environmental policy, even if not regulated by Green Belt provisions.
- It will be overdevelopment.
- Open space is there now.
- Leisure centre is nearby.
- Local centre would be inadequate.
- Health centre has failed to be built in Linslade where it is most needed.
- Primary school would have pupils with nowhere to go locally.
- Transport is badly served by existing services, with congested trains.
- There are no other commercial facilities in area.

Leighton Buzzcycles

Application emphasises importance of sustainable travel and incorporates number of welcome features to support cycling. However, there are some aspects that undermine sustainable travel.

Derwent Road access

Access would be open to all traffic and would form through route to other access on Leighton Road. Such through route would be used as 'rat run' and it is not clear why car access is required at this point. Derwent Road has long history of vehicles being driven at inappropriate speeds and has been considered for traffic calming in past. Access is also close to Greenleas Lower School. Volume of traffic using access and travelling along bendy road via Himley Green and Bunkers Lane to Wing Road, which are also principal routes for schoolchildren going to local middle and upper schools, means justification for access is further reduced. Proposed access should be open only for buses, cycles, service and emergency vehicles.

Leighton Road accesses

Accesses raise number of queries. It is unclear (a) how pedestrians and cyclists from part of site north of Leighton Road cross road to access schools and services on south side; (b) how cyclists transfer from cyclepath to highway; why right turn lanes are needed on approach to junction; (c) why cyclists going towards Soulbury have to divert into estate in order to go straight on; (d) why bus lanes are shown as not open to cyclists, as is common practice in former South Bedfordshire; (e) why cyclepath does not extend down hill or at very least why it is not available on uphill stretch; (f) why there is no cyclepath on north west section. Cyclepath should extend down hill to provide cyclepath on Leighton Road to station, as mentioned in para 2.3.9 of Design and Access Statement. Whilst cyclepaths are of great value to novice cyclists, experienced cyclists often do not use them as they are poorly designed, are designed for lower speeds and have many interruptions, for example, giving way to every minor road. Cyclists are allowed to use road and it should be designed to allow this to happen safely. Junction design does not incorporate features that result in naturally lower speeds and safe environment for cyclists and pedestrians. Continental style roundabout with single entry and exit lanes should be used instead of crossroads. This would slow traffic and allow safe progress for non-motorised users. Use of zebra crossings on all four arms would solve crossing issues. Junction and road design needs significant alterations to produce design that works safely and efficiently for all road users.

Speed limits

Support moving start of 30mph zone and suggest setting 30mph limit as far as bypass or at least setting 40mph limit between bypass and 30mph zone. It is also important that main road is designed to encourage lower speeds - lacking from current design. Speed limit within site is not specified and whilst roads are designed to discourage high speeds, would suggest setting 20mph limit.

Cycle routes to station and Rock Lane bridleway

Potential for upgrading some of Bideford Green footpath network to cycle route through estate from Derwent Road access towards station and town centre should be examined. Opportunities should be taken to upgrade Rock Lane bridleway to cyclepath standard and to provide links on eastern boundary of site to Derwent Road opposite Lomond Road and Greenleas Lower School. Extending bridleway along existing footpath via Rocklane Farm to minor road to west would be worthwhile addition to local routes.

S106 etc. funds

Site being within Buckinghamshire raises important question of where any S106, LTP, GAF etc money would be spent. Leighton-Linslade is most affected by proposal and bulk of money should be spent in town. Proposal is likely to lead to significant increases in traffic along B4032/Soulbury Road with Tescos, schools, leisure centre and station being key destinations. To alleviate congestion caused, contributions should be sought to encourage modal shift to buses and bicycles. S106 money should be sought for:

- Continuous production of Go Cycle's Cycling & Walking Map.
- Upgrading Bideford Green paths to shared use.
- Upgrading of Rock Lane bridleway and beyond to cyclepath status.

Support for sustainable transport

Concerned that applicants' support for sustainable transport is only thin veneer. At applicants' public exhibition (November 2008), basic view was that people will get in their cars and travel on bypass whether to work or to facilities in town. Whilst there have been some token additions for sustainable transport, these do not go far enough. The following should be sought:

- Residential travel plan - such travel plans have been provided for other recent developments in town.
- Diversion of bus route 100 via site giving access to Aylesbury and Milton Keynes.

Cycle parking

Cycle parking should be provided at new school, shops and businesses and cycle storage should be provided for all dwellings. Bedfordshire cycle parking guidelines, now adopted by Transport for London, should apply to proposal.

Conclusion

Proposed development could be flagship sustainable transport site. However, apart from few token items, it is really just another car based one. Accesses would have serious shortcomings for cyclists, connectivity to wider cycling network would be poor and impact on rest of town has not been properly examined. Whilst support for cycling within development is fairly good, poor design of site accesses and potential for through route for cars undermine claims to promote sustainable transport. Unless issues raised are addressed, application should be refused.

NHS Bedfordshire

No objection to Valley Farm proposals.

Town is one of NHS Bedfordshire's strategic locations for siting of new all-encompassing health facility and organisation is working with both CBC and LLTC to provide such facility. To this end NHS Bedfordshire is scoping service needs of community to ascertain best way to provide appropriate health care facilities. At present, organisation is not clear whether it would seek to have accommodation within proposed development, as branch of existing surgery, or seek financial contribution towards town-based development that would cover both existing and emergent community. Valley Farm represents possible location for health care facility, but it would be one of options considered in business case to be put to Board of NHS Bedfordshire. Whilst there is no objection to application, final location of health centre would be determined by services that would be provided by organisation in liaison with CBC. Masterplanning of town centre sites - south of High Street and Bridge Meadows area - offers opportunity to consider joint working where social care and health care could be delivered from joint location to benefit of patients. In order to deliver health facilities as part of this growth development it is vital that S106 contributions are provided - be it for off-site facility, provision of land option or design and build option.

Natural England

No objection, subject to Valley Farm proposals being carried out in strict accordance with terms of application and submitted plans.

Protected sites

- To ensure that Kings and Bakers Woods and Heaths

SSSI/NNR is not affected by increase in recreational pressure proposed green infrastructure must be established as early as possible in development so that as development becomes occupied this is available for use.

- To ensure that Nares Gladley Marsh SSSI is not affected by hydrological changes caused by development Environment Agency's best practice guidelines should be followed.

Local wildlife sites

- Valley Farm Local Wildlife Site, 0.52ha area of fen/wetland habitat and associated marginal vegetation, lies within urban extension site. As fen habitats are sensitive to change in hydrology, NE suggests use of sustainable urban drainage (SUDs) to ensure flow rates are not affected. However, system should be properly assessed before being put in place. Whilst fen habitats would be retained as part of POS proposals, NE strongly recommends measures be undertaken to restrict access and maintain this sensitive area, through fencing and interpretation boards, during development's construction and occupation phases.

Protected species

- Although no bat roosts were found within site, bat survey indicated that site is used for foraging and commuting. During development's occupation phase illumination should be installed in sensitive manner using directional lighting.
- Demolition and construction works should be undertaken outside of bird nesting season - 28th February to 1st October.
- NE recommends that biodiversity enhancements form part of development and that ecological management plan is produced and secured by condition to ensure long term management, maintenance and monitoring of site's biodiversity.

Landscape

- NE welcomes mitigation measures proposed to protect integrity of landscape and welcomes retention of both historically and ecologically important landscape features such as proposal to retain 84% of current hedgerow network on site.

Green infrastructure

- NE highlights importance of delivering adequate green infrastructure as part of development to ensure there are no significant impacts on nearby Kings and Bakers Woods and Heaths SSSI/NNR from visitor

pressure. NE has been made aware of significant concerns raised by The Greensand Trust in terms of quantity, design and deliverability of green infrastructure proposed which would appear to be well founded. Certainly, there is virtually no detail regarding delivery and long term (in perpetuity) management which should be fundamental part of any proposals submitted.

Suggested enhancements to green infrastructure should include:

- Provision of 'green bridges' across Leighton Road and bypass to link relatively restricted and isolated 'country park' to wider countryside and help create 'wildlife corridors' for greater connectivity between habitats.
- Incorporation of green roofs into new buildings.
- Provision of allotments.
- Native tree planting - this should be less easily vandalised semi-mature standards (10 years old) as continuous canopy to maximise habitat potential.

Sport England East
Region

Valley Farm outdoor sports facilities - quantity

- Application identifies 3.92ha of formal POS concentrated in southern part of proposed 'country park'. In assessing required provision, it is unclear why NPFA standard of 1.6ha per 1,000 population has been used rather than local standard, as recommended in PPG17. Given that development would be urban extension to Leighton-Linslade, new standards for outdoor sport set out in former SBDC Playing Pitch Strategy (2008-2021) would be most appropriate to apply to proposed scheme because in functional terms development would form part of town and standards should therefore be consistent with those applied to rest of urban area.
- Conclusions of Playing Pitch Strategy should inform mix of outdoor sports facilities to be provided, so in addition to turf pitches, all-weather pitch and synthetic running track, development should include multi-use games areas (MUGAs), tennis/netball/basketball courts and bowling greens.
- Development would only have space for one all weather pitch and three small mini football pitches and FA is concerned that area is relatively small for community playing field. Clubs prefer large multi-pitch provision because at peak times they can supervise several teams from same site at same time rather than playing on pitches across number of smaller sites. Many local authorities have sought to rationalise sites of size proposed and focus investment on larger multi-pitch sites. Question whether playing field of size proposed should be

provided or whether off-site solution would be more appropriate, for example, on existing or proposed school sites, so that strategic approach is taken. Financial contribution towards dual use full size all weather pitch on nearby upper school would be more appropriate than facility just for community use within development. School sites are preferred for all weather pitches due to operational and sports development benefits offered both to schools and community users. Without such consideration, it is possible that facilities could be provided that duplicate those existing or proposed in local area or which could be provided in alternative way. Applicants should liaise with key local organisations that are best placed to inform sports facility needs in area. For example, RFU advises that it would be appropriate for development to meet additional rugby pitch needs that it generates through improving quality of facilities at local rugby club ground rather than providing turf pitches on development site. Such provision would be secured by S106 financial contribution. The needs of other individual sports should be considered in similar way, although football authorities would expect on-site provision within development.

Outdoor sports facilities - siting and layout

Objection.

- From both sports development and operational/management perspective indoor and outdoor sports facilities in major new developments are best provided together. Playing field in south of Valley Farm site would be completely divorced from proposed leisure centre in north of site.
- Playing field would be divorced from residential area it would serve and associated sports pavilion by belt of trees. Whilst this may assist with screening of fencing and any floodlighting, visibility of facility to community would be reduced and there would be concerns about personal safety associated with changing facilities not being visible from pitches. Furthermore, it would be difficult to monitor unauthorised access to all weather pitch which is pertinent given cost of provision and maintenance.
- Proposed primary school would be remote from both leisure centre and playing field and potential for shared use of sports facilities would therefore be limited. Sports development opportunities such as school-club links may be reduced and potential to reduce capital and maintenance costs by providing shared facilities such as sports halls and MUGAs would be limited.

Outdoor sports facilities - quality

- Recommend condition requiring ground conditions assessment to be undertaken to confirm whether topography and ground conditions of site would provide any constraints to ensuring that good quality playing surfaces can be developed that would sustain high levels of use. If survey identifies drainage capacity and/or levels constraints, condition should require mitigation measures to be implemented.
- Whilst pavilion and changing rooms would be provided, it is unclear if adequate dedicated parking would be provided in order to avoid users parking in surrounding residential roads and generating potential amenity conflicts.
- It is unclear if all weather pitch is to be fenced and floodlit. Fencing would be essential to ensure facility is fit for purpose - security, controlling loose balls, surface contamination, spectator safety. Floodlighting is also necessary; without it use of pitch may be restricted by default to weekends which is inappropriate given significant investment required to provide facility.
- Recommend condition requiring facilities to be designed in accordance with Sport England's relevant design guidance.
- No objection in principle subject to issue of fencing and floodlighting of all weather pitch being clarified.

Indoor sports facilities

- Additional population of 2,232 people (average occupancy of 2.48 persons per dwelling) generated by proposed development would create significant additional demand for indoor sports facilities. Former SBDC Sports Facility Strategy (2008-2021) identified significant deficiencies of all types of indoor sports facility provision across southern Bedfordshire, particularly in Leighton-Linslade and especially in sports hall and swimming pool provision. There is clear and robust basis for justifying significant on-site or off-site provision, in particular as Tiddenfoot Leisure Centre is currently operating above its capacity and has significant qualitative deficiencies.
- Whilst principle of providing new leisure centre is acceptable, it is unclear how Valley Farm development would meet full range of additional indoor facility needs that it would generate, for example swimming pool provision, in view of deficiencies that exist in area. Due to level of investment required to provide new leisure centre, it is essential that it is strategically planned to ensure that it complements existing and proposed provision in area, for example, improvements to Tiddenfoot Leisure Centre, possible new leisure centre in

proposed urban extension to east of town, proposed investment at upper school sites in town. Significant financial contribution towards provision of off-site indoor sports facilities may be more appropriate than on-site provision, especially as Tiddenfoot Leisure Centre is only 2km from Valley Farm site.

Youth provision

- Whereas proposed LAPs and LEAPs would meet children's play space needs, no provision of facilities such as skate parks, BMX tracks or small MUGAs would be made for meeting specific needs of youths.

Primary school

- To ensure that school sports facilities would be dual use in practice, recommend condition requiring formal community use scheme to be approved before school is opened.

Voluntary and
Community Action
Central Bedfordshire

Objection.

- Building new communities is not just about erecting hundreds of new dwellings. It must have regard to the people that would make up those new communities. Those moving into a new housing development would include many new and young families; providing a need for parent and toddler groups, play facilities, etc. Residents' groups, new community groups, volunteering opportunities, and opportunities for people to get together through a range of social activities would also be needed.
- People arriving in new communities would not know other new arrivals or the availability of local services, both public and community based. They would need to be provided with information, advice and guidance on local services and enabled to create and participate in local community activities, clubs and societies.
- All these activities would contribute to the creation of a strong sense of community. If these facilities and services are not provided, people would move away from the area, feel isolated, insecure and unable to contribute to civil society. Ultimately, it would create a failing community, rather than a sustainable one, causing further isolation, insecurity and low levels of volunteering and community activity.
- If AVDC determines that the scheme should go ahead then the building of a sustainable community in the proposed West Linslade Urban Extension would require the provision of permanent and interim community facilities, and a dedicated worker to address the social infrastructure needs of new communities. This worker would have specialist

community development skills to welcome and work with new residents; provide opportunities for new residents to meet, socialise and set up new community groups, promote and facilitate access to local volunteering opportunities; and identify and support emerging local community leaders.

Determining Issues

The main considerations of the application are;

1. Impact on highway safety
2. Impact on street scene

Considerations

1. Impact on highway safety

The new road junction in Derwent Road would serve as a secondary access for the urban extension development proposed at Valley Farm. The applicants indicate that, as a result of the use of this access, traffic on Derwent Road would increase by 33%. In the vicinity of the proposed junction Derwent Road has a number of existing significant shortcomings.

- Its alignment does not comply with the requirements of the *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges*.
- It is a 7.3m wide carriageway with a 1m only footway on the eastern side and no footpath on the western side.
- Its junction with Lomond Drive does not have the driver to driver intervisibility specified in either the *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges* and *Manual for Streets*.

In the layout of the existing estate off Derwent Road, pedestrians are catered for internally - by way of roadside footways and segregated footpaths. With regard to the current proposal, the emphasis would change whereby pedestrians would be catered for within the corridor of the main road. The proposed provision of a zebra crossing beside the new junction indicates the applicants' intention here. To create a safe and convenient route for pedestrians, the Highways Officer would expect the provision of a 2m wide footpath on one side of Derwent Road and a 3m shared surface footpath/cycleway on the other side. Given the width of the public highway in this location, such requirements cannot be met. It follows that pedestrians, including young children attending Greenleas Lower School, would continue to use the inadequate footpath on the eastern side of the road. The increase in vehicle movements in Derwent Road as a result of the new junction would therefore increase the hazard to pedestrians and is clearly unacceptable. Furthermore, in order to support sustainable travel modes, residents of the new estate at Valley Farm would be encouraged to use the local footpath network and would, by virtue of a lack of a footpath on the western side of Derwent Road and the inadequate width of the footpath on the eastern side, be subject to the same hazard.

Between the primary access junction and the county boundary, it is proposed to provide a 3m wide footpath/cycleway on the southern side of Leighton Road.

However, between the county boundary and the Soulbury Road/Derwent Road junction the width of the proposed footpath/cycleway would be reduced from 3m to 2m. To accommodate this 2m footpath/cycleway on the southern side of Soulbury Road a realignment of the road on its northern side is proposed. Given that Leighton-Linslade is a Cycle Town, the proposed 2m wide shared surface footpath/cycleway is unacceptable. Moreover, the proposed realignment and narrowing of Soulbury Road between the county boundary and its junction with Derwent Road would be detrimental to highway safety and the free flow of traffic.

In respect of the wider highway network, the applicants have assessed how various junctions would operate in the future as a result of the increased traffic generated by the Valley Farm development. Where required, mitigation is proposed to address specific junction capacity issues. In his comments, the Highways Officer raises the following objections to the scheme's impact on the wider highway network.

- West Street/Bridge Street junction - The congestion arising from a quadrupling of the traffic queue length in the PM peak would be unacceptable. The mitigation proposed, which would involve widening the carriageway and increasing the diameter of the central island to 6m, would not achieve the capacity improvements that the applicants' modelling programme suggests.
- West Street/North Street - The increase in traffic would result in a doubling of queue length in the PM peak. The mitigation proposed would involve widening North Street (to the north of the roundabout) and introducing a left 'filter lane' here. The reduction in the entry angle below 20 degrees and the reduction in the length of the zebra crossing on Leston Road would be not only hazardous to pedestrians using the zebra crossing but also to other vulnerable road users and motorists.
- Leston Road/Hockliffe Road - The mitigation proposed would involve widening the carriageway junction entry width on both Leston Road (north of the roundabout) and Hockliffe Street (east of the roundabout). In turn, this would slacken the entry and exit radius curves and thereby increase entry and exit vehicle speeds. Given that there is an access (to a flats development) onto the radius at the location north of the roundabout and the Town Council/commercial access close to the exit, this increase in vehicle speeds would be hazardous to both vulnerable road users and motorists.
- Bunkers Lane/Wing Road - Since the application was submitted the Council has introduced a junction amendment by way of a mini roundabout which has improved flow and reduced queuing. The works proposed here would be wasteful and detrimental to the highway network.

The proposal has not demonstrated that it would cater for the increase in traffic that the Valley Farm development would generate. Such additional traffic is likely to increase traffic congestion at a number of junctions within the Leighton-Linslade urban area. Furthermore, the mitigation measures proposed by the applicants would be detrimental to highway safety.

With regard to the sustainable transport aspects of the Valley Farm development, the Sustainable Transport Officer raises the following objections.

- A shared footway /cycleway would not be provided either side of the primary (Leighton Road) access and would not be continuous to the town centre. The realignment and narrowing of Leighton Road would be necessary in order to facilitate a footway on one side to the Derwent Road junction. The current proposal does not detail how cyclists would transfer from the cycle path to the highway and indeed if the carriageway was to be narrowed in this location, then it would not be safe for these vulnerable road users. There would also be a lack of connectivity to the north west and into Buckinghamshire.
- There would be a lack of provision for pedestrians and cyclists from the part of the site north of Leighton Road to cross the road to access schools and other services on the south side.
- Measures would need to be introduced in Derwent Road that would encourage 20 mph speeds and these should take the form of actual road humps rather than the 'virtual' option together with a school safety zone to facilitate safe and sustainable travel to the lower school and beyond.
- Pedestrian and cycle access from the site should have priority at Derwent Road, being suitably located to facilitate use of the internal network of footpaths across the Southcott area to the railway station.
- There is a need for financial contributions to upgrade the internal network of footpaths to cycle route standard. However, this footpath network is not public highway and some negotiations would be needed with Southcott Management Company whose responsibility these remain. This is not within the applicants' control so must be considered not possible.
- Further opportunities should be taken to facilitate both walking and cycling through enhancements to the Rock Lane bridleway which would provide an excellent opportunity for links from the eastern boundary.
- With regard to on-site provision, there is only one 'cycleway'. All segregated routes should be open to all in order to maximise the potential for cycling. In fact the one off-road route is to the west of the site ignoring the fact that all of the key destinations are to the east.
- The main proposals in respect of public transport are for diversions to existing services from Leighton Road into the Valley Farm site through a bus only access. These proposals are inadequate due to the nature of the existing service which does not provide direct access to the town centre and would be likely to discourage residents from using public transport.
- A direct and bespoke service is required, using the Soulbury Road corridor only, that meets the needs of commuters using the railway station and facilitates access to the town centre. The developer should provide this service, but it is not offered within the application.
- A more detailed travel plan is therefore expected that would need to be secured as part of this planning application.
- The travel plan is also deficient in terms of the setting of targets in that Central Bedfordshire would expect a target of a 20% reduction in single occupancy car use over and above the baseline data provided in the Transport Assessment, rather than a target to achieve the baseline figures only.

Having regard to the objections set out above, it is clear that the application fails

to make adequate provision to promote sustainable travel modes.

2. Impact on street scene

The construction of the proposed secondary access would involve the removal of 110m of hedgerow that adjoins the Derwent Road carriageway on its western side. The Tree and Landscape Officer has assessed the hedgerow and it is not considered to be 'important' in terms of the botanical criteria set out in the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. The Historic Environment Information Officer advises that given it marks the historic parish boundary between Linslade and Soulbury parishes and marks the line of an Anglo-Saxon estate boundary described in a charter of AD 966, the hedgerow is 'important' in terms of the historical criteria described in the Hedgerow Regulations. Whilst this is not an application to which the Hedgerow Regulations apply, given its size and depth, the hedgerow makes a significant contribution to the visual amenity of the Derwent Road street scene and is of significant local historical interest. The loss of such a substantial length of hedgerow would have a significant detrimental impact on the visual amenity of the streetscene and on the local historic environment.

Recommendation

That Planning Permission be REFUSED for the following:

- 1 The introduction of an access on Derwent Road that would serve a major urban extension development on adjoining land at Valley Farm (Leighton Road, Soulbury) would increase vehicular movements onto a road which, by virtue of the inadequate width of the footpath on the eastern side, would increase hazard to vulnerable road users. Furthermore, if granted permission, the proposed urban extension development would increase pedestrian traffic along Derwent Road which, by virtue of the lack of a footpath on the western side and the inadequate width of the footpath on the eastern side, would be hazardous to all road users. The proposal is, therefore, contrary to national guidance in Planning Policy Guidance 13 (Transport) and Policies T2, T4, T8 and T9 of the East of England Plan.
- 2 The proposed realignment and narrowing of Soulbury Road between the county boundary and its junction with Derwent Road would be detrimental to highway safety and the free flow of traffic. The proposal is, therefore, contrary to national guidance in Planning Policy Guidance 13 (Transport) and Policies T4 and T8 of the East of England Plan.
- 3 The proposal fails to demonstrate that it would make adequate provision for the increase in traffic that would be generated by the urban extension development at Valley Farm (Leighton Road, Soulbury) and is likely to lead to an increase in traffic congestion at a number of junctions within the Leighton-Linslade urban area. Furthermore, the proposed mitigation measures described in the application would be detrimental to highway safety. The proposal is, therefore, contrary to national guidance in Planning Policy Guidance 13 (Transport) and Policy T8 of the East of England Plan.
- 4 The proposal fails to make adequate provision to promote sustainable travel

modes such as cycling, walking and public transport. The proposal is, therefore, contrary to national guidance in Planning Policy Guidance 13 (Transport) and Policies T2, T4, T8 and T9 of the East of England Plan.

- 5 The construction of the proposed secondary access would involve the removal of 110m of hedgerow that adjoins the Derwent Road carriageway on its western side. The hedgerow makes a significant contribution to the visual amenity of the Derwent Road streetscene and is of significant local historical interest. The loss of such a substantial length of hedgerow would have a significant detrimental impact on the visual amenity of the streetscene and on the local historic environment. The proposal is, therefore, contrary to national guidance in Planning Policy Statement 1 (Delivering Sustainable Development), Policies ENV3, ENV6 and ENV7 of the East of England Plan and Policy BE8 of the South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review.

DECISION

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