



Victoria Davies  
Central Bedfordshire Council

Our ref: ML/30027

[Victoria.Davies@centralbeds.co.uk](mailto:Victoria.Davies@centralbeds.co.uk)

28<sup>th</sup> March 2011

***By email only***

Dear Victoria

**Morrison's foodstore proposals Houghton Regis**

Thank you for meeting with TPP on the 7<sup>th</sup> March to discuss the proposed Morrison's foodstore in Houghton Regis. As outlined in previous correspondence the Houghton Regis Development Consortium (HRDC) does not object in principle to the proposed foodstore.

As discussed we have concerns about the applicants analysis for instance all pedestrians accessing the foodstore from the town centre have been assumed to cross the High Street at the existing crossing to the east of Bedford Road rather than at the new double mini roundabout. Further small variations in either traffic generation, or the direction of travel to or from the store could have an impact on the analysis. With regard to the applicants traffic counts we understand from our discussions that they have allowed for traffic joining the back of the existing queues as well as vehicles crossing the stop lines at junctions.

The proposed foodstore access will be just 40m to the west of the existing High Street/ A5120, Bedford Road junction. This would create a double mini roundabout on Houghton Regis High Street which we are concerned could have the potential to gridlock and exacerbate existing traffic conditions. Therefore our preference would still be for the access to be relocated to Cemetery Road as originally proposed by the developer. For information we have attached copies of the TPP plans tabled at the meeting, one of these shows how access could be achieved from Cemetery Road whilst retaining the foodstore, service yard and car parking in their current locations.

We understand that since our previous meeting with the council on the 8<sup>th</sup> October 2010 the highway proposals have been reviewed with the cycle lanes being removed to increase capacity and that further analysis has also been undertaken. This analysis, dated 7<sup>th</sup> December 2010, shows that the revised highway proposals will improve the traffic situation in the town centre and reduce queues in peak hours. We understand that this revised work has been reviewed by the council's consultants who have advised that they agree with the applicants conclusions. Therefore the Council believes that it is

not in a position to ask for the access to be relocated although they might seek to protect their position through the section 106 agreement and Travel Plan. We believe that the council should protect Houghton Regis through these documents by requiring the applicant to relocate the access on to Cemetery Way if traffic conditions are not as indicated in the applicants analysis dated 7<sup>th</sup> December 2010.

In addition to the above the committee report recognises the importance of strategic infrastructure to accommodating development including the proposed foodstore in Houghton Regis. The foodstore should be required to contribute towards the strategic infrastructure in the area, this includes the proposed A5 to M1 Link Road, Woodside Connection and extensions to the Luton to Dunstable Busway. With regards to the level of contribution there is no SPD in place, however if we take the neighbouring Luton Borough Council 2007 SPD as an example this requires a contribution £414 per sqm for a foodstore development. Therefore on this basis the proposed Morrison's would be required to contribute approximately £2 million towards strategic transport infrastructure in the Houghton Regis area. Alternatively it would be possible to calculate an amount based on the current proposals in the pre submission Core Strategy documents.

At this point it is also worth noting that the analysis in the applicants Transport Assessment dated February 2011, which we have just received, differs from the analysis dated the 7<sup>th</sup> December 2010 on which we understand the Council's conclusions were based. The analysis in the Transport Assessment predicts longer queues which mean a gridlock situation is more likely. On this basis the above comments become even more relevant. However we have not undertaken a detailed review of the applicant's analysis and therefore despite our reservations we must rely on your consultant's confirmation that the proposed highway arrangements will improve traffic conditions in Houghton Regis and the access junction will not gridlock. Therefore this is positive news for the proposed urban extension and the early release sites.

In summary we believe the council should protect Houghton Regis through the section 106 agreement and Travel Plan. These should include conditions requiring the applicant to relocate the access on to Cemetery Way if conditions are not as indicated in their analysis dated 7<sup>th</sup> December 2010. In addition the applicant should be required to make a significant contribution towards strategic transport infrastructure in the area as indicated above.

We look forward to working with you in the near future with regards to the details of the early release sites including their impact on the transport network. As you are aware the early release sites are necessary to enable us to bring forward funding for the A5 to M1 Link Road which should ultimately further improve traffic conditions in Houghton Regis.

If you have any queries with regards to the above please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
For Transport Planning Practice Ltd  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Victoria Davies  
Central Bedfordshire Council

Our ref: ML/30027  
28<sup>th</sup> March 2011

cc: Dave Ager Central Bedfordshire Council  
Jim Tombe Central Bedfordshire Council  
Trevor Saunders Central Bedfordshire Council  
Duncan Jenkins Lands Improvement Holdings  
Julian Carter GVA Grimley  
Neil Lawrence GVA Grimley

Att: Drawing 30027/106AC  
Drawing 30027/107AC