

Item No. 7**SCHEDULE A**

APPLICATION NUMBER	CB/11/00750/FULL
LOCATION	Land at Derwent Road, Linslade, Leighton Buzzard LU7 2XT
PROPOSAL	Revised scheme for the 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 CB/10/00859/FULL)
PARISH	Leighton-Linslade
WARD	Linslade
WARD COUNCILLORS	Cllr David Hopkin, Cllr Ken Janes & Cllr Nigel Warren
CASE OFFICER	Mr C Murdoch
DATE REGISTERED	02 March 2011
EXPIRY DATE	27 April 2011
APPLICANT	Paul Newman New Homes
AGENT	DPDS Consulting Group
REASON FOR COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE	Member request
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 application for full planning permission has been submitted to Aylesbury Vale District Council (reference 11/00426/APP) for a primary access off Leighton Road to serve 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 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 immediately 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.

The Application:

On 17th March 2009, an outline application for a residential-led mixed use urban extension development at Valley Farm was submitted to Aylesbury Vale District Council (09/00513/AOP). A corresponding full application for a secondary vehicular access off Derwent Road was submitted to the former South Bedfordshire District Council (SB/09/00176/TP). Both applications were subsequently withdrawn on 3rd June 2009. Revised applications were submitted on 12th March 2010 to both AVDC (10/00500/AOP) and this Council (CB/10/00859/FULL). The application for the secondary access was refused permission at Development Management Committee on 23rd June 2010. The four highway reasons for refusal are as follows.

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.*

The Valley Farm application was refused permission at AVDC's Strategic Development Control Committee on 4th August 2010. The decision includes three highway reasons for refusal.

On 22nd December 2010, the applicants submitted appeals to the Planning Inspectorate in respect of both refused applications. The conjoined appeals are the subject of a Public Inquiry due to commence on 5th July 2011.

Prior to and following submission of the appeals, discussions have taken place with the applicants' consultants to ascertain whether or not the highway reasons for refusal and the need for technical highway issues to be dealt with by evidence at the forthcoming Public Inquiry could be overcome. In the light of these discussions it was decided that the best route to deal with these matters would be by way of the submission of fresh planning applications covering technical highway issues only. This application together with that submitted to AVDC are full applications for revised primary and secondary accesses to the site. They seek to ensure that the correct consultation procedures are undertaken on the revisions to the technical highway issues and, if possible, seek to reduce the length and therefore the cost of the Public Inquiry should such revisions be deemed to be acceptable.

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 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.

Derwent Road is a 7.3m wide carriageway with a footway on the eastern side which varies in width. - 2m wide on the north side of Greenleas Lower School and on the north side of Leven Close, but only 1m wide in close proximity to the proposed secondary access. Since the refusal of permission the secondary access design has been developed in order to address the deficiencies in the existing footway provision and to improve highway safety. The proposed works include the following elements.

- The applicants control land on the western side of Derwent Road over a length of 200m and it is proposed that the existing carriageway be horizontally realigned within this land in order to permit the width of the footway on the

eastern side to be increased to 2m between Leven Close and the school. The applicants advise that the proposed realignment of the eastern kerb line would also permit the existing junction visibility splay from Lomond Drive to be improved.

- Although Derwent Road has an average width of 7.3m, frequent on-street parking causes the effective carriageway width to be reduced to 5.3m. In order to allow the proposed 2m footway to be extended along the frontage of the school, the existing carriageway would be narrowed to 6.3m and parking and waiting restrictions would be promoted. The applicants intend to provide a car park within the Valley Farm development to accommodate the vehicles that would normally park adjacent the school, in the area that parking and waiting restrictions are proposed, together with a zebra crossing (with Belisha beacons) to link the car park and Footpath 59 that abuts the southern boundary of the school.
- A new 2m footway would be provided on the western side of Derwent Road over the extent of land controlled by the applicants between a point opposite No. 112 Derwent Road to the proposed zebra crossing. The applicants argue that this new footway would improve pedestrian connections between the proposed Valley Farm development and existing residential areas, the school, the railway station and the town centre.
- Traffic calming measures in the form of virtual road humps and vehicle activated speed limit signs would be provided to compliment the carriageway narrowing in order to create a 20mph zone adjacent the school and on its northern and southern approaches.

On the southern side of Soulbury Road, between the county boundary and the junction with Derwent Road, the width of the proposed shared footway/cycleway would be generally increased from 2m to 2.5m with the exception of a short length directly opposite the vehicular access to the vacant land adjacent the Anglian Water reservoir site where it would be necessary to locally reduce the width to 2m. The applicants advise that this amendment to the width of the shared footway/cycleway could be achieved by removing approximately 50m of hedgerow on the northern side of the road and narrowing the carriageway to 6.1m over a length of approximately 110m.

Since the refusal of permission the proposed designs for the off-site roundabout junctions have been amended in order to address the previously identified shortcomings.

- West Street/Bridge Street junction - The central island diameter would be reduced to 4m. The carriageway on the northern side would be widened and the kerb realigned to allow the inscribed circle diameter to be increased to 18m and the entry width of the roundabout to be increased in order to generate additional capacity, whilst changing the deflection mechanism from the nearside shift to the offside shift.
- West Street/North Street junction - The northern arm would incorporate a smaller radius on the north-eastern corner of the junction (equivalent to the existing radius), in order to ensure that vehicles turning left from North Street to Leston

Road would not attempt to perform that manoeuvre at a higher speed. The road markings on the northern entry to the roundabout would be revised to provide compatibility with those on the southern arm.

- Hockliffe Street/Leston Road junction - The existing zebra crossing on the north-western arm would be raised in order to improve pedestrian safety and ensure that the proposed carriageway widening on the northern side would not encourage higher entry speeds. An additional zebra crossing would be provided on the eastern arm and this would also be raised to ensure that the proposed carriageway widening on the eastern entry would not encourage higher entry speeds. The resulting design response is intended to provide increased capacity during the peak hours whilst encouraging reduced vehicle speeds during the non-peak hours.
- Bunkers Lane/Wing Road junction - The form of the junction has been changed from a ghost island to a mini roundabout since the 2010 planning application was submitted and therefore the amendments that were originally proposed are no longer required.

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)

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 Policies

BE8 - Design and environmental considerations.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Design Guide

Main Guide Design in Central Bedfordshire: A Guide for Development

DS1 New Residential Development

DS5 The Historic Environment

DS7 Movement, Streets and Places

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.

CB/10/00859/FULL Refusal for formation of a secondary vehicular access on land off Derwent Road to serve development proposed within Aylesbury Vale District under 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). Appeal lodged - Public Inquiry due to commence 5th July 2011.

Representations: (Parish & Neighbours)

Leighton-Linslade Town Council Objection.

- Introduction of access on Derwent Road that would

serve major development on adjoining land at Valley Farm would result in unacceptable traffic congestion and additional hazards for users of highway.

- Inappropriate siting of access road close to primary school and causing additional risk to young children.
- Proposal fails to make adequate provision for increase in traffic into town centre which would result from such large development.
- Further to its resolution on 30th June 2008, Town Council remains opposed to any development of land between Linslade and Linslade Western Bypass.

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 2009.

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 2011.

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.

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 residents and other local residents

Alwins Field - 8
Bideford Green - 6, 34, 35, 44, 57, 74, 76, 125, 172, 173, 177, 214, 225, 232, 267, 281, 339, 381, 439, 482, 497
Calder Gardens - 12
Carron Close - 6
Chestnut Rise - 12
Coniston Road - 1
Cotswold Drive - 3, 7, 11, 20, 23
Derwent Road - 12, 14, 68, 148, 383, 385, 389, 393, 397, 399
Dudley Street - 27
Eriboll Close - 9
Fyne Drive - 9, 16, 75
Grange Close - 40, 62
Grasmere Way - 51, 145, 201
Kendal Gardens - 16
Knaves Hill - 61, 139
Leven Close - 9, 10, 16, 24
Lomond Drive - 35, 40, 77, 80, 105
Loyne Close - 2
Malvern Drive - 6, 7, 9, 10, 14, 19, 21, 39
Mardle Road - 33
Maree Close - 2, 5, 7
Melfort Drive - 55

Objection.

Derwent Road access

- Strip of land between road and county boundary is still officially Green Belt land, but not shown as green on definitive map because it is too thin to mark in.
- Road already carries sizeable traffic volumes, as in addition to schools it also serves as link between Soulbury Road and Wing Road; it follows many bends and dips and extra traffic will make it difficult for drivers turning out of side roads.
- Derwent Road is not main road, only service road for estate and it is surprising applicant is proposing major road junction to serve 900 houses, together with refuse and emergency vehicles onto small estate road.
- New junction will be situated between two bends with very poor visibility in both directions; such junction within 100m of Greenleas Lower School with its associated zebra crossing, lights, raised table and parking restrictions will be horrendous for local parents and residents, positioning being dangerous and causing congestion.
- Proposed pedestrian crossing will add to complexity of driving this stretch of road; crossing will be near to existing junction, proposed junction, parked cars, road narrowing and school that will all lead to drivers being distracted by succession of hazards and could lead to drivers failing to stop at crossing and hitting child/adult.
- Pavement widths in area are less than adequate - might have been acceptable 40 years ago, but not today.
- Already been various minor traffic accidents, so with increased traffic during peak periods, severity and frequency of accidents will increase thereby posing substantial threat to pedestrians, particularly children.

Mentmore Road - 42
Milebush - 1, 9, 10
Morar Close - 1
Mowbray Drive - 29
Nevis Close - 6
Orchard Drive - 40, 42
Southcourt Road - 13
Ullswater Drive - 9, 21
Windermere Gardens -
11

The Stile, Heath and
Reach - 5

- School already generates huge amount of traffic at beginning and end of school day and since construction of playgroup building within grounds traffic and parking has increased even further.
- Transport Assessment acknowledges that secondary access will provide more direct route to station and common sense dictates that this exit from new estate will be very well used and will therefore exacerbate congestion at this point; secondary access will in all probability become main access if traffic lights are installed at primary entrance to Valley Farm.
- Existing school parking stretches from Fyne Drive to Leven Close and down side roads causing severe disruption and blocking visibility on Derwent Road; such parking at beginning and end of school day restricts road to single carriageway which will be even more restrictive as proposal incorporates widening of path outside school by reducing width of road to compensate; reducing road width will surely lead to more chaos and accidents; notable that photographs included with application are wholly of road scenes at quietest part of day and totally unreflective of problems and issues revised application now purports to resolve.
- Applicant admits there are parking problems associated with school and only solution is to put yellow lines everywhere.
- Although modified proposals include various traffic calming measures, given amount of school traffic parked at peak times, these measures will be of negligible effect; speed is not central issue - notable that Soulbury Road has several features to limit speeds and is itself frequently clogged with traffic.
- Derwent Road is only means of entry/exit for hundreds of Bideford Green residents seeking access to/from Soulbury Road; majority of Valley Farm residents will be drawn to facilities at Vimy Road and town centre, further overloading Soulbury Road throughout week.
- Tiny car park proposed by applicant as part of development will be of no use to parents because it will be too small and positioned within development making it inaccessible to majority; most new housing estates make insufficient allowance for number of cars that new residents have, so it is inevitable that proposed car park will become ever more used by Valley Farm residents as overflow car parking thereby reducing amount of parking spaces available for parents/carers.
- Extra traffic will bring unacceptable levels of air and noise pollution to local residents; will effect existing residents quality of life, particularly nearby pensioners who purchased bungalows for quiet retirement.

Soulbury Road and wider road network

- Soulbury Road has been downgraded from B4032 to C256 and is incapable of taking any more traffic to town centre and station with severe bottlenecks at Springfield Road and Old Road junctions; alternative route is even more restrictive at Wing Road bridge which is single carriageway controlled by lights.
- Road has already had traffic calming measures installed to deter traffic from bypass.
- Applicants' estimates of additional 480 trips along road - total of 960 trips - is unrealistically low for 900 houses, most of which will have more than one vehicle; when bypass survey was conducted road was estimated as having to cope with 5,485 vehicles/day by 2012, but police survey in 2008 showed daily traffic flow had already increased to over 6,000 vehicles; bypass survey confirmed that no further development of Soulbury Road corridor should be undertaken and that it should be preserved as low-traffic 'C' road.
- Laughable for applicants to suggest proposed walkway and cyclepath along Soulbury Road into town centre would be sustainable alternative to avoid clogging up road with cars when consider long, slow hill up which residents, laden with shopping, will have to cycle back; without doubt new residents will use cars for such journeys, adding to traffic on roads already heavily congested from overdevelopment on eastern side of town.
- Town centre has recently undergone highway improvements which have gone some way to relieving congestion; adding 1,800-2,700 more cars to roads will bring traffic chaos back to town centre.
- Main cause of congestion in town centre is traffic flows crossing each other as they turn right or left; proposed changes to roundabouts - minor widening of approach/exit lanes and extra road markings - will not ease congestion; notable that most critical junction - exit from Old Road and roundabout before canal bridge - are totally ignored, as is constrained canal crossing.
- Relative lack of local employment suggests that proposal will result in considerable additional car and long-distance commuter journeys; development of industrial estates has taken place on other side of town where recent housing has been concentrated - development site is in entirely wrong place from this perspective.

Valley Farm proposals

- Proposals are contrary to development plans published by both Aylesbury Vale and Central Bedfordshire.
- Destruction of beautiful countryside that has been

classified as Grade 1 for tranquillity and distinctive landscape value.

- Destruction of 600 year old hedges.
- Proposed development will be fully exposed along full length of valley and will completely destroy current amenity.
- Granting permission will create strong precedent for infilling all way along route of new bypass.
- Significant wildlife, both flora and fauna, will be lost; if permission granted, doubt whether trees shown to be retained will remain after contractors start work, as happened at RAF Stanbridge.
- Loss of local countryside footpaths; number of walking groups in area that use these.
- Design and appearance of housing may be suitable for Milton Keynes, but will be totally out of context with Linslade.
- There will be considerable loss of privacy at rear of Derwent Road properties adjoining site from three storey flats.
- Question suitability of commercial properties proposed in residential area.
- Proposed school, health centre, leisure and community centres have also been proposed within other large developments in town and have never been built, so realistically they will not be built at Valley Farm and land allotted for these uses will be used for building more houses.
- Local schools are short of numbers, another school will make matters worse and have detrimental effect on local schools.

Impact on local infrastructure

- New estate will not be near any amenities or facilities in Aylesbury Vale which will mean new residents using Central Bedfordshire facilities which are already stretched to limit.
- Town currently suffering through lack of medical and welfare services - trying to register with local doctor is difficult; upshot of development going ahead will be for AVDC to collect appropriate council tax, leaving Leighton-Linslade residents to cover increased costs of all additional services required by Valley Farm residents.
- False promises of developers over building of various amenities, trying to sweeten planners; only recently, leisure centre 500 yards from site was taken over due to lack of business.
- Proposal does not make development self-sufficient due to lack of infrastructure and what is shown on outline plan will be watered down when detailed planning is submitted; development provides few jobs

meaning site will either be populated by rail commuters passing through already congested station, routes to which are not designed for such increase, or car commuters to other towns which means new residents are unlikely to integrate in Leighton-Linslade.

- It is more than likely that Valley Farm residents will commute to London, putting more strain on overcrowded train services; proposed bus service from site to station will not be at time required for people to catch early morning trains; minimum 15-20 minute walk to station would encourage people to use their cars; at present, commuters park in residential roads near station, as station car park is either full or too expensive; development will make matters worse.
- Drainage and sewage burdens placed on notoriously problematic Bideford Green drains will make already bad situation intolerably worse for existing residents.
- Local sewage works has insufficient capacity to absorb effluent from proposal and will require enlargement in order to cope; such development will encroach on local water meadows resulting in further loss of Green Belt land.
- There is already lack of water pressure in Derwent Road area which has to be boosted by electric pumps.

Consultations/Publicity responses

Buckingham and River
Ouzel IDB

Site is outside Board's district.

Commission for
Architecture and Built
Environment

No comment.

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.
- Applicants should be aware that any culverting, or works affecting flow of watercourse requires prior written approval of EA under terms of Land Drainage Act 1991 or Water Resources Act 1991. EA resists culverting on conservation and other grounds and consent for such works will not normally be granted

except for access crossings.

- Only clean, uncontaminated surface water should be discharged to any soakaway, watercourse or surface water sewer. Site operators should ensure that there is no possibility of contaminated water entering and polluting surface or underground waters.
- EA has issued series of Pollution Prevention Guidelines (PPGs) and following should assist applicants - '*PPG6 - Working at construction and demolition sites*'.

Leighton Buzzcycles

Neither supports nor opposes principle of development.

A. Soulbury Road area access and modifications

1. Drawing D120148-SK017, Soulbury Road cycleway

- Cycle path gives way at every minor road. This is not necessary and there are numerous UK examples where cycleway has same rights as road it is parallel to. Giving way at every minor road simply makes cycleway discontinuous and less likely to be used.
- Warning sign for motorists that cycleway rejoins carriageway is needed.
- Cycleway should continue to station to provide complete route.

2. Drawing D120148-100-101, Primary access

- Shared footway/cycleway should be clearly segregated into cycles and pedestrians to avoid conflict.
- Swept curve analysis for cycles turning into development is required.
- Crossings are poor and require cycles to stop when parallel road continues.
- Consideration should be given to traffic lights automatically activated by bike's presence.
- It is assumed that bus lane is one way and therefore cycle contraflow should be provided on bus lane for this key access.
- Question requirement for twin entry to junction. These are great problem for cyclists.
- Junction design seems to be basically same as previous one using roundabout except that roundabout has been removed.

3. Drawing D120148-100-004, Primary access

- The shared use cycleway is too narrow at 2m minimum. It would be better if it was segregated with a separate footway as it is a downhill route.
- As previously stated the minor road crossings should

retain priority with the cycleway.

4. Drawings D120148-100-200, D120148-100-201 and D120148-100-202, Visibility

- There are no cyclists shown on these drawings. Question whether they have been taken into account.

5. Drawing D120148-SK-012, Soulbury Road

- Opportunity should be taken to provide footway on north side of Soulbury Road.
- Toucan crossing should be retained or converted to zebra crossing to give clear signal of pedestrian and cyclist priority.

B. Derwent Road area access and modifications

1. Drawing D120148-SK-015, Derwent Road, Himley Green cycle lanes

- Cycle lanes are far too narrow at 1.5m. These are provided on uphill section only when speeds will be low and likelihood of wobbling will be greatest.
- Motorists tend to assume that cycle lane is not wide enough in itself and therefore do move to give more room when overtaking. Motorists tend to aim car equidistant between lines. This means that cycle lane needs to be wide enough to permit safe overtaking without car moving over. Width of 1.5m is not enough.
- Introduction of double yellow lines along cycle lane would prevent obstruction of the cycle lane by parked cars which is common drawback of such lanes.
- Consideration should be giving to closing Derwent Road to general through traffic at bottom south west corner to prevent rat running. Through access should be retained for buses, utility and emergency vehicles, cycles and pedestrians.

2. Drawing D120148-100-102, Secondary access, Derwent Road

- Possibility of upgrading Footpath 59 to segregated cycleway and separate footpath running along southern boundary of Greenleas Lower School does not appear to have been considered. This route gives access to centre of Bideford Green estate and could provide part of more direct route to station.
- Secondary access should be restricted to buses, utility and emergency vehicles, pedestrians and cycles.
- Uncontrolled crossings should be replaced by zebra crossings to give clear statement that pedestrians have priority.
- Narrow carriageway at start of 20mph zone creates pinch point which is major danger to cyclists.

- Question whether whole of Derwent Road, Himley Green and Bunkers Lane should be 20mph?
3. Drawing D120148-100-005, 20mph, Greenleas Lower School
- Need to remove centreline.
 - Wider footway is improvement. It would be better if segregated cycleway was included, as this would make it more suitable for children cycling to school.

C. Hockliffe Street, North Street and West Street modifications

1. Drawing D120148-700-001, Bridge Street/West Street mini-roundabout

- Question use of 85th percentile speed of 25mph when speed limit is 20mph. Question whether road design should be such as to encourage lower speeds.
- It is not clear why roundabout needs to be made bigger.

2. Drawing D120148-700-002 North Street/West Street roundabout

- Reducing footway width to 2m to give space to vehicles is hardly in keeping with encouraging sustainable transport.
- Roundabout should be converted to continental style including single lane entry. This is much safer for cyclists and would avoid taking space from pedestrians.

3. Drawing D120148-700-003, Hockliffe Street/West Street roundabout

- Need to show new cycle access from top of Hartwell Grove through to Hockliffe Street.
- Roundabout should be converted to continental style including single lane entry. This is much safer for cyclists. Current arrangement requires cyclists to take right hand lane to go straight on which often leads to cars undertaking in left hand-only lane, even though they too go straight on.

4. 20mph zone extension

- 20mph zone needs to be extended from Hockliffe Street/West Street roundabout down to Stanbridge Road/Billington Road roundabout.

5. West Street cycleway

- West Street is vital east/west transport artery in Leighton Buzzard and currently is not cycling experience that many would perceive as safe. Road

geometry allows for being gently squeezed into kerb, includes cycle lanes of little value and has dual lane entry roundabouts which require use of right hand lane to continue along West Street.

- Question whether this is road parents would let children on. Almost certainly not, despite it being key part of routes to Cedars Upper School, Linslade Middle School and Leighton Middle School.
- Highway area is easily wide enough to allow for segregated cycleway with priority at every junction along its entire length. Given importance of this route and lack of alternatives, segregated cycleway should at least be considered if cycling is to be seen as viable mode of transport in Leighton Buzzard.

D. Transport Assessment

- Question whether there has ever been transport assessment that does not show that existing roads can absorb traffic increase as consequence of development applied for.
- Big problem with this Transport Assessment is that it models wrong journeys. 2001 Census shows that well over 50% of working population of Leighton-Linslade commute elsewhere to work. This means that morning and evening peak journeys typically do not involve going through centre of town, but rather are directed towards bypasses or from bypasses to estates.
- However, this is not case for journeys to school on weekdays and into town centre on Saturdays. These journeys currently cause quite high levels of congestion and need to be included in traffic models.
- School journeys also need to take into account fact that 70% to 80% of children attending proposed new junior school will fail their 11+ and very likely decide to attend comprehensive schools within town, as currently happens, rather than more difficult journey to access secondary school in Wing.
- Whilst it is correctly acknowledged that Great Brickhill parish is not suitable demographic model for proposed urban extension, it has not been shown that Southcott ward is either. It seems likely that it isn't, as Southcott ward does not contain much employment apart from schools.
- One of key factors causing unsustainable commutes is affordability of housing. It has not been shown that affordable properties proposed for this development would be affordable on median Leighton-Linslade wage.

E. Statement in support

1. Rock Lane / Bridleway 52

- This is key route and needs to be upgraded with better surface, better lighting and priority crossings of Grasmere Way and Ullswater Drive.

2. On-street parking

- Measures need to be taken to control on-street parking to prevent obstruction of cycle lanes and pavement parking.

F. Community Travel Plan

1. Para 5.3.8 Cycle parking

- Any cycle parking designed for overnight use needs to be insurable as defined by insurance companies.

2. Cycling and Walking Map

- Cost of updating Leighton Buzzard Cycling and Walking Map and distributing it to all new households should be borne by developer.

3. Strip maps

- Palm sized strip maps, as have been produced for Sandhills, showing junctions along route and designed for easy use when cycling and walking would help new residents learn sustainable routes that do not often use roadways and are often poorly signposted. Cost should be borne by developer.

4. Sign posting

- Sign posts are critical to enable new people to find their way around and to encourage existing residents to use new routes. Cycling and walking routes often do not follow car routes. Cost should be borne by developer.

5. New resident packs

- These should be produced at developer's cost for all first residents of each dwelling.

6. Viability of sustainable choices

- In end, whether people make sustainable travel choices will depend on viability of those choices rather than quality of marketing. You can't sell bad product for very long and many people, if not most, regard cycling on roads as bad product.
- Two recent reports - Transport for London's '*Analysis of Cycling Potential*' and Department for Transport's '*Climate Change and Transport Choices*' - highlight danger from traffic as main reason people give as to

why they don't cycle. There is little point ignoring this consistent finding if proposed development is to truly support sustainable transport choices. This in turn means need to provide viable segregated cycle routes.

- Finally, what is often forgotten when discussing sustainable transport is need to disadvantage car use.

Conclusion

Quality of sustainable infrastructure proposed leaves much to be desired and lack of disadvantaging of car use means that any sustainable measures will be undermined from start. For this reason, Council should reject this application.

Sport England East
Region

Comments contained within consultation response to previous planning application (CB/10/00859/FULL) still apply. No further comment.

Previous comments

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.

The Leighton Buzzard Society

Object to proposal to construct vehicular access for failed application to develop within Aylesbury Vale District, in area designated in local plan both as Green Belt and as Area of Great Landscape Value, particularly being opposite Greenleas Lower School entrance.

Education Officer

No further comments to add to those of 2010.

Previous comments

New scheme would incorporate provision of primary school on site to serve development (that would have its own catchment area) and financial contributions, appropriate to scale of 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 nearby middle or upper schools in Central Bedfordshire to accommodate pupils from proposed development, as any existing surplus is expected to be absorbed by additional pupil yield from both existing and future planned developments in Leighton-Linslade area.

Environmental Health Officer

Understand that this application refers solely to construction of access off Derwent Road to proposed mixed use development in Aylesbury Vale District.

Applicant has carried out assessments for air quality and noise/vibration. Whereas increased traffic use on Derwent Road as result of this access will inevitably increase road traffic noise and affect air quality, any adverse impacts would not warrant action by Public Protection Service. Local authorities are precluded from taking statutory nuisance action in respect of road traffic

noise, which is predicted to rise by less than 3dB. National air quality objectives in respect of nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter would not be exceeded.

Historic Environment
Information Officer

Were hedgerow to be subject of Hedgerow Removal Notice it would satisfy at least two of five archaeological/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 archaeological/historical criteria.

Highways Officer

Objection

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. Since the previous refusal there have been alterations to the proposal by introducing a 2m footway on the eastern side along with the reduction of the carriageway width. However, while there is also a footway on the western side, this is only 2m and not a 3m shared footway/cycleway, as originally recommended.

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. 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. I would also question the ability to maintain this corridor, as the carriageway would be 6.1m and the footway 2m. This would mean that if there was any work required to the statutory undertakers' plant/equipment within the footway then this highway would have to be closed off to pedestrians, thereby cutting off the principal pedestrian link between the proposed Valley Farm development and Linslade.

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.

It should also be noted that the application does not include committed development, a survey of the existing function/delay of the junctions or a sensitivity test. Any comments below are in relation to the information submitted and there must be some caution that a true representation may not be portrayed in the Transport Assessment.

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. 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.

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

While it has been shown that this junction is acceptable in 2020, with the development in place as mentioned above, there has not been a sensitivity test or determination of the junction's existing queuing and function.

Landscape Planner

Proposed removal of 110 metres of existing hedgerow to facilitate visibility splays and new road junction access to proposed development site raises number of serious concerns.

Existing hedgerow is important landscape feature / planting structure.

Historic landscape character

Hedgerow physically marks historic parish boundaries and Anglo-Saxon estate boundary and are assessed as 'important' according to Hedgerow Regulations. (ref. Historic Environment Information Officer response)
Removal of substantial portion of this historic hedgerow will destroy intactness and quality of this significant historic landscape feature.

Biodiversity value

Whilst hedgerow is not assessed as 'important' in terms of woody species present, hedgerow is consistent, not gappy, and forms important component within local hedgerow network/habitat corridors due to intactness, size and depth of hedgerow.

Removal of this length of hedgerow will divide and disunite local hedgerow networks and habitat corridors.

Landscape character

Hedgerow and hedgerow trees contribute to local landscape character, forming important visual landscape feature defining ridgeline west of Derwent Road and providing rural edge to existing urban area of Linslade.

Streetscene

Hedgerow creates sense of enclosure along Derwent Road, and forms constant natural edge to existing residential area.

Removal of hedgerow and introduction of new road access to proposed development will remove consistency and degrade character of natural edge to west Linslade. Extending development and built form across Derwent Road to application site will impact on existing streetscene by reducing sense of enclosure, soft natural boundary and domestic scale of Derwent Road.

Sustainable Transport
Officer

Objection

Walking & cycling

This application provides for improved connectivity between the site and Leighton-Linslade than submitted previously, for instance it provides for:

- A shared use cycle path is provided along Leighton Road/Soulbury Road between the primary access and Derwent Road junction.
- A raised table at the junction of Derwent Road and Soulbury Road which will help slow traffic down on the approaches to the town.
- A raised crossing at the Toucan along Soulbury Road.
- The Soulbury Road cycle route is continued to the junction of Station Road to improve provision for cyclists travelling to the station.
- There are raised crossover points at side roads for cyclists on the Soulbury Road shared use path.
- Improvements to the Rights of Way network in the form of FP 59 and BW 52.
- A 20 mph zone is provided for the school with improved lengths of footpath connecting the secondary access to the school and rights of way network.

- A raised table is provided for pedestrians across the secondary access.
- On-carriageway cycle lanes are provided along Himley Green.

However the following issues remain:

- Due to the restrictions caused by the verge and highway widths along Soulbury Road, a pinch point still remains to the width of the shared use path which remains 2 metres at the narrowest point.
- The cycle crossing points at the side roads along Soulbury Road do not give cyclists the necessary priority which would enhance their use by cyclists and be in keeping with the Cycle Town.
- At the point at which the cycle path rejoins the carriageway, provision needs to be made for signage to warn motorists that cyclists are rejoining the carriageway. A mini roundabout at the junction of Old Road and Station Road would improve accessibility for on-road cyclists and also potentially enable the whole of the Soulbury Road, Old Road corridor to be 20mph extending the 20 mph from the town centre.
- A pedestrian priority facility is needed across the access to the lower school.
- Whilst the 20mph zone at the school is welcomed, the proposed measures still do not reflect the needs of cyclists at the road narrowings. A cycle bypass would provide an important alternative, however if the 20 mph zone was extended to the Derwent Road roundabout other alternatives would be possible.
- The raised table at the junction of Derwent Road and Soulbury Road presents the opportunity for a 20 mph zone extending from this junction past the lower school and towards Himley Green.
- The proposed on-highway cycle routes along Himley Green seem to add little value other than to provide an element of choice for cyclists. On their own they do little to change the character of the road such that vehicles might slow down. Other features need to be explored that might have the desired effect, particularly as Bunkers Lane itself is a well used route to school. Residents from the new development need to be discouraged from using the Derwent Road access to reach the bypass, the primary access being that onto Leighton Road instead.
- There are concerns that changes to the roundabouts in the town centre in order to increase vehicular capacity will have a detrimental effect on

cycling due to the increased circulatory space. The current situation has been audited by Cycling England as part of the town's Cycle Town status and has been commended as sympathetic to cyclists. As Leighton-Linslade is one of only 18 Cycle Towns and Cities in the UK, it is important that infrastructure associated with new developments reflect that status and contribute towards the Cycle Town's objectives and targets.

Travel Plan

The Council acknowledges that the travel plan has been developed in accordance with Buckinghamshire County Council guidelines but as the impact of the development will have the greatest impact on Central Bedfordshire residents it is still a requirement that it meets Central Bedfordshire criteria.

In order to be effective in mitigating the impact of this development on Leighton-Linslade, a target in line with that of other urban extensions in the town would have been appropriate. The travel plan target associated with the Southern Leighton Buzzard urban extension is for a 20 % shift in mode from single car occupancy. The travel plan developed for this application sets an overall target of 10% only.

The travel plan sets out the financial commitment associated with the delivery of the sustainable transport measures, however there is some concern about the amounts specified for both the travel plan co-ordinator (TPC) and the 'contingency' sum should additional measures be required.

The obligation should be phrased such that the obligation for a TPC will remain for the full length of time without estimating the costs, as this cost will need to be borne by the developers themselves. Should the site however be transferred to another developer or series of developers, then consideration needs to be given to where this obligation rests.

Public Transport

The principle concern with regard to the travel plan is the provision for public transport.

The provision of a developer-funded shuttle bus along the Soulbury Road corridor serving the town centre and the railway station is welcomed, as is the fact that the service is to be provided from first occupation through the morning and evening peaks at a 30 minute frequency. However, it is proposed that services in the off-peak are to be provided through the use of a diverted service 36

entering the site at Derwent Road with an exit onto Leighton Road.

From 150 occupations the proposed shuttle service will run all day, however any opportunity for the site to be provided with public transport operating at a greater frequency than 30 minutes is still dependent upon the service 36 which currently uses Derwent Road only.

In order for this site to achieve the necessary shift away from dependence upon the private car and to reduce its predicted impact on the town centre an effective public transport strategy is essential and a frequent, direct and reliable service essential.

The requirement is for a direct and bespoke service using the Soulbury Road corridor only, and one that meets the needs of commuters using the railway station and facilitates access to the town centre.

Upon full occupation, the Council's requirements are for a service that runs all day Monday to Saturday at a 20 minute frequency, meeting the needs of commuters and in particular rail users in the morning and evening peaks, in line with the service being provided by the 'Dash Direct' service for the Southern Leighton Buzzard urban extension.

It is acceptable to provide a phased approach to this service as the site begins to be built out such that phase one brings with it a 30 minute service in the peak hours with an hourly service off-peak, but upon 150 occupations the frequency should increase to every 30 minutes throughout the day. Upon full occupation however, the level of service should increase to every 20 minutes.

The current proposal does not meet the Council's requirements with regard to service levels and is dependent upon an existing service that is subsidised through the local authority and in fact has this year already been cut back to an off-peak level of service only. At peak times, the service should be co-ordinated with key train departures from Leighton Buzzard Station to both London and also Milton Keynes in the north. The service should aim to co-ordinate with train times such that commuters in particular should not have to wait longer than 10 minutes at the railway station. The timetable currently proposed does not adequately meet this requirement.

Tree and Landscape
Officer

Objection

As same general section of hedge is to be removed, then

there is no change to previous comments regarding composition of hedgerow species with reference to Hedgerow Regulations 1997.

Previous comments

In comparison with previous application for secondary access, whilst 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.

Determining Issues

The main considerations of the application are;

1. Impact on highway safety

Considerations

1. Impact on highway safety

As mentioned above, this application deals with technical highway issues only and seeks to overcome the four highway reasons for refusal.

With regards to the Derwent Road secondary access, the Highways Officer considers that the proposal to increase to 2m the width of the footway on the eastern side of the road is a satisfactory response to his previously stated objection to the scheme. Similarly, the proposal to locally narrow the carriageway across the frontage of the school in order to accommodate a widening of the footway here is acceptable. Although the footway on the western side of the road would be 2m wide rather than a 3m wide shared footway/cycleway, the applicants' proposal to promote Derwent Road as an on-road cycle route is acceptable. In acknowledging all the amendments to the Derwent Road scheme set out in the current application, the Highways Officer considers that the first reason for refusal has been overcome.

Between the primary access junction and the county boundary, it is proposed to provide a 3m wide footway/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 footway/cycleway would be reduced from 3m to 2.5m and locally 2m. To accommodate this 2.5m/2m footway/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 2.5m/2m wide shared surface footway/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. Accordingly, the second reason for refusal has

not been overcome.

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 objections to the scheme's impact on the wider highway network. Furthermore, he notes that the traffic modelling does not include reference to the East Leighton Buzzard development proposed in the Core Strategy nor does it include evidence of a survey having been carried out of the existing function/delay of each junction or a sensitivity test. The proposal as amended 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. Accordingly, the third reason for refusal has not been overcome.

With regards to sustainable transport, whilst the current application incorporates some improvements, a number of shortcomings are still evident in the overall scheme, as set out in the consultation response from the Sustainable Transport Officer. It is clear that the application fails to make adequate provision to promote sustainable travel modes. Accordingly, the fourth reason for refusal has not been overcome.

Recommendation

That Planning Permission be REFUSED for the following:

- 1 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.
- 2 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.
- 3 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.

DECISION

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