

Your Ref: MS/4494/16
Our Ref: 570\CON\3914\16
Date: 8th March 2019
Highways Enquiries to: julia.cox@suffolk.gov.uk

All planning enquiries should be sent to the Local Planning Authority.
Email: planning@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk

The Planning Officer
Mid Suffolk District Council
Planning Section
1st Floor, Endeavour House
8 Russell Road
Ipswich
Suffolk
IP1 2BX

For the attention of: Steven Stroud

Dear Mr Stroud

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
CONSULTATION RETURN MS/4494/16

PROPOSAL: Application for approval of Reserved Matters (phases 1 - 8), pursuant to Outline Permission ref. 1969/10.

LOCATION: Land at Column Field Quarry (Known as Masons Quarry), Great Blakenham, Ipswich, Suffolk

ROAD CLASS: B1113

The Highway Authority does not object to the granting of reserved matters approval, subject to the imposition of the suggested planning conditions and the prior completion of a planning obligation securing the identified obligations. With the identified mitigation measures it is the view of the Highway Authority that the Development should not be prevented or refused on highway grounds because there is no unacceptable impact on highway safety, and the residual cumulative impacts on the road network will not be severe.

Introduction

This site is known as SnOasis, a leisure and hotel development including; ski centre, winter sports centre, hotel, restaurants and associated infrastructure. The site is a former quarry, known as Mason's Quarry, in Great Blakenham. The primary access point is proposed to be off the B1113, Bramford Road, formed by a new roundabout at the location of the junction serving the recent residential development to the east of the B1113.

This application is for approval of reserved matters, the Outline permission (OL/100/04) was granted permission in 2008, following call-in by the Secretary of State. An application was made in 2010 (MS/1969/10) for an extension of time, and this was granted permission in 2011.

The time limit on the extension was 5 years, so the deadline for the submission of reserved matters was 31st October 2016. It was agreed that the reserved matters application can be submitted in either phases covering specific elements of the overall package.

The eight phases are as follows:

- Phase 1: Ecological mitigation, creation of the ponds and earth stripping
- Phase 2: Civil engineering, site-wide drainage, structural landscaping, construction of roads, water features and water courses, installation of services and perimeter fencing
- Phase 3: The ski dome, servicing areas and associated car parking and hard and soft landscaping
- Phase 4: The entertainment dome, servicing areas and hard and soft landscaping
- Phase 5: The hotel, apartments and retail units with associated servicing areas, car parking and hard and soft landscaping
- Phase 6: The sports academy, hostels, car parking and servicing areas and hard and soft landscaping
- Phase 7: The ice rink, conference and exhibition centre and servicing areas with associated hard and soft landscaping
- Phase 8: The log cabins and clubhouse with associated servicing areas and hard and soft landscaping

The submitted Transport Assessment builds upon the original document submitted with the Outline Application, the original was produced by Capital Symonds in 2006. The update was produced by Motion in October 2016. A further Transport Assessment Addendum was submitted in May 2017, a further update to this document was submitted in November 2017 Technical Note 4: Response to Suffolk County Council' dated 30 November 2017. Both documents consider the cumulative impacts of all of the phases of the proposed development.

In parallel with the SnOasis applications, an application was granted for the proposed Great Blakenham Railway Station. The original application was granted in 2008 and extended in 2011. Subsequently, the deliverability of the Railway Station was brought into doubt by the exclusion of this proposal from the Network Rail Anglia Route Strategy, which covers this area. This document was published in 2014, and the developers have investigated alternative transport measures. The Transport Assessment Addendum considers the options for dealing with this change in access strategy.

Committed Sites

The Transport Assessment dated October 2016 included some committed development sites, see below:

- Land between Gipping and Bramford Road, Great Blakenham MSDC reference 3310/14
- Land at Blackacre Hill, Bramford Road, Great Blakenham MSDC reference 2351/16
- Energy from Waste plant at Great Blakenham MSDC reference 3655/13
- Former British Sugar Plc Site, Sproughton Babergh reference B/16/00762

However, in the interim period since the original application it was felt that additional sites that had come forward recently should be included. These were:

- Land at Paper Mill Lane – commercial development MSDC reference 4710/16
- Former Fison's site, Paper Mill Lane – residential development MSDC reference 2700/12

The Transport Assessment Addendum dated May 2017 includes an assessment of these sites and is considered to be a robust assessment of the committed developments cumulative impact with the development traffic.

Junction Assessment

The Transport Assessment considered the local junctions that are most likely to be impacted by development traffic, these included:

- The proposed site access, a 4-arm roundabout located on the B1113 (Bramford Road) in the vicinity of the current access to the recent residential development.
- The junction of Gipping Road with Bramford Road, currently a priority T junction, and due to be upgraded to traffic signal control as part of the adjacent Orbit Housing mitigation package.
- The junction of the B1113/B1113 south of the site. This has already been upgraded to partial traffic signal control, partly in line with the original SnOasis mitigation scheme. However further signal works could be required to facilitate the cycleway / footway link to the site and a safe north / south crossing of the B1113, if justified by potential cycle movements to the site.
- A14/A12 Copdock Interchange, this junction has also been partially upgraded in the interim, and no further improvements have been requested by Highways England through the consultation process.

The Transport Assessment considered an AM Peak Hour of 0800-0900 and a PM Peak Hour of 1700-1800. Due to the nature of the site operations it is likely that the traffic impacts will be spread throughout the week and will mostly occur outside peak conditions. The consultants agreed to assess a worst-case development scenario of a large conference (1000 delegates), with the peak flow arrivals and departures occurring in baseline traffic peak conditions.

In this scenario the B1113 right turn movement into Bramford Road is slightly above optimum junction performance, but the overall network performance on SCC County Roads is shown to be within acceptable limits.

In the interim since the original application the adjacent residential development has amended the Gipping Road / Bramford Road junction. In the final Transport Assessment addendum (dated November 2017) the developers' consultants have assessed the new junction and found that it is adequate to mitigate the traffic impacts of SnOasis. Therefore, no further mitigation is required at this junction.

The additional traffic signal crossing at the B1113/B1113 junction, south of the site, was not found to be practical, as it doesn't facilitate a link to any adjacent cycling or walking facilities. Therefore, the additional junction mitigation at this location is not required as would not improve cycling or walking links to the site in practice. However, the associated upgrade of the footway to allow for off carriageway cycling from the B1113/B1113 junction to the site access is still required and will be secured through Planning Condition.

The A14/A12 Copdock Interchange, where a majority of the junction is managed by Highways England, is shown to be performing poorly in some peak scenarios. However, this is generally down to background traffic growth, the specific impacts of this site are negligible in comparison. Highways England were consulted on the scheme and have not raised any objections.

Sustainable Transport Modes

The Transport Assessment considered sustainable links from the site to key population centres. Due to the rural nature of the site it is not practical for a large number of visitors to walk or cycle to the site, although provision should be made for those that do. It is also likely that the nature of the activities will require more clothing and equipment than most are able to bring with them on foot or on bike. It is however likely that some staff will travel to work on cycles, especially from west Ipswich, therefore safe and attractive links need to be provided.

The developers will be required to provide details of a potential cycling route to Ipswich via National Cycling Route 51, and implement an improvement scheme in full, prior to opening. They will also be required to provide an upgrade to the footway linking the site with Bramford Road (B1113) to enable off carriageway cycling in the vicinity of the site, although it is accepted that it is not practical to provide a facility to cover the entirety of the route to Bramford.

The original outline permission was granted on the basis of a new Railway Station being provided at Great Blakenham. In the interim period the deliverability of the station has been challenged, especially as the route priorities of the operator Abellio Greater Anglia are the speed of journey times on the mainline routes, rather than adding in additional stops that would increase journey times for a majority of travellers and reduce overall capacity.

The Transport Assessment Addendum dated May 2017 a further update to this document was submitted in November 2017 Technical Note 4: Response to Suffolk County Council' dated 30 November 2017 included an assessment of a bus shuttle service as an alternative to the original Railway Station proposal. The assessment is that a service from Stowmarket Station would be more attractive than from Ipswich, as the road links from Stowmarket to the site are less affected by traffic congestion than in Ipswich. However, Stowmarket Railways Station does not have a fully accessible crossing between the platforms, the only level route is a significant diversion along narrow footways and across a busy Level Crossing. If the development is likely to generate a significant increase in use of the station, which is the current position, works to improve disabled access at the station will be required.

The site is very close to the recent Orbit Homes development to the east of Bramford Road, to enable these residents and residents from neighbouring residential locations to walk and cycle to site a Toucan Crossing is to be provided on Bramford Road, north of the site access

Draft Planning Conditions

Notice is hereby given that the County Council as Highway Authority recommends that any permission which that Planning Authority may give should include the conditions shown below:

Access Junction Condition

Condition 1: No other part of the development shall be commenced until the new vehicular access roundabout junction and Toucan Crossing has been laid out and completed in all respects, generally in accordance with Motion Drawing 160702-06 Rev. A and been made available for use. Thereafter the access shall be retained in the specified form.

Reason: To ensure that the access is designed and constructed to an appropriate specification and is brought into use before any other part of the development is commenced in the interests of highway safety.

Emergency Access Condition

Condition 2: Prior to commencement of the development, the emergency access to the site, in the vicinity of the proposed site access junction, shall be laid out and completed in all respects in accordance with details that will have previously been agreed by the Local Planning Authority and Suffolk County Council. Thereafter the emergency access shall be retained in the specified form.

Reason: To ensure that the access is designed and constructed to an appropriate specification and made available for use at an appropriate time in the interests of highway safety.

Refuge and Recycling Bin Presentation and Storage Condition

Condition 3: Before the development is commenced details of the areas to be provided for storage of Refuse/Recycling bins shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The approved scheme shall be carried out in its entirety before the development is brought into use and shall be retained thereafter for no other purpose.

Reason: To ensure that refuse recycling bins are not stored on the highway causing obstruction and dangers for other users.

Surface Water Drainage Condition

Condition 4: Before the development is commenced details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority showing the means to prevent the discharge of surface water from the development onto the highway. The approved scheme shall be carried out in its entirety before the access is first used and shall be retained thereafter in its approved form.

Reason: To prevent hazards caused by flowing water or ice on the highway.

HGV Construction Management Plan Condition

Condition 5: All HGV traffic movements to and from the site over the duration of the construction period, and for servicing arrangements thereafter, shall be subject to a Deliveries Management Plan which shall be submitted to the planning authority for approval a minimum of 28 days before any deliveries of materials commence.

No HGV movements shall be permitted to and from the site other than in accordance with the routes defined in the Plan.

The site operator shall maintain a register of complaints and record of actions taken to deal with such complaints at the site office as specified in the Plan throughout the period of use of the site.

Reason: To reduce and / or remove as far as is reasonably possible the effects of HGV traffic in sensitive areas.

Parking condition

Condition 6: Before the development is commenced details of the areas to be provided for the manoeuvring and parking of vehicles (including buses and coaches) including secure cycle storage shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development parking arrangements should be generally in accordance with the details set out in the Suffolk Guidance for Parking 2015 edition. The approved scheme shall be carried out in its entirety before the development is brought into use and shall be retained thereafter and used for no other purpose.

Reason: To ensure the provision and long term maintenance of adequate on-site space for the parking and manoeuvring of vehicles, where on-street parking and manoeuvring would be detrimental to highway safety.

Off-site Cycle Route Improvements (Bramford Road) Condition

Condition 7: The site shall not be open to the public until the proposed highway improvements (listed below), have all been completed in accordance with details that shall previously have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and Suffolk County Council.

- Footway / cycleway improvements on the B1113 Bramford Road
- Tourist Signing on A12(T) and A14 to direct visitors to site
- Tourist signing on SCC county roads in the vicinity of the site
- Stowmarket Rail / Bus interchange improvements

Reason: In the interests of road safety and sustainable transport.

Off-site Cycle Route Improvements (NCR51) Condition

Condition 8: The site shall not be open to the public until the proposed cycle route improvements from the site access to Ipswich, via Claydon / NCR51, have all been completed in accordance with details that shall previously have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and Suffolk County Council.

Reason: In the interests of road safety and sustainable transport.

Informatives and Notes

NOTE 1

It is an OFFENCE to carry out any works within the public highway, which includes a Public Right of Way, without the permission of the Highway Authority.

Any conditions which involve work within the limits of the public highway do not give the applicant permission to carry them out.

Unless otherwise agreed in writing all works within the public highway shall be carried out by Suffolk County Council. For further information go to:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/parking/apply-for-a-dropped-kerb/>

A fee is payable to the Highway Authority for the assessment and inspection of both new vehicular crossing access works and improvements deemed necessary to existing vehicular crossings due to proposed development.

NOTE 2

Public Utility apparatus may be affected by this proposal. The appropriate utility service should be contacted to reach agreement on any necessary alterations which have to be carried out at the expense of the developer.

NOTE 3

The existing street lighting system may be affected by this proposal.

The applicant must contact the Street Lighting Engineer of Suffolk County Council, telephone 01284 758859, in order to agree any necessary alterations/additions to be carried out at the expense of the developer.

NOTE 4

The works within the public highway will be required to be designed and constructed in accordance with the County Council's specification.

The applicant will also be required to enter into a legal agreement under the provisions of Section 278 of the Highways Act 1980 relating to the construction and subsequent adoption of the highway improvements. Amongst other things the Agreement will cover the specification of the highway works, safety audit procedures, construction and supervision and inspection of the works, bonding arrangements, indemnity of the County Council regarding noise insulation and land compensation claims, commuted sums, and changes to the existing street lighting and signing.

NOTE 5

The public right of way cannot be lawfully driven along without due authority. This highway must remain unobstructed at all times. It is an offence to disturb the surface of the highway so as to render it inconvenient for public use. Therefore it is imperative that the surface is properly maintained for pedestrian use during the construction phase and beyond.

The Highway Authority will seek to recover the cost of any such damage which it actions for repair.

In addition to the Planning Conditions proposed by SCC the applicants have also proposed a Grampian Condition to secure accessibility improvements at Stowmarket Railway Station. This would involve a DDA compliant footbridge and lifts to provide step free access to both railway platforms. SCC fully support the need for this project to be implemented prior to opening of the site.

Section 106 Planning Obligations

Generally, all of the highways requirements set out in Schedule Two (and following schedules, where appropriate) of the signed Section 106 (dated 1st August 2008) are still required, and any variation would need to be agreed with Suffolk County Council. This position was set out in Neil McManus' letter dated 8th January 2018.

Great Blakenham Railway station has been removed and is being replaced by a shuttle bus service running between Stowmarket Railway Station and Great Blakenham.

The Sproughton Village Mitigation Scheme is still required, and the Section 106 Obligations must be delivered to ensure that the traffic impacts arising from the development can be mitigated. In the interim a larger comprehensive mitigation plan has been developed for this area, therefore the costs have increased beyond what was originally included in the 2006 Section 106 agreement. The Minor Highways Contribution in the original S106 has now been replaced with a Planning Condition and these works will be carried out by the developer under a Section 278 agreement.

As part of the removal of the Railway Station (originally planned for Great Blakenham) the Passenger Transport Arrangements Obligations will need to be revised to ensure that visitors and staff have sustainable means of accessing the site from key destinations such as Ipswich and Stowmarket. As part of this a substantial contribution will be made towards improving access to both platforms at Stowmarket Railway Station this is to be secured by way of a Grampian Condition. Also, Greater Abellio have recently submitted a funding bid for a new DDA pedestrian footbridge at Stowmarket Railway Station. Greater Abellio are keen to work in partnership with SnOasis to deliver the new footbridge.

To ensure that the full range of Sustainable Transport measures are secured the Travel Plan Obligations need to be secured in full.

The Obligation covering Rights of Way Improvements will need to be maintained to ensure that any routes affected by the development will be mitigated and the scheme will be integrated into the surrounding Green Access network. SCC would require a Section 106 contribution to fund surface improvements and the Order Making Process, and any Land Owner Compensation required for upgrading routes from Footpath to Bridleway.

Heads of Terms	Description	Updated 2019 Contribution (£)
A12/A14 Trunk Road measures	Improvement of the Copdock interchange.	Removed
A12/A14 tourist signing scheme	Tourist signing on Trunk Road	S278 c/o HE
S278 Highway works	Maintaining roadside nature reserve – within a period of 10 years after completion. Chapel Lane measures. Beagle Roundabout & Sproughton.	Removed
Sproughton Mitigation measures Prior to commencement	Strategic Highway Improvements B1113 mitigation measures - Sproughton	£200,000

Minor Highway contribution Prior to occupation	Towards traffic management measures including signing. – sustainable links and/or road safety (Cycle links/Footway improvements)	S278 – Motion have provided indicative details of works proposed.
Originally Railway Station, now existing Railway Station improvements Prior to commencement Delivered prior to occupation	Railway station was to be commissioned. Instead a Shuttle bus service from Stowmarket now included. Improvements to Stowmarket Rail Station to enable disabled access across the platform.	Grampian Condition Required (MSDC)
Transport Arrangements Prior to occupation	SnOasis public Shuttle bus service. Stowmarket rail station to SnOasis. Private shuttle bus service. (employees) Note: Improvements to the scheduled Ipswich to Stowmarket Public Shuttle bus service are covered by CIL contributions	£200,000 rolling bond for a minimum of 5 years Service level agreement to be included in S106
Public Transport Infrastructure Prior to occupation	Improvements to Bus Station and promotion of the new services. Stowmarket Station Bus/ Rail interchange	Improvement scheme by condition - Motion to provide details
Travel Plan Liaison contribution	Obligation to revise the draft Travel Plan, Provide monitoring contribution Schedule of Travel Plan working	£15,000
Public Access	Draft Public Access Plan - The fund to be lodged with SCC to support the integration of SnOasis into the local countryside access network through engagement with local communities, small scale access improvements and promoting the area through Discover Suffolk and leaflet production. The creation of a new bridleway around the edge of the site. Upgrading the footpath to Lt Blakenham from the end of Blue Barn Lane, Gt Blakenham. Ensuring existing PRow are protected during and after construction.	Legal orders for creation, compensation extinguishment amendment and surface improvement works: £464,170.35

Summary

This project has been under consideration in the planning system for a number of years. While fundamentally the scheme remains the same in the interim period significant changes have occurred, both with the National Planning system and with the local factors effecting the project.

A majority of the original mitigation features are still required, and will need to be secured through Planning Condition, or Obligation, as set out in the original Decision Notice and subsequent amendments. Some of the original mitigation schemes have been overtaken by events, and it is our judgement that improvements in the surrounding area, specifically at the B1113 / B1113 junction and at Hackney's Corner are sufficient to mitigate the additional traffic impacts arising from this project.

The removal of the proposed Great Blakenham Railway Station is a significant change, and this has been reflected in amendments to the Section 106.

Therefore, subject to the mitigation measures set out in the list of Draft Planning Conditions, and the Section 106 Obligations being full secured, the Highway Authority sees no reason from a transport perspective to object to the granting of reserved matters approval.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Luke Barber
Principal Engineer
Strategic Development