

## 3/16/0530/OUT Highway Authority Assessment

### Summary of Application

The applicant has submitted a hybrid planning application for the redevelopment of the Bishop's Stortford Goods Yard, which is summarised below:

*Hybrid planning application for the comprehensive redevelopment of the site for mixed use purposes comprising up to 680 residential units (Use Class C3), 938 sqm of retail floorspace (Use Class A1/A3), 3,045 sqm of hotel floorspace (Use Class C1), two multi-storey car parks, associated highways and landscaping works, comprising the following:*

*a) Full planning application for Phase 1 for the redevelopment of the site to provide 122 residential units (Use Class C3), 938 sqm of retail floorspace (Use Class A1/A3) and 3,045 sqm of hotel floorspace (Use Class C1), together with a new multi-storey car park all in buildings of between four and six storeys in height, re-configured transport interchange (including bus stops, taxi rank and drop-off), provision of open space and a new public square, cycle parking facilities, surface car parking, service yard, new vehicular and pedestrian access arrangements from Anchor Street, Station Road and London Road, and associated landscaping, plant and servicing.*

*b) Outline planning application for Phases 2, 3 and 4 for the redevelopment of the site to provide up to 558 residential units (Use Class C3), together with a new multi-storey car park all in buildings of between three and up to seven storeys in height, provision of open space, new vehicular and pedestrian access arrangements, cycle parking facilities, surface car parking, and associated landscaping, plant and servicing (outline application with layout, scale, appearance, and landscaping reserved).*

The key elements of the scheme are summarised below:

- the provision of a sustainable link road from London Road
- the delivery of up to 682 new homes, including a proportion of affordable housing (subject to viability);
- the delivery of 607 sqm of retail floorspace (Use Class A1 / A3);
- the delivery of a new 80 bedroom hotel with ancillary restaurant;
- the delivery of a re-configured transport interchange;
- improvements to the station public realm;

- the delivery of two car parks for station users;
- the provision of one hectare of new parkland and open spaces, including a new waterside park along the River Stort.

The Highway Authority notes the extensive pre-application work undertaken with the developer and the applicant as they have developed the scheme.

The highway works as reflected in the drawings referenced in this response are considered an accurate reflection of these discussions, although there remain outstanding technical issues relating to the construction of the link road for both Phases 1-3 and 4.

### **Transport Assessment**

The Highway Authority has undertaken a comprehensive review of the Transport Assessment submitted by Mayer Brown, dated February 2016.

### **Access Strategy**

It is important to recognise that this is a hybrid application; the operation, access arrangements and internal highway layout differ between phases, particularly between Phases 3 and 4. The proposals include the provision of a new access road extending from the southern end of the site to the station and bus interchange and this has the potential to provide substantial benefits to the site and wider town if it is restricted to use by sustainable modes of transport.

For Phases 1-3, general vehicular access will be from the north of the town via Anchor Lane, but in order to make the scheme viable in terms of sustainable transport, the link road must be secured as part of the planning approval for Phases 1-3. There has long been an aspiration for access to be provided from the south of the site, but access through the site must be controlled so that it is restricted to sustainable modes, and the method of control agreed.

### **Internal Layout**

The Highway Authority has previously raised concerns over the alignment of the final link road in Phase 4. The Highway Authority previously commented that they believe a preferable alignment is shown in Phases 1-3 where the access to the development is at the rear of the site. The Highway authority has also raised concerns over the design of this alignment as it does not appear to comply with standards, in terms

of horizontal alignment and the provision of parking bays alongside the temporary access road. In addition, construction traffic, Network Rail vehicles and emergency vehicles may also use this route. There is also a potential point of conflict where the bus route through the site crosses the internal access road and where cyclists and pedestrians cross. There are no crossing points shown along the link road, and the Highway Authority has concerns over the visibility splays at the junction.

However, in granting approval of the proposed scheme, the Highway Authority has highlighted that the final design must meet design standards and they would therefore expect the actual link road to be built to standard, and to meet all the obligations of the design and safety requirements. In addition, the temporary alignment of the link road in Phases 1-3 would be built to adoptable standards, although this would not actually be adopted, as this would operate as the sustainable link road providing direct bus, cycle and pedestrian access to the site and station from the south, until the completion of Phase 4 of the development.

### Trip Generation and Distribution

The trip rates and distribution for the development have been in part based upon methodology and rates agreed for the Bishop’s Stortford North development, although the factor for internalisation has not been accepted. The Highway Authority is content with the rates as presented.

The adjusted residential vehicular trip rates for all Phases are set out below.

Trip Purpose	AM Peak (0800-0900)		PM Peak (1700-1800)	
	Arrivals	Departures	Arrivals	Departures
Work	15	56	51	22
Primary School	3	12	1	0
Secondary School	2	8	0	0
Leisure	2	0	0	0
Shopping	2	7	13	6
Other	5	21	19	8
<b>Total Residential</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>37</b>

The vehicular trip rates for the proposed 80 bed hotel are illustrated below:

	Arrivals	Departures	Total
AM Peak 0800-0900	12	13	25
PM Peak 1700-1800	13	8	21

Predicted additional vehicle trips to the railway station resulting from the general growth in the use of the rail network have also been modelled. This is based upon the Route Utilisation Strategy which forecasts a growth in rail trips of 39%. These translate into the forecast additional vehicle trips accessing Bishops Stortford Station, and are shown below:

Access	Time Period	In	Out	Total
Anchor Street	0800-0900	55	12	67
	1700-1800	16	53	68
Dane Street	0800-0900	23	18	41
	1700-1800	24	25	48
<b>Total</b>	<b>0800-0900</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>108</b>
	<b>1700-1800</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>117</b>

In order to cater for these additional trips the application includes a new multi storey car park with an additional 216 spaces compared to the current capacity.

The distribution of development trips has been undertaken in accordance with the approved Trip Generation and Distribution Spreadsheet Model; assessment has also been made to account for the additional trips to the station. Data has been obtained via surveys, GIS data and information derived from the Department for Transport's National Travel Survey for forecasting the trip distribution across the wider site.

Following pre-application discussions, two traffic routing scenarios were tested within the junction assessments to understand the impacts at the Hockerill Street Junction, namely:

- Scenario A – all arrivals and departures will be assigned via the Hockerill Street/Stansted Road (B1383)/Dunmow Road (A1250)/London Road (A1060) junction (where logical); and
- Scenario B – all arrivals and departures will be assigned through the (A1250) Dane Street/The Causeway/Hockerill Street roundabout (in this scenario traffic heading east avoids Hockerill Street and instead travels via Potter Street and Rye Street to the bypass).

The distribution of trips is affected by the provision of the southern access. Opening this to all traffic would provide a benefit to southern-based station users, and there would be a re-distribution of the existing station traffic as a result of this.

Therefore the “with southern access” scenario allows for a re-distribution of existing station traffic, whereby southern-based traffic accessing the

development site and station car park that currently travels up London Road or South Street is removed from the associated parts of the network.

In the “without southern access” scenario, no re-distribution is applied as station traffic will continue to route as it does currently, and as existing station traffic is included within the base traffic flows, no additional trips are added in the main development scenarios. The Highway Authority has concerns about the increase in car parking at the station and the impact on the wider network, in terms of attracting more trips.

In terms of vehicular traffic, the provision of a southern access to the car park is likely to provide a beneficial effect to: Dane Street, the London Road/Station Road junction and the Dane Street/South Street junction.

## **Assessment**

The Highway Authority has engaged extensively with the applicant’s transport consultant, Mayer Brown in reviewing several technical notes relating to the modelling of the development, including standalone junction modelling and a linked junction model. The following junctions have been assessed:

- Stansted Road/Dunmow Road/London Road/Hockerill Street signalised junction
- London Road/Station Road priority junction
- London Road/Crescent Road/Hallingbury Road mini roundabout
- London Road/Tanners Wharf signalised junction
- London Road/South Road roundabout
- Station Road/South Street/Newton Road signalised junction
- Station Road/Anchor Street signalised junction, Dane Street Station Access
- Station Road/Riverside one-way junction
- North Street/Bridge Street/Potter Street/High Street signalised junction
- Hadham Road/North Street mini-roundabout

The Highway Authority has also considered the effects of the link road. The proposed new access road extends from the southern end of the site to the station and bus interchange. Initially this will be a sustainable link with use restricted to buses, taxis, cycles and pedestrians, via an agreed method of control, as well access for Network Rail staff and emergency vehicles. In Phase 4 the link is also opened up to use by

residents and station car park users, but does not provide an alternative through route.

## **Phasing**

It is noted that the planning application for the Bishop's Stortford Goods Yard site has been submitted as a hybrid planning application. This comprises a full planning application for Phases 1-3, and an outline planning application for Phase 4.

Phase 4 will involve the full construction the southern access road with access control.

## **Parking**

As part of Phases 1-3 of the proposed development, the scheme includes 236 residential car parking spaces. This equates to approximately 0.5 spaces per unit. As part of Phase 4, it is anticipated that a further 174 residential car parking spaces will be provided at the site. This would bring the total number of spaces provided at the site to 410, which would equate to a provision of 0.6 spaces per dwelling for the masterplan proposals.

The applicant's consultant has noted that the provision is a justifiable reduction in accordance with the Draft District Plan Vehicle Parking Standards:

- Sustainable location;
- Consistency with existing Census data; and
- Consistency with the local area statistics.

The current station parking provides approximately 750 spaces; the following numbers of spaces are proposed for the following phases:

- Phase 1 – 708 Car Parking spaces;
- Phase 2 – 774 Car Parking Spaces;
- Phase 3 – 902 Car Parking Spaces; and
- Phase 4 – 966 Car Parking Spaces.

However, the Highway Authority has some significant concerns with the high level of parking proposed for the overall development (including parking for the rail station), and some of the underlying methodology used to produce the final parking numbers. It is noted that the future level of parking demand for the station is based upon a Network Rail Growth Factor (2043) of 39%. This figure is derived for the line, and

does not consider local conditions for Bishop's Stortford or the sustainability of the Goods Yard site. Providing additional car parking capacity will encourage additional traffic into the area and work against the desire to increase the number of sustainable journeys into the centre of Bishops Stortford.

## **Cycle Parking**

It is noted that it is for EHDC to determine the appropriateness of the level of cycle parking provided. The Highway Authority had previously expressed concern as to the level of cycle parking provided for the development and the need for the developer to consider additional provision. Recent discussions have resulted in the developer agreeing to provide 100 cycle parking spaces as part of the development, and these will be secured via a condition.

## **Delivery and Servicing Plan**

The Highway Authority has also recommended the inclusion of a Condition relating to the preparation of a Delivery and Servicing Plan.

Comments have previously been made on the Delivery and Servicing Plan, and the main points are that drawings should accompany the document marking out the loading bays and attendant swept path analysis for all uses, including access into servicing/delivery bays and thoroughfares/internal access roads within the development. The Highway Authority would require further detail with respect to the location of the loading bays and further clarity as to the numbers/usage of such provision.

## **Proposed Station Interchange**

The proposals include provision for a redesigned railway station interchange to improve cycle, pedestrian and bus access to the station, as well as the town centre and other destinations.

The Transport Assessment notes that surveys of the station car park/drop off areas have been undertaken, both manually and by video. The station interchange currently includes 14 taxi spaces and 6 drop off spaces; the proposals include the provision of only 8 taxi spaces and 7 drop off spaces.

The Transport Assessment notes that the drop off area of the station does not get congested in the AM Peak on any of the survey days (the Transport Assessment notes that it is busier in the PM peak, but does

not expand upon this). There are some queues for vehicles exiting the station, although these queues are shown to discharge quickly in the AM peak.

With the development proposals, the taxi stacking area within the interchange, separate from the taxi pick-up point, which provides space for approximately 7 taxis, is being removed. The Transport Assessment attempts to justify this by stating that the stacking area is rarely used by taxis waiting for space in the pick-up area. However, this area is presently utilised for public drop off/collection.

As such, there is some potential for issues to arise with taxis and the public trying to find alternative waiting spots (the taxi stacking area does keep such trips separate from general interchange).

At present, the bus interchange is located on Station Road, close to the station. There are four bus stops at the bus station, lettered B-E.

The bus interchange proposals include for improvements to the crossing facilities along Station Road, to provide better connectivity to the town centre from the station.

The original scheme proposed to reduce the size of the bus interchange from four to two bus stops, with two new bus stops provided adjacent to the station building on the sustainable link road to facilitate interchange of modes. There was a concern for the Highway Authority that the proposed layout would effectively provide a reduced bus station with little capacity to support future growth of bus services and those not using the link road.

A revised layout was developed, with two full bus stops, and two providing a bus stand facility (for passenger drop off, pick up, and vehicle layover), in addition to the two new stops.

The revised, four bay layout was preferred in principle (subject to detailed design and road safety audit), although due to footprint constraints, a limitation continues to exist with the north-western most bay (indicated as S3 on Drawing No MBSK160108-4). Insufficient space is available for vehicles in the bay to rear of this to manoeuvre around and past parked vehicles in front (bay S3).

Therefore it is recommended that a five year bus station management plan be secured by condition to ensure proper use of the facility.

## **Southern Access Road**

Key to the proposals is a southern access road through the development, linking the station to a new junction on London Road, which will serve as a bus/cycle/pedestrian only corridor.

In Phases 1- 3, access to and from London Road will only be available for either access to the Station Car Park, as an access for residents living within the development, or as part of a through route for Buses and emergency vehicles, subject to discussion and the final management. This part of the road would be a Private Road for residents and buses only, and a management plan will be agreed prior to the implementation of the link. The use of the link and the access will also be monitored, and the method of control is to be agreed.

## **Sustainability**

The Highway Authority notes the submission of a 'PER' audit examining pedestrian routes in and around Bishop's Stortford. However, it is noted, in particular for a development of this size, only one site for improvements to the pedestrian/highway infrastructure is identified. The 'PER' audit spends too much attention on routes outside of the town centre area which are considered far less important to a development of this type. The Highway Authority also note that the 'PER' audit is not the recognised form of analysis which has been developed by TRL Software. The submission of a 'Pedestrian Environment Review Software' (PERS) audit using the appropriate software and methodology would have been welcomed for a development of this importance.

The development, comprising of flats is likely to have its principal relationship with routes to the railway station and the central town centre area. There are a number of routes which could have been the focus of more in-depth studies, whereby mitigation measures would have been proposed to improve routes with a poor level of pedestrian utility.

The sustainable link will provide a cycle route through the site which should be linked with existing cycle routes in the area, including the river crossing of the River Stort, and the wider cycle network.

In terms of improvements for users of sustainable modes, the following are identified within the Transport Assessment:

- Proposed bus enhancements, including a new bus interchange and a bus/cycle/pedestrian route from London Road

- A residential and employee Travel Plan, which involves:
  - A Travel Pack for Residents and Employees will be provided which will contain information on how to travel by means other than the private car
  - The provision of a Social Media page to promote sustainable travel
  - Investigation into the provision of a Car Club/Car Hire vehicle on site
  - The promotion of a Car Sharing Scheme
  - The provision of Secure Cycle Storage for residents and employees
  - Monitoring of the Travel Plan and monitoring of the bus/resident access road
- A hotel Travel Plan, which involves:
  - Local Employment Policy for staff;
  - Available staff cycle parking;
  - Travel Packs for staff; and
  - Travel Information on the hotel website for hotel guests.

Notwithstanding the proposed new bus interchange which is welcomed, the actual Travel Plans submitted as part of the application are fairly high level and lacking in any particular detail. The Highway Authority is therefore not presently content with the Travel Plans as presented within the application.

More generally, the Highway Authority would expect the travel plan to consist of more than just information packs. There should be an action plan with greater clarity and commitment to the appointment of a travel plan coordinator, travel plan measures, and a specific monitoring, review and reporting framework. The Highway Authority would therefore recommend that further engagement is undertaken with the Transport, Access and Road Safety team at HCC ([travelplan@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:travelplan@hertfordshire.gov.uk)) to improve the Travel Plans, which as noted here, lack the detail that would be expected for a development of this nature.

It is noted that with respect to the travel information packs, in accordance with HCC's guidance these should include the residential travel contribution at £50 per flat and £100 per house in the form of sustainable travel incentives (see: [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/travelplans](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/travelplans) - Appendix E). Given the site's location adjacent the station, the Highway Authority would recommend that this takes the form of a rail voucher.

An Evaluation and Support Contribution is required to be secured by a Section 106 agreement. This is intended to cover the ongoing costs of

continued travel plan implementation support over the plan period. In line with travel plans for comparable sites, it is recommended that a contribution of £10,000 be sought in this instance.

## **Summary**

The Highway Authority has reviewed materials submitted in support of the development of the Bishop's Stortford Goods Yard.

The principle of the development with respect to the redevelopment of the goods yard is accepted, including the provision of the sustainable link in Phases 1-3 and in its final location in Phase 4.

The Highway Authority has noted that some elements of the proposals, including sustainability issues could be improved, although such issues as parking are the preserve of the Local Planning Authority.

In summary, the Highway Authority does not wish to restrict the grant of planning permission, although recommends the inclusion of the aforementioned Conditions and Advisory Notes in order to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Highways Act 1980.