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Your Reference: PLAN/RS/FAH007 GP003

30 October 2015

Dear Rob

Application by Hampshire County Council: Construction of a new southern section of Newgate Lane to provide a new connection from Newgate Lane to Peel Common Roundabout together with the construction of a junction and link road to access the existing route of Newgate Lane at Land to the east of Newgate Lane, Fareham Hampshire (application number P/15/0717/CC & 15/00382/HCC3).

Further to your letter of 22 October regarding deferment of the above application, please find below the additional information as requested to address each of the three issues identified. The responses are provided below, taking each issue in turn.

a) Provide additional information on the potential for the provision of lay-by bus stops on the new route rather than 'in carriageway' stops.

On carriageway bus stops were identified as the preferred solution following consultation with interested parties and analysis of the relative merits of providing lay-by bus stops or on carriageway stops. Four key considerations resulted in the preferred approach, which are outlined below:

1 - Frequency of services. The low frequency of buses along this route was a significant factor in the decision to provide on carriageway stops. First Hampshire & Dorset service 21/21A is the only public scheduled service that routes along this southern section of Newgate Lane (as per Page 37 of the Transport Assessment) and provides an average of one bus per hour in each direction, between the hours of 07:21-18:39 Monday to Friday (11 per day) and 09:28-13:28 on Saturday. This service is currently subsidised by the County Council.

2 - Presence of central hatching. The presence of the hatched road markings in the centre of the carriageway adjacent to the bus stops means that vehicles will be able to safely pass a bus on the infrequent occasions that one is waiting at the stop. This means that vehicles

will not incur any notable delay and that the scheme still accords with the objectives of keeping traffic moving and improving strategic access to Fareham and Gosport. Drawing EC/CJ007861/044 (provided at **Appendix A**) illustrates how vehicles are able pass a parked bus using the central hatching and therefore do not need to undertake any potentially unsafe manoeuvres by entering the opposing traffic flow.

The pedestrian refuge within the hatched road marking has been provided to improve safe road crossing opportunities for pedestrians, cyclists and bus users, in the vicinity of Brookers Lane. The bus stops have been carefully positioned north and south of the refuge to enable sufficient carriageway distance for vehicles to pass potential stopped buses safely and to avoid undue delay to passing traffic.

3 – Operator preference. Discussions with First Hampshire & Dorset indicated that there is no requirement by the Operator for any of the bus stops on the new road to be provided in lay-bys. The General Manager of First Hampshire & Dorset has written a letter to confirm this position, which is provided at **Appendix B**. The Operator also confirmed that bus stops are generally only required to be provided in laybys at stops which are registered timing points, which would not apply to any of the stops in this proposal. Comments received from the County Council Passenger Transport Group also confirm that the preference is always to maintain the bus stop on the carriageway and to remove lay-bys where possible. This is the case on the existing alignment of Newgate Lane, where the only bus stop lay-bys are those at HMS Collingwood, which is a timing point.

4 – Delay to buses. If buses were forced to pull into a lay-by to stop they could incur delay when seeking to pull out from the lay-by into the traffic on Newgate Lane. Providing lay-bys would therefore reduce the sustainability credentials of the scheme and means that an opportunity to maximise access by sustainable modes would not be taken, contrary to the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Furthermore, none of the existing bus stops along the southern section of Newgate Lane are provided in lay-bys.

b) Provide additional information on the justification and need for the closure of the southern end of Newgate Lane, including what consideration was given to retaining vehicular access to the Peel Common roundabout for buses and/or local residents only;

The treatment for the southern end of the existing Newgate Lane was considered in detail during the development of the design. During the summer 2014 consultation there was little support from local residents (Newgate Lane, Albert Road and Woodcote Lane) for maintaining an access for all traffic. When asked 'how would you like to see the existing entry from Peel Common roundabout managed', 36% of those who responded indicated a preference for 'No access except for emergency vehicles', a further 36% indicated a preference for 'No entry (except buses and cyclists)', while a further 20% indicated a preference for 'Full access as it is now'. Therefore almost three quarters of those who responded did not support full access. Consultation with the emergency services identified

no objection to the proposals to access Newgate Lane from the proposed road and associated new link road.

For reasons of safety and residential amenity the preferred solution is to maintain Peel Common Roundabout as a 4-arm junction, rather than introducing a 5th arm by keeping the existing Newgate Lane open to traffic. Studies have shown that five arm roundabouts are less safe than four arm roundabouts, and this is design advice as presented in the relevant Department for Transport design manuals. Whilst five arm roundabouts do exist, they are not preferred especially when alternative options that provide access to a given area are available.

Should the existing Newgate Lane be kept open to vehicular traffic in addition to the proposed new road, there is a potential safety issue associated with traffic from the existing Newgate Lane seeking to access onto the roundabout. Both the County Council Safety Auditor and traffic signal engineers indicated that it could be difficult for traffic to enter the roundabout / find appropriate gaps in traffic, particularly if accessing the third lane of the roundabout to route south or west.

To help overcome the above it is likely that 'Keep Clear' markings would be required to enable the manoeuvre out of Newgate Lane, which would have a negative impact on the capacity of the roundabout. The final layout of the roundabout requires much of the circulating carriageway to accommodate traffic waiting at signals whilst other traffic movements take place. Reducing these areas to accommodate another access and associated road markings would involve queues extending further back and affecting the next upstream arm of the roundabout, which would in turn compromise the overall viability of the proposed junction.

To retain access for buses only would require a bus gate or similar means to restrict access by all other types of vehicle. Under County Council Traffic Management Policy TM5, the following is included under movement restrictions:

Bus priority measures

Given the need for buses and emergency vehicles to be fitted with transponders, and the cost of installing, operating and maintaining automatic rising bollards, bus gates outside of town centre areas will only be provided at locations where there is a strong case for bus priority in terms of measureable benefits. In the case of new developments, commuted sums would be required for the ongoing costs associated with operating and maintaining rising bollards in addition to their installation costs.

Our view is that there would be few measurable benefits to providing a bus gate at this location for the following two reasons:

1 – If buses were to route along the existing Newgate Lane following the opening of the new route, they could incur an element of delay at the new junction with the new Newgate Lane, whereas if the bus route is along the new road buses would not be subject to any delay at the new junction.

2 – The position of the new bus stops places them in the catchment area for part of the Peel Common Estate, which is not in the catchment area for the existing bus stops. Drawing EC/CJ007861/02/045 (attached at **Appendix C**) illustrates this point and shows the 400m / 5-minute walk catchment areas from the existing and proposed bus stops. The plan shows that the new bus stop locations will open up the services to additional properties without losing any properties from the catchment area. Therefore the new bus stop locations have the potential to increase bus patronage.

The letter of support from First Hampshire & Dorset (Appendix B) also indicates their support for routing buses along the new road rather than the old road.

Maintaining an access for local residents only would be very difficult to enforce, as all traffic could potentially use the route which could potentially become a rat run. Maintaining a through vehicular access could potentially also detract from the attractiveness of the existing Newgate Lane as a cycle route and therefore reduce the sustainability credentials of the scheme, contrary to the objectives of the NPPF. It may not be possible to designate the existing road as an advisory on-road route if access was open to all vehicles.

With regard to the potential additional distance that residents of the existing Newgate Lane would be required to travel should the road be stopped up at the roundabout, it is considered that the benefit of the significant reduction in traffic flows past properties outweighs the cost of travelling the additional distance. The following additional travelling distances for properties on the existing Newgate Lane have been measured and as identified differ from the distance of 2 miles quoted during the Regulatory Committee meeting:

- In order for the property located at the southern end of the existing Newgate Lane to access Peel Common Roundabout the additional distance is circa 1,850m (1.15 miles). This represents the worst case additional distance; with properties located further north travelling a shorter additional distance.
- The new distance from the western end of Woodcote Lane to access Peel Common roundabout is circa 1,500m, while the existing distance is circa 350m, meaning an additional distance requirement of circa 1,150m (0.7 miles). In the context of trips to the wider area e.g. Gosport, this represents a low percentage of extra trip distance.

c) Explore the potential for an alternative access for maintenance vehicles to the Woodcote Lane detention basin, or a relocation of the detention basin.

Several possible locations for the detention basin at the eastern end of Woodcote Lane and its associated access were considered as part of the design process. The preferred location as shown on the design emerged as the most suitable location for the basin from a drainage perspective given the proximity to the existing drainage ditch on the northern side of Woodcote Lane, but also took account of the relative merits of all alternatives for both location and access. It is considered that the location as shown is satisfactory for this stage in the overall design process.

It should be noted that comments received from the resident of the property at the eastern end of Woodcote Lane during the planning application consultation period resulted in the design being amended to revise the access to the detention basin. A summary of these changes is provided below, while drawing EC/CJ007861/040 showing the amended design is provided at **Appendix D** (as sent to the resident):

- The access to the field containing the basin has been moved further east, and the new foot/cycleway has been reverted to its current alignment in the vicinity of the property at the eastern end of Woodcote Lane and effectively shortened.
- Access to the detention basin will be provided directly off the new foot/cycleway via a gated access behind which will be an area of reinforced grass. The access will be flush with the path which should help overcome concerns that the access could be misconstrued as a turning head.
- A bollard will be installed to prevent vehicles from accessing the new road from the foot/cycleway. The hedge opposite the driveway of the property at the eastern end of Woodcote Lane remains intact.

There are two key considerations with regard to the basin access at this location. The first is that providing direct access from the proposed road would necessitate creating a larger gap in the noise bund / acoustic fence, which would result in the properties along Woodcote Lane experiencing further increases in noise levels over those anticipated. Noise mitigation is an essential part of the scheme, therefore the noise reduction benefit of providing an access via Woodcote Lane is considered to outweigh the small negative impact of very occasional maintenance vehicles having to route along Woodcote Lane.

The second key consideration is that the provision of a vehicular access from the proposed road at this location would raise safety concerns due to the location of the bus stops, the uncontrolled pedestrian crossing and the presence of the noise bund/barrier. There is the potential that the landscape bund / noise barrier could mask the presence of a pedestrian or cyclist routing eastbound along the Brookers Lane path from a maintenance vehicle turning in to the access, which could result in a collision. Furthermore, the approach speed of the vehicle and following traffic on the proposed road is likely to increase the risk of shunt type accidents.

A further key point is that the frequency of maintenance visits to the basin will be very low at up to two visits per year and would be undertaken by a Ford Transit sized van i.e. not an HGV. These annual routine visits would be to inspect the basin and potentially cut back vegetation, with a potential additional requirement to undertake re-profiling of the basin on an infrequent basis – possibly once every 10 years. It should also be noted that the access to the basin will be gated and locked and therefore will not be available for use by any other parties.

Concluding Remarks

The supplementary information and points of clarification set out above seek to provide a reasoned explanation for the elements of the preferred scheme in question.

The preferred design has been carefully developed with due regard to the various design constraints and potential impacts of the scheme, taking into account best practice and safety considerations.

It is considered that some of the concerns raised by the Committee are not strictly related to land-use matters and reflect operational and maintenance issues which can be addressed further throughout the progression of detailed design work and normal best practice, if necessary. It is considered that the additional information provided satisfactorily addresses the issues raised by the committee and provides sound justification for the scheme as submitted.

Yours sincerely,

Heather Walmsley

Heather Walmsley

Team Leader, Major Schemes – On behalf of the Applicant