

Review of Travel Plan – matters arising

The Framework Travel Plan starts with a review of key transport related points from the National Planning Policy Framework. This identifies the relevant policy context and the claimed degree of development support / compliance for each. This review examines these claims first, and then the actual Travel Plan.

Policy Context

1. *Potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed:*
 - a. This has been confined to the operation of the site access junctions; impacts on the local roads have not been appropriately quantified or evaluated.
2. *Opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure and changing transport technology and usage are realised:*
 - a. The proposed development utilises existing infrastructure, without proposals for any enhancements apart from very minor changes to two junctions;
 - b. The masterplan recognises the need to extend the one local bus service, but makes no real provision for this within the development – routeing; terminal / layover; shelter(s);
 - c. No changes are proposed to walking and cycling facilities outside the development.
3. *The environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account:*
 - a. The environmental impacts of construction traffic have not been properly considered, with underestimates of volumes and little recognition of duration; it should be noted that monitoring of the HS2 CSP Vent-shaft site showed some exceeding of set limits;
 - b. The site could not be made sustainable without the widening of lanes and provision of flanking footways; this would inevitably result in the destruction of ancient hedgerows and loss of trees.
4. *Patterns of movement, streets, parking, and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes:*
 - a. On-site parking needs have not been given appropriate consideration;
 - b. Resultant lack of provision will inevitably result in parking on footways, with pedestrian obstruction and forced use of roadways.
5. *Significant developments should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes:*
 - a. There are no measures in the Application designed to limit the need to travel; rather, its semi-rural location makes travel unavoidable – and not immediately local;
 - b. Directly accessed public transport can only effectively serve one direction of travel, and services are at low frequency; ~~all other public transport routes require a long steep walk to the A413~~; public transport in the area is suitable neither for commuting nor for retail access;
 - c. Whilst the development is accessible by walking, cycling and public transport, quality of access is low;
 - d. It is acknowledged that NMT usage will be very low, with only 50 pedestrian and 5 cyclist two-way trips in each peak hour.
6. *Sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural area, and this should be taken into account in both plan making and decision making:*
 - a. The location is acknowledged as only being semi-rural, and residents will interact with the adjoining urban area for which they need appropriate transport infrastructure.

7. *All developments that will generate significant amounts of movement should be required to provide a travel plan:*
 - a. See following more detailed commentary.
8. *Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe:*
 - a. The Application has only considered the operation of site access junctions;
 - b. Current safety data are not a secure basis for evaluation when non-motorised demand is suppressed by the lack of appropriate infrastructure; no infrastructure development is proposed;
 - c. The Do-Minimum scenario modelling doesn't appear to include traffic from the Newland Park development on to which identified impacts would add;
 - d. Traffic projections are not credible, and may well understate likely volumes on some links without appropriate geometric or physical capacity;
 - e. Adverse effects on pedestrians and cyclists have not been appropriately assessed.
9. Conclusion:
 - a. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development; this review shows that this location doesn't meet that objective in the transport domain;
 - b. No significant proposals are presented to make the location sustainable in that context.

Travel Plan

1. Introduction:
 - a. The Travel Plan largely consists of a generic range of 'soft' measures that aren't of great relevance in the planning context, and also would be hard to enforce;
 - b. As such, this review will focus on the physical proposals and their potential impact on the sustainability of the proposed development.
2. Measures to promote bus use:
 - a. The Transport Assessment recognises the potential to extend the existing bus operation from Chalfont Common through to the proposed development, but this is not included in the Travel Plan;
 - b. Such an extension of the route, using full-size buses, would require provision for its routing through the proposed development in the illustrative master plan; this routing would need to consist of appropriate roadway widths and at least two bus lay-bys and passenger shelters;
 - b-c. The additional bus mileage required by the route extension would either require an additional bus in the roster, or an extension of the service headways that would lose the current desirable clock-face time-tabling;
 - ~~c. The routing would also need to include a bus layover point with an adjoining passenger shelter, and possibly additional shelters elsewhere on the route;~~
 - d. This route only operates at an hourly frequency, though, and so is of limited use for commuting; further it only effectively serves one direction of travel and so fails to provide access to several principal demand attractors in the area;
 - e. No proposal is made for the developer to support any dial-a-ride or demand responsive local transport service.

3. Measures to promote walking and cycling
 - a. Few significant employment opportunities exist in the location of the proposed development, so there is little opportunity for walk commuting;
 - b. Walking to the transport routes along the A413, Chalfont St Peter, or Chalfont St Giles, is challenging because of the relatively steep hills, the distances involved, and the undeveloped public footpath to the last;
 - c. Cycle commuting is challenging because of those hills and the narrow lanes to the north of the location; it is noticeable that the principal cycling purpose in this area is social, and focused on the weekends when traffic is lighter;
 - d. The above reasons demonstrate that the location cannot be deemed sustainable in transport terms.
4. Measures to promote electric vehicles:
 - a. The ambition presented in the Travel Plan is limited to ensuring that EV charging points are provided where practical, and investigating the possibility of delivering new charging infrastructure; clearly this is insufficient;
 - b. All households will need to have access to personal vehicle charging points for the following reasons:
 - i. The financial benefits of EV operation require access to domestic tariffs, particularly off-peak tariffs such as Economy 7;
 - ii. Durability of EV batteries will require routine slow charging, with public fast charging largely confined to use for longer journeys;
 - iii. Resilience of the National Grid will require the use of EV batteries as part of the storage capacity required to balance supply and demand;
 - iv. Self-generated electricity from solar panels, for which the location is well suited, requires direct connection to the EV.
5. Conclusion:
 - a. The Travel Plan lacks any ambition, or proposals for supporting infrastructure, to make the location sustainable in transport terms.