



Technical Note

Highways Review

Project	Land of Highfield Road, Sheppey	Job No	1000007836
Subject	Highways Review – Technical Note	Issue	02
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Introduction

- 1.1 Swale Borough Council (SBC) has commissioned Project Centre (PCL) to provide a Technical Note (TN) reviewing highway matters relating to:
 - Land At Highfield Road, Minster-on-sea - Outline application for the development of up to 16 dwellings and all necessary supporting infrastructure including internal access roads, footpaths and parking, open space and landscaping, drainage, utilities and service infrastructure works.
- 1.2 It is noted that all detailed matters of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale are reserved for subsequent approval except for access to Highfield Road which is to be determined at outline planning stage.
- 1.3 We note that an outline Transport Statement (TS) was submitted in December 2020 detailing a proposal for up to 19 dwellings. However, since then a revised development yield of up to 16 dwellings is proposed.
- 1.4 We have therefore reviewed all submitted information with the revised dwelling totals in mind.
- 1.5 Further information is required before the proposal can be fully supported, which is summarised as part of this TN's conclusion.



Access Arrangements

- 2.2 For the most part, the access arrangement is supported, noting:
- 5.5m wide carriageway,
 - 6m junction kerb radii, and
 - 2m wide pedestrian footpaths.
- 2.3 It is noted that we have not reviewed any drawing files at the time of this review and cannot confirm these geometries other than those provided as part of the outputs.
- 2.4 Desktop visibility plans provided by the applicant show that visibility splays of 43m can be achieved in both directions, compliant with requirements for 30mph roads. Highfield Road is subject to a 20mph speed limit and therefore visibility exceeds the requirements in Manual for Streets 1 (MfS1).
- 2.5 Parking restrictions will be required on Highfield Road to ensure visibility is not blocked at the proposed site access location. A site visit carried out by PCL in March 2022, confirmed that vehicles often park on the southern side of Highfield Road, close to the proposed site access location, as shown in Figure 1.
- 2.6 The site visit confirmed that visibility to the hill crest on Highfield Road from the site access is around 60m. An SSD of 43m is therefore noted to be achievable before the hill crest.

Figure 1: Parking on Highfield Road Near Proposed Access



- 2.7 Speed surveys should be undertaken to determine 85th percentile speeds on Highfield Road, where the site access is proposed. Given the proximity of the site access to the downward slope of the hill on Highfield Road, vehicle speeds could potentially be higher and suitable traffic calming measures required on this street.
- 2.8 In addition, visibility splay calculations should be undertaken in accordance with Manual for Streets 2 (MfS2) which takes into consideration longitudinal gradients when determining safe Stopping Sight Distances (SSD).
- 2.9 The TS notes that the internal road has a visibility splay of 12m which is in line with the requirements of MfS1 for a 10mph road. Although this is acknowledged, the TS does not outline what traffic calming measures are proposed to achieve these vehicle speeds.
- 2.10 As the internal road ties directly into the site access, it is considered the above measures should be outlined to ensure vehicle speeds remain low to and from the proposed junction with Highfield Road.



- 2.11 Therefore, the above matters should be addressed before the proposed access arrangement is considered acceptable.

Parking Provisions

- 2.12 The shown parking provisions adhere to Swale Borough Council Parking Standards.
- 2.13 It is acknowledged that proposed parking provisions are detailed matters and are reserved for subsequent approval.

Refuse Collection and Servicing

- 2.14 We have reviewed the vehicle tracking plans, which demonstrate refuse vehicles entering and exiting the site in a forward direction and consider these acceptable.
- 2.15 Given the proposed geometries of this site access, it is considered the access is sufficient in terms of geometries to accommodate servicing vehicles also.

Policy Context

National Policy

- 2.16 We have reviewed the TS in relation to national planning policies, noting:
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
 - Appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location (para. 110);
 - We note that the TS outlines infrequent bus services throughout the week, noting that only one bus service (334 Service) is every 30 minutes. It is considered that public transport could be unattractive for those residing at the site due to infrequent services.



- Safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users (para. 110);
 - We note that the suitability of the access is not supported until further evidence has been provided, as requested in this Technical Note.
 - The design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code (para. 128);
 - All detailed matters are reserved for subsequent approval except for access to Highfield Road.
 - Any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree (para. 104).
 - At this stage we have not seen any potential network issues. Vehicle trip generation based on 16 dwellings is low.
- 2.17 As stated in NPPF (para 111); *“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”.*
- 2.18 In relation to this, further evidence is required to deem the site access is suitable for purpose and therefore cannot support the proposal on highway grounds.
- National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
 - The TS discusses the effectiveness of implementing Travel Plans, however, the applicant has noted that a Travel Plan is not required due to the nature of the proposal and therefore this information is irrelevant.



- NPPG notes how Transport Statements can positively contribute to different transport and highway improvements. The TS should therefore outline how the development contributes to:
 - Encouraging sustainable travel,
 - Lessening traffic generation and its detrimental impacts,
 - Reducing carbon emissions and climate impacts,
 - Creating accessible, connected, inclusive communities,
 - Improving health outcomes and quality of life,
 - Improving road safety; and;
 - Reducing the need for new development to increase existing road capacity or provide new roads.

2.19 We have not seen sufficient evidence that the development adheres to critical national policies, notably those relating to the suitability of the site access, which should be demonstrated.

Local Policy

2.20 We have reviewed the TS in relation to Local planning policies, noting:

- Swale Borough Local Plan (Swale LP)
 - We consider the development compliant with most key aims outlined in the Swale LP.
 - One key aim which is not adhered to includes: *“Achieving safe and suitable access to sites for all people and goods”*.
 - We note that the suitability of the access is not supported until further evidence has been provided, as requested in this Technical Note.
- SBC Parking Policy
 - As mentioned, it is acknowledged that proposed parking provisions are detailed matters and are reserved for subsequent approval.



- o We note that further investigation should be made relating to local car ownership levels, in line with SBC Parking Policies, to ensure there is not an over provision of parking on site, which could encourage inappropriate levels of car ownership.

2.21 We note that the development should also be assessed by the applicant against the following Local policy documents:

- Local Transport Plan for Kent (LTP4),
- Kent County Council Active Travel Strategy,
- Swale Transport Strategy.

2.22 We do not consider the development to adhere to critical Local Policies, notably those relating to the suitability of the site access, which should be addressed.

Trip Generation and Distribution

2.23 We have reviewed the submitted trip generation and distribution methodology, notably Appendix D.

2.24 We consider the TRICS site selection suitable for the development.

2.25 In relation to trips by journey purpose, we consider the use of Tempro is a more robust method of calculating journey purpose percentages, as it provided more detailed information local to the site, whereas National Travel Survey data is based on national averages, which are not site or area specific.

2.26 We therefore advise that the journey purpose assessment be revised using Tempro data to consider localised travel habits, with the trip generation updated accordingly.

Conclusions

2.27 To conclude:

- PCL have reviewed highways matters relating to and outline planning application for a residential development at Land at Highfield Road, Minster-on-sea,
- For the most part, the development proposal is considered appropriate in principle, however, further information is required before the proposal can be fully supported at the outline stage, which include:
 - Determine the extent of parking restrictions required on Highfield Road, so that visibility is not obstructed at the site access,
 - This should include an assessment on the existing capacity and whether removed on street parking can be relocated within a reasonable walking distance.
 - Determine average speeds on Highfield Road, so a reliable visibility assessment can be determined,
 - Given the proximity of the site access to the downward slope of the hill on Highfield Road, vehicle speeds could potentially be higher and suitable traffic calming measures required on Highfield Road.
 - Visibility splay calculations should be undertaken in accordance with Manual for Streets 2 (MfS2) which takes into consideration longitudinal gradients when determining safe Stopping Sight Distances (SSD)
 - Confirm what traffic calming measures will be installed within the site to maintain a traffic speed of 10 mph, as per the forward visibility assessment shown within the site,

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- o Demonstrate the suitability of the development in relation to national and local policy, as highlighted throughout this TN. This should also include an assessment against:
 - Local Transport Plan for Kent (LTP4),
 - Kent County Council Active Travel Strategy,
 - Swale Transport Strategy.

Journey purpose and trip generation and distribution assessments considering Tempo data, which takes into consideration consider localised travel habits should be considered as part of the outline application and provided by the applicant.