



Council Meeting: 4th September 2019

Former Novartis Site, Parsonage Road, Horsham

Further to the Committee discussion of this application, this addendum seeks to provide additional information and details to assist in considering the points raised by Planning Committee North at the meeting on 6 August 2019. There are also points of correction.

1. Transport and Highways:

- 1.1 At the Planning Committee, several comments were made by Councillors and representatives of the public speaking at committee regarding the highway impact of the proposal. Particular concern was raised regarding the use of the Wimblehurst Road access from the Novartis site and the impact this would have on the Wimblehurst Road / Parsonage Road / North Heath Lane junction (Junction C). As outlined in the committee report, no significant improvements are proposed to this junction as part of this proposal.
- 1.2 However the Transport Assessment includes details of a potential improvement scheme, comprising traffic signals at Parsonage Road / Wimblehurst Road. The details are shown indicatively as a potential improvement scheme and proposed to come forward via CIL contributions at a later date. The improvements to the junction could be included by the Horsham District Council on its Infrastructure Delivery Plan at the appropriate point in time when evidence shows that the works are then necessary. A Monitoring Scheme is proposed to be included in the S106 Legal Agreement, as outlined in the committee addendum. This would monitor the impact of the proposal on the junction and ensure the Council is fully informed of when the works to the junction are required.
- 1.3 At committee, Councillor Burgess suggested that the scheme be amended to allow residential access from the Parsonage Road to reduce the impact on the Wimblehurst Road access. Presently, the scheme only allows residential access from Wimblehurst Road and commercial access only from Parsonage Road. This is to stop the site being used as a cut through between the two roads. Councillor Burgess was advised at committee that such a change is likely to require additional transport assessments.
- 1.4 WSCC Highways have commented that a new Transport Assessment wouldn't necessarily be required if a single point of access for the whole development was proposed from Parsonage Road. The traffic modelling work would need to be updated in terms of reallocating vehicular trips from the Wimblehurst Road access to that on Parsonage Road. Some immediately adjacent local junctions (the mini-roundabout at North Heath Lane/Parsonage Road/Wimblehurst Road for example) would also need to be remodelled in

light of the redistribution of trips. Having a single point of access would though result in a lot of traffic entering and exiting the site a one point. An alternate form of access (such as traffic signals) may need to be considered as a result. This would have to be assessed by a transport consultant.

- 1.5 The applicant has responded that combining the accesses at Parsonage Road would place additional pressure on that location, which may result in conflicting manoeuvres, potentially requiring a different junction form. They have stated that this could considerably increase development costs and could put more strain on Junction C. The applicants have stated that they have done a high level assessment of this amendment. However, no evidence has been submitted in support of this. Notwithstanding this officers and the consulted highway experts are of the view the scheme as submitted is acceptable.
- 1.6 Councillor Burgess also commented that the option of a signalised junction at North Parade / Pondtail Road should also be explored. The councillor commented that the proposal would result in increased traffic to Pondtail Road and suggested the junction be improved to help alleviate the impact of potential additional traffic from the Novartis site. WSCC Highways has commented that signalisation of this junction would introduce delays to traffic on North Parade that don't currently exist. Whilst there may be delays for traffic exiting Pondtail Road, delays would still exist with traffic signals albeit that it would be easier to exit. Looking at a potential design, the Highways Officer has commented that there are likely to be departures from standards regarding visibility between stop lines. This is a common issue and unlikely to prevent a scheme coming forward. The Highways Officer would also be cautious in viewing this as a low cost solution. There could be any manner of buried services that will significantly increase the cost. Officers are also of the view there is no evidenced link between the development and any such works at North Parade/Pondtail Road.
- 1.7 Finally, Councillor Burgess mentioned improving the waiting time at the railway crossing at Rusper Road. Any improvements to this crossing would need to be initiated by Network Rail.
- 1.8 At committee, comments were made that the scheme could be greatly improved with the addition of a pedestrian bridge over the railway line. The benefits of a bridge to the residents and employees scheme are acknowledged. However, a new bridge is expected to cost between £5 and £6 million. Additionally, there would be further fees and feasibility issues with land possession and future maintenance costs. Provision of a bridge would also involve the loss of development land and assumes that a route could be secured across third party land to the south of the railway line. The inclusion of a pedestrian bridge as part of this proposal is therefore considered unfeasible. The applicant has commented that they are willing to safeguard land as part of this proposal in order to facilitate a bridge should it come forward through other funding sources. This could be secured via the Legal Agreement if considered appropriate. At this time, there is no indication that a bridge will come forward through other means.
- 1.9 In terms of pedestrian improvements, as outlined in the Committee Addendum, the contribution towards off-site pedestrian and cycle improvements has been increased to £100,000. This would go towards improvements to the roads in the immediate area. The applicant has included details of where these improvements could be. This includes tactile paving and uncontrolled crossings to Richmond Road, Hurst Road & Foundary Lane and street lighting improvements to Foundary Lane and North Street. This would improve access

from the site to Horsham Station. The exact details of how this contribution would be utilised would be agreed as part of the legal agreement. As outlined in the Committee Addendum, it is anticipated that this contribution would go towards improvements outlined in the LCWIP project being led by Horsham District Council, which is due to be adopted later this year.

- 1.10 The applicant has further commented that there are 9 bus stops within a 400m radius of the site, some with multiple services. The applicant has had discussions with the main local bus operator who has confirmed to the applicant that there is sufficient capacity on key routes to accommodate the projected additional passenger demand. They have also confirmed that key routes are well established and anticipated to be stable for the longer term. The bus company is also supportive of the real time passenger information at the North Heath Lane bus stop, as offered in the proposed Heads of Terms within the S106 Legal Agreement.
- 1.11 The applicant has commented that they are willing to fund a new crossing at Wimblehurst Road, approximately 40m south of existing site access. As outlined in the Committee Report, due to the lack of certainty as to whether this crossing would be safe or necessary, it was determined not to pursue this crossing.
- 1.12 In response to comments on parking, the applicants have suggested monitoring the parking to establish if the amount of parking being provided for each commercial phase is appropriate or needs to be adjusted for subsequent phases. Whilst the applicants have suggested this, the proposal meets the WSCC Parking standards, as recently amended, and officers consider this provision is acceptable. However should the applicant wish to seek to demonstrate at reserved matters stage that a lesser amount of parking could be acceptable then the Council could consider this at that stage. At outline stage it is considered to be important that the application demonstrates it can provide parking in accordance with the new WSCC standards. This takes into account the potential use of some of the commercial parking for residential use. It should be noted that condition 10 requires the submission of a parking strategy prior to commencement of works. The purpose of the strategy is to agree how parking will be provided for the residential and commercial areas.
- 1.13 Following on from committee, no additional off-site highway measures have been put forward by the applicant. As stated at committee, given the comments of two separate technical highway experts that the proposal cannot be refused on either the lack of sustainable transport modes or highway safety, the proposal is considered acceptable on highway grounds. Officers have also considered the significant benefits the proposal offers in terms of the provision of employment, housing and the development of this strategic site. The scheme is therefore considered to meet the tests of paragraphs 108, 109 and 110 of the NPPF and Policies 8 and 40 of the HPPF.

2. Other Points Raised at Committee:

- 2.1 **Air Quality:** An Air Quality Assessment (AQA) was submitted with the planning application and was subsequently reviewed by HDC's Air Quality Officer. As noted in the Committee Report, the Air Quality Officer agrees with the conclusions of the AQA, provided a mitigation scheme is in place to offset emissions associated with the development. This includes a Travel Plan, energy efficient boilers, and means to encourage low emission vehicles and technologies. A condition is recommended to ensure the delivery of these measures.

- 2.2 At committee, concern were raised that the level of traffic entering and exiting the site at the Parsonage Road access could cause conflicting manoeuvres and queueing as a result of the proximity to the level crossing. The applicant has stated that this has been considered through the Transport Assessment using the same methodology as used for the Linden Homes site directly north of Parsonage Road. This shows that queue lengths would increase marginally, but that this would not have a significant impact on the operation of the highway network. The applicant has commented that this assessment also included discussion with Network Rail and incorporates a review of future level crossing down times, reflecting that full barriers, which require slightly longer downtimes, are programmed for future delivery. The longest projected downtime for the new barriers is around three minutes, which is very similar to the longest down time of the existing barriers.
- 2.3 **Safety of Locally Equipped Area of Play (LEAP):** The exact details of how the LEAP would be laid out including any safety measures would be determined through details to be submitted and agreed with HDC. These details would be secured through the Legal Agreement and a subsequent reserved matters application. The Council's Parks and Countryside Officer has agreed to the principle of the LEAP. It is considered that an appropriate and safe LEAP could be provided to the green space to the north east corner of the site, in agreement with the Council's Parks and Countryside Officer.
- 2.4 **Sussex Police Comments:** Sussex Police have commented that they have no objection to the proposal in relation to crime prevention. The comments go on to state that they have concerns related to the road system and the health and safety of pedestrians and drivers alike. They are concerned about the safety of road users using Wimblehurst Road and Parsonage Road. The comments of Sussex Police have been taken into consideration. Notwithstanding this, it should be noted that the remit of Sussex Police is to comment on crime prevention measures and not highway safety.

3. **Legal Agreement:**

- 3.1 Given the changes to the proposed Heads of Terms through the Committee Addendum, the Heads of Terms (as amended) have been outlined below for clarity:

Heads of Terms:

- Provision of 35% affordable housing with an appropriate housing tenure mix.
- Details of the phasing of the development.
- A detailed delivery plan for the provision of all residential and commercial units.
- The provision of Phase 1 employment floor space prior to an agreed number of residential units.
- Details of a marketing strategy for the commercial uses to be provided and be agreed by the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of development of the commercial area (excluding A1, A2, A3 and D1 uses). To include details of how the marketing will be updated.
- Details of the LAP and LEAP (including their management and maintenance) to be submitted for approval prior to occupation of 50 dwellings.
- Provision and implementation of a Travel Plan.
- Provision of a Traffic Monitoring Scheme for the junction at Wimblehurst Road and Parsonage Road.
- Transport Infrastructure improvements:

- 2m wide pedestrian footway to the north of the site on Parsonage Road. Safeguarding of land on Parsonage Road to enable the widening of the footway to 3 metres.
- Relocation of existing signalised crossing on Parsonage Road.
- Contribution of £10,000 to the improvement of bus waiting facilities (real time information) on North Heath Lane, past Blenheim Road.
- Contribution of £100,000 towards pedestrian and cycle improvements connecting the site with the surrounding area, including improvements to the link between the site and Horsham Station.

4. Report Corrections:

- 4.1 Paragraph 6.8 of the Committee Report states that the site viable for less than 200 units. This is an error and should read that the site has been assessed as being viable for 200 plus units.
- 4.2 Paragraph 6.49 is incorrect in stating that the 2m footway will be to the north side of Parsonage Road. This improvement is to the south side of the road.
- 4.3 Condition 26 requires the submission of a Travel Plan. The Travel Plan will be a requirement under the provisions of the Legal Agreement, therefore this condition is to be deleted.
- 4.4 The recommendation in Paragraph 7.1 incorrectly refers to the Director of Planning, Economic Development and Property. The correct title is the Director of Place.