

West Crawley County Local Committee

20th January 2011

**West of Bewbush Strategic Location – Notification
of off-site highways improvements
Report by Executive Director Communities and
Head of Communities and Infrastructure**

Part I

**Electoral
Divisions: All in
West Crawley**

Executive Summary

This report advises the North Horsham County Local Committee (CLC) and the West Crawley CLC of the highway improvements and contributions being progressed in relation to the West of Bewbush development and seeks the views of the West Crawley CLC on the potential options for the delivery of the Stage 2 improvement at the A23/A2220 Cheals junction.

A hybrid planning application has been submitted for a development of 2,500 dwellings west of Bewbush (also known as Kilnwood Vale). The site is allocated for development in a West of Crawley Joint Area Action Plan (JAAP) adopted by Horsham District Council and Crawley Borough Council. The proposed development is to be served by two new accesses onto the A264 and requires improvements or financial contributions to a number of junctions on the local highway network to mitigate the impact of development traffic. The form of access and the type of highway improvements were established in principle through the JAAP. The level of proportional contributions and the timescales for delivering improvements have been agreed by officers with the developer based on a full assessment of the technical evidence required to support the planning application.

Recommendation

1. That the North Horsham CLC and the West Crawley CLC notes the off-site highway improvements being secured from the west of Bewbush development in order to mitigate the impact of traffic generated by the proposed development on the local highway network.
2. That the West Crawley CLC notes that either a full traffic signalisation scheme or a modified roundabout scheme could be delivered as the Stage 2 improvement proposed for the A23/A2220 Cheals junction (paragraphs 2.7 - 2.10) depending on the funding available at the time the improvement is needed.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The former approved West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-2106 identified land west of Crawley for a strategic development of 2,500 new homes by 2016, together with other uses and high quality employment land. This land was also identified for development in the Horsham District Core Strategy (2007)

for the period up to 2016. A West of Bewbush Joint Area Action Plan (JAAP) was adopted by Horsham District Council and Crawley Borough Council in June 2009 following a public consultation exercise and examination in public and forms part of their respective Local Development Frameworks. West Sussex County Council produced evidence at the Examination in Public in relation to the highways and transport implications of the development.

- 1.2 The adopted JAAP establishes a principle that supports the development of the site and identifies the key issues to be addressed as the proposal progresses through the planning process.
- 1.3 A hybrid planning application for the development has now been submitted to Horsham District Council for outline approval for the development of approx. 2,500 dwellings including the construction of a new access from the A264 and a secondary access from the A264, a neighbourhood centre (comprising retail, community building with library facility, public house, primary care centre and care home), main pumping station, land for a primary school and nursery, land for employment uses, new rail station, energy centre and associated amenity space. The application is also seeking detailed planning permission for the development of Phase 1 comprising 291 dwellings.

2 Discussion

- 2.1 On the basis of the information submitted with the planning application, it is proposed to build the development in five phases over a period of 12 years (2011-2023), with phases 1-3 being located between the A264 and south of the Arun Valley railway line and phases 4 and 5 being north of the railway line. It is proposed that the main vehicular access to the development would be from the A264 with bus gates to Sullivan Drive and Woodcroft Road together with associated pedestrian and cycle links. There will be no vehicular access to either Bewbush or Ifield West other than the bus gates that are needed to integrate bus services between the existing and proposed new neighbourhood and to allow access for emergency vehicles.
- 2.2 Prior to the planning application being submitted, the County Council, as highway authority, had been involved in assessing the transport implications of the development using transport modelling software to establish the likely impact on the local highway network. This included submitting statements and giving evidence at the examination in public. The County Council was subsequently satisfied that access to the site could be satisfactorily achieved onto the A264 and that the wider transport implications of the development could be mitigated. At the same time, the County Council also identified a number of other infrastructure and service requirements as part of this process including the provision of a new primary school site and financial contributions to early years, primary, secondary education and a possible library facility. These requirements are being secured in a Section 106 planning agreement between the County Council and developer.
- 2.3 The adopted JAAP indicates the access requirements for the development and identifies a number of junctions where either improvements would be necessary or, alternatively, proportional contributions to improvements would be appropriate. These requirements are as follows :

- A new roundabout junction onto the A264 to serve as the main access serving the development (developer to fund and deliver prior to any occupations).
- A new traffic signalised junction onto the A264 (incorporating an equestrian/cycle/pedestrian crossing) to serve as a secondary access to the development (developer to fund and deliver prior to 300 occupations).
- A Stage 1 improvement to the A23/A2220 Cheals junction to provide lane widening on the A2220 Horsham Road (developer to fund and deliver prior to 300 occupations).
- A financial contribution towards Stage 2 of the Cheals junction improvement either to provide full traffic signalisation of the junction or a modified roundabout (developer to fund a proportion of the improvement cost - upon completion of 2,100 occupations).
- A financial contribution towards the A264/A2220 Sullivan Drive junction to provide a proposed traffic signalised gyratory (developer to fund a proportion of the improvement cost – upon completion of 2,100 dwellings if needed).
- A financial contribution towards the M23 Junction 11 to improve capacity (Highways Agency responsibility).

2.4 In terms of the proposed timescales for the improvements, these are broadly acceptable to the County Council and reflect the transport modelling scenarios. It is proposed that the main A264 roundabout access would be built prior to any occupations and the A264 secondary access together with the associated equestrian/pedestrian/cycle crossing (as shown on indicative drawing [16702/441/PA01](#)) would be built prior to the completion of the 300th dwelling. This is because a landfill access exists in this location and the developer would use this access for remedial work on the site resulting in high levels of HGV movements in the early part of the development. The developer, however, may seek some flexibility in terms of delivering the new A264 junctions as there could be a need to deliver some early housing to fund the high initial infrastructure costs.

2.5 It should be noted that officers have negotiated the delivery of this secondary access down from the completion of the 800th dwelling originally proposed by the developer to the 300th dwelling now proposed. There is some concern though that there may be growing demand from residents living on the new development to cross the A264 to access the Buchan Park AONB to the south. While there may be no crossing available until the completion of the 300th dwelling, the new A264 roundabout would help reduce traffic speeds and its design would allow for dropped kerb crossing points.

2.6 Officers have also had discussions with the developer about an alternative option that would allow the works to the main A264 roundabout access and A264 secondary access to commence at the same time with the secondary access being completed first and up to 50 dwellings being occupied from the secondary access point. Work would then proceed on constructing the main A264 roundabout access. This would deliver the secondary access and crossing earlier but, unfortunately, would extend the period of road works on the A264 for many months as the contract period would be much longer. However, provided adequate traffic management can be put in place to keep traffic congestion to a minimum, there may be some merit in carrying out the works as a single contract rather than under two contracts. The

expectation remains that the first option will be pursued. The CLC will be informed if circumstances change.

- 2.7 The West Crawley CLC is also asked to note the two scheme options for improvements at the Cheals junction. The developer would be required to carry out an early Stage 1 scheme at the Cheals junction (as shown on indicative drawing [16702/022](#)) by the occupation of the 300th dwelling. The developer would also be required to make a proportional contribution to the County Council towards a longer term Stage 2 scheme by the occupation of the 2,100th dwelling which could either take the form of a traffic signalisation scheme (as shown on indicative drawing [16702-043B](#)) or a modified roundabout scheme (as shown on indicative drawing [16702/045](#)).
- 2.8 The traffic signalisation scheme involves the removal of the existing roundabout. This would reduce traffic congestion in the peak hours, incorporate bus priority measures and provide additional cycle/pedestrian crossing facilities. This scheme would offer the best overall solution to managing a number of different travel modes and is more flexible in that the timing of traffic signals can be adjusted to deal with the prevailing traffic conditions. The cost, however, would be high and there would still be a significant funding shortfall to deliver it. Currently no other major development proposals have been identified in the area which would make up this shortfall. The County Council may, therefore, not be in a position to deliver this scheme within the required timescale.
- 2.9 The modified roundabout scheme would increase the size of the existing roundabout to increase capacity and reduce congestion, but would not incorporate bus priority measures or provide additional cycle/pedestrian crossing facilities. It would, however, cost much less than the traffic signalisation scheme. There would still be a funding shortfall to deliver this scheme, but this shortfall could more realistically be made up using contributions from other smaller developments that may come forward in the area. There may also be cost savings if the Stage 1 and Stage 2 improvements can be designed to complement each other. The County Council would, therefore, be more likely to deliver this scheme within the timescale required.
- 2.10 Both options at the Cheals junction would have to safeguard access to the proposed new Crawley fire station site at the south west corner of the existing junction, although the traffic signalisation scheme would require a much more complex arrangement in terms of signalling in order to allow fire appliances to pass swiftly through the junction.
- 2.11 The developers are also proposing a smaller contribution to a possible A264/A2220 Sullivan Drive gyratory scheme (as shown on indicative drawing [16702/071](#)). In capacity terms, this junction suffers much less from congestion and it is uncertain whether there would be a need to improve the junction based upon current background traffic growth forecasts which are lower than originally predicted. A proportional contribution to a highway improvement at this junction, if needed, is therefore considered to be a reasonable approach to take.
- 2.12 There is a package of public transport improvements set out in the approved JAAP which are in the process of being secured to complement the aforementioned highway improvements. Provision will also be made for safe

and convenient pedestrian and cycle links to Bewbush and Ifield West so that the residents from both existing and proposed communities can take advantage of their respective neighbourhood services and facilities.

3. Resource Implications and Value for Money

- 3.1 The west of Bewbush development allocation was identified in the West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-2016 as a strategic housing location. Officers are providing advice to ensure that the impact of the development is properly mitigated through improvements delivered by the developer or by using developer contributions. The proposed package of improvements is significant. Members views are sought where the developer may provide a contribution that will need to be supported through other funding sources that are uncertain and hence this could potentially leave a funding shortfall.

4.0 Risk Management Implications

- 4.1 There is a risk that development may be permitted without the need to provide the appropriate infrastructure to mitigate impacts. This risk is minimised through ensuring that a full and thorough response is provided to the planning application consultation and by ensuring that a dialogue is maintained with the developer and local planning authorities.

5. Crime and Disorder Act Implications

- 5.1 Not applicable. This issue will be considered by the planning authority in determining the planning application.

6. Human Rights Act Implications

- 6.1 Not applicable. This issue will be considered by the planning authority in determining the planning application.

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Background Papers

West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-2016
Horsham District Core Strategy 2007
West of Bewbush Joint Area Action Plan (2009)