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Response to Planning application from Hertfordshire County Council (T and CP GDP Order 2015)

Director of Planning

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
The Campus
Welwyn Garden City
Hertfordshire
AL8 6AW

District ref: 6/2021/1164/FULL
HCC ref: WH/6852/2021
HCC received: 28 April 2021
Area manager: Matthew Armstrong
Case officer: Samuel Tearle

Location

BEALES HOTEL COMET WAY HATFIELD AL10 9NG

Application type

Full Application

Proposal

Conversion of existing vacant hotel into 53 x room hostel and erection of further 40 units of accommodation in the car park

Decision

Notice is given under article 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 that the Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority does not wish to restrict the grant of permission subject to the following conditions:

Condition 1: EV Charging Provision

Prior to the occupation / use of the development hereby permitted, the development shall include provision for 5% (i.e 5 spaces) of the car parking spaces to be designated for plug-in Electric Vehicles (EV) and served by Active EV charging points.

Reason: To ensure construction of a satisfactory development and to promote sustainable development in accordance with Policies 5, 19 and 20 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).

Condition 2: Cycle Storage Provision

Prior to the first occupation /use of the development hereby permitted a scheme for the parking of cycles that is secure, covered and well-lit and compliant with design standards contained in the DfT LTN 1/20 'Cycle Infrastructure Design' must be fully implemented.

Reason: To ensure the provision of adequate cycle parking that meets the needs of occupiers of the

proposed development and in the interests of encouraging the use of sustainable modes of transport in accordance with Policies 1, 5 and 8 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).

Condition 3: Temporary Application

The site shall be used as a Hostel (Sui Generis land use) for a period of no longer than three years as stated in the supporting documents.

Reason: To ensure the impact of the development to the operation of the local highway network is accurately judged based on the details provided by the applicant.

HCC as Highway Authority recommends inclusion of the following Advisory Note (AN) / highway informative to ensure that any works within the highway are carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Highway Act 1980:

AN1) Storage of materials: The applicant is advised that the storage of materials associated with the construction of this development should be provided within the site on land which is not public highway, and the use of such areas must not interfere with the public highway. If this is not possible, authorisation should be sought from the Highway Authority before construction works commence. Further information is available via the website

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/business-licences.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

AN2) Obstruction of public highway land: It is an offence under section 137 of the Highways Act 1980 for any person, without lawful authority or excuse, in any way to wilfully obstruct the free passage along a highway or public right of way. If this development is likely to result in the public highway or public right of way network becoming routinely blocked (fully or partly) the applicant must contact the Highway Authority to obtain their permission and requirements before construction works commence. Further information is available via the website

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/business-licences.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

AN3) Road Deposits: It is an offence under section 148 of the Highways Act 1980 to deposit mud or other debris on the public highway, and section 149 of the same Act gives the Highway Authority powers to remove such material at the expense of the party responsible. Therefore, best practical means shall be taken at all times to ensure that all vehicles leaving the site during construction of the development are in a condition such as not to emit dust or deposit mud, slurry or other debris on the highway. Further information is available via the website

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/highways-roads-and-pavements.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

COMMENTS:

Description of Proposal

A full application has been submitted for the conversion of existing vacant Beales Hotel (C1 land use) into a 53 bedroom hostel and erection of further 40 units of accommodation in the car park (Sui Generis land use).

The Transport Statement states that the proposals are temporary only and will be for a period of three years.

The proposals include the retention of the existing vehicle, pedestrian and cycle accesses. The proposals also include the reduction of car parking spaces (from 119 to 90) and the additional provision of cycle parking spaces (from 8 to 32).

Existing Site Description

The Beales Hotel is understood to currently be vacant and comprises of 53 bedrooms. Vehicular access is via a left-in left-out only access onto the A1001 Comet Way. The access is in the form of a bellmouth and is bound on both sides by a segregated footway cycleway.

Comet Way is subject to a 50mph speed limit and is classified as a 'Main Distributor' in the HCC Highways Hierarchy.

Traffic Impact

Trip Generation

The Transport Statement has included a trip generation exercise that predicted the trip generation for the existing site use (53 bedroom hotel) and the proposed site use (93 bedroom hostel).

The trip rates used for the existing hotel are considered acceptable and has predicted the site could generate 15 two-way vehicle trips in the AM Peak Hour (0800-0900) and 14 two-way trips in the PM Peak Hour (1700-1800).

The trip generation for the proposed hostel use was based on existing user data from the existing hostel at the YMCA Peartree. This is because TRICs does not contain surveys for Hostels. The existing user information has stated that none of the existing users at the YMCA Peartree own a car and therefore only staff will drive to the site. This has predicted a small number of trips.

The Transport Statement has not stated how many bedrooms there are at the Peartree YMCA and has only stated there are 91 residents (i.e. it is unknown whether there are more than one resident per room). Therefore there is the potential for inaccuracy in the predicted trip generation approach. Despite the potential inaccuracy highlighted above, due to the proposed land use the Highway Authority expect the vehicle trip generation of the site would not be considered severe in terms of the NPPF.

Highway Safety

The Transport Statement has included a review of personal injury collisions over the past five years of available data that have occurred on the local highway network. The review has shown that there is no record of collisions at the site access.

Design Considerations

Vehicular Access

The proposals include the retention of the existing access to the hotel off Comet Way. The Highway Authority are satisfied with the retention of the access.

Pedestrian & Cycle Access

It is understood pedestrian and cycle access will be retained as per the existing arrangement.

Refuse / Servicing / Emergency Access

The Transport Statement notes that Servicing and refuse collection for the temporary hostel will continue as currently undertaken for the hotel. Refuse vehicles serve the site using the car park at the front of the hotel building where bins will be located on collection days. The Highway Authority are satisfied with this arrangement.

Car Parking

The existing site provides 119 car parking spaces for land use C1 Hotel. The proposals include the change of land use to hostel (Sui Generis) for the existing 53 bed hotel and the erection of 40 modular units on the car park. The building in the car park will result in the loss of 29 spaces.

Following the development, there will be a provision of 90 car parking spaces to serve the development of 93 bedrooms and staff.

The 'Welwyn Hatfield Supplementary Planning Guidance Parking Standards Adopted January 2004' states for a development of a 'Hotels & Hostels' a maximum of three car parking spaces per four units is required. Based on these standards the proposed 90 spaces is considered to be adequate.

It is noted that no details of EV Charging Provision has been provided. Hertfordshire County Council issued a climate emergency in 2019 and the HCC Local Transport Plan Policy 5 requires all new developments to provide EV infrastructure. The Highway Authority therefore request by way of condition that active charging provision is provided for 5% of all spaces (i.e. 5 spaces).

Cycle Parking

The development proposals include the provision of 32 cycle parking spaces. Based on the 'Welwyn Hatfield Supplementary Planning Guidance Parking Standards Adopted January 2004' standards of 1 long term space per 3 rooms, the provision of 32 cycle spaces is acceptable.

The Transport Statement provides no details of the type of cycle storage and the Proposed Site Plan 'Drawing No AS21.13.L.01 states the cycle storage will be 'storage hoops'. The Highway Authority are concerned that the cycle storage is not secure (locked), covered, and well-lit and thus will not encourage cycle trips. Therefore it is requested by way of condition that cycle parking is secure (locked), covered and well-lit, in line with the principles for Long Stay parking set out in the DfT's Cycle Infrastructure Design 'LTN 1/20'.

Sustainability

The closest bus stops to the site are located approximately 450m distance on Cavendish Way. The Highway Authority consider this to be located within an acceptable walking distance to encourage trips by bus.

The Transport Statement has demonstrated a number of local facilities and amenities are located within walking and cycling distance to the site.

Travel Plan

An updated Travel Plan is not requested on the basis that the site is a temporary development for a maximum period of three years.

CTMP

If the application is permitted planning permission, the Highway Authority request by way of planning condition that a Construction Traffic Management Plan is submitted prior to construction. Due to the sensitive location of the development site, a CTMP is needed to mitigate any adverse impact from the development on the operation and safety of the local highway network.

Planning Obligations / CIL

On the basis that the site is a temporary development for a maximum period of three years, developer contributions towards sustainable transport improvements (via a S106) are not sought.

Conclusion

The Highway Authority does not wish to raise an objection to the development, subject to the inclusion of the recommended planning conditions and informatives alongside the development being temporary for a maximum of three years.

Signed

Samuel Tearle

13 May 2021