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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: 6/2021/2125/MAJ
HCC ref: WH/8204/2021
HCC received: 27 July 2021
Area manager: Matthew Armstrong
Case officer: Samuel Tearle

Location

HERTFORDSHIRE CONSTABULARY STANBOROUGH ROAD WELWYN GARDEN CITY AL8 6DF

Application type

Full Application

Proposal

Partial redevelopment of the Hertfordshire Constabulary Headquarters site

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: Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Points

Prior to the first occupation the development hereby permitted, provision shall be made for 20% of the car parking spaces to have active provision for EV charging and 20% of the car parking spaces to have passive provision for EV charging.

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: Construction Traffic Management Plan

No development shall commence until a Construction Traffic Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, including elements of the CLOCS standards as set out in the Highway Authority's Construction Management template. Thereafter the construction of the development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved Plan: The Construction Traffic Management Plan shall include details of:

- a. Construction vehicle numbers, type, routing;
(including - construction vehicle numbers stated in the TA should be reviewed and vehicle numbers for staff provided; - routes should avoid schools and structures of restricted heights; - types of vehicles should be detailed, largest length vehicle must be tracked entering and exiting the Gosling Sports Club).
- b. Access arrangements to the site;
(including - Preliminary access design must updated to detailed & swept path analysis for largest vehicle; - Visibility splays of 2.4m x 23m must be provided at construction access; - Construction staff access details (including vehicle walking, cycling); - Access to sports facilities for Stanborough School and public).
- c. Traffic management requirements, including delivery booking details, signage plans for construction and public.
- d. Construction and storage compounds (including areas designated for car parking, loading / unloading and turning areas).
- e. Siting and details of wheel washing facilities.
- f. Cleaning of site entrances, site tracks and the adjacent public highway.
- g. Timing of construction activities (including delivery times and removal of waste) and to avoid school pick up/drop off times.
- h. Provision of sufficient on-site parking prior to commencement of construction activities.
- i. Post construction restoration/reinstatement of the working areas and temporary access to the public highway.
- j. where works cannot be contained wholly within the site a plan should be submitted showing the site layout on the highway including extent of hoarding, pedestrian routes and remaining road width for vehicle movements.
- k. Phasing Plan if applicable.

Reason: In order to protect highway safety and the amenity of other users of the public highway and rights of way in accordance with Policies 5, 12, 17 and 22 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).

Condition 3: Cycle Parking – Design Details

Prior to the first commencement of the development hereby permitted, a scheme for the parking of cycles including details of the design, level and siting shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The cycle parking must be designed in line with the standards set out in Chapter 11 of the DfT's LTN1/20. The approved scheme shall be fully implemented before the development is first occupied (or brought into use) and thereafter retained for this purpose.

Reason: To ensure the provision of 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).

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 County Council website at:

<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 highway: 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 County Council website at: <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) Debris and deposits on the highway: It is an offence under section 148 of the Highways Act 1980 to deposit compost, dung or other material for dressing land, or any rubbish on a made up carriageway, or any or other debris on a highway to the interruption of any highway user. 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 and use thereafter are in a condition such as not to emit dust or deposit mud, slurry or other debris on the highway. Further information is available by telephoning 0300 1234047.

AN4) Avoidance of surface water discharge onto the highway: The applicant is advised that the Highway Authority has powers under section 163 of the Highways Act 1980, to take appropriate steps where deemed necessary (serving notice to the occupier of premises adjoining a highway) to prevent water from the roof or other part of the premises falling upon persons using the highway, or to prevent so far as is reasonably practicable, surface water from the premises flowing on to, or over the footway of the highway.

AN5) Travel Plan (TP): A TP, in accordance with the provisions as laid out in Hertfordshire County Council's Travel Plan Guidance, would be required to be in place from the first occupation/use until 5 years post occupation/use. A £1,200 per annum (overall sum of £6000 and index-linked RPI March 2014) Evaluation and Support Fee would need to be secured via a Section 106 agreement towards supporting the implementation, processing and monitoring of the full travel plan including any engagement that may be needed. Further information is available via the County Council's website at: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/development-management/highways-development-management.aspx> OR by emailing travelplans@hertfordshire.gov.uk

AN6) Construction Management Plan (CMP): The purpose of the CMP is to help developers minimise construction impacts and relates to all construction activity both on and off site that impacts on the wider environment. It is intended to be a live document whereby different stages will be completed and submitted for application as the development progresses. A completed and signed CMP must address the way in which any impacts associated with the proposed works, and any cumulative impacts of other nearby construction sites will be mitigated and managed. The level of detail required in a CMP will depend on the scale and nature of development. The CMP would need to include elements of the Construction Logistics and Community Safety (CLOCS) standards as set out in our Construction Management template, a copy of which is available on the County Council's website at: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/development-management/highways-development-management.aspx>

Planning Obligations and Agreements **S106 (Town & Country Planning Act 1990)**

S106 Transport

A S106 contribution towards public transport enhancements must be sought as it is necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms. Further details can be found in the 'Mitigation' subsection below.

In accordance with the HCC Planning Obligations Guidance, contributions are sought for the northbound and southbound bus stops opposite the site on Stanborough Road. The contributions sought are:

- £30,000 for realtime bus displays at x2 bus stops (£15,000 per unit);
- £8,000 for raised kerbs at the northbound bus stop.

(Total £38,000)

The bus enhancements will significantly improve the facilities and ensure safe and suitable access for users of all ages and abilities and are necessary to offset the increases in staff to the site and size of the site. This request is in line with the HCC Guide to Developer Infrastructure Contributions (July 2021) and supports the policies set out in The Hertfordshire County Council 4th Local Transport Plan (May 2018) and NPPF (July 2021).

S106 Travel Plan Evaluation and Support

A £1,200 per annum for five years (£6,000) Evaluation and Support Fee (index-linked RPI March 2014) should be secured by section 106 agreement in accordance with Hertfordshire County Council's Travel Plan Guidance.

COMMENTS/ANALYSIS:

Description of Proposal

A full application has been submitted for the redevelopment of the existing Herts Constabulary site located on land to the east of Stanborough Road, Welwyn Garden City.

To support the application, a Transport Assessment (TA) has been submitted. The TA states that the proposals are for a like-for like replacement of the existing Constabulary headquarters, alongside the relocation of Herts Fire and Rescue services to the proposed site.

The TA states the existing floor area of all buildings within the site is approximately 19,241 sqm. Of this, approximately 8,955 sqm will be retained. The new buildings will provide 12,853 sqm floor area, which with the retained buildings will provide a total floor area of 21,808 sqm for 1,200 staff, including office space, conference and community engagement space, and ancillary buildings.

The proposals include the retention of the existing vehicular access arrangements following completion. The existing pedestrian and cycle accesses will be retained.

The proposals include the reduction of 9 car parking spaces and will result in a total of 760 spaces. The proposals include the provision of 44 short stay and 120 long stay cycle parking spaces.

It is understood the programme for construction will be spread over a four/five year period. Construction access is proposed via a track leading from Gosling Sports Centre.

Existing Site Description

The existing site consists of the policing headquarters complex, consisting of 19,241sqm and includes the main office building, fleet services, scientific research, emergency call centre and a series of support buildings.

The existing site also provides 769 car parking spaces for operational policing, office workers and visitors and 44 cycle parking spaces.

To the north of the site is Gosling Sports Park, to the east of the site is open playing fields and to the south is Stanborough Park and Lakes.

The main vehicle access is off the A6129 Stanborough Road and is in the form of a priority junction with a right-turn lane. A left-turn egress only access is located on the south of the site and links to Stanborough Road. The A6129 Stanborough Road is a 'Main Distributor' within the HCC Highways Hierarchy and is subject to a 40mph speed limit.

A shared footway / cycleway is located along the length of Stanborough Road that bounds the site.

Site History

The site was permitted planning permission in 2017 (6/2017/0504/FULL) for alterations to the existing highway junction, internal access road and car park, including replacement parking spaces, and erection of new security fencing and gates.

Traffic Impact

Trip Generation

The TA includes details of the trip generation during the Construction and Operational Phases.

Construction Phase:

The TA predicts that during the peak demolition stage the site will generate 36 two-way HGV trips per day and during the construction phase peak the site will generate 24-two way construction trips per day.

Whilst the predicted increase in HGVs on the local network is a concern, the Highway Authority are satisfied that the impact can be appropriately managed through a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP). A CTMP has been requested by way of planning condition.

Operational Phase:

The TA states that the proposals represent a like-for-like replace and upgrade of constabulary facilities, alongside the relocation of the Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service HQ to the site. The TA states this will result in a total floor area increase from approximately 19,241sqm to 21,808sqm and a staff increase by 60 to a total of 1,200.

Based on these details, the Highway Authority are satisfied the proposals will not have a severe impact to the operation of the local highway network. Mitigation is deemed necessary to ensure increases in staff and size/floor area of the site following the development can be accommodated.

Mitigation

The proposals include a reduction of 9 car parking spaces despite the increase in staff and floor area. Therefore, mitigation is sought to reduce the parking demand and number of single occupancy car driver trips and encourage public transport and active travel trips.

It is therefore requested by way of S106 transport contributions that bus stop enhancements are provided for the northbound and southbound bus stops opposite the site on Stanborough Road. The contributions sought are:

- £30,000 for realtime bus displays at both stops (£15,000 per unit);
- £8,000 for raised kerbs at the northbound bus stop.

(Total £38,000)

The bus enhancements will significantly improve the facilities and ensure safe and suitable access for users of all ages and abilities and are necessary to offset the increase in staff to the site. This request is in line with the HCC Guide to Developer Infrastructure Contributions (July 2021) and supports the policies set out in The Hertfordshire County Council 4th Local Transport Plan (May 2018) and NPPF (July 2021).

Highway Safety

The TA includes a review of personal injury collisions that had occurred over the most recently available five-year period on the local highway network.

The review found 15 collisions of slight severity and one fatal collision in 2015. The contributory factors were detailed in the TA. Whilst all collisions are a concern to the Highway Authority, it is considered that the number of collisions over a five-year period is not abnormal for a heavily trafficked highway.

Design Considerations

Vehicular Access - Operational Phase

The proposed site masterplan, as shown on Drawing No. DR-AR-00115 Rev P07, shows the retention of the existing site access arrangements.

The Highway Authority are satisfied with these arrangements.

Refuse / Servicing / Emergency Access - Operational Phase

The proposals include the provision of a servicing lay-by of 18m length located to the south of the proposed HCHQ building. The Highway Authority are satisfied with this arrangement.

The proposals also include the provision of a car transporter to the site. A swept path analysis drawing has been submitted that demonstrates a car transporter can access the site.

Pedestrian and Cycle Access - Operational Phase

The proposed site masterplan, as shown on Drawing No. DR-AR-00115 Rev P07, shows the retention of the existing footway that links the site to the shared footway / cycleway on Stanborough Road.

It is acknowledged that under the previous permitted application 6/2017/0504/FULL, the proposals included the provision of a raised table feature at the main access and the realignment of the shared footway cycleway on the southbound approach to the access. The current application does not include this provision, and the Highway Authority are satisfied with this omission as the previous application focused on minor amendments to the existing use at the site whereas the current application is a more fundamental change which introduces Herts Fire and Rescue service use. Considering this, and the anticipated increase in emergency vehicles, the existing design which gives emergency vehicles priority is considered suitable.

Parking – Operational Phase

Car Parking

The TA states the proposals include a total of 760 spaces, including 40 for visitors, 23 accessible spaces, and 8 active electric vehicle charging points. This represents a reduction of nine (-9) spaces from the existing site provision.

Details of the current parking usage have not been provided. The proposals include the introduction of the Herts Fire and Rescue Service to the site, which is likely to increase the demand for parking. Despite this predicted increase in parking demand, the Highway Authority are satisfied with the proposed provision as it will discourage single occupancy vehicle trips and encourage trips by active travel and public transport. To mitigate the impact of the parking demand, and encourage public transport, it is necessary for the applicant to provide bus stop enhancements (see 'Mitigation' section for further details).

It should be noted that it is up to the LPA to determine the appropriateness of the overall car parking provision.

The Highway Authority consider the provision of 8 active EV charging points for a car park of 760 vehicles as severely unsuitable, especially given that the proposals are to upgrade the existing facilities. This represents 1% of all spaces.

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 and the DfT's Decarbonising Transport (2021) states that in 2030 the sale of new petrol and diesel cars will cease. Therefore, the Highway Authority request by way of planning condition that 20% of all spaces are fitted with active EV charging provision and a further 20% fitted with passive provision.

Cycle Parking

The TA states 44 short stay cycle parking spaces will be provided for visitors, in the form of 22 Sheffield Stands. The Highway Authority are satisfied with this arrangement.

The TA also states 120 long stay cycle spaces will be provided, to accommodate the anticipated 1,200 staff (1 space per 10 staff). It is noted that these spaces will be provided in the proposed HCHQ building alongside the provision of showers, lockers and changing facilities. The Highway Authority are satisfied with these arrangements.

Vehicular Access – Construction Phase

The TA states construction vehicular access during the four/five year construction phase will be via a route through the Gosling Sports Centre Car Park (the TA states this arrangement has been agreed with Stanborough School, WelHat Council, and Gosling Sports Centre). The proposed construction route is shown on Drawing No.HCHQ-VGA-EW-XX-DR-AR-00441 P02.

The Highway Authority have reviewed the access design onto the Gosling Sports Park access road and are satisfied in principle. It is noted that the Gosling Sports Park access road has a private speed limit of 10mph, however, due to the straight alignment of the road and absence of speed management features, it is expected vehicles will travel at speeds excessive of 10mph. Therefore, as part of the Construction Traffic Management Plan it is requested that visibility splays for a 20mph highway (2.4m x 23m) are submitted from the construction access.

The Highway Authority note that the proposed construction route drawing is a preliminary design. The final design drawing must be included in the Construction Traffic Management Plan alongside a signage plans for the construction and public access.

Pedestrian & Cycle access – Construction Phase

The TA notes there is a footpath on Gosling Sports Park that is used by pupils from Stanborough School to get to sports pitches to the north of the Constabulary site. The TA states that measures will be taken at the crossing point to advise drivers of the presence of the crossing and to ensure the safety of pupils and others using the footpath. The details of these measures must be provided in the requested Construction Traffic Management Plan.

Parking – Construction Phase

The proposals include the provision of contractor car parking on a section of the construction access that routes through the Gosling Sports Park car park. This will result in the loss of car parking spaces for Gosling Sports Park.

The requested mitigation measures in terms of bus stop enhancements will assist in mitigating the impact of the loss of parking.

It should be noted that it is up to the LPA to determine the appropriateness of the overall car parking provision.

Sustainability

Active Travel

A shared footway / cycleway is located along the length of Stanborough Road that bounds the site. The shared footway / cycleway leads northwards towards Welwyn Garden City town centre (via Parkway or Longcroft Lane which are on-road) and also National Cycle Route 12 (NCR 12). NCR 12 leads eastwards to join NCR 61 which routes to Hertford, and also leads northwards to NCR 57.

The shared footway / cycleway on Stanborough Road also leads southwards and remains off-road and links to the cycle routes on Comet Way in Hatfield.

Public Transport

A southbound bus stop is located approximately 280m to the south of the site and the northbound bus stop is located approximately 250m walking distance to the north (via a Toucan crossing). This is with the desirable distance set out in Roads in Hertfordshire: Highways Design Guide. The shared footway / cycleway leads directly from the site to the southbound bus stop.

Both bus stops are in the form of shelters. It is noted no realtime information boards are provided at both shelters. The southern shelter includes the provision of raised kerbs. Both stops are served by the 302 and 601 bus routes and serve Welwyn Garden City train station (approximately 2km).

Once the requested bus stop enhancements are provided (via the S106), the Highway Authority will be satisfied the proposals are in-line with NPPF (July 2021) paragraphs 110 (a, c); 112 (a, b).

Travel Plan

The applicant has submitted a Travel Plan. The HCC Travel Plan team have the following comments on the current travel plan which must be addressed before it can be approved:

- TP requires name and contact details of a Travel Plan Co-Ordinator (TPC) once appointed;
- Interim TPC name and contact details should be provided;
- The details of a secondary contact need to be provided to HCC, once a TPC has been appointed. Please insert into the TP text saying that “a secondary contact will also be appointed and details provided to HCC”;

- TP should include a statement of commitment from developers stating that they are committed to implementing the TP;
- The average time per month allocated to TPC role and their frequency on site is required;
- More walking measures required – for example, should also include promotion of Hertfordshire Health Walks;
- More cycling measures required – should include mention of HCC's Bikeability cycle training programme and Dr Bike service;
- New baseline survey to be undertaken within 6 weeks of occupation of new HQ building;
- HCC have a strong preference of using multi-modal traffic counts for monitoring purposes. Any questionnaires should have an agreed response rate with HCC (a minimum of 50%-60%) and if the response rate is not met, then multi-modal traffic counts would be required annually;
- Interim modal shift targets should be updated, once baseline survey has been completed;
- Monitoring is to be undertaken annually. TRICS SAM monitoring to be undertaken in years 1, 3 & 5 - please note that it is incorrectly stated that year 1 is the baseline – baseline is year 0. Monitoring should be performed for five years post full occupation of the site;
- A TP review report should be submitted to HCC within 3 months of travel surveys.

If planning permission is granted, a Travel Plan Monitoring and Support fee of £1,200 per annum for 5 years (£6,000 subject to indexation Retail Price Index March 2014) is required via a S106 agreement.

CTMP

A comprehensive Construction Traffic Management Plan is requested by way of planning condition in order to ensure the impact to the Constabulary, Gosling Sports Park, Stanborough School and local residents during the construction phase is mitigated.

The CTMP must include the following:

a. Construction vehicle numbers, type, routing;

Including:

- Details of the construction vehicle numbers stated in the TA should be reviewed and vehicle numbers for staff provided;
- routes should avoid schools, and structures of restricted heights;
- types of vehicles should be detailed, largest length vehicle must be tracked entering and exiting the Gosling Sports Club.

b. Access arrangements to the site;

- Preliminary access design must updated to detailed & swept path analysis for largest vehicle;
- Visibility splays of 2.4m x 23m must be provided at construction access;
- Construction staff access details (including vehicle walking, cycling);
- Access to sports facilities for Stanborough School and public;

c. Traffic management requirements, including delivery booking details, signage plans for construction and public.

d. Construction and storage compounds (including areas designated for car parking, loading / unloading and turning areas);

e. Siting and details of wheel washing facilities;

f. Cleaning of site entrances, site tracks and the adjacent public highway;

g. Timing of construction activities (including delivery times and removal of waste) and to avoid school pick up/drop off times;

h. Provision of sufficient on-site parking prior to commencement of construction activities;

i. Post construction restoration/reinstatement of the working areas and temporary access to the public highway;

- j. where works cannot be contained wholly within the site a plan should be submitted showing the site layout on the highway including extent of hoarding, pedestrian routes and remaining road width for vehicle movements
- k. Phasing Plan if necessary.

Planning Obligations / CIL

Travel Plan

As outlined in the Travel Plan section above, a £1,200 per annum for five years (£6,000) Evaluation and Support Fee (index-linked RPI March 2014) should be secured by section 106 agreement in accordance with Hertfordshire County Council's Travel Plan Guidance.

Transport Scheme

As noted under the 'Mitigation' section of this statutory consultee response, a S106 transport contribution is sought for £38,000. This is to deliver:

- £30,000 for realtime bus displays at both stops (£15,000 per unit);
- £8,000 for raised kerbs at the northbound bus stop.

This contribution is necessary to address the immediate impacts of the site and cumulative impacts due to the increase in staff and floor area. This request is in line with the HCC Guide to Developer Infrastructure Contributions (July 2021) and supports the policies set out in The Hertfordshire County Council 4th Local Transport Plan (May 2018) and NPPF (July 2021).

Conclusion

The Highway Authority have reviewed the application and consider that the sustainable transport mitigation and a travel plan are fundamental in ensuring the site is in-line with the sustainable principles set out in the NPPF and HCC LTP4 and ensuring the vehicular impact of the site is appropriately managed.

Therefore, the Highway Authority does not wish to raise an objection to the proposals, subject to the inclusion of the requested planning obligations, conditions and informatives.

Signed

Samuel Tearle

16 August 2021