

Southern Planning Committee

Updates

Date: Wednesday, 12th March, 2014
Time: 1.00 pm
Venue: Council Chamber, Municipal Buildings, Earle Street, Crewe
CW1 2BJ

The information on the following pages was received following publication of the committee agenda.

Further Updates - Reaseheath College (Pages 1 - 4)

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SOUTHERN PLANNING COMMITTEE UPDATE – 12th MARCH 2014

APPLICATION NO: 13/5093N

PROPOSAL: New teaching facility, national centre for food futures and the environment and associated outbuildings including glasshouses and maintenance block

ADDRESS: Reaseheath College, Main Road, Worleston, Nantwich, CW5 6DF

APPLICANT: Mr. Kennish, Reaseheath College

Officer Comments (HIGHWAYS)

The Proposal

The proposal is for additional teaching facilities and the business case indicates this might be for up to 640 additional students increasing to this level over a five-year period. In addition, there are proposals for sports facilities including pitches.

Access to the development proposal is to be from the existing vehicular access points. The Transport Statement refers to there being four access points; Main St, A51, and two from Wettenhall Road, and provides traffic data at the three primary points of access. All access points are simple priority junctions at present. A new internal access road is proposed from the A51 to the new buildings (no additional parking is proposed in this location) although no drawing has been submitted to indicate the road alignment and width.

Site Assessment

SCP has presented a Transport Statement (TS) and Travel Plan (TP) to support the two planning applications.

Vehicular Access

SCP has indicated in dialogue that no new car parking areas are proposed on site. No parking is proposed in the vicinity of the new development proposals. As a result SCP suggests that access to the site will be via the existing three points of access.

The SHM has no objection to the proposed vehicular access strategy. However, the SHM is concerned about proposed parking levels/management on site and the absence of details on internal access roads means that a condition requiring details of layout will be required.

Traffic Impact

The forecast level of traffic associated with the new teaching block, as per the SCP TA, is some 75 vehicles in each the AM and PM network peak hours. The SHM considers it

likely that in excess of 100 additional vehicle trips will be generated in the morning peak hour as a result of the new teaching proposal. The sports facilities will generate external demand from the public but the likely level of such additional traffic will be minimal in network peak hours.

The additional trips will be spread between the three site access junctions, with the majority likely to use the main site entrance off Main Road. It is considered that the existing main college access is suitable to take the additional traffic forecast at this location.

The A51 Reaseheath roundabout will carry additional traffic associated with the development proposal and will be impacted upon, with around 60 extra vehicle trips forecast at the roundabout in the SCP TS. The junction operates with some capacity issues during peak hours. As part of development proposals associated with the NW Nantwich development the highway network in this location will be altered in the medium to long term, should that development come forward. Further highway measures may be required at the Reaseheath roundabout in future years. However, the impact of this development will not be such as to warrant a junction improvement at this time.

Sustainable Travel

It is recognised that Reaseheath College is already committed to measures that promote sustainable travel to the college and that allow for accessibility of those without access to a private car. For example, Reaseheath College already subsidises coach and bus travel to the campus. The Applicant has provided a revised Travel Plan, including monitoring and potential targets, to further promote sustainable travel initiatives to the site. However, the Travel Plan is silent on car parking provision and that is dealt with later in this response.

Construction Access

The Applicant's consultant has informally discussed potential construction access but no plan has yet been agreed. Any planning permission for the proposed development will require the agreement of a construction traffic access and routing plan (possibly incorporated in a Construction and Environmental Access Plan).

Car Parking

The TS indicates that the existing development operates at an 85% car parking occupancy (worst case) assuming non-marked parking areas are included in car parking supply; i.e. 874 spaces. SCP refers to mode share information collected for students and seeks to demonstrate that no additional car parking would be required on that basis. This, of course, takes no account of potential increases in teaching, ancillary and administrative staff required the additional student numbers and to look after the additional facilities.

We have considered the potential increase in parking on a simple pro rata increase in student numbers. This may result in an increased peak demand for parking of 101

vehicles. The proposed additional development will therefore potentially push the car parking occupancy much closer to 100%. Without highly visible and proactive management and signing of available car parking on-site such levels of occupancy is likely to lead to on-site issues with drivers seeking a very limited number of spaces at peak times. This could lead to overspill car parking on the highway network.

We have discussed the issue with the Applicant's consultant and, rather than seeking the provision of car parking as the development progresses at the outset of the process, it has been agreed that the Travel Plan will be altered to incorporate suitable monitoring and remedial measures (i.e. additional parking) should agreed thresholds for parking levels be exceeded. The threshold level for peak parking occupancy will be set at 90% and, on each occasion that levels reach this threshold an additional 45 car parking spaces will be provided on site to a maximum of 90 spaces.

Any planning consent should be conditioned such that if the agreed parking threshold is exceeded additional car parking will be provided on the site.

Conclusion

The SHM considers that the traffic impact of the development proposal will be minimal and has NO OBJECTION to this planning application subject to conditions relating to a travel plan and construction access plan/lorry routing plan.

RECOMMENDATION

The recommendation remains unchanged subject to the imposition of the following additional conditions

1. A construction access plan/lorry routing plan will be agreed by the SHM prior to first development.
2. A suitable travel plan incorporating; car parking thresholds, monitoring, and remedial measures, is to be agreed with the Strategic Highways Manager and implemented prior to first occupation.

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