

Application No: 19/1648N

Location: LAND AT GRAND JUNCTION RETAIL PARK, MANCHESTER BRIDGE,  
CREWE, CW1 2RP

Proposal: Application for the creation of a new vehicular access (ingress only) from  
Manchester Bridge

Applicant: N/A, Triton Property Fund

Expiry Date: 09-Aug-2019

## **SUMMARY**

**This application seeks full planning permission for the creation of a new vehicular access (ingress only) from Manchester Bridge into the Grand Junction Retail park, in Crewe.**

**The application site is situated within the Crewe settlement boundary and the site falls within the Strategic Location LPS1 (Central Crewe) as defined within the CELPS within this area the Council will look to maximise opportunities for improvement and regeneration and this will be achieved through by a number of ways including the following; *‘Corridor improvements on Earle Street from Grand Junction Way to Vernon Way’***

**There is a requirement in the NPPF (para 108b) for *‘consideration of safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users’*. Policy SD1 of the CELPS also aims to improve links to and from new development in a sustainable well designed manner.**

**The Strategic Highways officer has considered the proposal and concluded that subject to a contribution for a TRO the proposal is acceptable in terms of highway safety and will remove vehicles off the public highway.**

**Whilst the proposal may be acceptable from a Highway safety perspective, it is considered that the loss of the landscaping area and impact on the streetscene are negative impact of the development, however could be mitigated by means of a meaningful landscape scheme.**

**Furthermore, the creation of a further, ‘give-way’ section within the pedestrian and cyclist pathway along this stretch of road is unfortunate and does not promote good non-vehicular movements around this area of the retail park towards the town centre and beyond.**

**Therefore, it is considered, on balance, that the development is acceptable and subject to a legal agreement to secure £5,000 towards the TRO works, and conditions for replacement and improved landscaping; the application generally complies with the development plan and therefore is recommended for approval.**

**Recommendation: Approve subject to a S106 Agreement and conditions**

## **Reason for referral**

This type of application would usually be determined under delegated powers, however this application has been called into Southern Planning Committee by Cllr Brookfield for the following reasons;

*'I would like to call this application in if at all possible based upon the following planning reasons:-*

- 1. The proposed new access is from a major thoroughfare in Crewe i.e. Hungerford Road/Earle Street, is at the base of a railway bridge and there is not yet a highways report accompanying the application nor is it apparent the applicant has received any advice from the Highways department of Cheshire East Council. I believe consideration cannot be / should not be given by delegated authority due to the importance of this application due to the locality.*
- 2. The proposed access segregates a cycle and pedestrian access. This would prove dangerous in my opinion.*
- 3. The amount of interest being shown by the public is significant and it is apparent that the majority as do I feel that the reasons for this access providing only an "ingress" is not going to solve the problem that exists at this location in respect of congestion. Indeed I feel that if this access gets blocked then traffic congestion on the public highway could worsen thereby worsening standing traffic and thereby affecting the already poor air quality in the locality.'*

## **DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT**

Grand Junction Retail Park is a large retail park comprising several retail units with associated landscaping. It is located approximately 500m to the west of the defined town centre boundary of Crewe and is an edge of centre location as defined in the NPPF. The site is accessed via Earle Street (A532) which provides a direct pedestrian and vehicular link to the town centre.

## **DETAILS OF PROPOSAL**

This application seeks full planning permission for the creation of a new vehicular access, ingress only, from Manchester Bridge into the Grand Junction Retail Park.

## **RELEVANT HISTORY**

*There have been a large number of applications in relation to the retail park however no relevant history in relation to this application.*

## **POLICIES**

### **Development Plan Policies**

### **Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS)**

Strategic Location LPS1 – Central Crewe  
PG2 – Settlement Hierarchy  
PG7 – Spatial Distribution of Development  
SD1 - Sustainable Development in Cheshire East  
SD2 - Sustainable Development Principles  
SE 1 - Design  
SE 2 - Efficient Use of Land  
SE 13 - Flood Risk and Water Management  
EG5 – Promoting a Town Centre First Approach to Retail and Commerce  
IN1 – Infrastructure  
IN2 – Developer Contributions

### **Saved policies of the Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan**

BE.1 (Amenity)  
BE.3 (Access and Parking)  
BE.4 (Drainage, Utilities and Resources)  
TRAN.3 (Pedestrians)  
TRAN.5 (Provision for Cyclists)

### **National Planning Policy**

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)  
Planning Practice Guidance

### **Other Material Considerations**

Cycling Strategy – A vision for the future in Cheshire East 2017 - 2027

### **CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)**

**Strategic Highways:** No objections, subject to the applicant entering into a s278 agreement for the proposed access works, and a s106 agreement for the £5,000 TRO contribution.

**Environmental Health:** No objections subject to an informative for construction hours

**Cadent Gas/National Grid** – No objections subject to an informative

**VIEWS OF THE PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL:** None received time of writing this report.

### **OTHER REPRESENTATIONS:**

Letters of representation have been received from 20 addresses, including 1 objection from the Local ward member, Cllr Brookfield. The main issues raised are;

- This application will not address the issues with the retail park, as the main issue is getting off the car park not on to it,

- A single ingress road will not ease the congestion around the retail park/roundabout,
- A better solution would be to add another major entrance/exit off Macon Way
- The spaces near the new entrance will be unusable due to queuing traffic,
- Proposal will be unsafe for pedestrians and cyclist due to the angle of the entrance which will encourage fast vehicle movements,
- Town centre needs promoting not encouraging more vehicles onto the retail park
- To alleviate congestion around the roundabout, the old Earle Road should be re-opened and a one way system put into place,
- The carpark needs a one way system rather than all the entrances which create congestion/general redesign of the car park layout/ parking control needed
- Loss of parking spaces in front of Frankie and Bennies would be an inconvenience to the customers
- Contrary to the NPPF – *‘planning should ... actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable’*
- Proposed one way / no entry signs are unenforceable by the Police
- The entrance is sited at the most congested part of the retail park and will undoubtedly cause tailbacks at peak times on the Manchester Bridge,
- Concerns over air quality in the area of the retail park
- Impact on tree coverage in the area
- Removing left turning vehicles from the roundabout will reduce the ‘gap’ in the traffic needed to allow customers to leave the Retail car park
- Loss of parking spaces is unacceptable
- Concerns over safety of the new access on pedestrians and cyclists,

## **OFFICER APPRAISAL**

### **Principle of Development**

The application site is situated within the Crewe Town settlement boundary where the principle of development is acceptable.

The site falls within the Strategic Location LPS1 (Central Crewe) as defined within the CELPS within this area the Council will look to maximise opportunities for improvement and regeneration and this will be achieved through a number of ways including the following;

- *Corridor improvements on Earle Street from Grand Junction Way to Vernon Way*

This application will be accessed off the part of the road network known as Manchester Bridge and is therefore slightly outside the corridor improvement area noted within the policy. However, there is a clear indication that improvements are sought between the Grand Junction retail park and the Town Centre.

Policy SD1 (Sustainable Development in Cheshire East) sets out that all development should, where possible, (inter alia), *‘6. Ensure that development is accessible by public transport,*

*walking and cycling; 7. Provide safe access and sufficient car parking in accordance with adopted highway standards; 9. Provide a locally distinct, high quality, sustainable, well designed and durable environment; 12. Incorporate sustainable design and construction methods'*

Therefore, the policy aims to improve links to and from new development in a sustainable and well designed manner.

## **Highway safety**

The proposal is for a new vehicle entry only access into the Grand Junction Retail Park, approximately 45m east of the Manchester Bridge roundabout. The roundabout is currently the only public vehicle access into the site.

The applicant has proposed this with the intention of reducing the vehicle numbers travelling into the site via the Manchester Bridge roundabout, thereby improving vehicle flow around it.

The access will be one-way, entry only and will be 3.75m wide to prohibit two-way movement. A Road Safety Audit has been carried out and following this minor amendments have been made to the plans. Road markings and signage within the site will be provided to make drivers aware of the one-way nature of the access. The access cuts across the footway and cycle lane, and therefore dropped kerbs, tactile paving, the cycle give-way markings have been included.

In terms of the planning balance, the additional pedestrian and cyclist give-way section on this path is considered to be an unfortunate design solution which does not promote good pedestrian and cyclist links into the town centre, and which may lead to more cyclists using the public highway as opposed to the shared pedestrian/cycle way as a consequence of the additional give way provision on this section of the road. This is therefore a conflict with the aims of Policy SD1of the CELPS which aims to improve links for all users in a sustainable well designed way and is in conflict with the Council's Cycling Strategy.

Notwithstanding this planning policy conflict, the Strategic Highways Officer advises this is a typical arrangement across vehicle accesses for pedestrians and cyclists, and further Road Safety Audits would be carried out during the technical approval process, should the application be approved.

The applicant has stated that the proposal will result in a loss of 11 car parking spaces. A car park survey across Friday, Saturday, and Sunday has been carried out showing that the loss of these spaces can be accommodated.

The Strategic Highways Officer states that given the existing capacity of the car park this small loss of parking spaces is considered acceptable. The loss includes 2 car parking spaces adjacent to the access so that car manoeuvring within this area is removed; ensuring arriving customers are not temporarily blocked from accessing the wider car park. Given this and the fact that the new access has a stacking capacity for 6 cars; the Strategic Highways Officer considers that blocking back onto the highway will not take place, and accordingly he raises no concerns.

The access is designed for customers arriving from the east and a 'no right turn' signage is proposed which will discourage right turners into the site and maintain the free flow of eastbound traffic. The Strategic Highways officer states that a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) is required for this and a contribution of £5,000 is necessary and should be secured by S106 agreement.

The Strategic Highways Officer notes that a number of comments have been submitted objecting to the proposal on the belief that it will not improve the congestion on the local highway network, and specifically on exiting the site where the main problem has been said to be.

However, the Strategic Highways Officer notes that with having an extra access into the site it is evident that the proposal will remove vehicles off the public highway earlier than if it were not there. Whilst capacity assessments have not been carried out by the applicant it is clear that the impact of the proposal in terms of congestion on the public highway, if any, will be minimal and certainly not severe as required by the NPPF.

The Strategic Highways Officer considers that any congestion on private land within the retail park, south of the roundabout, is a matter for the applicant to deal with. As the problems within the retail park are on private land, it is not a matter for the Strategic Highways Officer to comment upon, but there may be potential impact on the public highway if the scheme failed, e.g. more than 6 cars backed up on to the access road. The Safety Audit required under Highways legislation to permit the scheme would consider such matters in greater detail.

The Strategic Highways Officer considers that in terms of Highway Safety, the proposal will take some of the vehicular traffic off the Public Highway before the roundabout. He considers this to be acceptable and a benefit of the scheme.

It is clear that there are a number of issues with the existing layout of the car park which will need to be addressed as part of wider improvement works to the retail park; however they sit outside the remit of this application.

In terms of encouraging good cycle and pedestrian links to the town centre and beyond, there appears to be greater weight being given to the needs of the motorist as opposed to cyclists and pedestrians who will be the subject of an additional requirement to give way to the motor car wishing to enter the retail park. Policy SD1 requires development to provide safe access and sufficient car parking in accordance with adopted highway standards. The planning issues raised in respect of the proposed development are therefore finely balanced.

## **Design Standards**

The slip road design will project into the retail park half way along the Manchester Bridge road way, and will include the intersection of the existing cycle and footpath. The creation of the new access will include the loss of an area of landscaping and hedgerow/trees along the street frontage, along with a number of car parking spaces. It is considered that the loss of this green infrastructure is unfortunate in an area where trees and green space is invaluable. However there may be opportunities to replace and improve the landscaping along the street

frontage, and therefore conditions are proposed for a landscape and replacement planting scheme to be submitted.

### **Landscape and tree impact**

The proposed development will include some loss of landscaping and trees along the boundary of Manchester Bridge frontage. This will be an unfortunate impact on the streetscene where the landscape setting of the street frontage is important. It is considered reasonable to condition a landscape plan and a replacement tree planting plan is required to be submitted by condition.

### **Amenity**

The proposed access will be sited opposite the residential properties off Old Earle Road. If the new access works as proposed, the development should have an improved impact on the neighbours as less cars will drive past the properties and create less congestion on the highway network. The proposal therefore should not have a significantly detrimental impact on neighbouring amenity over and above the existing situation.

The proposal is therefore considered to be in compliance with Policy BE.1 of the adopted local plan.

### **Other Matters**

It is noted that a large number of the objections relate to the proposal being illogical and would not serve to improve permeability of the site. Other comments include the need for a redesign of the retail park car park and the need for a new access/exit else where, whilst these are reasonable suggestions, it is not a material planning matter which can be considered as part of this application, which relates solely to the new ingress access.

The law requires a planning application to be determination on its own merits, having regard to the development plan, having regard to all material considerations

### **CIL Compliance**

In order to comply with the Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010 it is necessary for planning applications with planning obligations to consider the issue of whether the requirements within the S106 satisfy the following:

- (a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- (b) directly related to the development; and
- (c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

As the main report states, to ensure the access is safe, a 'no right turn' is required and a TRO is required to secure this. A contribution of £5,000 is required to facilitate this. This is considered to be necessary and fair and reasonable in relation to the development.

### **PLANNING BALANCE**

There is a requirement in the NPPF (para 108b) for *consideration of safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users*. Policy SD1 of the CELPS also aims to improve links to and from new development in a sustainable well designed manner.

The Strategic Highways officer has considered the proposal and concluded that subject to a contribution for a TRO the proposal is acceptable in terms of highway safety and will remove vehicles off the public highway providing a wider benefit.

Whilst the proposal may be acceptable from a Highway safety perspective, it is considered that the loss of the landscaping area and impact on the streetscene are negative impact of the development, however could be mitigated by means of a meaningful landscape scheme.

Furthermore, the creation of a further, 'give-way' section within the pedestrian and cyclist pathway along this stretch of road is unfortunate and does not promote good non-vehicular movements around this area of the retail park towards the town centre. Pedestrians and cyclists will have to give way to motorists entering the retail park. The Highways Manager advises that the further safety audit necessary under the TRO process will consider the safety of other road users such as pedestrians and cyclists.

Therefore, on balance and subject to a legal agreement to secure £5,000 towards the TRO works, it is considered that the development is acceptable and is recommended for approval.

**RECOMMENDATION - Approve subject to a Section 106 Agreement to secure;**

<b>S106</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Triggers</b>
<b>Highways</b>	<b>£,5000 for contribution towards TRO</b>	<b>Prior to commencement of development</b>

**and Conditions**

- 1. Standard Time**
- 2. Approved plans**
- 3. Surfacing Materials**
- 4. Landscape Plan to include replacement trees**
- 5. Landscaping implementation**
- 6. Tree protection measures**
- 7. Signage to be erected prior to first use**

**In order to give proper effect to the Southern Committee`s intent and without changing the substance of its decision, authority is delegated to the Head of Development Management in consultation with the Chair (or in their absence the Vice Chair) to correct any technical slip or omission in the resolution, before issue of the decision notice.**

If the application is subject to an appeal approval is given to enter into a S106 Agreement with the following Heads of Terms;

<b>S106</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Triggers</b>
<b>Highways</b>	<b>£,5000 for contribution towards TRO</b>	<b>Prior to commencement of development</b>

