

Chesham Bois Parish Council (by email only)
Council Office
Glebe Way
Chesham Bois
Bucks
HP6 5ND

Our Ref: SJ/SJH/ITB15185
Date: 1 October 2020

Dear Councillors

St Leonard's Parish Centre, Chesham Bois – Updated Information Review

Chesham Bois Parish Council (CBPC) previously appointed i-Transport LLP to review relevant transportation material submitted within planning application ref: PL/20/0401/FA and to give CBPC independent transport advice on the impact of the proposal so that they can be properly informed. In March 2020 we provided a written note summarising the key points in the application focusing on trip generation of the proposed development, car parking provision, site access and internal highway matters.

Subsequently the applicant has provided updated information following our review and separate comments received from Buckinghamshire Council (BC), the local highway authority. This letter summarises an updated review of that further information in the context of the previous assessment.

Trip Generation and Traffic Impact

Previously the development was forecast to generate 23 additional vehicle movements in the evening peak hour which was identified (in traffic terms) as being equivalent to building around 50 new residential dwellings on the site, a level which would normally require an assessment of the traffic impact on the local highway network. In BC's response dated April 2020 they requested that an assessment be undertaken of the impact of the additional movements.

The applicant provided updated traffic information with new trip generation figures in line with those put forward by BC in their initial response. With reference to the applicant's new work, the resultant level of traffic is now forecast to be higher than was set out in the initial submission. The revised net increase in traffic following development is now:

- 49 additional movements in the morning peak hour;
- 44 additional movements in the evening peak hour; and
- 257 additional movements over the course of a typical day.

Taking account of the existing traffic generation of the site on top of the above, the site is now anticipated to generate circa one movement per minute in the morning and evening peak hours (63 and 57 respectively). This would be broadly equivalent to a development of around 100 residential dwellings. The applicant has however still not undertaken an assessment of the off-site impact of these movements despite BC's request. Instead the updated information simply states that once distributed onto the local road network, the development will result in an immaterial level of traffic flow. The applicant makes reference to the superseded *Guidance on Transport Assessment* document (DfT, 2007) to justify this. Whilst it is sometimes possible to conclude that there will be no traffic impacts arising from a development (i.e. where there is a very low level of additional traffic perhaps from five or ten new homes) it is our view that without undertaking any form of assessment of the off-site impact, it cannot be concluded that there will be no impact in this case.

A further point is that the café proposed on the site has been identified as having a trip generation of two movements in the AM peak, 14 in the PM peak and 113 over the course of a typical day. However, it has been assumed that all café trips are 'linked' to other uses on the site, i.e. people visiting the site for other uses will be the only ones using the café. This is unlikely to be the case. Whilst a café in itself may not generate many totally 'new' trips, the presence of a café in this location will at the very least draw in 'pass-by' trips. These trips would need to be assessed as part of the parking accumulation and operation of the site access junction.

Furthermore, BC raise concerns around traffic routing south from the site towards Amersham and the off-site impact of these trips. The applicant has undertaken 2011 Census analysis to determine the origins of trips to the site, i.e. where those visiting the site will travel from. Whilst this is an established methodology for employment premises, the nature of the uses proposed here are likely to be more local than those identified in the analysis. We would therefore anticipate a greater proportion of trips to route to the site to/from the south and for these trips to impact the junctions to the south in a scale greater than is currently identified. The method of distribution used by the applicant therefore provides an optimistic distribution, in the context of likely draw to/from the south, for the nature of the uses on site.

Car Parking Provision and Geometry

Previously the level of car parking proposed was identified as 87 spaces on the site which, assuming the travel patterns of the existing church continue would likely be sufficient. The updated scheme now provides some 92 spaces and provides a reinforced grass area for some 22 additional spaces. This takes the total available spaces onsite to 114 with bays provided in line with BC's most recent comments.

The applicant has also undertaken a parking accumulation exercise to understand the likely level of occupancy across the site over a typical day. The 'worst-case' assessment undertaken identifies that the maximum occupancy would be some 64 spaces utilising the arrival and departure profile for the nursery and applying this to the wider site traffic generation. Even if the café is allowed for in the traffic generation this is likely to demonstrate sufficient car parking is now being provided on the site.

Site Access

The site access onto Glebe Way requires visibility splays of 2.4m x 43m as identified in BC's response in April 2020. This requires the visibility splays to cross over Common Land outside of the applicant's control. Whilst this is not an insurmountable issue it will require an agreement to be secured from the Secretary of State or evidence that this can be secured prior the determination of the application. As identified in the BC response without this comfort BC could therefore conclude safe and suitable access cannot be provided to the scheme.

Refuse Collection and Vehicle Turning

The site layout was previously tracked for a 9.86m refuse vehicle which was identified as being smaller than some of the vehicles which are used by the waste authority. The applicant has now undertaken updated tracking which demonstrates that a 10.32m (the largest vehicle used by the waste authority) can adequately track around the site.

Summary

The key outstanding issue is that of traffic impact, the main points being:

- The applicant's updated traffic information shows the level of traffic is now forecast to be higher than was set out in the initial submission.
- The site is now anticipated to generate circa one movement per minute in the morning and evening peak hours (63 and 57 respectively). This would be broadly equivalent to a development of 100 residential dwellings.
- The applicant has not undertaken an assessment of the off-site impact of these movements despite BC's request. Instead the updated information simply states that once distributed onto the local road network, the development will result in an immaterial level of traffic flow.
- Whilst it is sometimes possible to conclude that there will be no traffic impacts arising from a small development (i.e. where there is a very low level of additional traffic perhaps from five or ten new homes) it is our view that without undertaking any form of assessment of the off-site impact it cannot be concluded that there will be no impact in this case.
- The proposed café on the site has been identified as having a trip generation of two movements in the AM peak, 14 in the PM peak and 113 over the course of a typical day. However, it has been assumed that all café trips are 'linked' to other uses on the site, i.e. people visiting the site for other uses will be the only ones using the café. This seems unlikely.
- Furthermore, BC raise concerns around traffic routing south from the site towards Amersham and are concerned about the off-site impact of these trips. The applicant has undertaken 2011 Census analysis to determine the origins of trips to the site, i.e. where those visiting the site will travel from. Whilst this is an established methodology for employment premises, the nature of the uses proposed are likely to be more local than those identified in the Census analysis. We would therefore anticipate a greater proportion of trips to route to the site to/from the south and for these trips to impact the junctions to the south in a scale greater than is currently identified.

Yours sincerely



STEVE JENKINS

Partner

for i-Transport LLP

Email: steve.jenkins@i-transport.co.uk

cc: Stephen Hunt, i-Transport LLP (email only)