



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEV/SE/17/12

Development Control Committee

2 March 2017

Outline Planning Application DC/16/1723/OUT **Land adjacent to the road from A14 to C629, Risby**

Date	6 September	Expiry Date:	10 March 2017
Registered:	2016		
Case Officer:	Gary Hancox	Recommendation:	Grant Outline Planning Permission
Parish:	The Saxhams	Ward:	Barrow
Proposal:	Outline Planning Application (Means of Access to be considered) - Parking facility for approximately 100 no. HGV's with refuelling station, shop and facilities for drivers		
Site:	Land adjacent the road from the A14 to C629, Risby (within the parish of The Saxhams)		
Applicant:	George Gittus and Sons		

Synopsis:

Application under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and associated matters.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Committee determine the attached application and associated matters.

CONTACT CASE OFFICER: Gary Hancox
Email: gary.hancox@westsuffolk.gov.uk

Telephone: 01638 719258

Background:

This application is referred to the Committee because it is a major application and the Officer recommendation to GRANT OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION is contrary to the views of the Parish Council.

Members will note that the recommendation remains provisional, and subject to Highways England withdrawing their present holding objection.

A site visit is proposed for Thursday 23 February 2017.

Proposal:

1. Outline planning permission is sought for a truck stop for approximately 100 HGVs with associated facilities at a site to the south of the A14(T) at Junction 41 of the A14 dual carriageway near Risby. The scheme proposes parking for 100 HGV's, a refuelling facility, an amenity block for drivers including cafe, toilets and shower facilities, a new roundabout access and landscaping. Details of access are for consideration at this stage, with all other matters reserved.

Application Supporting Material:

2. Information submitted with the application as follows:
 - Location plan
 - Site plan
 - Transport Assessment
 - Phase 1 Habitat survey
 - Flood Risk Assessment
 - Air Quality Assessment
 - Design & Access Statement
 - Noise & Vibration Impact Assessment

Site Details:

3. The site is situated 4 km to the west of Bury St Edmunds and approximately 14 km to the east of Newmarket, adjacent to the south side of the A14. The village of Risby is to the north of the site on the opposite side of the A14, and the village of Little Saxham lies approximately 1.5 km to the south of the site. To the east of the site is the Saxham Business Park and Calor Gas storage area. The site is accessible from an existing westbound junction which passes in front of the Claas agricultural machinery factory. Access can also be gained to the site by eastbound traffic by exiting the A14 on the old Newmarket Road heading towards Risby village, passing an existing transport cafe and pallet store and then crossing over the A14.

4. The site extends to some 3.5 hectares and is currently in use for agriculture as an arable field. The site is bounded to the east, west and south by tree belts, but is more open to the north, and its boundary with the A14. The site is located in open countryside (being outside any defined settlement boundary) and is not within any policy designated or protected area.

Planning History:

5. None relevant.

Consultations:

6. Highway Authority: No objection, subject to conditions.
7. Highways England: **Holding direction**. No objection to the principle of the proposed truck stop. Furthermore, it is likely that a set of signing and lining measures will be forthcoming sufficient to mitigate the potential adverse impacts of the truck stop on the A14. The applicant is willing to fund this set of measures but it is imperative from our perspective, and only fair from the applicant's perspective, that the measures are defined in sufficient detail: (i) for the applicant to know broadly how much those measures are expected to cost; (ii) to ensure the measures will not exacerbate existing issues at this interchange that are perceived to be a result of shortcomings of the existing signing and lining; and (iii) where possible, these measures will help address some of those perceived shortcomings.
8. Environment Agency: No objection, subject to conditions.
9. SCC Flood and Water Management: No objection subject to conditions.
10. Natural England: No objection.
11. SCC Rights of Way: No comments.
12. Public health and Housing: No objection.
13. Environment Team: No objection.

Representations:

14. Parish Council: Object.
 - The application would result in excessive vehicle movements off the A14. The junction at the south end of South Street is not capable of accommodating this number of vehicle movements.
 - The new roundabout to the access road will not be large enough to accommodate HGV's when sight lines are restricted due to the curvature of the clover leaf and the hedges on that slip road. A

larger turning space on this roundabout would be required to allow safe access.

- Planning policy DM2 states that proposals for all development should not adversely affect the amenity of adjacent areas by reason of noise, smell, other type of pollution, or volume or type of vehicular activity generated. This application would adversely affect the amenity of the residents of Newmarket Road and South Street due to increased noise, light and fuel pollution, particularly at night, as the increased volume of HGVs will generate more noise and pollution.
- There is a lack of natural screening at the north end of the site (an earth bank) to protect the village from the impact of this development.

Policy:

15. The following policies have been taken into account in the consideration of this application:

St Edmundsbury Rural Vision 2031

- Vision Policy RV1 - Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development

St Edmundsbury Core Strategy

- Core Strategy Policy CS2 - Sustainable Development
- Core Strategy Policy CS3 - Design and Local Distinctiveness
- Core Strategy Policy CS7 - Sustainable Transport
- Core Strategy Policy CS8 - Strategic Transport Improvements
- Core Strategy Policy CS9 - Employment and the Local Economy

Joint Development Management Policies Document

- Policy DM1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy DM2 - Creating Places Development Principles and Local Distinctiveness
- Policy DM5 - Development in the Countryside
- Policy DM13 - Landscape features
- Policy DM14 - Protecting and Enhancing Natural Resources, Minimising Pollution and Safeguarding from Hazards
- Policy DM20 - Archaeology
- Policy DM45 - Transport Assessments and Travel Plans
- Policy DM46 - Parking Standards

Other Planning Policy:

16. For decision making purposes, as required by Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Development Plan comprises the Adopted St Edmundsbury Core Strategy, The Joint Development Management Policies Document, the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (2015), and Haverhill Vision 2031.

17. Section 38(1) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations in respect of national planning policy are the NPPF and the more recently published National Planning Practice Guidance.

18. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) sets out government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. Paragraph 14 of the Framework explains that there is a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking'. For decision taking this means:

- Approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and
- Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
 - any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this framework taken as a whole;
 - or specific policies in this framework indicate development should be restricted."

19. The Government defines sustainable development as having three dimensions. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:

- economic, in terms of building a strong economy and in particular by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places;
- social, by supporting, strong vibrant and healthy communities by providing the supply of housing required to meet future need in a high quality environment with accessible local services, and;
- environmental, through the protection and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment.

20. Paragraph 8 of the NPPF stresses that these roles should not be undertaken in isolation because they are mutually dependent; therefore a balanced assessment against these three dimensions is required.

Officer Comment:

21. The issues to be considered in the determination of the application are:

- Principle of Development
- Impact on the character and appearance of the area and the wider landscape
- Ecology
- Highway impact

- Impact on amenity

Principle of Development

22. Although the site is not currently allocated for any form of use or development, historically the site was allocated in the 1998 Local Plan for use as a truck-stop. The allocation was removed in 2006 as it was considered unnecessary as no truck-stop proposals had come forward during the allocated period and to protect the site from other forms of inappropriate development. The application therefore falls to be considered against the general policies of the Development Plan.
23. Policy CS7 'Sustainable Transport' acknowledges that part of the Government's long term strategy for a modern, efficient and sustainable transport system includes *'the road network providing a more reliable and free flowing service for both personal travel and freight, with people able to make informed choices about how and when they travel'*. Policy CS8 indicates that the Council will work with Suffolk County Council and Highways England to secure the necessary highway infrastructure, and this could include lorry parking in appropriate locations adjacent the A14. This commitment is also repeated in Suffolk County Council's Local Transport Plan.
24. Paragraph 4.99 of the Core Strategy document identifies that: *'In urban areas, particularly town centres, freight movement can add congestion at certain times of day. Overnight parking for lorries and roadside services are important facilities and policies to manage this matter will be included, where necessary, within the Area Action Plans for Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill and the Rural Site Allocations document.'* Although no specific sites are allocated in the Rural Vision document, it is clear from historical allocations, and the site's location adjacent the A14 and junction 41, that there is general support for the type of development proposed. Both Suffolk County Council and Highways England agree that there is a need for infrastructure to support the lorry movements on the A14.
25. Policy DM5 seeks to offer support for economic growth within the countryside, but also seeks to protect such areas from unsustainable development. DM5 seeks to restrict the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land. The site is classified as Grade 2, so falls within the category of best and most versatile. The loss of the site therefore is a factor which weighs against the scheme and this must be considered in informing the principle of development.
26. However, the site is considered marginal for agricultural purposes given its location and the nature of the historic uses thereon. It is also the case that most if not all of the land along the A14 falls within this classification and so if the need to support the growth of infrastructure such as this is to be respected, then it is inevitable that there would be some loss of agricultural land as a consequence. Balancing these factors therefore, the loss of the land for agricultural purposes is not considered to prevent the principle otherwise being acceptable.

27. Taking into account the above, it is considered that the principle of a truck stop in the proposed location adjacent the A14 is acceptable. Consideration of the scheme's environmental impacts, including highway impact, follows.

Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

28. Policy DM13 states that development will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that it would not have an unacceptable impact on the character of the landscape and its amenity value. The application site is a flat arable field directly adjoining a dual carriageway and although contributing to the amenity of area adjoining the road, it does not greatly contribute towards the wider landscape. The existing tree belts to the east and west are a landscape feature and are of significant ecological benefit to the locale. These tree belts help to screen the site from long distance views and the site is not considered to be sensitive to development.

29. The quality of the agricultural land has been compromised as the site was used as a contractor's depot in the 1970's whilst the adjacent overbridge was built, and in any event, the site only extends to some 3.5 hectares which is a very small proportion of the agricultural land available in the area.

Ecology

30. The application is accompanied by a Phase 1 habitat survey that assesses both the site and the wider environment having regard to biodiversity and the presence or not of protected species and/or habitats. The Breckland SPA is located approximately 1km to the North West, and is on the other side of the busy A14. It is not considered likely that the bird species for which this SPA has been designated, (stone curlew, nightjar and woodlark) would be using the development site in significant numbers due to its sub-optimal habitat. It is also considered unlikely that customers using the truck stop for rest breaks and meals will be seeking to access the SPA during their stay.

31. Due to the arable nature of the site, the majority of wildlife is restricted to the field margins in and around the unmanaged grassed areas and tree belts. A dry ditch is located at the west edge of the site along the tree line, and this did contain a large hole, likely to be an outlier badger sett. No signs indicating recent use were evident, however a further survey for badgers is recommended. At the time of writing this report, the results of the survey were awaited. As the site is located at the margins of the site, it is likely that even if the sett were occupied, adequate mitigation is likely to be achievable.

32. In majority of the site is considered to be sub-optimal in respect of reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates, and therefore the incorporation of reptile hibernacula and habitat for invertebrates as part of a successful landscape scheme would help to enhance the biodiversity of the site.

33. No objection to the scheme is raised by Natural England who are satisfied

that the proposed development being carried out in strict accordance with the details of the application, as submitted, will not damage or destroy the interest features for which the Breckland Farmland SSSI has been notified. Policies CS2, DM10, DM11, DM12 and DM13 of the Core Strategy and Joint Development Management policies seek to conserve and enhance biodiversity through the assessment of the impact of the development and the provision of mitigation. Subject to the results of an additional badger survey, the information submitted with the application has demonstrated that the impact on protected sites and species is unlikely to be significant and is capable of mitigation through the imposition of conditions. As a result the proposal is compliant with the policies listed above.

Highway Impact

34. The proposals for the truck stop will be able to accommodate up to 100 HGV's along with on site amenities. All matters save for access are reserved, so the application is accompanied by a Transport Assessment that assesses the impact of the proposal on the highway network. In this case the highway network includes both that maintained by Suffolk County Council as the Local Highway Authority, and the A14 trunk road maintained by Highways England. To ensure that the impact on the highway network is acceptable, or can be made acceptable through appropriate mitigation, both Suffolk County Council and Highways England have been consulted as statutory consultees.
35. The application proposes the upgrading of the existing priority junction which serves the site to a new four arm standard roundabout with the proposed Truck Stop accessed off the western arm. The eastern arm of the roundabout will offer access to a parcel of land bounded by the A14(T) westbound on-slip which may come forward for development in the future.
36. Due to the nature of the application, vehicular traffic in the form of HGVs will form the majority of movements to/from the site. However, in accordance with Policy DM45 and paragraph 32 of the NPPF, the overall accessibility of the site has been assessed in detail with respect to pedestrian, cycle and public transport access to demonstrate that the site offers opportunities for the small number of staff to travel to the site by modes other than private car. In this case, the need to access the site by public transport or modes of transport other than the car is likely to be limited, to encourage cycling, the proposed development would seek to promote cycle use by providing adequate cycle parking facilities in accordance with the local cycle parking standards. These details and this provision will form part of the reserved matters submission as appropriate.
37. Due to the site's rural location, the bus service provision is limited. However there is a bus stop in Risby Green (s/bound) which is located an approximate 12.5 minute walk (1km) north of the site in the village. A further two bus stops are available 1.2km from the proposal site adjacent to the village hall and Risby Primary School. The services that are

available do serve key settlements in the local area including Bury St Edmunds and Newmarket together with intermediate villages from which potential Truck Stop employees could originate. Although the site performs poorly in respect of making use of current sustainable transport modes, the addition of cycle parking facilities on site goes some way to mitigate for this.

38. The vehicular impact of the proposals on the highway network has been assessed using the junction capacity modelling programs ARCADY and PICADY (these being standard modelling tools used for assessing highway impact). The results of the capacity assessments confirm that the proposed Truck Stop can be supported without detrimentally affecting the operation of the proposed site access roundabout and priority junctions.
39. The above assessments demonstrate that ample reserve capacity is available and that traffic associated with the proposed Truck Stop can be accommodated without affecting the operation of other transportation links.
40. Both Highways England and the Local Highway Authority agree that there is enough capacity in the highway network to accommodate the proposal. However, the Transport Assessment and accompanying Stage 1 Road Safety Audit has raised a number of potential safety concerns in respect of the alignment and visibility. Furthermore, Highways England has identified that the current road signage for junction 41 of the A14 is poor, particularly for HGV's.
41. The applicant has since submitted an amended roundabout proposal, which is now acceptable to the Local Highway Authority. At the time of writing this report a scheme of signage improvement is being discussed and agreed with Highways England, and a Holding Direction is in place while this happens. It is expected that the scheme of signage will be approved and the Direction removed by the end of February. The agreed signage scheme can then be required to be implemented by condition.
42. Paragraph 32 of the NPPF is clear that development generating significant levels of movement should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of the development are severe. In this case the applicants are able to demonstrate that a safe access can be achieved, and that, subject to the implementation of signage mitigation measures, the impacts of the development on the highway network would not be significantly adverse.
43. Subject to confirmation of from Highways England that an agreed signage improvement scheme for Junction 41 is in place, then the application accords with Policy DM45 and paragraph 32 of the NPPF.

Impact on Amenity

44. As there are no residential dwellings adjoining the site, no local residents will be directly affected by the proposed development. However, indirectly, a couple of dwellings located to the north side of the A14 at the

edge of Risby village will be impacted by a likely increase in HGV traffic. These HGV's will pass the properties both entering the overbridge section of the junction from the west, and departing the junction via the overbridge heading east. These properties are already affected by HGV's and traffic leaving the existing lorry park to the west of the application site, as well as when leaving Saxham Business Park heading east.

45. The increased impact in terms of trip generation and flows is difficult to quantify, however the proposed Truck Stop will offer a brand new purpose built facility with a wider range of driver amenities than the existing Risby truck stop which occupies a site to the north of the A14(T) on Newmarket Road. There is therefore potential for the proposed Truck Stop to attract a proportion of the HGV traffic which uses the existing Risby Truck Stop. The proposed Truck Stop is expected to be particularly attractive to HGV traffic on the westbound A14(T) as it will negate the need to cross over the A14(T) to access the existing Truck Stop facility. Furthermore, HGV traffic on the eastbound A14(T) could also choose to transfer to the new Truck Stop given the better facilities.
46. The Transport Assessment submitted with the application has looked at existing transport data as well as a comparison facility to gauge the likely trip distribution of the HGV's. The vehicular impact of the proposals on the highway network has been assessed using junction capacity modelling programs. The results of the capacity assessments confirm that the proposed Truck Stop can be supported without detrimentally affecting the operation of the proposed site access roundabout and priority junctions.
47. The Transport Assessment indicates that it is likely that the majority of HGV traffic will arrive and/or depart the site from/in a west bound direction, there is still a significant proportion of the predicted traffic accessing/departing the site from/to the east. Traffic passing the dwellings directly to the north of the A14 will increase, and consequently there will be increased disturbance the general amenity levels of these properties. Whilst this impact counts against the proposal, regard must also be had to the fact that the HGV movements will be during the day only and generally at peak traffic times. The vast majority of the village will also not be directly affected by the development.

Other Matters

48. The comments of the Parish Council have been taken into account the determination of this application, and as set out below, due regard has been had to the traffic impacts of the proposed development.
49. The application was screened in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 and it was concluded that the development was Schedule 2 development that would not have significant environmental impact.

Conclusion and Planning Balance

50. Both Suffolk County Council and Highways England agree that there is a

need for infrastructure to support the lorry movements on the A14. It is considered that the principle of a truck stop in the proposed location adjacent the A14 is considered acceptable in principle. The development would not have an unacceptable impact on the character of the landscape and its amenity value and is compliant with Policy DM13 in this regard. The loss of best and most versatile agricultural land is not a factor that is of sufficient weight, in the planning balance, to justify a refusal. Subject to confirmation of from Highways England that an agreed signage improvement scheme for Junction 41 is in place, then the application accords with Policy DM45 and paragraph 32 of the NPPF.

51. The benefits of the scheme can be summarised as follows;

- The provision of a lorry park (capacity for 100 HGV's) helps meet an identified need for improved infrastructure for the A14.
- The facilities at the site will provide employment opportunities, albeit limited.
- The proposal would generate economic benefits during its construction and operational period.
- An improved scheme of road signage for users of the A14 (although this is required in mitigation for the increased traffic generation, it will provide additional benefits for all traffic.) Appropriate weight is given to this benefit.

52. The dis-benefits of the scheme can be summarised as follows:

- The scheme will result in the development of an existing open field and will result in some harm to the existing character and appearance of the area. However, this harm is not considered significant.
- Increase in peak time HGV traffic routing pass residential properties to the north of the A14 (to the south of Risby village) will add to the current poor levels of amenity enjoyed by these properties being located so close to the A14 and the Junction 41 overbridge and on slip.

53. It is considered that the limited harm from the development identified above would not outweigh its benefits and having regard to the Development Plan and the NPPF as a whole, the development constitutes sustainable development.

Recommendation:

It is **RECOMMENDED** that Outline Planning Permission be **Granted** subject to confirmation from Highways England that an agreed signage improvement scheme for Junction 41 is in place (and their removal or their holding direction), and the following conditions:

1. Outline permission time limit
2. Reserved matters (appearance, landscaping, layout and scale)
3. Contamination remediation strategy
4. Surface water drainage (details to be submitted and agreed)

5. Ecological mitigation (in accordance with Habitat Survey)
6. Off-site highway works
7. Visibility splays (provision in accordance with approved plans)

Documents:

All background documents including application forms, drawings and other supporting documentation relating to this application can be viewed online:

<https://planning.westsuffolk.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=OBFUF1PDITT00>

Case Officer: Gary Hancox

Tel. No. 01638 719258