

## APPENDIX C

**Planning Application 10/0920**  
**Land of Selsdon Close, Wythall**  
**By Taylor Wimpey**

This note is written to advise members of Bromsgrove District Councils Planning committee (members) of the impact the development will have on the Highway Network by summarising the documents submitted as part of the planning application and the conclusions of Worcestershire County Council.

### **Background**

The applicant, Taylor Wimpey, employed M-EC to prepare a Transport Assessment (TA) on their behalf. M-EC undertook pre application discussions with Worcestershire County Council (WCC) prior to the submission of the planning application in order to prepare a scoping note for the TA. Meetings held with M-EC detailed the limit of the assessment and any known issues.

WCC has published a guidance document on how to prepare a TA based on the Department for Transport (Dft) guidance 2007. Normally TA's are necessary when a development proposes greater than 80 residential units and at that point a separate transport modelling exercise is undertaken to assess any impact on the strategic highway network. In this instance neither a TA nor strategic assessment was necessary but a lesser assessment of a Transport Statement (TS) was required due to the scale of the development. Notwithstanding this a TA was still submitted as part of the planning application to ensure that all the necessary issues were considered. Strategic infrastructure need has been considered as part of WCC's Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) and developments which demonstrate impact on LTP3 proposals will have to contribute towards those proposals.

The TA Scoping note agreed an assessment area of Station Road, Norton Lane, Lea Green Lane and Selsdon Close including the Houndsfield Lane Crossroads and Shawhurst Lane Mini Roundabout. All junctions where these roads converge were assessed using junction modelling tools that are the industry standard.

### **Traffic Impact on the Network**

The Application is for 76 residential units, which will see in the most intensive peak hours (08:00 – 09:00 and 17:00 – 18:00) additional trips of AM 7 arrivals and 87 departures, and PM 80 arrivals and 15 departures, this should be considered against a background traffic flow of 526 two way trips in the AM peak and 452 in the PM Peak.

The data recorded without accounting for the development only discovered the Houndsfield Lane Crossroads had a theoretical capacity failing, but only from the Silver Street direction in the PM peak hour. Accounting for the year 2015 and increasing traffic flows in accordance with normal industry practices there is still a capacity failing at this junction, however on detailed analysis of this failure it should be noted that in the worst instance the queue will increase by 4 cars and results in an average additional delay of 14 seconds. This is not considered to be significant and at all other times for all junctions there are no capacity failings and no increase in delay other than a few seconds. Applying the development traffic onto the 2015 prediction the Silver Street approach to Houndsfield Crossroad, which is the only junction operating over capacity sees that 1 additional car queuing is

predicted and an average additional traffic delay of 3 seconds. In the opinion of WCC this increase in queuing and delay is insignificant and represents a 0.74% increase over the 2015 scenario.

The junction of Seldon Close will see increase traffic movements as this is the sole access to the site, however the junction presently experiences very few movements and in the year 2015 with the development traffic 0 cars queuing are expected and a maximum delay to access Lea Green Lane of 11 seconds. Seldon Close presently serves 10 residential properties and the application site as previously mentioned is for 76 units taking the total residential properties to 86. Seldon Close is 5.5m wide and comparing this to WCC's adopted design guide a total of 100 units could be served off it without the need to provide an emergency access. Therefore as the total number of properties falls below the threshold of the road (i.e. 100 dwellings) so the road width is considered to be acceptable.

It is recognised that Seldon Close's carriageway surface is in poor condition, but it does not meet the requirements for resurfacing at this time. It is accepted that construction traffic will have an adverse impact on the structural condition of the carriageway, therefore it would be a requirement of any development that once significant construction had been completed that the road would need to be resurfaced and any structural repairs identified made good, as suitably worded condition is proposed to ensure this occurs.

The junction of Lea Green Lane/Norton Lane/Station Road sees the greatest increase in the AM peak hour but still operated in theoretical capacity. The 2015 assessment with development traffic sees the AM peak queue increase by 1 car and an average additional delay to motorists of 4 seconds.

### **Accident Analysis**

M-EC have conducted an analysis of accidents of the Wythall area for the period June 2005 to June 2010 (the time which the report was prepared). Although this indicates 40 incidents it would not be appropriate to consider that all the junctions are affected as they are more remote from the application site.

Lea Green Lane has 2 recorded incidents, one in 2005 and the other in 2007 both being due to drivers losing control of their vehicles on the bend north of the site.

Station Road has 4 recorded incidents all are slight and not close to the junctions which would immediately be used by this development.

Norton Lane has no recorded incidents.

WCC was concerned about the junction of Lea Green Lane and Station Road due to the geometry of the approach from Norton Lane, but through consultation with the accident studies team and the lack of incidents at this location there is no recorded problem and no reason to suggest that the development would create any incidents at this location.

There are a greater numbers of incidents recorded at the Houndsfield Lane Crossroads with 8 being recorded since 2007, 2 of which are defined as serious. Notwithstanding the greater number of incidents recorded at this junction the increased vehicle movements are not considered to be significant and therefore would not give rise to greater numbers of incidents. It should also be noted that WCC has undertaken some alterations at this location in the past and it is difficult to see what could reasonably be undertaken at this location. WCC's accident studies team does not raise any concerns about the developments impact on this junction and have also confirmed that there have

been no incidents recorded from Station Road to Houndsfield Crossroads from July 2010 until the end of 2010, this being the most up to date record.

### **Lea Green Lane Speed Survey**

M-EC have undertaken speed surveys on Lea Green Lane to confirm the suitability of the Selsdon Close junction. 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds are recorded at 37mph Northbound and 38.2% Southbound. Whilst it should be noted that the limit is 30mph and enforcement of speed limits are a matter for the police authority the junction has been assessed on the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile regardless of the speed limit. The required visibility splays are therefore 58m and 96m and the available visibility splay exceeds 100m. It can be seen that visibility splays exceeding the minimum levels can be provided.

### **Sustainability**

M-EC have undertaken an analysis of alternative means of access and considered the availability of local amenity. This allows WCC to consider whether walking, cycling, bus and rail access can be provided as a realistic alternative to car travel. There are clearly local facilities available within short walking distances on Station Road which will assist in reducing short distance car trips and whilst there are no specific bicycle facilities Wythall village centre and the Maypole area are easily accessible and can be considered for shopping, employment and social reasons. Walking and cycling are considered to be realistic alternatives to short car journeys, this is well documented in government policy and WCC seeks further improvements through a Section 106 agreement which is explained later.

Bus access is undeniably less frequent than desirably would be, but the fact remains that whilst services are presently limited and WCC is reviewing service provision that the development site seeks to make the best use of what is available by providing a footway/cycleway link to gain access to the nearby stops and through soft measures in the travel plan.

The site is well located to take advantage of Wythall Railway station which provides connection to Birmingham and the strong transport links that are available from there onwards. The proximity of the site to the railway station offers significant opportunity for modal shift away from car trips.

M-EC has prepared a Travel Plan which has been agreed with WCC's travel plans officer subject to some minor alterations which can be addressed through a planning condition. This will result in each resident being provided with a "welcome pack" which highlights the alternative transport choices that are available. They will also provide residents with a temporary pass for the public transport network to encourage them to use that instead of their cars. Finally an onsite travel plan co-ordinator will be provided to assist in encouraging sustainable travel patterns, this will be a sales representative whilst they are on site. Whilst some measures can only be provided in the short term due to the application being residential these options are seen to offer benefits to residents and reduce movements in the longer term as well.

### **Conclusions and Mitigation**

M-EC has made some recommendations as part of the TA, some are agreed others are not, but it is felt that with a Section 106 agreement that the short comings can be adequately addressed. The areas of disagreement are to do with WCC's policies. There is a suggestion to improve bus stops in the local vicinity, but considering the financial viability of the site WCC considers the existing stops

to be acceptable and the saved cost would see greater improvements if spent elsewhere. These are detailed below.

Also speed activated warning signs were proposed on Lea Green Lane. WCC has a policy for these features and it is considered that in this particular instance they are not appropriate to install them in this instance as they did not meet the requirement of that policy. Consequently WCC does not accept that these signs should be installed as they do not meet the policy criteria.

All other conclusions are agreed with.

### **Section 106 Agreement**

WCC in this instance requires a Section 106 agreement to allow contributions to be made to improve access for sustainable access means.

In considering the appropriateness of any contributions WCC compares requirements against circular 05/2005 and the five key tests which all must be met to allow the Section 106 agreement to proceed, these are:

- i. relevant to planning;
- ii. necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- iii. directly related to the proposed development;
- iv. fair and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development; and
- v. reasonable in all other respects.

This application is not considered to be a significant trip generator and does have potential to reduce car movements, it is considered that the most significant improvements could be achieved by ensuring that walking and cycling links were strong and this would encourage these movements as an alternative to short distance car trips. Consequently a contribution towards providing safe uncontrolled pedestrian points and footway improvements to connect the site better to the Wythall Station and the Station Road parade of shops, and to provide better cycle connection to Drakes Cross parade and the supermarket at the Maypole was considered to be appropriate. Through WCC's own assessment it was concluded that a contribution of £40000 was appropriate and through negotiation this has been agreed with the applicant.

With this contribution WCC considers that appropriate mitigation has been provided and the justification for this can be robustly defended.

### **Reflection on the comments raised by Members**

At the planning committee held on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2011 members deferred this application to allow for further consideration of the impact of the development on the highway network with specific concerns raised about highway capacity, road widths, accident history and bus access.

The TA prepared by M-EC demonstrates that there will be no adverse impact on highway capacity as a result of the development and that the only junction which has capacity failing is not significantly impacted on, there are no strategic infrastructure proposals identified in the LTP3 document for this area and therefore no deficiencies in the strategic network. Accident analysis of the network indicates no problems at the key junctions for this site and this is agreed by WCC and specifically the expert staff who consider accident data.

The road width accords with WCC's adopted design guide and outside the application site, the Lea Green Lane cannot be widened due to the constraints of the existing highway limits. Bus access is

limited and is under review by WCC, the outcome of the review cannot be foreseen but there is an existing service and efforts are being made to encourage its use which is considered to be an appropriate solution.

The suggestion of greater road widths being required cannot be substantiated as the applicant has demonstrated that there is no capacity related problems and the accident history for the area of Lea Green Lane where members were concerned shows no accidents recorded.

The Section 106 package is considered to comply with circular 05/2005, members did suggest greater levels of contributions should be provided to provide major infrastructure improvements, but the TA shows that this is not required and therefore would not comply with the circular.

WCC's position is therefore unchanged, and it is considered that the development will not adversely impact on the highway network subject to the introduction of the conditions recommended and the signing of a section 106 agreement for the purposes stated.

Stephen Hawley  
BSc (Hons) IEng FIHE MCIHT Certmgmt(Open)  
Development Control Engineer  
Worcestershire County Council

17<sup>th</sup> February 2011