



National Highways Planning Response (NHPR 24-02) Formal Recommendation to an Application for Planning Permission

From: Christine Allen, Regional Director
Operations Directorate
South East Region
National Highways
PlanningSE@nationalhighways.co.uk

To: Mid Sussex District Council (FAO Mr S Ashdown)
mpc@midsussex.gov.uk

CC: transportplanning@dft.gov.uk
spatialplanning@nationalhighways.co.uk

Council's Reference: DM/23/2866

Location: Land East of Ansty Way Cuckfield Bypass Cuckfield West Sussex

Proposal: Outline planning application (All matters reserved except for access) for the redevelopment of land to the east of Ansty to create a new Garden Community, comprising of the erection of up to 1,450 homes (including 30% affordable housing), up to 90 residential care units (C2 class), a primary school, a SEND school, health hub, sports facilities including all weather hockey pitches and tennis centre, allotments, retail, community and employment uses together with ancillary and associated development including new and enhanced pedestrian/cycle routes, open spaces, and landscaping

National Highways Ref: NH/23/04120

Referring to the consultation on a planning application dated 12 December 2023 referenced above, in the vicinity of the A23 that forms part of the Strategic Road Network, notice is hereby given that National Highways' formal recommendation is that we:

- ~~a) offer no objection (see reasons at Annex A);~~
- ~~b) recommend that conditions should be attached to any planning permission that may be granted (see Annex A – National Highways recommended Planning Conditions & reasons);~~
- c) recommend that planning permission not be granted for a specified period (see reasons at Annex A);


~~d) recommend that the application be refused (see reasons at Annex A)~~

Highways Act 1980 Section 175B is not relevant to this application.¹

This represents National Highways' formal recommendation and is copied to the Department for Transport as per the terms of our Licence.

Should the Local Planning Authority not propose to determine the application in accordance with this recommendation they are required to consult the Secretary of State for Transport, as set out in the [Town and Country Planning \(Development Affecting Trunk Roads\) Direction 2018](#), via transportplanning@dft.gov.uk and may not determine the application until the consultation process is complete.

The Local Planning Authority must also copy any consultation under the 2018 Direction to PlanningSE@nationalhighways.co.uk.

Signature: 	Date: 18 April 2024
Name: Matt Lewis	Position: Assistant Spatial Planner
National Highways Bridge House, 1 Walnut Tree Close, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 4LZ planningse@nationalhighways.co.uk	

¹ Where relevant, further information will be provided within Annex A.

Annex A National Highways' assessment of the proposed development

National Highways has been appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport as a strategic highway company under the provisions of the Infrastructure Act 2015 and is the highway authority, traffic authority and street authority for the Strategic Road Network (SRN). The SRN is a critical national asset and as such we work to ensure that it operates and is managed in the public interest, both in respect of current activities and needs as well as in providing effective stewardship of its long-term operation and integrity.

We will be concerned with proposals that have the potential to impact on the safe and efficient operation of the SRN, in this case, particularly within the vicinity of the A23 near Cuckfield.

We require further information to be provided by the applicant on this application in order that an informed decision can be made in relation to the potential impacts of the development on the strategic road network. In particular, the following comments should be passed onto the applicant:

Throughout this response **ACTION points** for the applicant are highlighted in **underlined bold**.

Policy Context

We have reviewed the TA and while there is reference to DfT Circular 01/2022, there is no vision statement; this is required.

We have previously advised at the pre-application stage that to align with DfT Circular 01/2022, the TA should include a vision that can be realistically achieved, along with sufficient evidence to demonstrate how that vision can be realised.

However, we acknowledge that the TA currently does currently highlight the provision of quality broadband, improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure and a public transport strategy.

Collision Analysis

As highlighted at pre-application stage, at those locations on the SRN where capacity analysis is required, STATS 19 analysis of the relevant SRN location(s) will need to be undertaken for the five years pre-pandemic, as well as the pandemic period.

Trip Rates and Trip Generation

The TRICS output contained with Appendix F of the TA has been reviewed, the trip rates are based on ‘mixed private / affordable housing’ and are concluded to be representative of a ‘pre-vision and supporting measures’ scenario. The peak hour trip rates obtained from TRICS are shown below.

Peak Hours	Arrivals	Departures	Totals
AM (08:00 - 09:00)	0.135	0.377	0.512
PM (17:00 - 18:00)	0.317	0.142	0.459

Table 6.1: Proposed Development Trip Rates (Baseline)

It is acknowledged that the provided trip rates are a replacement for those used in the existing Local Plan Scenario 4 assessment.

The TA notes that Scenarios 4m1/4Bm1 of the MSSHM include trip rate reductions ‘as a result of home working, internalisation, and mode share assumptions for to and from the scenario’s significant site developments’ that were included within Scenarios 4 and 4B.

The trip rate reductions assumed for the Crabbet Park, West of Burgess Hill, Sayers Common and the proposed development are as follows:

- 15% reduction on residential unit car trip rates to account for home working, internalisation and future mode share assumptions
- 80% reduction on primary school car trip rates to account for internalisation of trips

The TA notes ‘*it is understood that the above reductions are applied at the matrix level, prior to route assignment*’.

The TA notes that in addition to the above trip rate reduction scenario, ‘as agreed with WSCC during pre-application discussions, a 25% trip reduction is proposed to be applied to the proposed development to reflect the effects of the active and public transport strategies. This reduction consisted of a 20% reduction, to reflect the high proportion of employment types suited to working from home in Mid Sussex, as well as a further 5% for sites with local retail and community facilities’.

In *principle* we support the applicant’s aspiration to set out a preferred future scenario, which aligns with current policy and prioritises sustainable travel modes and to provide the infrastructure to realise that vision. **However, as noted above and previously advised at the pre-application stage, there is a need for one trip generation scenario to be developed which must be supported by appropriate evidence.**

The information presented above is noted to not align with the trip reduction forecasts contained within the Framework Travel Plan. This needs to be rectified.

The supporting evidence would typically comprise 2011 Census journey to work modal split data for the Middle Super Output Area (MSOA) in which the development is located. There would then be a forecast of the modification to modal split which is expected in association with the measures proposed to support the development vision.

The TA includes the following table to represent the trip generation which has been assessed.

Peak Hour	Total Development Trips (Without Reduction)			Total Development Trips (With Reduction)		
	Arr	Dep	Tot	Arr	Dep	Tot
AM (08:00 - 09:00)	196	547	743	181	514	695
PM (17:00 - 18:00)	460	206	666	190	427	617

Table 6.2: Total Development Trips With & Without Reduction

There is a need to provide additional evidence to demonstrate how the above trip generation ‘with reduction’ has been achieved, we also note the arrival and departure figures during the PM appear to be the wrong way round.

Committed Developments

We acknowledge that committed development (8,039 additional households and 6,500 additional jobs) and infrastructure assumptions have been included within the model consistent with those which were included within the existing MSSHM 2039 Reference case model. There is a need to provide details of the specific sites and the traffic flows associated with each.

We previously advised at the pre-application stage that there is need to review the committed developments considering the requirements of DfT Circular 01/2022. There is also a need to agree the committed developments and committed highway schemes with the LPA and to then provide this information to us for review, with evidence of the LPA’s acceptance. Paragraph 49 of the Circular states ‘Assumptions underpinning projected levels of traffic should be clearly stated to avoid the default factoring up of baseline traffic’.

Background Traffic Growth

The TA notes that TEMPro version 8.0 has been used to provide growth factors between 2019 and 2039. It is noted that alternative assumptions have been input to

TEMPro to ensure no double counting of the committed development. The approach is agreed in principle; however, we note the following:

- **There is a need to provide justification as to why the modelling has been developed to 2039 and not 2031, alternatively the assessment year should be revised to 2031 (as this is the year of the adopted Local Plan)**
- **TEMPro version 8.1 contains the National Road Traffic Projections 2022 which is acceptable to use, whereas this is not included within TEMPro version 8.0, please clarify the dataset which has been used**
- **Specific details of the TEMPro growth factors should be provided, including the area and road type**
- **Details are required to be provided of the specific TEMPro growth factors which have been applied to the model**

Strategic Modelling

The Mid Sussex Strategic Highway Model (MSSHM) has been utilised as the basis of the traffic forecasting required in association with the TA. It is noted that the current MSSHM model is in the process of being updated by MSDC, including adjustments to the Reference Case and forecast scenarios. The latest available version of the model is Scenario 4m1/4Bm1 which is reported to have been produced in late 2022.

Scenario 4m1/4Bm1 was produced in support of the Draft Mid Sussex Transport Study District Plan Review Scenario 4. The study assessed 'proposed Local Plan development and supporting infrastructure under a 2039 assessment horizon'.

2039 Scenario 4 (model Scenario 4m1) does not include the development at Ansty, while 2039 Scenario 4B (model Scenario 4Bm1) is consistent with Scenario 4 other than the addition of the proposed development at Ansty.

It is noted that Scenario 4B model currently has two access points for the development, whereas the current proposal is for three access points. The TA notes that ACE has undertaken additional modelling which considers the additional access point and other modifications.

The strategic modelling process which has been adopted within the TA is understood to be as follows:

- 2019 Baseline – the calibrated model
- 2039 Without Development – this is based on the 2019 baseline model with committed development and infrastructure included within the existing MSSHM 2039 Reference Case (as described above), plus generalised TEMPro growth
- 2039 With Development – based on the Without Development scenario, with the development added

In terms of this specific planning application, the Baseline calibration and validation report should be provided to demonstrate that the model is suitably calibrated, in particular at the SRN junctions.

In line with requirements of DfT Circular 01/2022, there is a requirement to consider all development which is committed and/or allocated within the adopted Local Plan, as follows:

21. Where development proposals are consistent with an up-to-date plan or strategy (or where there is no up-to-date plan or strategy), this should include all relevant development that is consented or allocated where there is a reasonable degree of certainty will proceed within the next 3 years and include the full amount of development to be built. Where development proposals are not consistent with an up-to-date plan or strategy, this should include all relevant development that is consented or allocated over the entirety of the plan period. In some instances, due regard should be had to permissions and allocations in neighbouring authorities. The inclusion or exclusion of specific developments should be agreed with the local planning authority at pre-application stage. ↩

There is a need to clarify why assessment is undertaken at 2039, while the adopted Local Plan is to 2031. In line with DfT Circular 01/2022, we would expect assessment to be undertaken at 2031.

Traffic Flow Diagrams

The traffic flow diagrams included within Appendix G of the TA have been reviewed. **At the pre-application stage we requested that, in addition to the identified SRN assessment locations, the trip distribution/assignment should be extended to the following SRN junctions, and this has not yet been done:**

- **A23 / B2115 Sloughgreen Lane / B2115 Cuckfield Lane junction**
- **A23 / Broxmead Lane junction**
- **A23 / A2300 junction**

Junction Assessment

The assessment locations of relevance to us are noted by the applicant to be:

- A23 / Bolney Road / Cowfold / Crossroads Roundabout
- A272 Cowfold Road / London Road Priority Junction
- A23 / London Road Roundabout

Paragraph 7.21 of the TA states that ‘the above study was agreed with WSCC and NH during pre-application discussions’. **We reiterate that we did not agree to the study**

area presented at pre-application stage; we requested that the study area is expanded as we have noted above.

The TA refers to a threshold of 30 PCUs and consideration of a percentage impact. We reiterate what we advised at the pre-application stage, as follows:

‘An absolute threshold of 30 trips to establish the need for junction assessment is not accepted. In addition, percentage impact analysis is not accepted. It should be noted that junction modelling may be required at SRN locations even if the development trip threshold of 30 vehicles is not met, and any percentage impact argument put forward will be disregarded. The junctions requiring assessment can be determined following agreement of the trip generation, distribution, assignment, and STATS 19 collision analysis.’

Of the three SRN locations currently assessed, the TA has concluded that only Junction O requires further assessment. We do not agree with this based on our pre-application advice.

The forecast impact at the study junctions is reported in paragraph 7.28 and the SRN junctions are shown below. This highlights impact at each of the three junctions which is at a level that requires ‘detailed’ junction assessment to be undertaken.

<u>Roundabout</u>						
<u>Junction O – A23 / London Road Roundabout</u>	107	18	16.8%	3.0%	YES	NO
<u>Junction P – A272 Cowfold Road / London Road Priority Junction</u>	76	24	3.3%	1.0%	NO	NO
<u>Junction Q – A23 / Bolney Road / Cowfold / Crossroads Roundabout</u>	95	50	4.4%	2.1%	NO	NO

We have undertaken a preliminary review of the provided junction assessment at Junction O and note the following:

- Soft copy Junctions 10 input files should be provided
- A CAD drawing should be provided which demonstrates the geometric parameters which have been input to Junctions 10
- A ‘one hour’ profile is adopted, and this is accepted
- Assessment should be undertaken for each scenario of the strategic model, currently only 2039 Do Something PM is provided
- As highlighted at pre-application stage, there is a need for a calibrated and validated base Junctions 10 model, this should comprise ‘direct’ modifications to intercept values to ensure that the modelled queues align with the observed queues

Mitigation

As previously set out, the development proposals should provide a single scenario for trip generation that is in line with the development vision. **Following the agreement of residual impacts, any required mitigation will need to be formulated. The developer must identify when, in relation to the occupation of the development, transport improvements become necessary. Accordingly, interim assessment year(s) are likely to be required.** In due course, it will be possible to consider any mechanism required to secure such mitigation works at the appropriate stage of development build out.

Travel Plan

The Framework Travel Plan (FTP) includes the following objectives:

- *To inform residents of the proposed development of their travel options*
- *To support car-free lifestyles*
- *To maximise the use of cycle provision as far as practicable*
- *To increase the attractiveness and use of cycling for day-to-day journeys*
- *To raise awareness of sustainable modes of transport available within the vicinity of the site*
- *To promote sustainable travel modes as a convenient alternative to car travel*
- *To encourage healthy and active journeys*

The FTP aims to achieve a 3% reduction in single occupancy car use within three years and a 5% reduction within five years.

The FTP highlights measures including the following:

- High-speed fibre broadband
- Walking and cycling network improvements, comprising both internal links and also links outside of the development which will allow for connectivity to the wider network
- Mobility hubs to allow for connectivity to / from bus stops
- Electric vehicle charging provided in line with regulations

In addition to the stated measures, the FTP notes that there have been discussions with transport operators who currently serve the site regarding the provision of a new bus service or diversion of an existing service. It is noted that this is not currently finalised.

The FTP includes for an initial survey 3 months following occupation of phase 1 followed by biennial monitoring, together with setting targets and identifying the needs for additional measures to be considered.

The FTP should include the identification of firm financial commitments to support the objectives of the FTP.

In consideration of our preceding comments in relation to compliance with Circular 01/22, the FTP is likely to need amendment.

Construction Management Plan

Given the location of the application site, at the appropriate stage of the planning process we are minded to recommend the following planning condition:

***‘Condition:** Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted a Construction Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority (in consultation with the Highway Authority for the A23). The plan shall include as a minimum:*

- *Construction phasing*
- *Construction routing plans*
- *Permitted construction traffic arrival and departure times*

Thereafter all construction activity in respect of the development shall be undertaken in full accordance with such approved details unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highways Authority.

***Reason:** To mitigate any adverse impact from the development on the A23 in accordance with DfT Circular 01/2022.’*

The above represents our *initial* requirements. As the analysis progresses, it is possible that further requirements may emerge.

Conclusion

Given the above, it is currently not possible to determine whether the application would have an unacceptable impact on the safety, reliability and/or operational efficiency of the SRN (the tests set out in DfT Circular 01/2022 and DLUHC NPPF December 2023 [particularly paras 114 to 117]). This response details the steps that need to be taken in order to resolve this issue.

Recommended Non-Approval

National Highways would recommend that planning permission not be granted for a specified period of 6 months from the date of this response (until 18 October 2024).

Reason: to allow the applicant sufficient time to address the above issues raised.

Thank you again for consulting with National Highways and please continue to consult on other planning applications via our inbox planningse@nationalhighways.co.uk.

Standing advice to the local planning authority

The Climate Change Committee's [2022 Report to Parliament](#) notes that for the UK to achieve net zero carbon status by 2050, action is needed to support a modal shift away from car travel. The NPPF supports this position, with paragraphs 74 and 109 prescribing that significant development should offer a genuine choice of transport modes, while paragraphs 108 and 114 advise that appropriate opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport should be taken up.

Moreover, the build clever and build efficiently criteria as set out in clause 6.1.4 of [PAS2080](#) promote the use of low carbon materials and products, innovative design solutions and construction methods to minimise resource consumption.

These considerations should be weighed alongside any relevant Local Plan policies to ensure that planning decisions are in line with the necessary transition to net zero carbon.