

REPORT

# Bloor Homes and the Sandleford Farm Partnership

Sandleford Park

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APP/33 Rebuttal Proof of Evidence of David Bird  
On Transport Issues

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# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This is the rebuttal Proof of Evidence (PoE) of David Bird.
- 1.2 I address issues raised in the Proof of Evidence of Mr Vickers representing Greenham Parish Council and Newbury Town Council in this rebuttal.
- 1.3 Throughout the rebuttal I have sought to refer to evidence already set out in my main PoE (APP/7) and appendices (APP/8) rather than repeat that evidence in this document.

## 2 Rebuttal to Mr Vickers

2.1 This section sets out my rebuttal to Mr Vickers PoE.

### Appendix 2

- 2.2 At paragraph 2 Mr Vicker notes that Jenny Graham's consultation response on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2020 queried the census area selected (SOA) from which to derive existing mode spilt data. Since this data is a key input to the traffic modelling, if it is not an appropriate area to base that modelling on then the modelling outputs will be unreliable. If the modelling is unreliable, then predictions in the Transport Assessment of the Active Travel (cycling and walking) mode share, both pre-development and for target setting and monitoring in any Travel Plan, will also be unreliable.
- 2.3 The consultation response provided by Jenny Graham relates to the Travel Plan submitted in support of the planning application and not the Transport Assessment. The mode spilt data was not used to derive traffic estimates applied as part of the traffic modelling. As such, it has not impacted on the results of the VISSIM modelling.
- 2.4 The trip generation estimates used within the VISSIM modelling were derived from surveys of existing residential sites within Newbury. As noted at para 6.6 of my proof, the inputs into the VISSIM modelling were agreed with West Berkshire Council (WBC), Hampshire County Council (HCC) and Highways England (HE) prior to undertaking the traffic modelling.
- 2.5 The actual mode share data that Jenny Graham referred to was used to set the baseline mode share target within the Travel Plan. In fact, this was for illustrative purposes since the actual baseline mode share will be set following the first set of Travel Plan surveys.
- 2.6 Referring to Mr Vickers paragraph 7, it would clearly not be practicable to delay planning decisions until the results of the 2021 Census are available. In any case they will only give a snapshot of conditions during the pandemic and not any indication of how matters will settle down once normality returns. Whilst there will be a number of different factors that affect future travel habits, it is reasonable to assume that there will be a more flexible working environment with an increase in working from home, more flexible hours of working etc. This will tend to reduce the quantum of travel that takes place during peak periods compared with what has happened historically and on which the traffic analysis within the TA is based.

### Appendix 3

- 2.7 At Figure 1 and paragraph 7, Mr Vickers suggests a cycle route from the Newbury College roundabout into College owned land, via the north side of the car park to where the Land Use & Access Plan already shows a pedestrian / cycle access is proposed.
- 2.8 The proposals for part of this route fall outside of the Appellant's land ownership and would require agreement with third parties to deliver it. As such, it is not within the Appellant's control to deliver the cycle route. Whilst the application seeks to provide a pedestrian and cycle link up to the Newbury College boundary, the creation of a physical link between the two sites would need to be agreed by Newbury College.
- 2.9 Whilst no discussions on this option have been undertaken, I would expect Newbury College to have some concerns with a temporary route passing through their site, particularly in relation to security and health and safety issue.

- 2.10 Mr Vickers agrees that it would not be appropriate to require provision of a route through third party land. He states:  
“The planning system (and this Appeal) can only deal with what is wholly under the control of the developer and the LPA”
- 2.11 As Mr Vickers points out, there is an existing combined pedestrian/cycle route that runs along the southern side of Monks Lane. It is inevitable that there will be some disruption to this route as the access works and the upgrade works to the A339/Pinchington Lane area are undertaken. However, it will be a requirement on the contractor to ensure safe and continuous access for pedestrians and cyclists. This will be encapsulated in the Construction Traffic Management Plan.
- 2.12 At paragraph 10 Mr Vickers states that a new pedestrian/cycle route should be provided through Newbury Rugby Club/David Lloyd Leisure. This is to provide a link into Park House school.
- 2.13 The Land Use and Access Parameter Plan shows two potential access points through to the land safeguarded for Park House School expansion. An extract from that plan is shown below. Up until the point at which the expansion is provided (if it is provided at all) and the Bloor development has proceeded to the point of connection, then pedestrians and cyclists from Greenham would continue to use the current available route which is to continue westbound along Monks Lane, turn south onto Andover Road and then use Warren Road.
- 2.14 If the expansion does not occur, then there may be opportunity to access the school site directly from the Bloor site.
- 2.15 Once the New Warren Farm (Donnington New Homes) site proceeds then the PROW immediately to the west of the Bloor land and south of the school would be upgraded so that access can be gained to the existing school in that way (once the Bloor development has proceeded that far).
- 2.16 Therefore, in summary, the route from Greenham to Park House School will continue as existing until the planned linkages on the western boundary of the Bloor site are formed, at which point new linkages either to the expansion land or existing school can be formed.
- 2.17 At the bottom of Page 5 Mr Vickers also notes that there is no route through from the Bloor land to the Andover Road facilities until the linkages between the Bloor and New Warren Farm developments are made.
- 2.18 There are two points I would make in response to this: First, there is an existing PROW link, albeit not hard surfaced, and, secondly, there are many other local facilities available to local residents that can be accessed without using a link through to Andover Road, as I set out in Section 5 of my proof of evidence.

## Appendix 4

- 2.19 I note at paragraph 4, Mr Vickers refers to the principle of “20-minute neighbourhood”. As I have set out at Section 5 of my proof, and in particular Table 5.1, there are a significant number of local facilities that are within 20 minutes of the site by walking and cycling.
- 2.20 Paragraph 9 to 11 of Mr Vickers Appendix provides a commentary on the design of the proposed site access roundabout and its highway safety implications for cyclists. Reference is made to best practice in other parts of the UK, notably Wales and London and DfT LTN 1/20, which seeks to avoid the use of roundabouts in junction design where traffic levels and speeds are high.
- 2.21 In responding to this general point, I would note that Monks Lane is not a high speed route since it has an existing speed limit of 30 MPH.

- 2.22 At paragraph 10 it is stated that the proposed site access roundabout “*must be amended to provide separation in time and/or space for all forms of active travel – especially cyclists – using Monks Lane now and/or requiring access to this site in future.*”
- 2.23 There is an existing shared footway/cycleway on the southern side of Monks Lane, which allows cyclists to avoid cycling on the carriageway. During detailed design, the needs of cyclists will be fully considered. The design of the crossing where this cycleway crosses the site access road will be given due consideration and take into account guidance in LTN 1/20.
- 2.24 Paragraph 11 of Mr Vickers Appendix raises a number of design issues. I address these as follows:
- i) Para a: This is not a busy, high speed roundabout without facilities for cyclists. In fact, it is a low speed roundabout with facilities for cyclists;
  - ii) Para b: It is inevitable that a new development will create new junctions on Monks Lane. It has been agreed with WBC that it would not be appropriate to serve a development of this size with a single access onto Monks Lane. The third (western) access is required to serve circa 40 dwellings, which cannot be readily accessed internally. However, this access will carry very low volumes of traffic and a suitable design can be developed at Detailed Design stage to give priority to the through cycle movements;
  - iii) Para c: The detailed design of the junctions will manage conflicts by separating pedestrians, cyclists and traffic;
  - iv) Para d: Separate facilities are provided for cyclists;
  - v) Para e: cycle facilities are provided at the roundabout;
  - vi) Para f: Addressed in (ii) above;
  - vii) Para g: I agree with this comment and it can be incorporated at detailed design stage;
  - viii) Para h: It is not planned that the eastern access would act as a main vehicular access to the primary school;
  - ix) Para i: The details of construction access points will be developed in due course;
  - x) Para j: I agree that active modes should be taken into account in the detailed design of this junction.
- 2.25 Paragraph 15 of Mr Vickers Appendix states the desire to retain the existing light-controlled crossing 60m south of the A339 roundabout until new staggered light-controlled crossings have been installed at the south side of the proposed new signalised double crossroads.
- 2.26 Subject to the construction programme and traffic management during construction, I would agree that the existing crossing should be retained until the proposed crossings are provided.
- 2.27 Paragraph 19: As I have shown in my proof of evidence, e.g. at Figures 6 and 7, a safe route is provided to St Gabriel’s school using the enhanced PROW and adjacent cycle route, along with an improved crossing of the A339.
- 2.28 Paragraph 27 of Mr Vickers Appendix states that the West Berkshire Council RoWIP (Rights of Way Improvement Plan) has recognised the need for a safer link between Sandford Park and the Commons ever since the site was chosen as a strategic site in 2011. The Council’s online map shows a possible new public footpath, whose west end is just south of the east end of GREE/9 where it reaches A339. At its east end, it links with GREE/10 passing through Bunkers Farm and north into the open access land surrounding the common.

- 2.29 Whilst I consider this proposal would provide a benefit, the land required on the eastern side of the A339 falls outside of the ownership of both the Applicant and WBC. As such, it is not within the Applicant's control to deliver this PROW.
- 2.30 Paragraph 31 of Mr Vickers Appendix states that Newbury Town Council and Greenham Parish Council would object strongly to GREE/9 being used for emergency access to DPC, as it would involve excessive urbanisation of the route to take the weight of emergency vehicles. It is also unreasonably long. I have addressed this at paragraph 4.15 onwards in my proof.
- 2.31 Paragraph 33 of Mr Vickers Appendix states that the Combined Access Plan of 2018 shows the purple pecked line with a double headed arrow, following the existing track north-south from Highwood Copse Road all the way to the southern SSSA boundary at the River Enborne. This implied an intention to make a new crossing into Hampshire at some time. It is unclear why this proposed "key footpath / cycle link" is now omitted from the 2020 Access Plan, although it may be because the track south of GREE/9 no longer exists on the ground. Paragraph 34 goes on to suggest a new crossing of the River Enborne.
- 2.32 These links, including a new bridge are not within the Appellants gift to deliver and are not a requirement of the scheme, as agreed with WBC.

## Appendix 5

- 2.33 Paragraph 14 of Mr Vickers PoE states that *"WSP's analysis concludes that for most residents of Sandlesford as well as those from Wash Common south of Park House School, the desire line and best route for cycling and walking is down Rupert & Wendan Roads. They call this Corridor 1a and it coincides with the recommendations of WBC Highways in their response to the Appellants' 2020 outline application."*
- 2.34 I agree with the above and improvements are proposed to this route both in terms of signing (my figures 6 and 7) and footway improvements (my Appendix L).

## Summary

- 2.35 In summary, the thrust of Mr Vickers proof of evidence is that appropriate provision should be made in the development of the Appeal proposals for walking and cycling. I concur with this and, as I have set out in my proof, there will be high quality walking and cycling routes provided within the site and good connections to the external network. External to the site, there are good quality routes that link to the rail station and town centre as well as local facilities. These routes will be enhanced as part of the Appeal proposals.
- 2.36 At the detailed design stage pedestrian and cyclist facilities will be incorporated into the design in accordance with current design practice.



