

Verbal update on Camgrain site

- 1) Objections have been received from residents of No. 6 Vineyard Walk Bottisham, 17 Frog End, Great Wilbraham and 15 The Rookery, Balsham. These reiterate the concerns and issues set out in paragraphs 42-47 of the report.
- 2) A petition has been received from almost 500 residents of Great Wilbraham, Little Wilbraham, West Wratting, Six Mile Bottom, Balsham and surrounding villages. The petition states that there will be 26000 HGV movements on and off the existing junction each year. The junction is already dangerous and was never intended to cope with significant HGV traffic. The changes proposed in the application are not sufficient and the design of the junction should be substantially improved as part of any planning permission. It needs:
 - A level 2 carriageway bridge;
 - 4 long separate entry and exit slip roads. One entry and exit slip on each side of the A11;
 - Wide 2 carriageway feeder roads from the site to the junction;
 - Wide access into the grain store in order to prevent congestion on the road.
- 3) Following comments raised by a number of objectors, Officers have explored with the applicants and Highways Agency whether preventing HGV movements during peak hours (ie – 7am - 9am and 5pm - 6pm) would be appropriate in this instance:
 - The Highways Agency states that the junction, when improved, will fully meet the standard. It would not be desirable to see an increase in HGV movement through the junction at peak times. However this would be preferable to and less dangerous than a short burst of lorries turning up just after the peak time. In addition, there could be problems with lorries parking on the road waiting to enter the site.
 - The applicants agents state that any form of restriction at peak times would make the operation of the site unworkable. Such a condition would result in: (a) HGV's queuing on the road at the entrance to the site awaiting permission to enter; (b) A group of HGV's all arriving at the same time; and (c) The constraint of vehicle movements to a shorter time period thereby intensifying traffic movements during the middle part of the day. The above would have highways implications for the junction as well as environmental consequences of vehicles having to wait at the side of the road. The traffic management system that Camgrain operate is perfectly capable of controlling the free-flow of traffic in and out of the site and through the A11 junction. There is no justification for restricting entrance and exit at peak hours, bearing in mind the lack of objection from the LHA and Highways Agency to the proposal and, in particular, to the stated opening hours of the site of 6am – 8pm.
 - The applicant's agent has also pointed out the problems that such a restriction would cause to the operational side of the business. During harvest time, 50% of lorry collections are carried out by lorries that work for Camgrain all day, going to and from local farms, until the

driver has utilised all of his tachograph hours. Camgrain relies on sub-contract hauliers and lorries will not work for Camgrain if they cannot maximise the earnings potential of their lorry. A lorry cannot afford to stand for up to 3 hours a day out of an average 10/12 hour working day. The other 50% of transport into Camgrain during harvest will be collected by lorries that have previously delivered grain to flour mills around East Anglia. If these hauliers feel they will run out of tachograph hours whilst waiting to enter the site, they will not work for Camgrain. Traffic flow needs to be continuous and evenly spread to ensure safe and economic operation. Throughout the year, any peak hours restrictions will force up haulage costs. If Camgrain is not globally competitive, farmers will lose important export opportunities.

- 4) An additional response has been received from the Local Highways Authority following a site meeting involving the LHA, the Highways Agency, Cllr Turner and a resident of Valley Farmhouse. The LHA states:
- Sufficient parking should be provided on site and, if necessary, a booking-in system introduced to avoid large numbers turning up at once;
 - The road between the A11 junction and site entrance should be widened;
 - A routing agreement should be put in place to direct all HGV's to use only the A11 for access to/from the site, other than when serving farms in the locality. It would be beneficial if this agreement could be extended to cover Six Mile Bottom.

In response to these latest LHA comments, the applicant's highways consultant states:

- Sufficient parking should be provided on site to enable lorries to lay over if necessary. For this reason the gates have been set back into the site and the layout could accommodate 12 HGV's parked on site with the gates shut. The site will be manned from 6am to 8pm. Camgrain do not want HGV's stacked on the access road and there is no need for this to occur. The Linton site has space for 4 lorries. In 22 years this has proved adequate without lorries stacking back onto the highway. Linton has a greater tonnage and operates with one third the out of hours stacking space being proposed for the current site;
- Passing bays have been proposed and this will be sufficient to stop HGV's overrunning the verge;
- It is confirmed that all HGV movements coming from the A14 eastbound will use M11 Junction 10 and thence the A505. Also, the A1304 through Six Mile Bottom will only be used for access to/from farms.

Following receipt of these comments, the Local Highways Authority has raised no further objections subject to the provision of 3 passing bays and a Routing Agreement.

- 5) The applicant's agents have written in with regards to proposed condition 18 requiring the demolition of the buildings and restoration of the site to its current state if the site ceases to operate as an agricultural grain store for a period of 12 months or more. It is argued that such a condition which is not time-limited would impose a significant liability on Camgrain's members. This

would be a draconian condition given other developments that have occurred in the countryside (eg – petrol filling stations, employment development) without such an imposition. Camgrain are firmly committed to the site and there are no intentions or plans to look at any other use on the site. However, no one can predict social or economic changes in the future and the planning system should be able to address alternative proposals for the site. The Camgrain proposal cannot be directly compared to windfarms, telecommunications masts or mineral workings where restoration conditions would normally be appropriate. A condition that would apply for a 10 year period within 10 years from the date of substantial completion of the works would be a sensible compromise. This would provide the safeguard the authority requires for a reasonable period of time to give some solace that the Camgrain proposals are long term and reflect a commitment to running the business in this part of the District. The applicant is making a substantial financial investment into the site including major improvements to the A11 junction. Further financial penalties are of great concern to Camgrain.

- 6) The resident of Valley Farm has written to the LHA and Highways Agency stating that the extra HGV movements associated with Vogan Grain Millers in Fulbourn needs to be taken into account, particularly in light of the Highways Agency's stipulation that the amount of grain stored on the site be restricted to 90,000 tonnes. The Highways Agency has responded by stating that there is no ceiling that can be imposed on the use of the junction once it has been brought up to standard. The LHA states that these concerns will be designed out or mitigated for by the developer with the improvements, passing places and traffic lights.

Officer Recommendation

The terms of the recommended Section 106 Agreement regarding vehicle routing should be expanded to cover the A1304 through Six Mile Bottom.

There should be no restriction on the timing of HGV movements.
An additional condition requiring the provision of the 3 passing bays shown on drawing number PH10A should be added to any consent.