

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee

5<sup>th</sup> December 2007

**AUTHOR/S:** Executive Director / Corporate Manager - Planning and Sustainable Communities

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**C/6/9/1A**

### **Discharge of Conditions - Cambridgeshire Guided Busway**

#### **Recommendation: Approval**

#### **Notes:**

**These submissions have been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because the officer recommendations of approval are contrary to objections raised by Parish Councils.**

#### **Background**

1. On 21<sup>st</sup> December 2005, the Secretary of State for Transport directed that planning permission be deemed to be granted for the development included in the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway Order. One of the ten conditions reads:  
  
(Condition 3)
  - (a) Work shall not begin on each of the following items of development until in each case prior written approval of their design and external appearance has been obtained from the local planning authority:
    - (iii) the formation, layout or alteration of any means of access to any highway used by vehicular traffic; and
    - vi) Park and Ride sites, including finished ground levels for sites located within the indicative floodplain.
  - (b) The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approval given by the local planning authority or, if that authority gives prior written approval to any amendment or alteration, subject to such amendment or alteration.

The reason for the condition is to ensure the satisfactory appearance and functioning of the development, in the interests of highway safety.

Three submissions require Committee consideration:

#### **A. CONDITION 3(a) (iii) - PARK LANE JUNCTION, HISTON**

##### **Site and Proposal**

2. Park Lane links Histon with Oakington and Girton. The junction of Park Lane with the proposed Guided Busway is known as Girton Crossing. To the north west of the carriageway is a recently completed footway and cycleway. A public footway follows

the course of the former railway towards Oakington. Park Lane at this point is unlit and subject only to the national 60 mph speed limit.

3. The submission dated 11<sup>th</sup> May 2007, as amended by letter dated 18<sup>th</sup> September 2007 and Drawing No. CGB-HJY-JNGIR-D-1-001F, proposes a signal controlled junction on Park Lane, an uncontrolled cycle crossing of the Guideway, a toucan crossing of Park Lane for the maintenance track/cycleway, signage and 13 lighting columns.

### **Consultations**

4. **Histon Parish Council** objects:

- (a) "It is noted the cycleway recently installed is to be diverted to the north on a different line which will have an uncontrolled crossing with the guideway. As this cycleway is used by children travelling to school, the Parish Councils would expect it to be controlled.
- (b) Over-usage of signage in a rural setting. "Except Guided Buses" and equestrian warning signs are considered particularly excessive in a rural setting.

The Parish Council has very strong objection and wish to see amended design. 13 light columns have recently been added to the plans for this rural junction along a minor road that has never been lit to this standard before (some of which may be outside the limit of deviation). In fact when constructing the cycleway along this road the County Council deliberately used solar powered lights in the footway to reduce environmental pollution. We request their removal, save for the 4 nearest the junction. We also request a reduction in the excessive signage by 50%".

5. **Local Highways Authority** confirmed on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2007 that the design of the junction and therefore the access to the adopted public highway, was still in a process of iterative negotiation with the developer. The amended drawing is acceptable to the Highway Authority.

In response to the objections of the Parish Council the Local Highways Authority states:

"I wish to confirm that the County Council will not accept street lighting that does not meet county standards, at a junction where there are to be vulnerable road users crossing a busy village road and the guided busway whilst under signal control.

In respect of the need for measures to prevent drivers from inadvertently turning into the guided busway, it is normal practice to sign in advance where there are 'No Entry' side roads, and in this instance it is extremely important that such signing is provided. Additionally, the consequences of drivers encountering the 'car traps' will be delays and potential damage to vehicles and injury to occupants. The County Council would not accept the scheme being implemented without adequate advance signing".

### **Planning Comments**

6. The Road Safety Audit (RSA) Stage 2 recommended a signal controlled facility for pedestrians/cyclists crossing the northern arm of the Girton junction. However, the Guided Bus Team (GBT) has indicated that there is insufficient land within the limits of the scheme to provide the infrastructure necessary for a controlled crossing.

7. As an alternative the RSA Stage 2 stated that “the design team must ensure that a pedestrian or cyclist waiting to cross the guideway has the appropriate visibility in each direction in relation to the approach speed of vehicles. The GBT has responded by removing the bus turning movement on the NW corner of the junction to improve sight line visibility for the crossing.
8. The RSA Stage 2 recommended a greater number of signs than those shown on the submitted drawings. The submission aims to minimise the amount of additional signage recommended by the auditors. In addition, the “New Traffic Signals Ahead” signs on the approaches to the junction will be removed after six months. I do not consider that signage can be reduced without prejudicing safety, having regard to the RSA.
9. The proposed lighting columns have not recently been added to the plans. They were included in the original submission. The GBT states:

“Lighting has been included in all of the junctions and was part of the scheme which has been approved by the Secretary of State. We therefore have planning permission in principle for lighting at the junctions. The details are subject to the planning condition. An objection in principle to having lighting is inadmissible as that has already been decided.

The PC are incorrect when they say that solar studs were used on the cycleway because of its rural location. The cycleway is unlit because the cycleway’s budget won’t stretch to lighting. The solar studs are provided to give edge definition, they provide very little illumination.

All new street lighting is designed to minimise light pollution, which means that the light source is recessed into the housing such that the light is directed downwards at the road surface. The light sources will not be visible to the residents of Pease Way”.

10. The lighting columns are all within 50 metres of the junction and in my view are essential safety components at traffic light controlled junctions. This is confirmed by the response of the Local Highways Authority.

### **Recommendation**

11. It is recommended that Condition 3(a) (iii) be discharged in regard to the amended design of the Park Lane, Histon junction subject to agreement of the detailed signals design by the County Council’s Signals Team.

## **B. CONDITION 3(a) (iii) - DESIGN AND EXTERNAL APPEARANCE OF STATION ROAD, HISTON JUNCTION**

### **Site and Proposal**

12. Station Road is an un-classified road that runs parallel to the B1049 and is a relatively busy road within the villages. The junction of Station Road with the proposed Guided Busway is at the location of the former Histon Station, with Bishops’ hardware and cycle shops on the opposite side of the line. Station Stores abuts the line to the south-east.

13. The submission dated 20<sup>th</sup> July 2007, as amended in writing, dated 5<sup>th</sup> November 2007 and Drawing No. CGB-HJY-JNHIS-D-1-001 Rev C, proposes a signal controlled junction on Station Road, a toucan crossing of Station Road, five pedestrian crossings including one to New Road, signage, 13 lighting columns and CCTV.

### **Consultations**

14. **Histon Parish Council** made no recommendations in relation to the initial plan but commented on the overuse of signs; over-removal of trees; and lack of clarity to the signage in front of Bishops' entrance, the cyclists in the marked box would block the entrance/exit. Its comments on the revised details will be reported verbally.
15. **Impington Parish Council** recommended refusal. It commented on there being too much signage; the northbound cyclists' advance stop would block the entrance to Bishops'; excessive tarmac on the north east corner; unmaintainable and unnecessary strip of grass to the north stop (east side); there should be parking for three cars rather than two outside of Station Stores and should be a lay-by; "Guided Bus Only" signs should cover both lanes of the road; the Eastern platform should be "Impington Bus Stop"; "New traffic signals ahead" should only be a temporary permission for 6 months. In addition it queried whether the junction should be a "yellow box" and requested that consideration be given to the segregation of cyclists and passengers at stops. Its comments on the revised details will be reported verbally.
16. **The Local Highway Authority** confirmed that the details are acceptable "subject to detailed design". Its comments on the revised details will be reported verbally.

### **Planning Comments**

17. In relation to the junction design several issues have been raised. The contractor has advised that a yellow box to the junction and extending the yellow lines to New Road were considered and that it was felt best to monitor the operation of the junction and provide these if it proves necessary in order not to reduce parking on New Road and avoid unnecessary visual impact.
18. Two car parking spaces on Station Road are proposed to serve Station Stores. This is similar to the current arrangement. Providing a lay-by would be difficult to achieve in my opinion and unnecessary.
19. There is a particularly large expanse of hard-surfaced area to the north-eastern side of the junction; however it has been advised by the contractor that reducing the area with soft landscaping would not be the preferred approach to this area, in order not to impede the free-flow of cyclists, who have to cross the Guided Busway at this point, or pedestrian desire lines.
20. The keep clear site in the area of Bishops has been relocated to prevent the exit being blocked. The level of signage is the minimum required by the Road Highway Safety Audit process and "New Road Layout" signs will be removed after 6 months. The stops have been re-named "Histon and Impington".
21. Cyclists and pedestrians are to be segregated at bus stops and will be the subject of detailed submissions relating to the design of these, as required by condition three.

### ***Recommendation***

22. It is recommended that Condition 3(a) (iii) be discharged in regard to the amended design of the Station Road, Histon junction, as amended in writing, dated 5<sup>th</sup> November 2007 and Drawing No. CGB-HJY-JNHIS-D-1-001 Rev C, subject to the comments of the Histon and Impington Parish Council's on the revised design raising no new material planning considerations and subject to agreement of the detailed signals design by the County Council's Signals Team.

### **C. CONDITION 3(a) (vi) - DESIGN AND EXTERNAL APPEARANCE OF LONGSTANTON PARK AND RIDE SITE**

#### **Site and Proposal**

23. The Park and Ride site is located on the east side of B1050, Station Road and south of the Guideway. To the west of Station Road is a number of commercial premises and two residential properties ("Southwell" and "Stanton House"), to the north are two residential properties (Orchard Cottage and Gresley House) and commercial properties including John Henry Engineering Ltd, and to the south and east is land which falls within the Northstowe Action Area Plan. Station Road is unlit, subject to a 40mph speed limit and has no footways south of the former level crossing. To the north is a footway/cycleway on the east side of the carriageway leading into Willingham.
24. The submission, dated 28<sup>th</sup> August 2007, as amended by letter dated 8<sup>th</sup> November 2007 and accompanying drawings, proposes the design and layout for a 700 vehicle space park and ride site to be constructed in two phases of 350 spaces each. A total of 32 spaces have been provided for disabled passengers. The site consists of a bus terminal, although details of the building are to be the subject of a separate submission.
25. A cycleway has been provided from the B1050 Station Road and follows the entrance road into the bus terminal area. There is provision for cycle shelters to accommodate 50 cycles each for Stage 1 and Stage 2.
26. Two walkways have been provided for pedestrian access through the parking area from the furthest parking row to the bus terminal.
27. Access into the Park and Ride is provided from the B1050 Station Road via a signalised junction and then through a roundabout. The details of the highway junction, site access road and balancing ponds have been removed from this submission by the amended scheme. They will be submitted under separate cover at a later date once the junction location has been finalised.
28. Landscaping proposals include native screen planting between 5m and 20m wide on the western, southern and eastern edges and larger stock trees planted in an avenue arrangement alongside the central pedestrian routes.

## History

29. The planning permission for the Guideway includes the construction of a park and ride site at Longstanton. The Public Inquiry Inspector noted that the site would have a significant visual impact but he was satisfied that adequate mitigation could be achieved by way of appropriate design and landscaping to protect the amenities of those living nearby and to integrate the development within the wider landscape.

## Policy

30. Structure Plan Policy P8/10 and Northstowe Area Action Plan, adopted July 2007, Policy NS/11 promote a Park and Ride site. The latter states:

“The Park and Ride stop for the guided bus on the disused St Ives railway line will be easily accessible by foot and cycle from Northstowe. Direct road access to the site from the town will not be provided.”

The supporting text states:

“D6.12 A Park and Ride facility is planned as part of the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway proposals on the north western edge of Northstowe, to be served by buses on the guideway and dedicated local busway. The dedicated local busway will serve residents of Northstowe, so there will be no need for residents to travel by car to the Park and Ride facility.

D6.13 The Park and Ride facility will be easily accessible by foot and cycle from Northstowe, as it will be the closest bus stop for residents in the northern part of the town. Direct road access from Northstowe will not be provided in order that car parking will be available for more long distance travellers, with vehicular access from Station Road, Longstanton. Design and traffic management measures will facilitate movement by pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians and ensure that no motorised vehicular traffic, other than that for essential access, can use this route.

D6.14 The Council will also seek to explore opportunities for shared use of the car park with other nearby uses, in accordance with the strategy in the Travel Chapter of the Development Control Policies DPD.”

## Consultations

31. **Longstanton Parish Council** has not commented.
32. **Willingham Parish Council** “has two major concerns:
- (a) Impact of traffic
  - (b) Impact of water (flood risk)

All of the development is premature prior to having an acceptable By-Pass for Willingham and thus will have an adverse impact on Willingham”.

33. **Local Highway Authority** has confirmed that the details are acceptable.

34. The **Council's Land Drainage Manager** states:

"Temporary consents from the Environment Agency and under the Council's Land Drainage Byelaws have been in place for the initial phase of the site works.

For the final approvals the developer should be informed that:

1. EA approval will be required as statutory consultees.
2. Land Drainage Byelaw approval will also be required from the Council's Drainage Manager. This approval will be conditional on the provision of final design details on pond size, outfall details, cleaning works to existing piped section of the award drain long-term upkeep and maintenance of the detention pond. Additionally, the developer will be expected to demonstrate that the proposal will have no impact downstream of the development. These have not been provided".

35. **Environment Agency** has not commented.

36. The **Council's Landscape Design Officer** has made detailed comments about the plant schedules, cycle parking, edging of balancing ponds, materials for footway paving, width of tree planting beds within the car park, signage, CCTV and cabling routes.

### **Representations**

37. John Henry (Civil Engineers) noted an incorrect boundary position. (The GBT informs me that this has been addressed in the amended drawings).

38. Residents of "Stanton House" and "Southwell", properties on the west side of Station Road and opposite the proposed junction, have objected. In addition, Taylor Vinters Solicitors have commented on behalf of the occupier of "Southwell". The grounds of objection are summarised below:

- (a) The position of the traffic light junction across the access of "Southwell" will block that access, interfere with the occupier's established business of selling produce and flowers, cause a serious loss of amenity and may have an adverse effect on the health of the occupier.
- (b) Traffic queuing to turn right into the Park and Ride site would also block access into Stanton house at busy times. Exiting this access would also be riskier due to stationery traffic across the sight-line.
- (c) Air pollution in the vicinity of the two properties would be increased.
- (d) No provision has been made for a footpath/cycleway to Longstanton.
- (e) Proposed low level landscaping to replace a hedge separating "Stanton House" and "Southwell" from the Park and Ride site would prejudice road safety (snow drift), cause loss of an eastern windbreak, loss of a visual shield from the development and damage established hedge ecology.
- (f) The use of a traditional, inefficient and oversized lighting scheme design risks gross light pollution. Insufficient on-off timing information has been provided to be able to form a complete assessment about light pollution effects.

- (g) Loss of the large existing hedgerow would cause urbanisation, loss of visual amenity and further light pollution.
- (h) Use of the new junction by John Henry Ltd would increase unplanned traffic, noise and pollution risk.
- (i) Expansion of the John Henry Ltd land is apparently taking place without involving the public planning process.
- (j) There is a risk to drainage with lack of attention to pre-existing problems in the open roadside ditch which flows on the west side of Station Road.
- (k) Insufficient details have been provided for drainage arrangements to the two properties.
- (l) The Park and Ride scheme should be assessed against the environmental impact of expansion of Northstowe to the west of Station Road.
- (m) There are existing foul drainage problems. If a septic tank system is required, its size and arrangements for emptying it regularly need to be considered.

The occupier of "Southwell" considers that, in the event that the details are approved, consideration will be given to challenging the decision in the Courts on the basis that it compromises a breach of her human rights. This seems to be based largely on the position and impact of the access falling disproportionately on that property.

**39. Gallagher Estates:**

- (a) Fully support the "future connection to Northstowe development". But it is not clear how the two-way flow of buses between Northstowe and the bus stops at the northern end of the Park and Ride will work.
- (b) It is suggested that the central north/south walkway is continued to the south boundary to ensure that the Park and Ride is immediately accessible to the first occupiers of Northstowe.
- (c) Finally it is suggested that the native screen planting on the perimeter of the site include some evergreen species to provide some year round greening.

**Planning Comments**

- 40. The Park and Ride development has planning permission as part of the Guided Busway Project. Condition 3(a)(vi) requires consideration of design and external appearance.
- 41. The amended submission specifically excludes details of the location, design, drainage and landscaping of the proposed junction on Station Road, the 55 metre length of roadway from that junction to the car park roundabout and the balancing ponds and landscaping either side of that section of roadway. Issues raised by consultees and residents in regards to those matters will, therefore, be assessed when that submission is received.
- 42. The CGB planning permission does not include or require the provision of a by-pass for Willingham or a cycleway/footpath link to Longstanton. However, I am informed by CGB Team that a cycleway/footway is to be part of a Growth Area Fund bid to



government. Policy NS/10 of the adopted Northstowe Area Action Plan 2007 states that:

“If at the time of grant of outline planning permission a Willingham Bypass is required by the County Council, a contribution will be sought from the developers of Northstowe towards its construction related to the forecast percentage volume of traffic that will be generated by Northstowe”.

43. Although details of the balancing ponds will be the subject of a separate submission, drainage for the Park and Ride will be in accordance with the Flood Risk Assessment, which has been approved by the Environment Agency. Drainage from all paved areas will be attenuated to a permissible greenfield run-off rate. Foul drainage from the Park and Ride building (subject of a future submission) will discharge to a foul water sewer in agreement with Anglian Water.
44. Landscaping issues have been discussed in considerable detail between the CGB Team and the Council's officers. The scheme has been amended to reflect those discussions. To assimilate the development in the short-term, the most sensitive boundary will be to the south west, where native screen planting is proposed. It will, in future submissions, continue along the south boundary of the balancing lakes and to the east of Station Road. In the longer term the combination of maturing vegetation and development at Northstowe will satisfactorily screen the development. Some evergreen species would be welcomed.
45. The Park and Ride site will be extensively lit from 10m high columns for safety reasons. But the lighting design will be in accordance with British Standards and the recommendations of the Institute of Lighting Engineers, which recommends the use of full horizontal cut-off luminaires installed at 0° uplift to reduce sky glow and to minimise visual intrusion and light pollution. Lighting at the Cambridge Park and Ride sites have been successful in achieving this objective. The lights will be switched off outside of operational hours.
46. Planning Permission was granted on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2007 for the change of use of land south of John Henry Engineering Ltd for a goods yard, subject to, amongst others, a condition preventing development commencing until the “adjacent park and ride site is fully operational and details of the access and balancing pond, required for both the proposal and the park and ride site, and the access directly into the site, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority .....” The application was determined at Committee on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2007 when objections from the occupier of “Southwell” were considered. The owner/occupier of “Stanton House” was notified of the application. Vehicles using John Henry's yard are already on the B1050, but using a junction south of the former level crossing with poor visibility.
47. The location of the Park and Ride site in relation to the needs of Northstowe has already been determined as part of the planning permission. The provision of a necessary bus link to the new town in the south east corner of the site is now illustrated on the amended plans. I await the reaction of the CGB Team to the suggested extension of the central walkway as a footpath/cycleway link to Northstowe.
48. The amended scheme has increased cycle provision to covered accommodation for 100 cycles (50 in each phase).

## **Recommendation**

49. It is recommended that condition 3(a)(vi) be discharged in regard to the design and layout for the Longstanton Park and Ride site in accordance with the amended drawings submitted by letter dated 8<sup>th</sup> November 2007 subject to agreement being reached on a timescale for the completion of the dedicated bus, foot and cycleway connection to Northstowe and the use of full cut off luminaries in accordance with the recommendations of the Institute of Lighting Engineers. The approval does not give consent to the siting and layout of a means of access to Station Road (B1050) or to the design and external appearance of landscaping and works within the area specified on drawing no. CGB-PC-D-1-089A (dated 02/11/2007) as "junction proposals to be provided in a separate submission".

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Northstowe Area Action Plan (adopted July 2007)
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- Planning File Ref: C/6/9/1A
- Documents referred to in the report including appendices on the website only and reports to previous meetings

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