

SUMMARY PROOF OF EVIDENCE

Taylor Wimpey and Homes England

Pickering's Farm Planning Appeal

July 2022

LPA Ref: 07/2021/00886/ORM and 07/2021/00887/ORM

PINS Ref: APP/F2360/W/22/3295498

Transport and Mobility Summary Proof of Evidence – Final

Mike Axon

Vectos (part of SLR)

vectos.co.uk

1 Summary Proof of Evidence

Qualifications and Experience

- 1.1 My name is Mike Axon. I am the Global Director for Transport at SLR Consulting Ltd, an environmental focused organisation with a presence around the world. Prior to this, I was Managing Director of Vectos, a 160 strong company specialising in transport planning, highway engineering and research and demonstration, largely for the EU, in the social science, trends and psychology underpinning transport and mobility. Vectos was acquired by SLR in 2021.

The Proposals

- 1.2 The two Applications together incorporate up to 1,100 homes. The sites are the substantial part of the site allocation know as Pickering's Farm (Policy C1) in the SRBC Local Plan.
- 1.3 The development is located and designed to maximise the convenience of accessibility without high car dependency. It is a sustainable location with a wide range of day-to-day facilities and services available. It delivers active travel and public transport travel priority compared with car use, which it also provides for.
- 1.4 The development is designed to maximise the benefits of the sustainable location, to connect with, and form part of, the existing communities. It is to maximise and prioritise local living, and hence active travel and public transport mobility. It is a community led approach.
- 1.5 The development's location and planned facilities influence the characteristics for travel.
- 1.6 The vision is to embrace local living and virtual mobility where that is most appropriate, achieving excellent accessibility by the highest priority forms of mobility and minimising road capacity increases, particularly where these are likely to encourage and generate private vehicular traffic.
- 1.7 There will be a local centre with some employment facilities. There will be a Primary School and open space. There will be Third Place (co-working) facilities in the local centre.
- 1.8 A Primary Mobility Hub, or Community Hub, will be located in the local centre, and there will be Secondary Mobility Hubs dispersed around the settlement. These will be administered by the Community Concierge team. Bus accessibility will be a priority.
- 1.9 The proposal includes highway improvements at the Bee Lane and Leyland Road junction, changing the existing roundabout to a signal-controlled junction. The benefit of this improvement is better active travel connectivity. It does this at the expense of traffic capacity.

Planning Policy and Guidance

- 1.10 In my main proof of evidence, I address what I consider to be the relevant national and local transport policies and guidance.

- 1.11 I also refer to several industry guidance documents and reports that highlight the importance of adopting the Vision and Validate (V&V) approach, which is that you start with the vision of what you want to achieve, and design accordingly. It encompasses all accessibility, including digital accessibility, and considers this across the day.
- 1.12 In traffic terms it employs what is often called the ‘first law of transport’ which is that on a busy network the volume of traffic is increasingly a function of the available road space. This is in contrast to the dated Predict and Provide (P&P) approach which focuses upon a forecast of traffic in the traditional peak commuter periods, and how that can be accommodated.
- 1.13 P&P led to more road building. More road building led to higher capacity road networks and these higher capacity networks attracted traffic. This is contrary to the aims of policy, which addresses climate change and healthy living.
- 1.14 V&V is not a new approach. In a Secretary of State decision to approve two housing developments in Hartford, Cheshire, in 2013, the Inspector concluded in his judgement that it is not the aim of planning policy to protect the convenience of commuting car drivers.

The Context

- 1.15 The Inspector has identified three ‘main issues’ relating to transport:
- i) Whether or not the proposed development would have a severe adverse impact on the local highway network
 - ii) The effect of the proposed improvements to the Bee Lane bridge on the safety of pedestrians and cyclists
 - iii) Whether or not the proposal makes adequate provision for highways improvements, with particular regard to the Cross Borough Link Road and the Bee Lane bridge

Local Highway Network Traffic Assessments

- 1.16 There is an issue between the Appellants and the Councils as to how to quantify highway impact effects. The Appellants say that a V&V approach, which is promoted by most professional bodies and the DfT, is the more appropriate interpretation of planning policy. The Councils prefer a P&P approach to traffic impact, and an assessment of a ‘worst case’ or ‘more than likely’ volume of traffic.
- 1.17 In my proof I set out why our approach to trip forecasting and traffic modelling is appropriate and pick out the trends that the modelling shows with respect to the characteristics of the surrounding highway network taking into account the proposed development traffic on a cumulative basis alongside committed developments.
- 1.18 The local road network is high capacity, and I expect it to attract traffic. It is congested for short periods in the day, and it is reasonable to expect this. This proposal will have an impact, the consequence of which is that journey times will go up. They will go up because of the physical interventions, the new junctions interrupting the flow of traffic, and the effects of additional traffic demand.

- 1.19 However, the changes are unlikely to be substantial, and in the order of matters of minutes for short periods of the day at the most. Commuter period car travel inconvenience measured in minutes, in an environment where non car accessibility is good, where there are many choices for many people, in a world where car driver convenience is not the priority, and where the test for 'severe adverse' is set high, means that the proposed development would not have a severe adverse impact on the local highway network.
- 1.20 My judgements on the basis of my work are corroborated by the results presented by LCC's own planning application for dualling of the A582, which includes an allowance for a number of homes in excess of that provided by this proposal and the allocation that it forms part of.

Safety at Bee Lane Bridge

- 1.21 In my proof I describe the existing character of Bee Lane Bridge as one of a shared space accommodating cars, agricultural vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians. The observed effect is that that Bee Lane bridge at the moment is safe. This is borne from an investigation of the accident statistics and the judgement of a qualified safety risk assessor.
- 1.22 The proposal will intensify the use of the bridge by cars, but not by much. It will intensify the use by pedestrians and cyclists, and we aim to maximise that intensification as people interact within the community. There is no reason to suppose that an intensification changes the character of the bridge.
- 1.23 Network Rail raised a concern about vehicles swerving to avoid pedestrians and striking the parapets. As a result, we offered to make changes to the bridge layout to minimise this likelihood. These changes are relatively straightforward and similar to those that exist on a neighbouring bridge.
- 1.24 The eventual solution can be determined at detailed design stage, however the safety risk assessor judged the situation to be 'low risk' and therefore acceptable. Therefore, I judge there to be no adverse effect on the safety of pedestrians and cyclists at Bee Lane bridge.

Highway Improvements

- 1.25 LCC and SRBC have an aspiration to provide a Cross Borough Link Road ultimately connecting the A582 to the west with the A6 to the east. Part of this route has now been completed east of the Pickering's Farm allocated site. To extend this route to the A582 would involve passing through the allocated site.
- 1.26 The Cross Borough Link Road is provided for in the scheme. A safeguarded area, and a design criteria, is a commitment in the legal documents. The scheme makes highway improvements that deliver a cross borough link through the site for active travel and public transport (shared travel). Buses will be able to pass through the site, connecting with neighbouring communities, where private vehicles will not, via a bus gate.
- 1.27 The scheme makes direct provision for a vehicular site access to the A582. It also makes provision for a highway upgrade to the Bee Lane/Leyland Road junction. This upgrade benefits active travel users at the expense of car driver convenience at some times of the day.

- 1.28 We say that no further highway changes are necessary in order to make this development acceptable. However, LCC has strategic aspirations to increase the capacity of the A582, and it has a live application for that scheme at the moment. This is not necessary in order for the development to proceed, but the development will contribute to demand on this route.
- 1.29 If it deems it an appropriate use of funds, contributions to this strategic scheme can be made by the planning authority using the CIL payment that this development provides. This use of CIL monies for this purpose is referenced in the Local Plan.
- 1.30 Therefore, I judge that adequate provision for highways improvements is made by the proposal.

Third Party Representations

- 1.31 Third party representations have been submitted in objection to the appeal by Keep Bee Lane Rural (KBLR), a campaign group. My evidence addresses the KBLR representations and explains why I do not agree with their analysis of the traffic impact of the development proposals.

Contact

London

Network Building,
97 Tottenham Court Road,
London W1T 4TP.
Tel: 020 7580 7373

Bristol

5th Floor, 4 Colston Avenue,
Bristol BS1 4ST
Tel: 0117 203 5240

Cardiff

Helmont House, Churchill Way,
Cardiff CF10 2HE
Tel: 029 2072 0860

Exeter

6 Victory House,
Dean Clarke Gardens,
Exeter EX2 4AA
Tel: 01392 422 315

Birmingham

Great Charles Street,
Birmingham B3 3JY
Tel: 0121 2895 624

Manchester

Oxford Place, 61 Oxford Street,
Manchester M1 6EQ.
Tel: 0161 228 1008

Leeds

7 Park Row, Leeds LS1 5HD
Tel: 0113 512 0293

Bonn

Stockenstrasse 5, 53113,
Bonn, Germany
Tel: +49 176 8609 1360
www.vectos.eu

Registered Office

Vectos (South) Limited
Network Building,
97 Tottenham Court Road,
London W1T 4TP
Company no. 7591661