

48/2007/019 (to be considered in conjunction with 48/2007/061)

HOOKIPA LTD

CONSTRUCTION OF A ROUNDABOUT AND ALTERATION OF ASSOCIATED ROADS AND HIGHWAY STRUCTURE AT THE FORMER CHICKEN HATCHERY, BRIDGWATER ROAD, MONKTON HEATHFIELD

325558/126220

FULL

PROPOSAL

The proposal is for the erection of a roundabout and associated road links to the A38 and Eastern Relief Road as identified in the Taunton Deane Local Plan allocated site T8. The roundabout would have four arms and link to the A38 south towards Creech Castle roundabout, A38 north through Monkton Heathfield, Milton Hill to the west and would be situated in order to be facilitate a link to the east onto the Eastern Relief Road as proposed in planning application 48/2007/061 and as identified in the Local Plan Major allocated site T8. The roundabout is located to the east of the existing route of the A38 and is largely sited on the former Hatcheries land.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

COUNTY HIGHWAY AUTHORITY - I have no objection to the principle of a roundabout being constructed in this location, provided that it is constructed to serve development. The details shown on the drawings accompanying the application are generally acceptable. However, I have certain concerns about the juxtaposition with the existing access into the hatchery and the proposed roundabout, although this could be sorted out at detailed design stage. In consequence, I have no objection to the proposal, subject to the applicants entering into a Section 106 Agreement requiring the design, construction and funding of such a roundabout and a Grampian Condition being attached saying that the roundabout should not be constructed prior to the development associated with it being approved and constructed.

COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGIST - as far as we are aware there are limited or no archaeological implications to this proposal therefore we have no objection.

HIGHWAY AGENCY - no objection.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY the application falls outside of the scope of matters on which the Environment Agency are a statutory consultee and therefore would wish to make no comment.

NATURAL ENGLAND There will be little or no negative impact on wildlife/protected species as a result of the proposed development therefore no objection.

SOMERSET WILDLIFE TRUST - comments awaited.

CIVIC SOCIETY - the Civic Society supports this application as the best available proposal for the southern termination of the A38 Eastern Relief Road (ERR) proposed for the new developments at Monkton Heathfield. We don't know why there are two alternative proposals for this land. However, having examined both the Consortium's proposals in 48/2005/072 and this 48/2007/019 application we are in no doubt that this is preferable for the following reasons:

- (1) It is less damaging to the Green Wedge, especially if the ERR has to be constructed so that it may be duelled at a later date.
- (2) It does not subject traffic to a turning back "dogleg" manoeuvre to get to Milton Hill and the B3259. The Consortium's proposal for a more southerly roundabout leads to a 3-exit roundabout, and such roundabouts seem particularly prone to priority confusions. This "019" proposal for a conventional 4-exit roundabout with a straight path to Milton Hill seems to be both safer and conducive to better traffic flow.
- (3) The alternative Consortium "072" proposal may eventually result in pressure for a much greater intrusion into the Green Wedge, as there will then be a stronger case for the proposed Western Relief Road (WRR) to be built directly from the more southerly roundabout across the Green Wedge close to Tanpitts Farm. When (if) the WRR is eventually built it may be that the Milton Hill road will need to be widened and given a much better separation for cyclists and pedestrians (heavy usage because of the school), but this would still be less damaging to the Green Wedge than a completely new route.
- (4) The Consortium's proposal is likely, given the planned bus gate towards the northern end of the B3259, to provide an incentive for traffic that would otherwise approach Taunton via the B3259 to continue down the A38 to Creech Castle and the Toneway. We note that the Consortium are proposing quite a large amount of landscaping' and planting to screen their proposed southern end of the ERR, so as to ameliorate the effects on the Green Wedge. However such landscaping is itself a change to the natural environment, and while we think that this proposal may also require both screening and noise containment features, the Wedge is less affected and thus the need for extensive landscaping is reduced. It is most important that, as a matter of principle if nothing else, the Council protects the Green Wedges declared in the current Local Plan. We do not think that they may never be changed within the lifetime of the present Local Plan, but any such change should only occur in cases of absolute necessity, and when all other alternatives (including CPOs if appropriate) have been shown to be unacceptable. We trust that the Council will fully recognise the linkages between this and the older Consortium proposal, and consider them at the same time.

LANDSCAPE OFFICER - the proposals are within the Local Plan development proposals and subject to landscape mitigation it should be possible to integrate them into the surrounding landscape. The proposals largely in keep the Green Wedge width intact between Tanpitts Farm and the land to the east of the Bridgwater Road - EN13.

NATURE CONSERVATION AND RESERVES OFFICER - no objection subject to updated survey, impact assessment and mitigation prior to commencement of works on site and methodology for demolition.

FORWARD PLAN – None received

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICER - No objection subject to conditions for the submission of investigation, assessment and mitigation works (if necessary) for contaminated land, noise and air quality

WEST MONKTON PARISH COUNCIL - The parish Council support this application.

14 LETTERS OF OBJECTION have been received raising the following issues:

- the closure of the existing A38 will have a devastating impact on the existing businesses located along the A38 by removing passing trade in addition the closure of the A38 will be difficult to achieve as it must maintain access by delivery vehicles, sales servicing and parts;
- the closure of the A38 north through Monkton Heathfield will disadvantage local people and would hope a solution can be found that enabled access to be maintained;
- the proposed traffic calming measures on the A38 are considered to have a detrimental impact on the trading of existing premises along the A38, which currently benefit from such a busy road side location;
- the proposal for an isolated roundabout will not resulting the comprehensive development of the allocated site as required by the Local Plan policies;
- the applicant should provide a Masterplan identifying how the application would enable the delivery of the application before the application can be determined;
- the proposal does not provide sufficient land within the red line to enable any landscape mitigation as required by the adopted Development Guide; Milton Hill is not adequate to cater for the heavy traffic and is too narrow to take cattle trucks, articulated lorries etc;
- the increased use of Milton Hill will have a detrimental impact on the quality of life of adjacent residents; the proposal should include a bank and screening along the main A38 as a sound barrier to protect the occupants of caravans who may occupy the fields;
- There will need to be sound barrier along the approach road to the roundabout to protect the campers who pitch in the adjacent orchard;
- Tanpits farm own part of the verge adjacent to Milton Hill, if this is required to be used for a cycle/pedestrian link or needed to provide a major road then we would wish for sound reduction measures to protect the existing camp site along Milton Hill;
- If the bus gate was relocated it would be safer to use; the bus gate will cut off access to the shops and schools in Monkton Heathfield and prevent commercial traffic from the motorway accessing ATS and other businesses; residents of Farriers Green will find it even more difficult to exit onto Milton Hill could a mini roundabout or traffic lights be provided?;
- the proposed roundabout will not answer questions of the impact that 900 houses and new businesses will have on the area and the damage to the resulting environment; the proposal will result in piecemeal development prejudicial to the ability to provide a comprehensive development of the Monkton Heathfield Development.

1 LETTER OF SUPPORT - has been received raising the following issues:- the proposed roundabout represents common sense in the provision of the road link to the A38

POLICY CONTEXT

Site Specific Policies

Monkton Heathfield Major Site Allocation

Policy T8

Sites at Monkton Heathfield are proposed for a major comprehensive development including housing, employment, and community facilities and associated developments as set out in more detail in Policies T9, T10, T11 and T12. To ensure the provision of a satisfactory overall development, a coordinated approach and the delivery of the following key elements will be necessary:

- (A) primary and secondary school provision accommodation in accordance with Policy C1;
- (B) social and community facilities in the local centre;
- (C) playing fields and public open space in accordance with policy C4;
- (D) preparation and maintenance of a local nature reserve;
- (E) landscaping;
- (F) surface water attenuation;
- (G) affordable housing in accordance with policy H9 and H10 (35% affordable housing);
- (H) bus priority measures within the site and linking the site to Taunton town centre;
- (I) revenue support if necessary to maintain a frequent quality bus service linking the site to Taunton town centre;
- (J) a comprehensive cycle and pedestrian network within the development area and Monkton Heathfield village, providing convenient access to the schools, local centre and employment;
- (K) cycle access to Taunton town centre via the A3259 and the canal, to the Riverside Leisure and Retail facilities and to from Creech St Michael;
- (L) eastern and western relief roads; and
- (M) traffic calming and environmental enhancement on the existing A38 and A3259.

East of Monkton Heathfield

Policy T9

A site of 50 hectares east of Monkton Heathfield is allocated for a mixed use development, to incorporate the following uses (with a minimum site area shown):

- (A) Housing (25 ha);
- (B) B1 business development (4 hectares);
- (C) Public playing fields (4.5 hectares)
- (D) Primary school (2 hectares);
- (E) Local centre (3 hectares); and
- (F) Landscaping and public open space (10 hectares).

Affordable housing will be sought on this site in accordance with policies H9 and H10.

North of Aginghill's Farm

Policy T10

A site of 4.8 hectares north of Aginghill's Farm as shown on the Proposals Map is allocated for residential development.

Affordable housing will be sought on this site in accordance with policies H9 and H10.

South of Langaller

Policy T11

A site of 10 hectares south of Langaller is allocated for B1 light industry and B8 warehousing development.

Community Developments

Policy T12

A site of 1.6 hectares east of Monkton Primary School is allocated for educational uses.

General Policies

Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Policies

STR1 Sustainable Development;

Policy 5 Safeguards the Landscape Character of an area with particular attention to distinctive landscape, heritage or nature characteristics;

Policy 11 Land with High Archaeological Potential;

Policy 14 Development proposals should ensure that protection of archaeological remains is undertaken;

Policy 49 Transport Requirements of New Development;

Policy 51 Identifies the A38 as a National Primary Route), Policy 54 - (New Road Schemes.

Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies

S1 General requirements;

M6 indicates that existing streets will be traffic calmed to improve the environment, safety or to encourage traffic to use the most appropriate roads;

EN13 Does not permit development that will harm the open character of the green wedge;

- EN23 Requires sites that may have an archaeological potential to be fully investigated before planning applications are allowed);
- EN25 Requires development near to rivers or canals not to be detrimental to their landscape, character, wildlife and recreational potential and to respect enhance and maximize the benefits of a waterside location);
- EN33 Building Waste.

There is also supplementary planning guidance for the allocated sites: - The Monkton Heathfield Development Guide

ASSESSMENT

The Taunton Deane Local Plan requires a comprehensive and coordinated delivery of the whole of the allocated sites, with the southern junction of the Eastern Relief Road, A38 and Milton Hill provided in the vicinity of the former Hatcheries site. The current proposal is located in a position that generally conforms to the local plan allocation and (subject to the submission and approval of full detailed plans) is a technically acceptable highway solution.

Policy T8 requires a coordinated and comprehensive approach to the development of the allocated site. Whilst this application alone does not achieve such a comprehensive development, when combined with current application 48/2007/061 (for the mixed use development of the land to the north and east of this roundabout, for your consideration tonight) the proposal would enable the provision of a significant proportion of the Local Plan allocation including the provision of 900 houses; the majority of the employment land; the Eastern Relief Road on the local plan alignment, thereby retaining the maximum amount of Green Wedge to separate Monkton Heathfield from Bathpool, the required affordable housing; the secondary school improvements, including a new playing field, primary school and community facilities; the leisure and recreation facilities required for the proposed new dwellings, and the local centre required for the allocated site (see above report for details).

This application does not include details of the landscape, wildlife, contaminated land, noise or air quality impacts or any necessary mitigation measures for the roundabout and such details would need to be submitted and approved prior to the commencement of works on site.

A roundabout in this location will result in significantly less impact upon the character and function of the Green Wedge between Bathpool and Monkton Heathfield when compared with the Consortium's proposal, which is the subject of the current appeal.

In view of the above I consider that it is possible to support the principle of the proposed roundabout in this location subject to the provision of acceptable landscape details, contaminated land details, noise details and air quality details, detailed road design, and a Section 106 requirement for the timely provision of the road. The applicants have indicated a willingness to enter into such an agreement and the following heads of terms have been suggested:

- The provision and maintenance of a landscaping bund adjacent to the new roadway
- A requirement that the road and roundabout be provided prior to the occupation of the 301st house, to be constructed as part of the Local Plan allocated site at Monkton Heathfield or when the balance of the Eastern Relief Road has been constructed up to the boundary the site, whichever is the sooner
- An obligation that in default of the requirement to construct the road and roundabout, rights will be granted to a third part to enter onto the land and construct the same
- The agreement to include the mechanism for valuation in the event that a third part exercises such rights (by means of RICS Arbitration or similar)
- An obligation that the roundabout is dedicated either as soon as it is completed or as soon as a third party steps in to complete it in the event of default.
- Obligation to submit a planning application for the remainder of the site for B1/B8 uses as identified in the Monkton Heathfield Development Guide.

RECOMMENDATION

The Development Manager in consultation with the Chair/Vice Chair be authorised to determine and planning permission be GRANTED subject to a S106 agreement in accordance with the Heads of Terms suggested above and conditions of time limit, detailed road design, contaminated land survey, assessment, mitigation and monitoring, noise survey, assessment and mitigation, air quality survey, assessment and mitigation, updated wildlife survey, assessment and mitigation and landscaping details.

REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION: To enable the delivery of the Monkton Heathfield allocated site in accordance with the Taunton Deane Local Plan allocations Policies T8-T12.

In preparing this report the Planning Officer has considered fully the implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.

CONTACT OFFICER: 356467 MRS J MOORE

NOTES: