
LPA Ref: F/20/89488

PINS Ref: APP/W175/W/22/3292580

SUMMARY OF PROOF OF EVIDENCE

1. My name is John Wilde. I am a transport planner, traffic engineer, a Director of C&A Consulting Engineers Ltd and member of the Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation.
2. My Proof of Evidence deals with matters of Highways and Transport and in this respect focuses on the LPA's reasons for refusal no. 2 (RfR2), no. 3 (RfR3) and no. 4 (RfR4) in part. RfR2 and in part RfR4 deal with the matter of the sustainable accessibility of the Appeal scheme. RfR3 relates to the perceived severe impact of the development on the free flow and operation of the local transport network.
3. I have not sought in my evidence to reproduce the extensive information already made available as part of the planning application submission and have therefore sought to place greatest reliance on cross-referencing to that material and to the previous decision related to this site where relevant.

Sustainable Accessibility

4. The planning application was supported by a comprehensive Transport Assessment which set out the Appeal Scheme's access to a full range of destinations by means sustainable modes of travel. It is my understanding that the particulars of this appraisal are not challenged by the LPA but the conclusions that can be drawn from it are disputed. The LPA site specific concerns regarding access to education (both primary and secondary) and healthcare as the basis for their conclusions on the site. I have therefore focused my evidence on these areas in order to demonstrate that in my view, the site quite clearly benefits from appropriate levels of accessibility to each of these destinations. My conclusions on this matter are entirely consistent with those of the Inspector who determined a previous appeal for a larger residential development on this site and whose own determination was found to be without error when subject to judicial review in the High Court.

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5. The LPA's SoC infers a related basis for refusal on highways safety grounds relating to the northern pedestrian route, which does not appear on the decision notice. Whilst I accept the LPA's case that the perceived safety of this particular route is a material consideration in evaluating overall sustainability, I do not accept that the mere presence of this route, perceived to be unsafe, gives rise to an unacceptable highway safety impact that would be contrary to para. 111 of the NPPF. I disagree with the LPA's conclusion that the Appeal Scheme should be refused simply on the basis that future residents may choose to use a route that is perceived to be unsafe, when alternative, acceptable and safe routes are available. My opinion on this is supported by the findings of Mr Justice Garnham in his review of the previous appeal on the Appeal Site.

Cumulative Traffic Impact

6. Hampshire County Council did not object to the previous, larger residential scheme on the Appeal Site. This position was reached by means of a reasonable appraisal of the net development impact against prevailing conditions and thus it was not refused on this basis. This position changed markedly in the response to the current, smaller Appeal Scheme in which HCC objected on the basis of it giving rise to a severe impact contrary to policy in para. 111, 100.T of the previous local plan and DM13 of the then emerging Local Plan. The application was subsequently refused on this basis.
7. In preparing my evidence I sought to establish common ground with HCC (acting on behalf of the LPA) on this matter, including agreement on the nature of base modelling for assessment and the interpretation of para. 111 of the NPPF. Unfortunately, these matters remain in dispute along with overall conclusions on the materiality of the impact. Through this process, my understanding of HCC's case has broadened to include what I consider to be a clear misapplication of para. 111 of the NPPF in addition to any dispute on the extent of impact. At the time of the preparation of my evidence, HCC's position remained that the current conditions on the local highway network could already be described as 'severe' and as such clearly any development impact would, by definition, be severe. As I set out in evidence, I consider this to be an entirely flawed application of the test within para. 111 of NPPF which I believe quite clearly requires appraisal of the development impact, and, to do so in the prevailing cumulative context. In my view reaching a conclusion on the basis of only one of these aspects would be incorrect.

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8. In contrast, my evidence sets out how I am unable to identify any clear change in local context that would support the shift in position reached by HCC and the LPA between the previous application and the Appeal scheme. I have identified no material change in prevailing traffic conditions since that previous position; no change in the nature of the highway network and no notable shift in cumulative considerations. I have also highlighted the reduction in development impact arising from the new development, relative to that previously consented and set out my view that it can be determined that the impact on the network is not severe through reasonable professional judgement, as HCC did for the previous scheme.
 9. Notwithstanding this, I have provided a comprehensive traffic modelling evidence base, developed in accordance with a scope agreed with HCC prior to the submission of the Appeal and responding to specific, but in my view unjustified, concerns regarding the efficacy of the base modelling. This has involved the preparation of a detailed VISSIM microsimulation model of the Hound Road and Satchell Lane junctions with Hamble Lane to supplement empirical local modelling of the less impacted junction of Portsmouth Road to the north. I have placed the outcomes of this modelling in the context of the criteria for severity of impact established by the Inspector on the nearby GE Aviation appeal case, to which HCC themselves place reliance. This evidence supports my opinion that the impact of the development cannot reasonably be determined to be severe and, as such, the application should not have been refused on this basis.
 10. Without prejudice to this conclusion and for completeness, I have demonstrated through my evidence how this limited and non-severe impact could be effectively mitigated by means of modest interventions in the highway network, should this be deemed appropriate. These interventions would derive overall net betterment in two of three identified peak periods.
 11. On the basis of the evidence I have submitted to this Appeal, it is my view that the application should not have been refused on the basis of the highways and transport reasons as set out in RfR2 and RfR3.