



Developments Affecting Trunk Roads and Special Roads

Highways England Planning Response (HEPR 16-01)

Formal Recommendation to an Application for Planning Permission

From: Regional Director
Operations Division
South West Region
Highways England.
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To: Cheltenham Borough Council

CC: transportplanning@dft.gsi.gov.uk
growthandplanning@highwaysengland.co.uk

Council's Reference: 16/02208/FUL

Referring to the notification of Hybrid Planning Application dated 12th January 2017, in connection with the A40 (T) / M5 J11; seeking detailed planning permission for a 5,034m² of commercial office space (Use Class B1), 502m² day nursery (Use Class D1), 1,742m² supermarket food retail unit (Class A1), a 204m² coffee shop retail unit and drive-thru (Use Classes A1 and A3), with associated parking, landscaping and infrastructure works, with all matters reserved (except access) on land at North Road West and Grovefield Way, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, notice is hereby given that Highways England's formal recommendation is that we:

- a) offer no objection;
- ~~b) recommend that conditions should be attached to any planning permission that may be granted (see Annex A – Highways England recommended Planning Conditions);~~
- ~~c) recommend that planning permission not be granted for a specified period (see Annex A – further assessment required);~~
- ~~d) recommend that the application be refused (see Annex A – Reasons for recommending Refusal).~~

Highways Act Section 175B ~~is~~ is not relevant to this application.¹

This represents Highways England formal recommendation and is copied to the Department for Transport as per the terms of our Licence.

Should you disagree with this recommendation you should consult the Secretary of State for Transport, as per the Town and Country Planning (Development Affecting Trunk Roads) Direction 2015, via transportplanning@dft.gsi.gov.uk.

Signature:



Date: 12th April 2017

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Position: Asset Manager

Highways England:

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¹ Where relevant, further information will be provided within Annex A.

Annex A Highways England recommended No Objections

HIGHWAYS ENGLAND ("we") has been appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport as strategic highway company under the provisions of the Infrastructure Act 2015 and is the highway authority, traffic authority and street authority for the Strategic Road Network (SRN). The SRN is a critical national asset and as such we work to ensure that it operates and is managed in the public interest, both in respect of current activities and needs as well as in providing effective stewardship of its long-term operation and integrity.

This response represents our formal recommendations with regard to planning application (App Ref – 16/02208/FUL) and has been prepared by Rachel Sandy of the South West Operations Division Growth and Improvement Team and Asset Manager for the SRN in Gloucestershire.

We have undertaken a review of the relevant documents supporting the planning application to ensure compliance with the current policy of the Secretary of State as set out in DfT Circular 02/2013 "The Strategic Road Network and the Delivery of Sustainable Development" and the DCLG National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), being advised on this matter by our consultants, CH2M.

Previous Correspondence

Highways England have previously been consulted on a Transport Statement (TS) submitted in support of the above application, providing comments in a HEPR dated 7th February 2017. It was Highways England's recommendation that Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC) do not grant planning permission for a period of 3 months, to allow the applicant time to address outstanding concerns regarding traffic impact on the SRN. The applicant has now responded to these comments and our response is detailed below.

Development Proposals

Highways England previously raised concerns regarding the difference in floor areas between the TS and planning application form. Clarification has now been provided by the applicant, and the differences were a result of the TS including Gross External Areas (GEA), whereas the planning application form refers to Gross Internal Areas (GIA). With clarification provided the results now match. The conclusion is accepted by Highways England, and no further action is required.

Further to Highways England's HEPR response dated February 2017, the applicant has made amendments to the development masterplan set out in the TS. Whilst the

applicant has suggested that tweaks are still possible, the land use proposals currently comprise:

- B1 Office (Detailed) – 6,593m² GEA
- B1 Office (Outline) – 8,736m² GEA
- A1 / A3 Costa Coffee drive thru – 287m² GEA
- A1 Aldi discount food retail – 2,037m² GEA
- D1 day nursery – 800m² GEA

GEA comparisons to those set out in the TS show that the only change is to the Costa Coffee drive-thru, which decreases by 17m². This change in quantum results in a two vehicle reduction (two-way vehicle trips) in both the AM and PM peak hours. This has also resulted in a minor reduction to the 'linked trip' proportions, which take into account some journeys to / from the Costa Coffee proposals.

Overall, the revised Costa Coffee drive-thru would generate 26 two-way vehicle trips in the AM peak hour and 23 two-way vehicle trips in the PM peak hour.

The applicant states that the development quanta quoted above are current values and could be subject to change. Highways England emphasise that the details on the planning application form are for what planning permission is granted. The TS should match these values or should include greater GFA values in providing a slightly robust view on trip generation.

Should any land use or GFA changes suggest higher trip generation levels to those stated on the planning application form, then these would require the submission of a new planning application and/or approval from the LPA in consultation with Highways England.

Nursery Trip Rates

Highways England previously requested clarification on the nursery trip rates presented in the TS, as these were based on employee numbers rather than GFA's.

The TS predicted that the nursery would employ 27 staff; a number which Highways England could not verify. A note prepared by Happy Days Nurseries confirms the number of staff numbers and states that '*the staff numbers for an 81 place Nursery would be 27 when full*'. It goes on to say that due to the shift patterns operated at the site, '*not all staff will be on the site at all times*'.

The applicant has also provided a comparison of trip generation using TRICS to show that the number of employees / pupils at each nursery site, do not necessarily have a relationship to the overall floor area of the respective site.

Highways England have undertaken an independent TRICS exercise based on the GFA of the proposed nursery, to ensure the number of pupils and staff are in line with those suggested for the development proposals. Trip rates identified are not considered to be materially higher than those presented in the TS. As such, Highways England accept the trip rates presented. This suggests 57 two-way vehicle trips would be generated by the nursery in the AM peak hour, with 47 two-way vehicle trips in the PM peak hour.

Net Development Trips

Taking account of the sites extant planning consent for 16,800m² of B1 employment, (Ref: 14/01323/OUT) the 'net' development proposals are predicated to generate an additional 18 and 16 additional two-way vehicles trips in the AM and PM peak hours respectively.

Trip generation for all elements (other than the nursery) of the proposed development has been previously been accepted by Highways England. Trip generation for the nursery is now also accepted. The methodology for discounting extant trips from proposed trips is also accepted by Highways England.

Under planning permission 14/01323/OUT, the site has an extant trip envelope for 441 and 460 two-way vehicle trips in the AM and PM peak hour respectively. These can be 'netted off' against the development proposals resulting in an additional impact of 18 and 16 additional two-way vehicles trips in the AM and PM peak hours respectively.

Trip Distribution / Assignment

Highways England requested trip distribution information in order to assess the impact of the proposed development on M5 Junction 11. This was based upon final trip generation values being unknown due to issues with development gross floor areas and nursery trip rates.

This information has now been presented and development trips impacting on SRN junctions has been calculated. This is shown to be less than the additional 18 and 16 additional two-way vehicles trips.

Traffic Impact

Based on the level of development trips anticipated to impact on M5 J11, taking into consideration extant peak hour trips, Highways England accepts that the proposals do not constitute a severe impact on the SRN.

Summary

The development proposals generate an additional 18 and 16 two-way vehicle trips in the AM and PM peak hour respectively. Assuming that all additional vehicles travel through M5 J11 (robust assumption), these are not believed to be a capacity or safety concerns for the SRN.

Highways England recommends 'no objections' to the development proposals.