

Agenda Item 3	Committee Date 24 August 2009	Application Number 09/00654/CCC
Application Site Croskells Farm Caton Road Quernmore Lancaster	Proposal Variation of Condition No. 2 of Permission 01/08/0821 to allow for an amended layout for Heysham M6 Park and Ride	
Name of Applicant Lancashire County Council	Name of Agent -	
Decision Target Date 29 July 2009	Reason For Delay N/A	
Case Officer	Mr Andrew Drummond	
Departure		
Summary of Recommendation	Supports the Proposal in Principle, subject to the satisfactory resolution of the listed matters.	

1.0 The Site and its Surroundings

- 1.1 The application site, not including the access road, has an approximate site area of 3.2 hectares and is situated on land to the south of the A683 Caton Road, adjoining the western boundary of the M6 Junction 34.
- 1.2 The site incorporates an existing farm complex comprising a Grade II Listed farmhouse and associated curtilage buildings, situated to at the northern boundary of the site adjoining Caton Road. The remainder of the site consists mainly of improved grassland with small areas of dense scrub and marshy grassland.
- 1.3 The Lancaster District Local Plan indicates that the application site is partially within an area of unallocated land adjoining a main access corridor (Caton Road), and partially within an area allocated as Key Urban Landscape and a Woodland Opportunity Area. To provide suitable access onto the A683 (Caton Road) the application site also includes a very small section of land designated as part of Lancaster Business Park.

2.0 The Proposal

- 2.1 The proposal is very similar to that previous reported to Committee under the reference 08/00821/CPA, but due to continued safety concerns regarding the access into the Park and Ride from the proposed M6 junction 34 northbound slip road this entrance has been redesigned and moved northwards towards Caton Road. The Park and Ride exit remains in the same location, the point where the 2 lane slip road terminates and the motorway regulations end. Beyond this point up to Caton Road, the number of lanes increase to 6 allowing 1 lane of traffic to turn left onto Caton Road towards Lancaster, 3 lanes to continue straight on over the new bridge towards the new M6 link road and Halton, 1 lane to turn right on Caton Road towards Caton and 1 lane to turn right into the Park and Ride just south of Croskell's Farm.

The result of this change is a reduction of 19 car parking spaces to 500 spaces.

Other changes include a reduction in length of the Long Bank Brook culvert, a reduction in length and height of the Long Bank Wood retaining wall, consolidating bus facilities in one central location with a 'drop-off' area and a 'pick-up' bus shelter. A welfare facility will also be provided in a purpose built building (which will be subject to a separate planning application), which will also provide public toilets, CCTV control centre and an information office.

The application seeks permission to vary Condition 2 of permission 08/00821/CPA allowing the previously approved drawings to be replaced by the revised drawings.

2.2 The promotion of 'Park and Walk' and 'Park and Cycle' from the site has required the introduction of ticket machines and barriers. The gates at the entries and exits to the car parks will incorporate height restrictions.

Cycle lockers will also be provided measuring 1.9m (l) x 0.8m (w) x 1.2m (h) each. They will be constructed of sheet steel panels, with graffiti resistant polyester powder coat in blue to match the bus shelter. They will be surface mounted and secured by stainless steel anchor bolts.

2.3 The changes described above do impact on the landscape proposal, but no more trees are lost as part of this proposal and the off-site mitigation area remains unaffected.

3.0 Site History

3.1 A number of relevant applications relating to this site have previously been received by the Local Planning Authority. These include:

Application Number	Proposal	Decision
05/01584/CPA	The construction of a new highway to complete the Heysham to M6 Link, and modify a number of other existing highways	Support
07/01177/CPA	Park and Ride application for 637 spaces	Support
08/00821/CPA	Park and Ride application for 519 spaces	Support

4.0 Consultation Responses

4.1 The following responses have been received from statutory and internal consultees:

Statutory Consultee	Response
Environmental Health	Comments not received at the time of compiling this report - comments will be reported verbally.
Tree Officer	Comments not received at the time of compiling this report - comments will be reported verbally.
Land Drainage Engineer	Comments not received at the time of compiling this report - comments will be reported verbally.
Access Officer	Comments not received at the time of compiling this report - comments will be reported verbally.

5.0 Neighbour Representations

5.1 No correspondence has been received at the time of compiling this report. Any comments subsequently received will be reported verbally.

6.0 Principal Development Plan Policies

6.1 Lancaster District Local Plan - adopted April 2004 (saved policies)

The following Lancaster District Local Plan Policies are particularly relevant to this application:

Policy T1 relates to the management of car travel within the district and seeks to make efficient use of the existing transport infrastructure and promote public transport.

Policy T8 relates specifically to Park and Ride schemes stating that the City Council, in conjunction with the County Council and Bus Operators should examine the case for Park and Ride car parks at Caton Road (A683). Furthermore this policy sets out that proposals for Park and Ride Schemes should also demonstrate by means of transport assessment that they are sited and managed to ensure that they will result in increased public transport use and reduced car journeys.

Policy E12 relates to Wildlife and Habitat Protection stating that where development is permitted, developers will be required to minimise any adverse impact or create and provide for the appropriate management of compensatory wildlife habitats.

Policy E17 relates to County Biological Heritage Sites stating that where development is permitted developers will be required to minimise adverse impacts and to compensate for these by appropriate habitat creation or enhancement measures either within the site or the immediate locality.

Policy E27 relates to new Woodland Opportunity Areas and as such outlines part of the site as a potential area for the creation of woodland.

Policy E31 relates to areas of Key Urban Landscape and seeks to safeguard important natural features. However, the policy allows development that will preserve the open nature of the area and the character and appearance of its surroundings.

Policy E32 relates to the Demolition of Listed Buildings stating that exceptional levels of demolition may be permitted where redevelopment would produce substantial benefits for the community that would outweigh the resultant loss.

Policy E47 relates to Access Corridors, this policy seeks to ensure that uses do not adversely affect the appearance of their surroundings and retain existing landscape features wherever possible and incorporate landscaping and tree planting.

6.2 Lancaster District Core Strategy - adopted July 2008

Policy E2 relates to Transportation Measures, including the protection of land for strategic transport improvements (such as the Heysham-M6 link) and provision of improved public transport solutions such as more road space for buses and other innovative solutions.

7.0 Comment and Analysis

7.1 For the purposes of this application the City Council is a statutory consultee in its role as the Local Planning Authority. The City Council has agreed an extension of time with the County Council so that the proposals could be debated at this Planning Committee. The County Council anticipates that the application will be considered at their Development Control Committee on 12 August 2009.

As the proposal does not differ significantly from the previous submission (08/00821/CPA) many of the comments raised in the relevant Committee report last time are still relevant. For convenience these are incorporated below.

7.2 Site Assessment

The Park and Ride scheme is sited on a main access corridor. The development will have two access points, one for motorway traffic travelling north (utilizing the redesigned and relocated access) and the other directly from the A683 Caton Road.

The County Council considers that the site is in an optimal location to intercept traffic travelling from the M6 motorway and other major routes to Lancaster City Centre, estimating that 40% of private cars using the facility could be attracted to the site as part of the journey to work trip alone.

Though the County Council considers that the application site offers the best location when considered against all factors in the selection process for determining its location, the current application (like the previous submission) fails to provide sufficient details of the sequential approach

taken to site selection. In land use terms the County Council must be satisfied that the possibilities of alternative sites have been fully explored prior to consideration of this application and that this site is the most appropriate taking all relative matters into consideration.

7.3 Sustainability and Accessibility

A critical part of the City Council's support for the potential development of a Park and Ride proposal for Lancaster was a request that sustainable transport measures be incorporated to ensure that the development forms part of an efficient and fully integrated transport system, that provides alternatives to private car use wherever possible by promoting the use of public transport and the role of cycling.

The previous application was accompanied by a supporting statement outlining the County Council's commitment to sustainability. They considered that the proposal would result in a freer flowing network with improved street ambience and air quality. Although it is feasible that there will be a potential reduction in traffic congestion on the A683 Caton Road due to the direct access from the motorway to the Park and Ride, the proposal fails to demonstrate that the Park and Ride would constitute a sustainable form in that it fails to provide clearer details as to how the proposal would increase public transport use and reduce car journeys.

The Local Planning Authority is of the view that the proposal should be accompanied by a comprehensive sustainable transport package which addresses issues relating to congestion, air quality and highway safety and should be delivered in accordance with the Local Transport Plan and Bus Strategy. In particular the proposal should be amended to include significant improvements to the quality bus corridor network within the District, including reallocation of road space on the A683 Caton Road to provide for a dedicated bus lane and a review of signal timing to facilitate bus priority measures. This would improve connectivity to the city centre and promote an alternative to private car use in order to alleviate existing congestion problems along the A683 Caton Road.

The County Council had previously addressed the City Council's previous concerns regarding adequate cyclepath provision and access onto the existing local cycle network with provision of the obvious link onto the River Lune cyclepath (which has been retained in the current application). The inclusion of cycle lockers is a further positive measure. Possibilities for improvements to local cycle networks could maybe be explored further to maximise effective use of the proposed Park and Cycle scheme.

Notwithstanding the comments relating to sustainability and accessibility the design of the proposal is considered appropriate in terms of vehicular access, scale and layout which have been designed to take into account the type and number of vehicles using the site. As stated above, this subject application has improved the general car park layout, its circulation space and the access in comparison to the 2 previous submissions.

7.4 Wildlife Implications

The site has been the subject of an ecological survey and an environmental management plan, which assesses the ecological impact of the proposal and the mitigation measures required. These assessments identify that the main impacts of the proposal are the losses of:

- potential bat roosts within a group of traditional farm buildings;
- a Veteran Ash Tree associated with Cottam's Farm; and
- some areas of protected hedgerow habitat within the site.

The development raises concerns regarding the potential disturbance of bat roosts and bat forage areas as a result of associated noise, vibration and lighting during both the construction and operational phases of the development. A detailed bat survey is therefore required prior to the determination of the planning application so that the full impact of the proposal on potential bat roosts can be properly assessed. The last 2 surveys were undertaken in 2003 and 2007. At this stage consideration should also be given to modification of the scheme so as to reduce disturbance to the identified roosts.

The application proposes a significant amount of compensatory landscaping within and around the site, including tree planting and replacement hedgerow planting, which will go some way to

mitigating for the loss of existing landscape features. However, the Local Planning Authority considers that further compensatory measures in the form of improvements to the County Biological Heritage Site (which adjoins the western boundary of the Park and Ride) in order to create and enhanced wildlife habitat, should also be incorporated as part of the development.

7.5 Site Archaeology & Impact upon Listed Buildings

The area for the proposed works includes a possible medieval settlement and a known Romano-British farmstead/settlement, as well as all the buildings of the Croskell's and Cottam's farm complexes, which include a Grade II Listed building and a number of stone curtilage buildings. The application proposes significant excavation and back filling of the site, and demolition of Cottam's Farm, all its surrounding curtilage buildings and Woodend. The significant buildings of Croskell's Farm would be retained, including the Grade II Listed building. It is proposed to surround the farm with additional landscaping.

The Local Planning Authority considers that the farmstead incorporates a number of important curtilage buildings that are considered to be of architectural and historical importance. As such the current level of demolition is considered unacceptable taking into account the historic importance of this part of the site. Though buildings 4, the Grade II Listed farmhouse, and building 5 (a rectangular farmhouse site to the north-east corner of the site) are being retained, building 6, which is a sandstone rubble farmhouse orientated east-west, should be incorporated within the retained scheme. It is therefore recommended that further consideration be given to the retention of a number of curtilage buildings, in particular building 6. Further to this all other buildings should be recorded to a level three standard prior to demolition.

8.0 Conclusions

8.1 The Local Planning Authority fully supports in principle the provision of a Park and Ride site in Lancaster.

However, the City Council's support for the proposal is dependent upon the incorporation of wider sustainable transport measures that will provide an alternative to private car use and ensure that the development forms part of an efficient and fully integrated transport system.

Should the application be amended to incorporate the full package of transport measures, most notably a commitment to delivering sufficient road space from the Park and Ride site to the City, then the Local Planning Authority would confirm its support for the proposal.

Recommendation

That the **City Council supports the proposal** to vary Condition 2 allowing the previously approved drawings to be replaced by the revised drawings. The Council's previous comments still stand:

1. The scheme should be delivered in conjunction with a comprehensive range of sustainable traffic and transport initiatives reinforced by evidence from travel surveys, including the delivery of sufficient road space from the Park & Ride site to the junction of Caton Road with Kingsway and improvements to public transport links to ensure that there is no modal shift from existing public transport to Park and Ride.
2. Bat Roost Survey should be carried out prior to the determination of the application.
3. The application should include compensatory enhancements to the adjoining County Biological Heritage Site.
4. The application should include a sequential analysis to consider and explore the possibilities of alternative sites.
5. Further consideration should be given to the retention of a number of curtilage buildings, in particular building 6.
6. All buildings should be demolished should be recorded to a level three standard prior to demolition.

Human Rights Act

This recommendation has been reached after consideration of the provisions of The Human Rights Act. Unless otherwise stated in this report, the issues arising do not appear to be of such magnitude to override the responsibility of the City Council to regulate land use for the benefit of the community as a whole, in accordance with national law.

Background Papers

None.