

Item 13.C

Harborough District Council Development Control
Adam & Eve St
MARKET HARBOROUGH,
Leics
LE16 7AG

Dear Sirs

Planning Application 15/00919/FUL

Planning Application 15/00865/OUT (Same to large extent but customised)

The Leicestershire Local Access Forum takes a neutral position on the developments in this area but would offer what we trust you will feel is constructive advice. First and foremost all actual and anticipated applications in the area should be looked at together as far as possible in respect of sustainable travel and access. Consideration must be given to the further applications in this area and the others which are envisaged and a holistic view taken on the impacts throughout the area. Section 106 monies can be utilised to improve the interconnectiveness of all routes outside the immediate sites.

Inevitably there will be a substantial increase in traffic from service vehicles and HGVs, and employees getting to and from work and we would like to see better infrastructure for horse riders, cyclists and walkers off-road and improved public transport, especially direct from such places as Rugby and Leicester, not just extending the route and hours of the existing service linking Lutterworth and Hinckley.

We would therefore strongly recommend enhanced non-motorised access routes and adequate safe crossing points. We also feel it essential with developments of this size, with the loss of open countryside, that consideration be given to green corridors, both to avoid isolation of wildlife populations but wherever possible to afford people a pleasant and safe route to local amenities, bus routes, the wider network of rights of way and the open countryside beyond. There has been some consideration of these issues in the application but we feel more could be done. There is an attractive lagoon envisaged on the site and we would recommend a metalled track all the way round it as this would be a strong attraction to the less able.

There is mention of the retention of existing permissible bridleways, and the creation of new permanent footpath and bridleway connections. These new connections provide access to the wider network of existing public rights of way between the villages of Ullesthorpe and Willey to the north and west of the site. These should be dedicated as PRowS as permissive routes could be withdrawn at will. There is talk of making paths cycleways but the legal status of such routes is unclear and as such we would advocate they be made into bridleways.

Bus stops are proposed to the south east of the new roundabout on Argosy Way. Providing a connection into Magna Park from Mere Lane will allow the existing bus route to divert into Magna Park from Mere Lane thus avoiding the need to join the A5 and negotiate the Cross in Hand Roundabout but is this extension adequate if so many new jobs are to be created. There will be a segregated signed cycle route running on the north side of the A4303. Via this route Magna Park can be reached in less than five minutes from Lutterworth, but cyclists from further afield could be accommodated. Woodby Lane is a narrow lightly used road that connects the NE corner of Magna Park to Ullesthorpe Road just to the west of Bitteswell. This lane is not open to through traffic but cyclists and pedestrians can access Magna Park at its western end. It is not lit however, and should perhaps be so, to make it an attractive and safe route for these, particularly during the winter months. It is highly likely that shift working will mean people leaving late at night and bus provision should also accommodate this.

We therefore recommend that Woodby Lane is made a through bridleway to Mere Lane to facilitate access for riders and pedestrians and would at the same time restore the historic route cut when the airfield was built across it and that Mere Lane itself be dedicated as a bridleway.

This would have the added benefit of enabling pedestrians, horse-riders and recreational cyclists off parts of the dangerous Ullesthorpe Road. To make this usage safe and realistic the proposed roundabout where Mere Lane joins the A5 should have a light controlled crossing. Similarly where the road from Willey comes out opposite bridleways W88 / W86 another light-controlled crossing would help this already dangerous exit.

There are other safety issues bearing in mind the increase in traffic we will see. Every opportunity should be taken to keep vehicles and other users apart. The safety of the network would be much improved if an off road link on the south west side of the A5 could join the two Willey bridleways.

Further observations:

The cycling network is patchy in this area and cannot be resolved as part of the planned developments but they could contribute to at least part of Sustrans long term ambition for the A5. The stretch involved in this development could certainly provide an off road cycleway in the verge.

The X35 path from Lutterworth should be upgraded to provide a 'sustainable' route to work from town into Magna Park.