

Item 17.B

(www.leics.gov.uk/laf)

Development Control
Blaby District Council

Via Email
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Date: 30/11/2015
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Planning Application Optimus Point Glenfield 15/1384/FUL

I am writing on behalf of the Leicestershire Local Access Forum (LAF) which is an independent statutory body, set up as a result of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW) 2000, and exists to represent the interests of everyone concerned with access to the countryside and the public rights of way network including footpaths, bridleways and byways, cycleways and areas of open access. Section 94 of the CROW act makes it a statutory function of the forum to give advice to a range of bodies, including local authorities, on access issues in respect of land use planning matters. The Secretary of State advised that in particular forums were asked to focus on the impact and options for minimising possible adverse effects, of planning policies and development proposals in respect of future public access to land and identifying and expressing support for opportunities to improve public access, or associated infrastructure, which might be delivered through planning policies or new development.

We do not support large commercial areas being created involving employees having to travel considerable distances by private vehicles and relocating this business close to its previous location is to be welcome.

Employment opportunities should as far as is possible be served by public transport and it is important to ensure off road access is available both by way of footpaths and cycle ways.

We are pleased to note that discussions are underway to extend at least one of the local bus services into the Optimus Point development area and you may wish to consider requiring a further contribution under S106 from this particular development to subsidise this service into the evenings to provide for shift changes

In addition the present development has provided funds for traffic calming on Elm Tree Avenue because of the perceived increase in usage. There is local concern that the already very dangerous stretch of Kirby Road as it becomes Main Street will also become busier and this major employment is bound to exacerbate that. We would suggest therefore that this applicant be asked to provide S106 monies to reduce this risk.

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Chairman of the Access Forum

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Turning to off road means of accessing this employment we note that cycle routes are planned within the overall development which is to be commended. There are plans for these to cross the Rothley Brook by a new bridge and for there to be a new cycleway extension running up to Sacheverell Way providing a route from Groby, Ratby and North West Leicestershire. Given this sizeable unit and the prospect of hundreds of employees requiring access we would suggest you consider making it a condition of this approval that these works be brought forward to be in place as the unit becomes operational.

Finally we would point out that the cycleway to be diverted which at present runs directly across the site which the unit is to be built on was previously a public road and as such is illuminated and has a hard surface. It is already well used and will be increasingly so and we would therefore suggest the new route should be of a similar standard if somewhat narrower. It should be extended to meet the new bridge.

Terry Kirby

Chairman, Leicestershire Local Access Forum
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