

From: Roy Denney [<mailto:roydenney@hotmail.com>]
Sent: 08 February 2018 11:26
To: 'Doyle Georgina'
Cc: 'Eric Vardy'
Subject: Broadnook

Thank you Georgina

I am the Chairman of the Planning and Travel Committee of Leicestershire Local Access Forum based at County Hall. The Forum 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. Access includes promoting the use of such opportunities as there are, to improve the health and general well being of the population, and public transport to get to those areas.

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 developments.

The group members come from a range of backgrounds. We include landowners and managers, farmers, a representative of the NFU, a former Director of the Cooperative Society, and a retired Commercial Banking Manager. Amongst our number we also have a Trustee and now Vice Chairman of the Air Ambulance Service who was also Chairman of the East Midlands Ambulance Service. In addition we have members of a number of user groups all very knowledgeable in their own fields and the Forum has a lot of skills to offer and is well placed to assist the Authority.

In the years since our formation we have advised and assisted many authorities with major projects and have also worked directly with developers to help shape their ambitions. We have contributed to the debate about the revitalisation of Thurmaston and were involved in the Connect2 project which enhanced Watermead Park and the approaches to it. We also made constructive comment in the process of the arrangements for Garendon Park.

For the last few years we have been assisting with the development of the Charnwood Forest Regional Park and I serve on the steering group which Cllr. Eric Vardy chaired and I am on the development board.

The Forum had an ongoing dialogue with the agents acting for the developers of Broadnook and indeed did make observations to your authority on this case back in 2016 a copy of which I attach.

We have no reason to amend the comments made then but would add that Longslade Secondary School will presumably service the children from these houses and they need a good off road access route which further supports the argument for the provision of a footbridge over the A46.

Since our original discussions the need for more housing has become even more apparent and also raises the question of types of homes. The simple answer is all types. A project of this scale will eventually create a distinct community and as the second generation emerges there should be provision for them to become independent and yet stay within the community. This therefore means some apartments but perhaps more importantly as they marry and start families, affordable homes to buy near to friends and family.

There will always be a need for more housing including people living in the city wishing to better their accommodation so semis and smaller three-bed detached will be popular. In the interests of a genuinely mixed community there will also have to be some larger ones as well. Developers will always favour larger properties where there is more profit potential but the planning process can ensure a more mixed approach.

We would welcome an opportunity to revisit the plans as they evolve and there may well have been changes we are unaware of. There did seem to be two areas which we wondered about in the original proposals. Given the age profile of the people likely to be the early occupants of this project we do feel a nursery should be considered and doubt the demand for a supermarket with the increase in online shopping and delivery and the proximity of the Beaumont Leys shops. A good convenience store would probably be adequate.

Roy

Roy J Denney

Leicestershire Local Access Forum,

c/o Room 700, County Hall, Leicester, LE3 8RJ
(www.leics.gov.uk/laf)

accessforum@leics.gov.uk

Telephone - County Hall 0116 305 7086
Private 0116 233 8604

August 2016

To Charnwood BC

P/16/1660/2

Outline permission for Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) Broadnook

The Leicestershire Local Access Forum (LLAF) wishes to make some observations about this planning application. The LLAF 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.

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural affairs has issued guidance for forums including Section 94 of the CROW Act which 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.

As such we will be commenting on any ultimate detailed planning application and reserved matters but we would wish to give you an overview in this early stage. Without prejudice to our ultimate stance or the right of individual members to respond in any way they see fit there are points we wish to bring to your attention

We are not convinced this green field areas should be developed as there appear to be brown field sites that can be built on within the borough but notwithstanding that, we have suggestions about these plans as outlined so far. We do not support piecemeal development and this proposal does at least give scope for a comprehensive and sustainable solution to housing requirements.

If we accept that there is to be development here, this actually looks like a fairly well thought out scheme. We have followed its development carefully and have met with the developers twice.

On the face of it we should see access into and through the area improved although we can suggest some further improvements. We are in particular interested in the provision of green spaces, green corridors and off road public rights of way. We would also wish to see adequate public transport provision.

In general terms when assessing these plans we would ask you to bear in mind that the benefits of the footpath, bridleway and cycleway network are multi-dimensional and have impacts on sustainable transport, green infrastructure, recreation, tourism, health and general well-being. Bridleways and Cycleways for local commutes should be provided and something "behind-the-hedge" would be best. Wherever possible the routes should be such that motorised traffic is kept quite separate. Similarly there should be scope to create footpaths for walkers keeping them away from riders. 'Behind the hedge' routes when a development fronts an existing road can take walkers, cyclists and horse riders off the road and these should be linked to any existing such routes, or provide that any future developments can extend them. Very often developments have a 'green edge' to screen them and it is normally feasible to put a track in this strip. There can however be significant problems in how to start and end them. Coming straight out from behind the hedge when there is no footway may be quite dangerous.

Gates/gaps/stiles should be as easy to use as the requirements permit to assist the less able and those pushing buggies etc. With the massive increase in traffic on the roads, horse riders and cyclists need alternative off-road routes and these would have the added benefit of easing traffic flow as well as traffic safety. Dog walkers also need to be catered for so that nuisance is minimised. If this location is to be developed the scope of it gives good opportunities to satisfy everybody.

With the huge amount of housing which is proposed in the area there is a need, and should be an opportunity, for new and existing public rights of way to be opened up to all users; walkers, riders, dog walkers and those relying on public transport. There are also very real opportunities to link these access routes to neighbouring communities, facilities and amenities by linking up with existing rights of way.

We are encouraged by the developer's apparent ambitions to provide a generous framework of open spaces, parkland and woodland, all assisting biodiversity but it is essential these are linked to each other and to the wider countryside by green corridors along which wildlife can migrate.

Obviously a safe, pleasant walking and cycling network within the site is welcome but again it must link in properly with the wider network and we would like to see adequate provision for horse riders through the site. Off road paths should link to any schools, health care facilities bus stops, shops and sporting facilities wherever possible. There are two large open access areas fairly near this development, Watermead Country Park to the south east and Castle Hill Country Park to the south west. Off-road routes out of this development should take every opportunity to allow passage towards those facilities. Once Castle Hill is reached there is largely off-road routing through to Bradgate Park and once in Watermead people can follow the river Soar all the way to Leicester off road.

If the main access is to be from the A6 at a new signalised roundabout with a local two-way connection to Loughborough Road, this is where bridleway J100 and footpath J53 join the A6 from the east. This junction when created ideally should allow for safe passage for walkers and riders. This was a route favoured by Sustrans when the Mountsorrel/Rothley bypass (the current A6) was built allowing access to quieter roads and a link from into Watermead Country Park. It would provide an excellent link for your residents to this facility. The proposed tunnel under the A6, south of this new roundabout partially satisfies this need for a safe crossing for vulnerable road users.

Ideally we would also wish to an East-West riding route through the development to link to these crossings. This could utilise an upgraded J54 footpath using the bridge under the Great Central Railway at the Thurcaston end.

For walkers and cyclists this would provide a route from the development to the Beaumont Leys employment and shopping area and a recreational circuit with bridleway J59 between Rectory Rd, Thurcaston and the Town Green in Rothley for all users including horse riders.

We are pleased to see that they have taken the opportunity here to much improve the present alignment of J54 at the A46 end. The present alignment on the top of the embankment, inside the highway boundary, resulted from the changes when the A46 was created in its present form and it is far from being the most pleasant of walks.

There are increasing employment opportunities across the A46 from this site and a footbridge across would give access to these and also assist access to the park and ride bus service.

To the North we would like to see better access to J55. An off road link should run from the new roundabout to meet this path where it turns north away from the stream. This would provide an off road route for new residents to the Rothley facilities. Similarly if there is to be a Doctor's surgery on site, Rothley residents could access that as to the best of our knowledge they have no doctor at present.

On the subject of bus provision, we would assume that most of the residents would desire to shop in Leicester or Loughborough, so the existing bus links should be supported to divert into this development but we would point out that existing 126 / 127 routes already have long journeys which should not be lengthened by a slow loop through this development. A single stop just inside the edge of the development would not make the routes materially worse which should satisfy any need to travel north. Use of and access to the Park & Ride service should be facilitated for those going south. There is talk of a local service and as there are numerous other developments in this quadrant, if a bus service is required throughout this development and it is to be sustainable and self financing down the road it should be a dedicated service covering other nearby developments as well. There are such developments at Hallam Fields and Ashton Green with smaller ones in Rothley and Mountsorrel. Ashton Green is in close proximity to the Beaumont Leys shopping area where residents of these new houses may well wish to shop and might find employment so any dedicated service could provide a link to that location as well.

There is mention of the privately run Great Central Railway and claims that in the future it may bring forward commuter opportunities to both Leicester and Loughborough. We feel this is a bit disingenuous as there seems almost no possibility of a restored link to Leicester

We trust you find these suggestions constructive and that you will bear them in mind with the various stages of this development.

Terry Kirby, Chairman,
Leicestershire Local Access Forum,
c/o Room 700, County Hall, Leicester, LE3 8RJ
(www.leics.gov.uk/laf)

accessforum@leics.gov.uk

Telephone - County Hall 0116 305 7086