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UNITED KINGDOM

30 May 2024

Project/File: 333101034

Planning Policy
Canterbury City Council
Military Road
Canterbury
Kent
CT1 1YW

Dear Sir / Madam,

**Reference: Canterbury Local Plan Representations
On behalf of Barratt David Wilson Homes**

These representations are prepared by Stantec UK Ltd (Stantec) on behalf of our Client, Barratt David Wilson Homes (BDW), who have land interests at Saxon Fields, Thanington to the south west of Canterbury. BDW is in the process of building homes at Saxon Fields and as part of this has an obligation to deliver a new coastbound off slip junction to the A2 at Wincheap. These representations specifically relate to this obligation.

As set out below, we are concerned the strategy for the South West Canterbury Strategic Development Area could create conflicts between the Council's preferred strategy for a new A2 off slip junction and the extant consent at Saxon Fields, Thanington.

Background

Saxon Fields forms part of a Canterbury Local Plan 2017 Strategic Allocation for 'Land at and adjacent to Cockering Farm, Thanington' (Site 11). The Saxon Fields development was granted Outline planning permission (CA/18/00346) - 750 residential units, 4,000 m2 of business use, 1,000 m2 of retail/service uses, 5,000 m2 of residential institutions, including hospice and nursing home, 2,000 m2 of community and leisure uses; primary school; extended westbound slip road on the A2. Development begun in 2019, with 218 homes completed to date.

As referenced above, the consent included an obligation for the construction of a new A2 slip road. This is to be located to the north of Thanington, linking the A2 and the A28, as it enters the Wincheap commercial area of Canterbury. The exact configuration and design was subject to a separate application.

The Local Plan 2017 identified the need for this junction through both the Cockering Farm allocation and supporting text in the Plan:

Canterbury also suffers from congestion at peak times particularly to the south from the A2 junction at Bridge. This junction now requires substantial upgrading and will need to be provided as part of any development to the south of Canterbury. The local plan is therefore proposing new relief roads for Herne and Sturry and a new/ improved A2 junction at Bridge, together with a new eastbound A2 off slip at Wincheap and extended westbound slip

road off the A2 at Wincheap, to be provided as part of the development of the strategic sites.

The requirement for the new slip road was secured through conditions and the legal agreement of application ref. CA//15/01479 including:

- before the occupation of 300 units the developer shall advise the City Council and Kent County Council whether it proposes to carry out the slip road works, or if not, to make a payment to the Highway Authority to commission the works
- before the occupation of the 450th unit, to ensure that the slip road is complete.

A previous consent for a slip road was agreed in May 2018 (application ref. 18/00235) for:

Construction of a new eastbound (coastbound) A2 off slip, associated reconfiguration of both Ten Perch Road and the Ten Perch Road/A28 junction, modified footpath/cycle routes, ground re-profiling, lighting, surface water attenuation features and landscaping

Whilst this confirms the principle, the approval has since lapsed without being implemented.

An alternative slip road design has now been submitted to Canterbury City Council, pending determination (ref. CA/23/02167). This follows the previous approval, as well as up-to-date design requirements of National Highways (forming part of the Strategic Road Network). The application is for:

Construction of new Eastbound slip road, associated reconfiguration of Ten Perch Road and the Ten Perch Road/A28 junction, modification of a footpath and cycle route, ground re-profiling, surface water, lighting and landscaping

BDW has also submitted a Deed of Variation (ref. CA/24/00605) to the legal agreement referenced above to amend the first trigger from 300 units to 332 units. This is currently pending determination.

Emerging Local Plan (Reg 18)

A key element of the emerging Local Plan proposals is the consolidation of growth along the southwestern boundary of Canterbury to create a new 'South West Canterbury Strategic Development Area' (SWCSDA). This seeks to integrate existing planned growth from the 2017 Local Plan (Saxon Fields / Cockering Farm) with the proposed new allocation at Land at Merton Park.

Merton Park is located directly to the south-east of Saxon Fields and comprises land to accommodate circa. 2,250 new homes, new hospital facilities, a sports hub including professional rugby and football facilities / stadium, education and community uses, and a new Park and Ride.

The concept masterplans for both the SWCSDA and Merton Park show provision of a new junction off the A2 further south than that approved as part of the Saxon Fields development at Wincheap, instead directly serving the Merton Park site. The supporting text references the need for a new A2 junction (singular). Policy C6 (Land at Merton Park) identifies a need for a "new access from and to the coastbound A2 carriageway to serve the site" and for "new access from the A2 should be delivered prior to occupation of any dwellings". Similarly, Policy SS4 (movement and Transportation Strategy for the District) identifies a need for "new A2 access to the Kent and Canterbury Hospital".

Instead of a new slip at Wincheap, the emerging Plan seemingly proposes a new 'South West Canterbury Link Road' which would connect Saxon Fields and Merton Park, through Land to the North of Hollow Lane (to the south of Saxon Fields). Policy C11 (South West Canterbury Link Road) identifies that land will be

safeguarded to deliver this link road including provision of new on/off slips on A2 coastbound and a link via Saxon Fields to the A28. The concept masterplans (referenced above) show the connection to the A2 being through Merton Park.

Policy C11 states that proposals which would prejudice the effective implementation of the South West Canterbury Link Road would be refused.

In addition to the above, the Draft Canterbury District Transport Strategy (2024) references:

- The Merton Park strategic allocation to include a new park and ride accessible from a new A2 junction which will serve motorists coming from the A2 west, with Wincheap remaining to serve A28 west;
- The Wincheap off slip proposed through Thanington Park / Cockering Farm (also known as Saxon Fields) to potentially be replaced by a scheme at Merton Park; and
- A A2 off-slip and site for new Park and Ride at Merton Park, as an alternative to Thanington.

Location of new A2 off-slip

As drafted, it appears the emerging Local Plan favours the provision of a new A2 off-slip at Merton Park, providing access to this new community, sports facilities and an expanded Canterbury hospital. Further, this would, once delivered, serve the SWCSDA alongside the proposed South West Canterbury Link Road. There are clear advantages in this approach in respect of increasing park and ride capacity / options (inc. not impacting the existing Wincheap park and ride) and facilitating growth in this new area of Canterbury.

Whilst BDW have no objection to this in principle, there is a conflict with the off-slip approved as part of the Saxon Fields development, which BDW are currently obliged to gain permission for and deliver. It is unlikely National Highways will deem the delivery of both off-slips necessary in highway terms.

CCC should make it clear what their preferred option is and ensure the evidence underpinning the Plan, including any highway modelling, reflects this. Further, CCC should work with BDW to ensure delivery of housing at Saxon Fields is not frustrated by the existing obligations (inc. any need for deeds of variation to the S106 and variations to planning conditions). In this regard, a Deed of Variation of pending, as referenced earlier in these Representations, which would provide the extra time necessary for the emerging Local Plan to progress and provide more certainty on which option/s for a new A2 slip is being progressed.

As it currently stands the lack of clarity could lead to a significant delay in housing delivery at Saxon Fields, and lead to issues in respect of matters of 'soundness' as the draft Plan progresses to Examination.

BDW are happy to work with CCC and the promoters of Merton Park to ensure a coordinated approach delivery of the preferred option for a new A2 off-slip, whether that be at Wincheap or Merton Park.

Regards,

Joshua Mellor
Planning Director

