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Sent: 15 September 2020 12:47
To: Markwell, Jonathan <Jonathan.Markwell@reading.gov.uk>
Subject: FW: 55 Vastern Rd, Reading (200188) - Agenda and attachments for meeting on Monday 14th September

OFFICIAL

Hi Jon,

Further to our meeting yesterday morning I thought it best to get some comments to you quickly for the applicant to address.

Internal Vehicle Access Arrangements

I still have concerns regarding the turning facility provided within the application site. I would re-emphasise my comments from the meeting that I have no objection to vehicles crossing the footway / cycleway but it is the need for vehicles to reverse over the route that I specifically have concerns about. I reference the following points from Manual for Streets below, to which the application would be at odds with.

6.8.8 Reversing causes a disproportionately large number of moving vehicle accidents in the waste/recycling industry. Injuries to collection workers or members of the public by moving collection vehicles are invariably severe or fatal. BS 5906: 2005 recommends a maximum reversing distance of 12 m. Longer distances can be considered, but any reversing routes should be straight and free from obstacles or visual obstructions.

7.10.3 Routeing for waste vehicles should be determined at the concept masterplan or scheme design stage (see paragraph 6.8.4). Wherever possible, routing should be configured so that the refuse collection can be made without the need for the vehicle having to reverse, as turning heads may be obstructed by parked vehicles and reversing refuse vehicles create a risk to other street users.

I appreciate that the number of servicing movements maybe low but the interaction of vehicles reversing over the pedestrian / cycle route which would be utilised by commuters and leisure users including children would be detrimental to highway safety and cannot be supported.

The applicant has also referred to the development of Colliers Way as a comparison to this application however, the servicing arrangements for that site did not include any reversing movements over the pedestrian / cycle route and a dedicated off carriageway turning head within the development car park was provided.

New Pedestrian/Cycle Route through site / Justification for Northern part of the proposed cycle/footway

I note from the document submitted in advance of the meeting, and as discussed in the meeting, that the applicant does not believe that there is a Policy requirement for a direct route and has referred to Paragraph 5.9 below, of the Reading Station Area Framework.

5.9 A major 'city spine' – a direct pedestrian route – is proposed through the historic core, the Station Area and through to the Thames. This spine is based on the north-south link which is the

most significant movement corridor in the RCAAP, and is vital to the success of development in this area. The spine will extend across the Thames with a new footbridge(s) and new riverside parks, which can act as amenity space for new residents. The spine will include enhancements including wider pavements and greater pedestrian priority in Station Road. North of the railway, the spine will incorporate a 'green link' towards the river. Buildings will face onto the spine rather than away from it, and, on all parts of the spine south of Vastern Road, the frontages will be enlivened with active uses including retail and leisure.

However it should be stressed that this section relates to Public Realm and would not feature the requirements of cycling. I would however draw the applicants attention to the Transport section of the Reading Station Area Framework and in particular Paragraph 11.10, which explicitly refers to a direct route for pedestrians and cyclists, see below.

11.10 High-density mixed-use development in the Station Area will maximise the potential for local walking and cycling trips. The framework will help to secure high quality pedestrian and cycle facilities to include routes that are direct, well lit, naturally surveilled and safe.

I would also reiterate the comments made within my previous written statement that referred to Local Transport Note 1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design dated July 2020, which provides guidance on proposed cycle facilities, see extracts below:

18) Cycle routes must flow, feeling direct and logical.

Users should not feel as if they are having to double back on themselves, turn unnecessarily, or go the long way round. Often, cycling schemes - when crossing a main road, for instance - require cyclists to make a series of ninety-degree turns to carry out a movement that a motor vehicle at the same location could do without turning at all. Schemes should be based on a proper understanding of how people actually behave rather than how they might be expected to behave.

4.2.2 When people are travelling by cycle, they need networks and routes that are:

a Coherent;

a Direct;

a Safe;

a Comfortable; and

a Attractive

4.2.7 Directness is measured in both distance and time, and so routes should provide the shortest and fastest way of travelling from place to place. This includes providing facilities at junctions that minimise delay and the need to stop. **Minimising the effort required to cycle, by enabling cyclists to maintain momentum, is an important aspect of directness.** An indirect designated route involving extra distance or more stopping and starting will result in some cyclists choosing the most direct, faster option, even if it is less safe.

It is appreciated that the route would be shared with pedestrians but this would not detract from the basic design principles that should be adhered to when designing the proposed route through the site. In addition and as I highlighted at the meeting the pedestrian bridge is already accessed via straight ramps on either side of the river albeit that the ramp turns 90° on the southern side heading east to west. The Highway Authority are unaware of any speeding cyclists, issues or conflicts along the existing route and therefore do not believe that any conflicts would arise from providing a direct / straighter route within the site.

It was stated within the meeting that the development will increase the density of pedestrian movements given residential flows attributed to the development. However, Local Transport Note 1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design states the following on shared use design:

6.5.9 Research shows that cyclists alter their behaviour according to the density of pedestrians – as pedestrian flows rise, cyclists tend to ride more slowly and where they become very high cyclists typically dismount. It should therefore rarely be necessary to provide physical calming features to slow cyclists down on shared use routes, but further guidance on this, and reducing conflict more generally, is given in Chapter 8, section 8.2.

As I alluded to within the meeting there could be other design features that could aid reduce speeds if this was necessary including the alignment of the route on the podium in the same way as the 90° turn does on the southern side of the bridge.

Overarching all of the above is Paragraph 5.4.6 of the Local Plan which states:

The successful development of this area hinges on improved accessibility by public transport, and improved permeability for pedestrians and cyclists. In terms of permeability, improving links for pedestrians and cyclists through the centre, particularly in a north-south direction, is one of the key principles for the spatial strategy of the centre, along with removing barriers to access within the centre. If visual links are also provided, this will help change the perception of the area north of the station as a separate entity. The opening of the underpass under the station and the provision of a new pedestrian and cycle bridge over the Thames have recently helped to achieve this vision, but further improvements can still be made. Ensuring active frontages along these routes will assist these to become attractive links, as will the provision of new areas of open space. This is particularly important on the route between the shopping core, the station and the Thames. **In particular, on the Riverside site (CR11g), achieving this north-south link is the main priority for the site, and this should be given substantial weight in development management.**

Given the above it is clear through Policy and design guidance that the development must include a direct north south route and that this is the main priority for the site.

Design of Access to Southern Towpath

The Council have commenced the process that would permit cycling along the towpath and although this may not have reached a conclusion the scheme should ensure that suitable design standards are included within the site as this would form part of the desirable route to and from the town centre. The route will also become the desire line to NCN Route 5 to the east of the site, as previously identified within previous comments.

The Highway Authority therefore does not agree with the comments provided.

Waste Collection Strategy

The submitted information address the concerns regarding Bin store No. 4 but as per previous comments other bin stores were located in excess of 10m which is the design recommendation and the distance to which RBC refuse collection team work to. It would therefore need to be confirmed what arrangements will be put in place for all refuse stores that exceed the distance to ensure that bins are not left obstructing the surrounding footways.

Disabled Parking Bays

In principle I am happy that the location of the disabled bays are acceptable but the development must include locations where pedestrians can access the surrounding footways and this should be included on revised plans.

Cycle Store Design

It has been stated that in addition to the 2.35m headroom that is provided at Building D, there is an additional 0.5m headroom provided as part of the service area. At the location of the cycle store this will remain clear and as such provide an overall headroom of 2.85m and suitable for the josta style racks. I am happy that this would be acceptable but section drawings should be provided confirming this.

I must also stress that access locations for Blocks C and D are still to be addressed.

If you have any questions regarding the above please let me know.

Kind regards,

Darren Cook

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