

Travelodge ASDA

In March 2012 the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) introduced the following statement:

“Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe”

Since then there has been substantial uncertainty with regard to what constitutes a “severe impact” and how it can be appropriately quantified;

The update of the NPPF in July 2018 attempted clarification of the terminology:

“Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe”

Local Plan Inspector Reports and Appeal Decisions continue to be regularly monitored to understand appropriate interpretation and application of the ‘severe impact’.

The interpretation of severe impact has been tested at various planning appeals and local plan inspector reports as follows.

- Inspector Mike Fox summarized his interpretation of a ‘severe impact’ which acts as a useful reference point for decision makers:

“The Council agreed that mere congestion and inconvenience was not sufficient to trigger the ‘severe’ test but rather it was a question of the consequences of such congestion”.

- These consequences relate to the following associated considerations:
 - Highway safety (collision trends) or blocking of adjacent junctions;
 - Ease of access from side roads and route choice;
 - Safe and convenient pedestrian / cycle facilities.

The design of Traffic Signals Roundabout to replace the existing staggered crossroads was completed in 2016 and was designed using 2014 traffic flows, plus projected future flows from committed development sites, with allowances for windfall sites and future traffic growth within the area. As a result, this junction currently has spare capacity which can be utilised to accommodate the out of peak traffic flow patterns from this” proposed windfall” development without causing safety or severe impact.

At some festive times of the year vehicular traffic leaving ASDA find it difficult to join the roundabout and results in long queues within the retail site. This situation could be improved by the installation of traffic control on this access, but it is not adopted highway and is a scheme that can only be carried out by ASDA. The occasional queuing within the site does not cause safety or severe impact on the highway

Given the NPPF guidance this application could not be refused and defended at any subsequent appeal.

