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APP/24/00342

Date

03 July 2024

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For the attention of Kayleigh Taylor:

Planning reference: APP/24/00342

Site location: Woodcroft Farm Development Site, Woodcroft Lane, Waterlooville

Proposal: Outline Planning Application for the development of up to 190 units, with associated vehicular access, infrastructure and landscaping (all matters reserved except access).

Consultation response: No Objection subject to obligations and conditions

Thank you for consulting Hampshire Countryside Service (the Service) as Highway Authority in respect of Public Rights of Way (PROW) and Commons Registration Authority. We also manage Country Parks and Countryside Sites throughout Hampshire. Please accept this as our response to the above application, taking into account the material considerations relating to PROW, Commons and impacts to Hampshire County Council (HCC) Country Parks and Countryside Sites.

Site Context:

- The development site is located in an area with an extensive PROW network that provides public off-road access to local amenities, such as a Woodcroft Primary School, Wecock Recreation Ground, the Acorn Community Centre and Wecock Common, as well as to the countryside and PROW network northwest of the site for recreation.

- Horndean Byway Open to All Traffic 46 (BOAT 46) runs east from Eastland Gate adjacent to the site's north boundary, terminating at the site's northeast corner at a junction with Havant Restricted Byway 523 (RB 523) and Havant Bridleway 1b (BW 1b).
- RB 523 continues southeast to Reed Walk/Horndean Cycle Route, from which Woodcroft Primary School can be accessed.
- BW 1b runs south adjacent to the site's east boundary, is crossed by Merritt Way close to the site's southeast corner and ends at a junction with Havant Bridleway 1a (BW 1a), which runs parallel to the Recreation Ground.
- Horndean Bridleway 30 (BW 30) runs southeast from the junction of Eastland Gate and BOAT 46 along an unadopted surface adjacent to the site's southwest boundary, continuing directly south to the district boundary where it becomes Denmead Bridleway 42 (BW 42) and continues south to a junction with BW 1a and the Horndean Cycle Route.

A copy of the Definitive Map of Rights of Way and Definitive Statement and Countryside Sites can be found at [The definitive map and statement | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://hants.gov.uk/the-definitive-map-and-statement)

Planning Policy:

This response has shown regard to the following relevant planning policy and guidance:

- National Planning Policy Framework (2023) para. 96c); 104; 108; 110; 114; 116; 124.
- Havant Borough Core Strategy (2011) Policy CS20 Transport and Access Strategy.
- HCC Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) (2024) Policies:
 - C6 "Encourage sustainable travel behaviour."
 - C9 "Protecting the environment."
 - HP1 "Deliver the infrastructure required to support a large-scale shift towards walking and cycling for everyday trips."
 - HP3 "Widen participation and broaden the appeal of walking and cycling as a natural travel choice."
 - RT2 "Sustainable access to the countryside."
 - AM2 "Managing and maintaining the existing highway asset."

Commentary:

The Service welcomes the applicant's statements in the Planning Statement (PS) paras. 7.24 and 7.25:

7.24 "The development seeks to create new access points onto this bridleway network, allowing future residents enhanced access to the countryside as well as sustainable access to existing communities and services to the south and east of the site."

7.25 "The BOAT that runs adjacent to the northern boundary of the site is managed by HCC as a public right of way. However, at the public consultation, it was raised that the BOAT is currently in a poor state of repair and can be subject to anti-social behaviour due to its discrete location. Whilst the development will provide some natural surveillance to the BOAT, the applicant is keen to engage with HCC on its state of repair."

It is, however, also noted from the Transport Assessment (TA) para. 4.11 that the applicant believes discussion regarding PROW improvement schemes should take place at the Reserved Matters, rather than Outline, stage, perhaps indicating a view that PROW is a Landscape matter. This is not the case - PROW, as public highway, falls under Access and must, therefore, be considered at the Outline application stage, which also ensures any developer obligations to the rights of way outside the site boundary can be secured within an S106 agreement.

BOAT 46 and BW30 financial obligation

The Service's Rights of Way Access team has carried out a recent inspection of these PROW. BOAT 46 requires extensive improvements to repair its surface, which is overgrown, as well as broken and cratered in some places, to make it safely accessible to the public, including the hundreds of new residents that shall desire to access it directly from the site for their recreational and day-to-day needs. BW30 also needs remedial works to ensure the route of the bridleway is clear and suitable for year-round use.

The total cost to the Service to carry out the works is calculated at £208,535, to be secured in a Section 106 agreement (index-linked and subject to HCC review prior to signing of S106).

Site connections to PROW

The Illustrative Landscape Masterplan shows three proposed footway connections to BOAT 46 in the western half of the development and one to BW30 on the southwest boundary. These connections would be welcomed, however, given the

adjacent PROW are all lawfully usable by cyclists, the Service hopes that the proposed footways are/will be intended by the developer for cycle use as well.

Another footway, named 'Existing Footpath' in the Illustrative Landscape Masterplan, links to BOAT 46 in the centre of the site's north boundary and runs south through the middle of the site and then west inside and parallel to the southern boundary, leaving the site and linking to BW30 a short distance later. Cycle access over this footway would again be welcomed by the Service for connecting into the byway and bridleway, however, as with the proposed footways noted earlier, it shall be at the developer's discretion to allow this, with the Service having no legal interest in these routes.

To further improve the site's permeability, the Service requests new connections are proposed by the developer that connect to BOAT 46 in the eastern half of the site. These shall provide residents of this parcel with a non-vehicular route to the byway directly from the site, rather than using the site's vehicle access to Merritt Way and turning north up BW1b to reach it. A link at the site's southeast corner to BW1b is also requested, to give residents of the eastern parcel the most direct route possible to Wecock Recreation Ground and BW1a, which leads towards Rachel Madocks School and Wecock Common, as well as the countryside to the west via Denmead Bridleway 41.

Surface specifications for the proposed foot/cycle links to PROW shall be required prior to their installation for the Service's approval.

Proposed eastern vehicle access crossing of BW1b off Merritt Way

In support of active travel and LTP4 the Service requests this be designed to give priority of movement to bridleway users, with road users required to stop and give way at all times when encountering walkers, cyclists and equestrians using the PROW. This would protect the continuity of the right of way and accord with relevant national planning policy.

Conclusion

The Service raises no objection to this application, subject to the following obligations and conditions. Should these not be agreed to by the applicant, the Service would object to this application and recommend its refusal by the planning authority, on the grounds that it would not accord with local and national planning policy regarding sustainable modes of transport and public highway infrastructure, in this case Public Rights of Way:

Obligations

A financial contribution shall be paid by the applicant, in full and prior to commencement of on-site works, of £208,535 to Hampshire County Council Countryside Service to undertake works for the improvement of Horndean Byway Open to All Traffic 46 and Horndean Bridleway 30. This figure shall be secured in a Section 106 agreement and shall be index-linked from the date the Section 106 is completed, in line with BCIS all in tender price index.

Conditions

1. No works to the surface of any Public Right of Way shall be carried out without prior approval of the HCC Countryside Service, the Highway Authority for PROW. Any damage caused to the surface of a PROW by construction traffic will be required to be restored to the satisfaction of HCC Countryside Service as soon as possible.

Reason: In the interests of public safety.

2. No vehicles, machinery, equipment, materials, spoil, scaffolding, or anything else associated with the works, use or occupation of the development, shall be left on or near to any Public Right of Way as to cause obstruction, hindrance or a hazard to the legitimate users. The public retain the right to use the PROW network at all times.

Reason: In the interests of public safety.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Miles
Countryside Planning Support Officer
Hampshire Countryside Service