

Appendix 15

Transport / Access Issues

Proposal

The applicant proposes to access the site via a new access from the north side of the A583 (Preston New Road). Traffic to the site could travel either east or west along the A583 in order to gain access to the M55 at junctions 3 or 4. Both routes to the motorway are comprised of major roads and would not require HGV traffic to pass through major built up areas.

The access would be created by breaking through the existing hedgerow on the north side of the A583 to create an access point of sufficient width to allow two way passages of HGV's. The access road to be surfaced to withstand HGV traffic would then lead to the site compound. The works to create the access would require the removal of approximately 190m of hedgerow including two trees in order to create the required visibility splays.

In the vicinity of the site access, the A583 has a large central hatched area arising from when the road used to have three lanes with a central overtaking lane. The applicant proposes to use part of the central hatched area in order to create a right turning lane for vehicles entering the site from the east.

The ES includes an assessment of traffic impacts which includes details of the anticipated traffic flows and an assessment of likely impacts in terms of highway capacity and safety.

The traffic movements associated with the development would vary over the duration of the project depending upon the activities being undertaken. During stage 1 (construction of the site), which would last approximately 2 months, there would be an average of 22 two way HGV movements per day (maximum of 48). During stage 2 (mobilisation of rig, drilling of first borehole and demobilisation of rig) lasting five months, there would be an average of 14 two way HGV movements (maximum of 50). For drilling of the subsequent three wells, the duration of the movements would be over a shorter period of three months but would equate to around 17 two way HGV movements per day. For hydraulic fracturing, (taking one to two months for each well) the average two way HGV movements would be around 10 per day. For the initial flow testing, (around three months), it is anticipated that the average two way movements would be around 5 per day. The extended flow testing would generate minimal HGV movements whilst the decommissioning and restoration of the site over approximately 2 months would generate an average of 22 two way HGV movements.

The peak traffic flows will occur as a result of combined traffic associated with activities at more than one well. The total traffic numbers in the ES are based on such conditions. The peak traffic generated would be around 50 two way HGV movements per day which would occur for around one week on eight occasions over the life of the project.

The forecast traffic flows are below the thresholds in Department for Transport Guidance for Transport Assessments which define when a full transport assessment is required. The main traffic impacts arising from the development therefore relate to the size of vehicles rather than vehicle numbers. The assessment has therefore concentrated on selection of the appropriate access routes to the site.

Policy

The policies of the NPPF support sustainable development as does policy NPPF 1 of the Joint Lancashire Minerals and Waste Local Plan – Site Allocation and Development Management Policies. Policy DM2 of the Joint Lancashire Minerals and Waste Local Plan – Site Allocation and Development Management Policies seeks to ensure that proposals do not have an unacceptable impact on amenities.

Summary of consultations and representations

The Highways Agency has raised no objection subject to the traffic levels not exceeding those predicted for the strategic highways network and that the costs of any mitigation to the highway assets needs to be covered by the instigator should damage occur due to project activities

LCC Developer Support (Highways): No objection subject to conditions and notes. The proposal is temporary in nature. The proposed access routes are via A583 Preston New Road from both the Preston and Blackpool directions as well as utilising the M55 via junctions 3, near Medlar, and Junction 4 (Peel Hill). The M55 forms part of the Strategic Road Network and the Highways Agency have indicated the presented forecast volume of traffic generated by the development would not be likely to result in a material impact upon their network.

The A583 Preston New Road is a principal Distributor Road between Blackpool and Preston and it is considered that the increase in traffic from the proposal (which includes a large proportion of HGV's) can be accommodated on this part of the network.

The existing traffic figures on the network and the forecast volume generated by the development are presented in the submitted Transport Statement. The ES includes a number of tables that highlight 12hour traffic data for HGV's and total vehicle flows (2way); and also peak hour (pm) flow which is compared against the theoretical capacity of the highway. The ES provides levels of generated HGV's and light vehicles for a number of key stages being:

- Site set up/construction,
- Drilling (of wells),
- Fracturing,
- Testing, and
- Decommissioning

The information presented within the ES has been considered and additional analysis of potential generated trips per day for each phase which has resulted in differing numbers of vehicles. Forecasting for each stage includes greater levels of

deliveries/servicing (HGV's), security, visitors and staff which are considered reasonable. In addition the influence of program slippage (daily) has been considered as well as uncertainty during the fracturing stage. In addition the impacts during the peak period/hours have been considered. It is concluded that the impacts would be higher, the following simple table highlights that presented in the ES, the forecasts and the net difference.

Comparison of Environmental Statement Daily Maximum Data (2way) and that Considered by LCC Based on the Above Influences								
Stage	Description	ES			LCC			Net Increase
		Light	Heavy	Total	Light	Heavy	Total	
1	Set up/Construction	12	48	60	38	58	96	36
2	Mobilisation	32	40	72	48	46	94	22
	Drilling	36	36	70	50	38	89	19
	Demobilisation	32	50	82	48	53	101	19
3	Mobilisation	22	27	43	36	41	77	34
	Fracturing	30	24	54	35	36	71	17
4+	Impacts lower than those highlighted above							

These (LCC) maximum daily flows highlighted above, are not at a level that are a significant cause for concern when location and appropriate routeing options to access the site without conflict or compromising the surrounding network or environment is considered. This assumes that suitable access is delivered together with other supporting changes.

The ES included limited information on peak periods. The peak hours for the highest occurring stage which results in the demobilisation (and cleanout) stage (as highlighted in bold in the table), which is expected to last for 2 days.

Assuming that a daily profile based 30-35% of all HGV's and 45% of all cars arriving and departing in each peak period that lasts up to 90mins with the remaining 30-40% of HGV's and 10% cars being prorated throughout the day. Based on this would result in up to 14HGV and 14 cars movements (2way) during each peak hour. As above, these (LCC) maximum hourly flows are not at a level that are a significant cause for concern when location and appropriate routeing options to access the site without conflict or compromising the surrounding network or environment is considered. This assumes that suitable access is delivered together with other supporting changes.

Given the differences in assessment flows an area wide Monitoring Regime should be put in place to provide detailed information regarding actual traffic generated by the proposal by type including time of day. This would help to identify if any changes to the site operation or routeing in line with background changes and this information could be used by the developer to better inform any future, similar, proposals for exploration/monitoring at other sites.

Given the increase in HGV numbers it is also considered appropriate for a road condition monitoring regime to be put in place and which would ensure the condition

of the local highway in the vicinity of the site is monitored and maintained as appropriate.

There are very limited pedestrian movements in location of the site access. There are no Public Rights of Way or Bridleways in the immediate vicinity of the site or the site access. A footway is present on the south side of the A583. There are road cycle lanes in both directions on A583 Preston New Road in the vicinity of the proposed site access. The on road cycle lanes should be maintained at 1.5m through the proposed site access and the detailed design, to be agreed, should include measures to enhance the visibility and safety of the on-road cycle lanes. This should include cycle symbol markings, coloured surfacing and signing.

Accident Data has been provided in Appendix C of the Transport Statement for a five year period between 2008 and 2013. In the study area there were four accidents in the last five years. With consideration for the existing accident record it is not expected that the increase in traffic from the proposal will have a material impact on safety on this part of the network.

The proposed main site access is shown in ARUP drawing, Figure 2 of the Transport Statement (Drawing PNR-ARP-CH-001)

A secondary access is proposed some 800m to the west. This 'Farm Gate' style access is only to be used by National Grid for occasional maintenance purposes. This access is shown in ARUP drawing, Figure 3 of the Transport Statement (Drawing PNR-ARP-CH-002).

The speed limit on the A583 in the vicinity of the proposed junction is 50mph. Visibility splays of 4.5m x 215m have been agreed in each direction and should be provided and maintained for the duration of the use of the site access. In addition suitable junction turning radii will be required to allow large vehicles to enter/exit the junction without undue delay on the mainline which would impact on the safe operation of traffic on the A583. The junction layout to allow for a HGV to enter at the same time as a second HGV is waiting to exit.

The layout of the site access road is shown it to be proposed as 4m wide. This is not adequate to allow two HGV's to pass and would result in large vehicles waiting on the main A583 carriageway and which would not be acceptable). Adequate road width is required exiting/entering the highway for a distance on the access road that includes sufficient space for waiting HGV vehicles to ensure no parked/stationary vehicles on the public highway (at any time).

The Stage 1 Road Safety Audit has identified that the existing centreline and hatching markings mean that some drivers/riders may attempt to overtake close to the site access. The main road right turn facility should be protected by a double white line system on both approaches. This needs to be delivered by the development as part of the offsite highway works.

Advanced warning signs will be required to inform road users of the new road layout ahead and any necessary signing will be incorporated into the detailed design of the main access junction, which is to be delivered as part of a s278 agreement.

Parking on site must be adequate to ensure that site vehicles do not park, even temporarily, on the A583 or on the site access road thus impacting on the safe and efficient movement of the highway network.

In regard to the dirt and dust created by site construction and exploration works traffic, this will need to be managed. Wheel washing facilities will be necessary and this should be controlled by an appropriate condition.

Should planning permission be granted conditions relating to details required to be submitted for the construction of the access points to the site, the internal access road, traffic management plan, off site highway works, construction method statement, monitoring of highway conditions, provision of drainage, and measures to prevent air and ground and surface water pollution should be imposed.

Westby-with- Plumptons Parish Council and Medlar-with-Wesham Parish Council and Kirkham Town Council: Object to the proposed increase in HGV movements and the associated impact on the highway and amenity of nearby residents. CPRE propose that heavy good vehicles servicing the site should not operate or park in the vicinity of the site (but may park on the site) during the overnight period 2100-0700 and that the operator should not move heavy plant or equipment to or from the site during the same period without the consent of the Highway Authority. In addition, operation procedures provide for and ensure the use of wheel cleaning equipment for vehicles leaving the site and ensure that the local highways are kept clear of mud and debris emanating from the site

LCC Director of Public Health: has requested that a full assessment of the impacts of additional traffic associated with the proposals on road safety should be carried out and appropriate traffic management options considered to address the public concerns. Further, should planning permission be granted, provision should be made with the applicant to maintain road safety, and road safety and any related incidents on the access to both the sites should be monitored.

Representations have been received objecting to the proposal principally due to the increased numbers of HGV's travelling to and from the site delivering materials and the risks associated with such, primarily associated with waste water from the fracturing operations.

Concern is expressed to the site access and the conflicts it would cause with existing traffic, pedestrians, horse riders, bus services and bus stops and local access issues for residents at Foxwood Chase and Carr Bridge Park and the impacts on the amenities of nearby residents due to the increase in numbers of vehicles and associated noise and vibration.

It is maintained the proposal would be contrary to policies SP7 and SP9 of the Fylde Local Plan.

Assessment

The site is located on the A583 which is a major highway carrying around 13,000 vehicles per day including over 250 HGV's. The proposed development would therefore only increase total traffic on this road by around 1%. The increase in HGV's would be greater but would still be within the carrying capacity of this road. In either direction, the A583 enables access to the motorway network without passing any major residential communities or locations with established highway safety of capacity issues and therefore either route to the M55 is considered to be an acceptable route for the traffic that would be generated by this proposal. LCC Developer Support (Highways) considers that the proposed routing and existing highway network is capable of accommodating the predicted traffic levels for each phase of the proposed development over a temporary period. It is recommended further details would be required regarding the construction of the access points to the site, the internal access road, traffic management plan, off site highway works, construction method statement, monitoring of highway conditions, provision of drainage and measures to prevent air and ground and surface water pollution and which could be required by condition.

In terms of detailed design, the applicant proposes to modify the existing road markings on the A583 in the vicinity of the proposed access so that part of the existing cross hatched area in the centre of the road is converted into a dedicated right turn lane. Such arrangements would prevent traffic delays on the A583 caused by vehicles turning into the site and would also enhance road safety. The design of the junction has been the subject of a safety audit which has recommended that the right turn facility be protected by no overtaking lines on the approach to the junction and also to ensure that the lanes past the central refuge are of adequate width to ensure cyclist safety is not compromised.

The Highways Agency is satisfied the strategic network can accommodate the proposed increase in traffic and subject to conditions relating to the access, LCC Developer Support (Highways) is satisfied the access could be safely accommodated.

The site would generate an increase in HGV movements on the strategic highway network but which it is considered capable of accommodating. The proposed route via the motorway network would be acceptable and would not pass through any major residential areas. There would be some localised impact on the nearest residential properties at Foxwood Chase but the impacts associated with such for a temporary period on a strategic highway are not considered to be so great as to constitute a sustainable reason for refusal. It is considered there would be no greater impact on residents at Carr Bridge as a result of the increase in traffic. Such an increase would be temporary and relative to different phases of the development unlike increases in traffic associated with more permanent forms of development. The policies referred to are not relevant to developments of this nature.

It is therefore considered that the proposal would not generate unacceptable increase in vehicle movements, that the existing highway could accommodate such and consequently the proposal would not be in conflict with the policies of the development plan.

Conclusions

The proposed route via the motorway network would be acceptable and would not pass through any major residential areas. There would be an increase in HGV movements on the strategic highway network but it is considered there is sufficient capacity to accommodate such.

There would be some localised loss of amenity as a result of an increase in movements, most particularly to those residential properties close to the access, but this would be for a temporary period; it is considered that such impacts would not be so great as to constitute a sustainable reason for refusal.

Subject to conditions regarding the construction of the access points to the site, the internal access road, traffic management plan, off site highway works, construction method statement, monitoring of highway conditions, provision of drainage and measures to prevent air and ground and surface water pollution, restricted hours of operation, vehicle cleanliness and replacement of any lost hedgerow, it is considered that the development would be acceptable in terms of highway safety and capacity issues and would not be in conflict with the policies of the development plan.