

Report to: Planning and Conservation Committee

Report from: Chair of Planning and Conservation Committee

Date: 26 January 2023

Subject: White House Farm (WHF) Phase 2: Southern Access Road (SAR) and issues highlighted by the withdrawal of National Highways' objections

1. Background

We learned last week that WHF developers, Miller Vistry (MV), have now responded to National Highways' (NH) comments on their (MV's) proposals. In short, NH have withdrawn their holding objection to the granting of consent to the WHF Phase 2 Planning Application (22/01485/OUTEIA) as those proposals affect the route of the SAR.

This leaves unresolved some serious key issues relating to this particular Planning Application.

2. Lack of adequate Transport Assessment

The Transport Assessment in the view of local residents is flawed and is based on out of date data and unsupported assumptions.

We are told by NH that they have received further information from the applicants in response to the points they (NH) raised. However, this information does not appear to have been submitted on Chichester District Council's Planning Portal nor has the Transport Assessment been revised.

Consultants Phil Jones Associates (PJA) who were employed by Chichester City Council (CCC) to examine the Planning Application (22/01485/OUTEIA) as it related to the SAR raised similar issues as well as a number of additional points.

Clearly the Transport Assessment as it stands does not provide a sound and reliable basis for assessing the severity of the impact of the proposed SAR on the road network in Chichester West. Therefore, any decision by CDC taken on the basis of this assessment would be open to legal challenge. PJA also make this point in their report to CCC.

3. Lack of certainty around the nature, timing, and delivery of necessary improvements to the A27 and in particular to the Fishbourne Roundabout

NH have withdrawn their objection on the basis of (inter alia) a requirement for the developers to contribute to the costs of the A27 improvements.

While the Local Plan is hopefully nearing completion it is essentially a work in progress and there is no certainty around the nature of A27 improvements, particularly to the Fishbourne Roundabout, or their funding and timing.

The current local plan (para 7.19) states that phasing of development round Chichester (of which WHF forms part) should be co-ordinated with delivery of A27 junction improvements.

Given the uncertainty around the nature of any such improvements, how they will be funded, their timing and their impact on the proposed SAR design, how can consent be given to the construction of the SAR in advance of delivery of such improvements?

This would appear to be in breach of CDC's own planning policies.

PJA discuss this in some detail and conclude that:

- Further understanding of the scheme at Fishbourne Roundabout is required before any appropriate scheme for the SAR and Cathedral Way Roundabout can be concluded (para 5.2.8)
- 'At this juncture it seems unlikely that all of Phase 2 of the West of Chichester development could be delivered and/or the SAR completed before the A27/Fishbourne Roundabout improvement is delivered' (para 5.4.6)

4. Key Focus Now

As a matter of some urgency, we need now to ask PJA to update their comments on the above issues as soon as possible. Further, the profile of these issues needs to be raised with CDC and West Sussex County Council (WSCC) so that appropriate action may be taken.

5. Recommended

That CCC allocates a sufficient sum to enable PJA to review both MV's response to NH and NH's withdrawal of their holding objection.