



PROOF OF EVIDENCE

OF

DAVID SCHUMACHER

Planning Inspectorate Reference
APP/D3315/W/18/3205705
Planning Application Reference
14/17/0033

Land off Langaller Lane
Creech, St Michael, Somerset,

Client: Gladman Developments



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Qualifications and Experience

1.1.1 My name is David Schumacher. I hold the position of Director of Prime Transport Planning (Prime) based in Liverpool.

1.1.2 I hold a Diploma in Management Studies from Liverpool Polytechnic and a Master of Science in Transportation Planning and Traffic Engineering from Salford University. I am a Chartered Member of The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport and a Member of Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation and have practised in the field of Transport Planning and Engineering for over 30 years. I have specialised in the fields of infrastructure development and traffic/transport planning for land use changes since 1985. In that time, I have provided transportation advice in respect of a wide range of development projects.

1.1.3 With respect to the proposed development on land off Langaller Lane, Creech St. Michael Somerset, I have undertaken visits to the site and the surrounding highway network for the purpose of giving evidence at this Inquiry.

1.2 Scope

1.2.1 The remainder of my Proof is structured as follows:

- **Section 2** provides a summary of the history to the planning application but in particular the background relating to the traffic and transportation input to the planning application;
- **Section 3** describes the relevant local and national transport policy and guidance;
- **Sections 4** summarises the Transport Assessments (CD 1.7 & CD 6.2), Travel Plan (CD 1.8, CD 6.3 & CD 6.8), Technical Note 01 (CD 6.6), Technical Note 02 (CD 6.9) that were submitted to Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) and Somerset County Council (SCC) to support the scheme through the planning/appeal process;
- **Section 5** provides my supporting evidence to address the issues raised by the highway's officers at SCC;
- **Section 6** provides my supporting evidence to address the other issues by local objectors;
- **Section 7** provides a summary as to how the proposed development complies with both National and Local Transport Policy Initiatives; and
- **Section 8** provides a conclusion to my Proof of Evidence.

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2 PLANNING HISTORY

2.1.1 Prime was originally instructed in August 2016 by Gladman Developments Ltd (Gladman) to advise on the traffic and transportation issues relating to outline planning permission for up to 200 residential dwellings on land off Langaller Lane, Creech St. Michael, Somerset. All matters were reserved with the exception of a vehicular access point to be provided from Langaller Lane.

2.1.2 The application was validated by TDBC on 18th October 2017 and was supported by a comprehensive suite of technical reports in accordance with the Council’s planning application validation requirements, which are set out in the Planning Statement that accompanied the application. This included a Transport Assessment (TA), which is Core Document (CD 1.7) and a Travel Plan (TP) (CD 1.8), both produced in September 2017.

2.1.3 The application was refused under delegated powers, which the Council confirmed by notice on 17th April 2018, the original highways Reason for Refusal (Reason Number 2) was:

‘Insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate that the proposed development is not contrary to Section 4 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) and Policy DM1 of the Taunton Deane Core Strategy (Adopted 2011-2028) since the proposed development is likely to result in a severe transport impact, which could be prejudicial to safety, amenity and convenience of highway users.’

2.1.4 No quantifiable evidence has been provided by SCC to substantiate this Reason for Refusal, not least because it alleges insufficient information, rather than any substantive objection to the scheme in this regard.

2.1.5 A number of issues contributed to this reason for refusal and were grouped into the following headings in SCC’s consultation response (CD 4.22):

- Road safety;
- Travel Plan;
- Access;
- Sustainability (including connectivity with the village, walking to Heathfield secondary school and buses);
- Parking; and
- Traffic Impact (including link capacity assessment, traffic growth, committed developments, Creech Castle junction and A358 scheme).

2.1.6 The Appellant subsequently appealed this decision and submitted a Statement of Case (SOC) in June 2018. This document stated that:

‘...evidence will be adduced by our Highways Consultant to demonstrate that the proposed development would not have a severe transport impact’.

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- 2.1.7 A revised TA (CD 6.2) has been submitted separately and addresses the following:
- Road safety;
 - Access;
 - Some issues of sustainability; and
 - Traffic impact.
- 2.1.8 It should be noted that the issue regarding parking will be dealt with at Reserved Matters Stage, this fact being recognised in SCC’s consultation response (CD 4.22).
- 2.1.9 A revised TP (Revision A) (CD 6.3) has also been submitted separately and addresses the original issues raised by SCC.
- 2.1.10 Further e-mailed comments were received from SCC/their representatives in relation to the revised TA (CD 6.2) and TP (CD 6.3) on 10th December 2018. These e-mailed comments are contained within (CD 6.7), the subsequent e-mailed response dated 14th December 2018 regarding the TA are contained within CD 6.11. The comments relating to the TP (Revision A) (CD 6.3) have been addressed via a further revision to the TP. TP (Revision B) (CD 6.8) is the document that should now be referenced in relation to TP issues.
- 2.1.11 Technical Note 1 (TN01) (CD 6.6) provides a response to the following:
- Improved pedestrian connections from the site along North End; and
 - Improved pedestrian connections to Hopkin Field from the west of the site via an upgrade to PRoW T10/23.
- 2.1.12 The proposed site access arrangements and the suggested improvements to North End contained within TN01 (CD 6.6) were subject to an independent Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (RSA). The Stage 1 RSA and the Designers Response to the various issues raised are contained within Technical Note 2 (TN02) (CD 6.9).
- 2.1.13 The content of the above documents is discussed in greater detail in Section 4 of my Proof.

3 TRANSPORT POLICY AND GUIDANCE

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 It is important that any new developments conform to and complement national and local planning policy. This section details the policies that are relevant to this development.

3.2 National Planning Policy Framework

3.2.1 The current *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) was published in July 2018 and sets out the Government's current planning policies. At the core of NPPF is 'a presumption in favour of sustainable development' as detailed in paragraph 10 and 11.

3.2.2 Section 9 of the NPPF, *Promoting sustainable transport*, outlines the important role that the planning system has in facilitating sustainable development. It states in paragraph 103 that:

'Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health.'

3.2.3 The document offers guidance for planning policies including:

- supporting appropriate mixes of land uses;
- minimising the number and length of journeys;
- actively involving local highway authorities, transport infrastructure providers and operators and neighbouring councils in order to align strategies and investments for supporting sustainable travel; and
- providing high quality walking and cycling networks and associated supporting facilities such as cycle parking.

3.2.4 Paragraph 108 of the NPPF provides direction for the assessment of sites for development, stating:

'...it should be ensured that:

a) appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location;

b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users; and

c) any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.'

3.2.5 In determining planning applications, paragraph 109 states that:

‘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.’

3.2.6 Paragraph 110 continues:

‘Within this context, applications for development should:

a) give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second – so far as possible – to facilitating access to high quality public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use;

b) address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport;

c) create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards;

d) allow for the efficient delivery of goods, and access by service and emergency vehicles; and

e) be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations.’

3.2.7 In the context of maximising sustainable transport solutions, paragraph 103 of NPPF acknowledges that the opportunities to do so will vary between urban and rural locations.

3.2.8 In the context of PRow connections and enhancement, point a) of paragraph 118 acknowledges improved public access to the countryside as being a benefit that should be encouraged.

3.2.9 Paragraph 111 highlights the need for planning applications for developments that will ‘generate significant amounts of movements’ to be accompanied by a Transport Assessment or Transport Statement and a Travel Plan so that the *‘likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed’*.

3.3 Planning Practice Guidance

3.3.1 The theme of sustainable development runs throughout Planning Practice Guidance, with the detailed elements regarding transport being focussed in the following sections:

- Transport Evidence Bases in Plan Making and Decision-Taking; and

- Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements in Decision-Taking.

3.3.2 Both sections of the Guidance provide significant amounts of detail on the information types and sources that are appropriate for helping Local Planning Authorities to take forward their Local Plan with an appropriate evidence base. The Guidance is also a useful reference for assessing schemes such as the proposals which this proof accompanies.

3.3.3 The core components of the requirements for assessment, as set out in the Guidance, can be summarised as:

'The key issues, which should be considered in developing a transport evidence base, include the need to:

- assess the existing situation and likely generation of trips over time by all modes and the impact on the locality in economic, social and environmental terms
- assess the opportunities to support a pattern of development that, where reasonable to do so, facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport
- highlight and promote opportunities to reduce the need for travel where appropriate
- identify opportunities to prioritise the use of alternative modes in both existing and new development locations if appropriate
- consider the cumulative impacts of existing and proposed development on transport networks
- assess the quality and capacity of transport infrastructure and its ability to meet forecast demands
- identify the short, medium and long-term transport proposals across all modes.'

3.4 Manual for Streets

3.4.1 *Manual for Streets* (MfS) was published on behalf of the DfT and Communities and Local Government in March 2007 and provides advice for the design of residential streets in England and Wales.

3.4.2 The focus of MfS is to demonstrate the:

'benefits that flow from good design and assigns a higher priority to pedestrians and cyclists, setting out an approach to residential streets that recognises their role in creating places that work for all members of the community. MfS refocuses on the place function of residential streets, giving clear guidance on how to achieve well-designed streets and spaces that serve the community in a range of ways' (MfS page 7).

3.4.3 The guidance addresses many common design principles and discusses detailed design issues, often presenting recommended design criteria. Some of the key principles of MfS include:

- The need to shift from focusing on designing for motor vehicles to designing streets around the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users which in turn enhances safety;
- Good design can help to create and strengthen a sense of place and community;
- Creating streets that are permeable and offer good quality connections to main destinations for all road users;
- Inclusive design that recognises the needs of people of all ages and abilities; and
- Cost-effective construction often by avoiding over-designing.

3.4.4 In September 2010 a companion document *Manual for Streets 2 – wider application of the principles* (MfS2) was published. This document expands on some of the design principles of MfS and provides examples of places where designs based on these principles have been implemented.

3.5 Estate Roads in Somerset: Design Guidance Notes

3.5.1 This guide was published by SCC in 1991 and includes general design parameters, design details, and carriageway construction details for residential and industrial estate roads.

3.5.2 Given the age of the document, many of the areas covered are addressed by the more recent MfS and MfS2 guides. However, it is understood that the guide remains a reference point for Highways Officers at SCC for areas not covered by MfS. Notably, the guide provides details of the hierarchy of roads in SCC, which are divided into:

- a. Distributor Roads: typically applied where the number of homes served would exceed 400;
- b. Transitional Roads: short lengths of road linking Collector Roads to Local Distributor Roads and serving not more than 300 dwellings;
- c. Collector Roads: laid out in the form of cul-de-sac they should not serve more than 200 homes;
- d. Access Roads and Access Ways: usually cul-de-sac of less than 100m and serving no more than 100 homes; and
- e. Shared Surfaces: the lowest category in the hierarchy and will serve up to 20 homes.

3.6 Somerset Future Transport Plan

3.6.1 Somerset's Future Transport Plan (FTP) was published in March 2011 and sets out SCC's transport policy for the 15-year period from 2011 to 2026.

3.6.2 The FTP is comprised of a suite of documents, including a brief Summary Document, a Schedule of Policies, a Transport and Development Policy Document; an Implementation Plan; and a series of Supporting Technical Notes.

3.6.3 The Transport and Development Policy Document sets out SCC’s position in relation to development location and transport:

‘A primary planning consideration is to deliver sustainable development. From a transport perspective, the County Council will seek to ensure that development proposals are well located, reinforce self-containment of settlements and reduce the need for travel. They should achieve suitable connection to appropriate transportation infrastructure and services in order, where travel remains necessary, to maximise the use of sustainable forms of transport appropriate to the particular location by:

- Ensuring most new development is located in the main urban areas where it is most accessible and can help to increase the use of non-car modes and the layout takes account of climate change;
- Managing travel demand, reducing air pollution and enhancing road safety;
- Enabling and promoting safe, sustainable and accessible alternatives to the fossil-fuelled car. As well as public transport services this means appropriate connections to highway or other Rights of Way that are safe for pedestrians, users of aids that assist mobility, cyclists and occupants of vehicles. In short, all modes of travel need to be considered;
- Encouraging efficient, safe and sustainable freight transport;
- Requiring all applications for developments which are likely to have significant transport implications to be accompanied by a Transport Assessment, a Travel Plan, and an Air Quality Assessment, and,
- Creating attractive environments which are accessible, and which provide links to the wider transport network.’

3.6.4 The document goes on to provide details of what transport impacts SCC Highways will typically address when providing its planning consultation response to LPAs, as follows:

- ‘the expected nature, mode and volume of trips, particular attention will be paid to motorised traffic and parked vehicles generated by the development, which should not compromise the safety and/or function of the adjoining highway (particularly National Primary and County Routes);
- the travel generated by or attracted to the development, and its impact on the character or amenity of the area in terms of type, volume or speed;
- development’s access to the highway network and other transport networks, and that it is commensurate with both the scale and nature of development and function of the adjoining highways and other transport networks;
- the transport impact of development and the provision of necessary transport infrastructure, facilities, services and information to mitigate its effects; and,
- required parking, facilities and vehicular servicing (for all modes).’

3.6.5 The document states that in reviewing the above, SCC will have regard to the findings of TAs and TPs.

3.6.6 The document sets out SCC's desire for development proposals to 'strive to achieve nil detriment ('no worse off') to the highway network, for the opening year and an appropriate agreed future horizon year or years.

3.6.7 In elaborating acceptable levels of impact, the document states that:

'Once detailed investigations into the impact of development traffic have been undertaken at agreed locations the Council will consider whether measures are required to mitigate the impacts of the development. In considering the assessment and subsequent mitigation, the Council will seek to achieve the following outcomes and will agree on a case by case basis how this will be assessed by the developer:

- Nil-detriment to junction capacity and delay from development traffic where junctions currently operate at greater than 85% ratio of flow to capacity (RFC) for non-signalised junctions, or 90% for signalised junctions;
- Nil-detriment from development traffic on links where capacity is currently at 90% or more;
- Nil-detriment to journey times for traffic on agreed routes;
- Nil-detriment to journey times for public transport, walking or cycling;
- Nil-detriment to accident rates at clusters along key routes; and
- Agreed mode share targets for development related trips where travel plans are required.'

3.6.8 In considering operational design and layout of developments, the document makes clear that the application of principles in MfS/MfS2 is encouraged within the county.

3.7 Travel Planning Guidance SPD (November 2011)

3.7.1 SCC has produced detailed guidance on Travel Planning within a dedicated Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The intention of the SPD is to demonstrate the importance of Travel Plans within the development planning process:

Policy TVS 2

For relevant developments requiring a travel plan, the document should be submitted with the planning application and have been informed by pre-application discussions and technical feedback from the Local Highway Authority (LHA). Travel plans must show integration with the transport assessment, design and access statement, environmental statement and the proposed layout of the development.

3.7.2 A Travel Plan is therefore a crucial tool in promoting sustainable travel for the proposed development site from the outset; and the principles of this SPD are reviewed and contained within the revised TP.

3.8 SCC Parking Strategy Document

3.8.1 SCC has published a Parking Strategy Document which is intended to integrate parking provision and management with land use planning, and as such sits alongside the Somerset FTP, covering the same 15-year period of 2011 to 2026.

3.8.2 The document contains details of vehicle and cycle parking standards for different types of development, which vary according to defined ‘zones’ within the county. The document also contains guidance on the layout and location of parking provision.

3.8.3 It is acknowledged that this report relates to the outline planning permission and therefore the final design layout, including car parking layout and numbers will be provided within the final detailed planning application.

3.9 Taunton Deane Core Strategy

3.9.1 The Taunton Deane Core Strategy was adopted in September 2012 and sets a long term strategic vision for the future of the Borough and how it will develop over the period 2011 to 2028.

3.9.2 The document sets out a series of Strategic Objectives, in addition to identifying strategic development site allocations, which include urban extensions.

3.9.3 The Development Management Policies Chapter sets out the broad development management policies which are applied at the strategic levels across the Borough. Policy DM1 relates to General Requirements and sets out the overarching criteria to be met, taking account of mitigation measures proposed. Point b. in relation to traffic states:

‘Additional road traffic arising, taking account of any road improvement involved, would not lead to overloading of access roads, road safety problems or environmental degradation by fumes, noise, vibrations or visual impact;’

3.9.4 Regarding Accessibility, Strategic Objective 6 is as follows:

‘To improve accessibility between homes, jobs and services and achieve a major change in travel behaviour towards walking, cycling and public transport.’

3.9.5 Strategic Objective 7 then goes on to set out specific targets for proportions of new development within 400m of public transport nodes, within 30-minute public transport times of local services and within 5 minutes’ walk of town, district or local centres. Targets are also set for the proportions of

trips made by non-car modes, of ‘car free’ new developments, and of compliance with adopted car and cycle parking standards.

3.9.6 Regarding Infrastructure, Objective 7 (Infrastructure) sets out that,

‘To ensure that development provides the on- and off-site infrastructure that is necessary for the development to proceed and to mitigate impact on existing communities and the environment.’

3.9.7 The Core Strategy also sets out a number of ‘Core Policies’, of which Policy CP 6 concerns Transport and Accessibility:

Development should contribute to reducing the need to travel, improve accessibility to jobs, services and community facilities, and address climate change. This will be achieved by:

- Ensuring that development proposals are consistent with the principle of ‘corridor management’ on the strategic road network and rail links connecting Taunton Deane to other regions;
- Improving accessibility by public transport, cycling and walking to key destinations such as Taunton and Wellington town centres, new employment areas, Somerset College and Musgrove Park Hospital, especially from North Taunton and Taunton East;
- Ensuring that new development supports expansion of local and regional rail services, including the West Somerset Railway;
- Requiring all developments which are likely to have significant transport implications to submit a robust evidence base and management plan in line with current policy and guidance on Transport Assessment and Travel Planning;
- Using ‘smarter choices’ measures such as personal and employer travel planning programmes to achieve modal shift;
- Managing public and private car parking (including capacity and pricing structures) in accordance with national and/or local parking standards to reduce congestion and pollution, improve road safety, and encourage travel by sustainable modes; and
- Locating major industrial and warehousing development where it will encourage efficient, safe and sustainable freight transport, including options for the use of rail or waterways.

3.10 Summary

3.10.1 This section of my Proof of Evidence has outlined national and local transport policies and guidance which are applicable to the development site. How the site conforms to and complements these policies and guidance is outlined in Section 7.

4 APPLICATION DOCUMENT SUMMARIES

4.1 Transport Assessment

4.1.1 The original TA (CD 1.7) considered the appeal site's accessibility by sustainable modes of travel, specifically walking, cycling and public transport, devised a safe and suitable access arrangement for motorised and non-motorised traffic and demonstrated that the impact of the development on the local highway network would not be severe. This was based on a review of the existing situation, accident history and local and national transport planning policy.

4.1.2 The TA (CD 1.7) concluded that as the development proposal complies with local and national planning policy and guidance with respect to sustainable accessibility, safety and impact on the highway network, there are no highways or transportation related reasons why planning permission should not be granted.

4.1.3 Following SCC's comments (CD 4.22) a Revised TA (CD 6.2) has been submitted to TDBC. This includes the following:

- Amendments to the proposed site access drawing including the provision of an additional pedestrian crossing island to the west of the proposed site access, the provision of additional traffic calming features and improvements to the footway in the northern verge of Langaller Lane between the site access and the A38;
- The provision of additional drawings showing swept path analysis of commercial vehicles (refuse vehicles) entering and leaving the site;
- Addresses specific comments raised by SCC in relation to the traffic impact of the scheme including an update of the junction modelling utilising 2018 traffic survey data, an assessment of the capacity of certain key links within the village of Creech St. Michael utilising additional 2018 survey data, the modelling the impact of the Eastern Relief Road (ERR), Western Relief Road (WRR), Bridgewater Road bus gate and A3259 bus gate and a sensitivity test to review the impact of the proposed Nexus 25 Development; and
- An assessment of the injury accidents that occurred on the highway network between 1st April 2013 to 31st March 2018 (this being the most up to date information available at the time of writing the revised TA).

4.1.4 The revised TA (CD 6.2) also concluded that as the development proposal complies with local and national planning policy and guidance with respect to sustainable accessibility, safety and impact on the highway network, there are no highways or transportation related reasons why planning permission should not be granted.

4.1.5 Comments from SCC/their representatives in relation to the revised TA (CD 6.2) were made via e-mail on 10th December 2018 (CD6.7).

4.1.6 An e-mailed response to the points raised by SCC/their representatives was sent on the 14th December 2018 (CD 6.11) and covered the following issues:

- Further minor amendments to the site access arrangements to accommodate additional comments on the provision of additional traffic calming, extension of speed limits, pedestrian visibility splays and commentary on swept path analysis for commercial and farm vehicles;
- Confirmation that the proposed improvements to North End and PRoW T10/23 can be delivered either on highway land or land within the control of the Appellant, thus confirming that the proposed development is accessible by the sustainable modes of transport including walking and cycling;
- Provision of additional information relating the secondary site access;
- A commitment to fund improvements to public transport in the area including confirmation that FirstBus (the main bus operator in the area) has been approached regarding the viability of the suggested improvements;
- Provision of additional assessment on the impacts of the proposed development on off-site junctions; and
- Provision of additional commentary on the PIA data used in the assessment of road safety impacts on the surrounding road network.

4.2 Travel Plan

4.2.1 The original planning application was supported by a TP (CD 1.8). This report defined the purpose of a TP from a Policy and Guidance perspective, defined targets for between a 5% and 10% reduction in single occupancy car use and the likely impact this would have on the use of sustainable modes of transport and then went on to describe measures that could be implemented to achieve those targets. The TP stated that a sufficient revenue budget will be identified to employ a Travel Plan Co-ordinator together with sufficient budget to introduce and manage TP initiatives and interventions.

4.2.2 Following SCC's comments (CD 4.22) a revised TP (Revision A) (CD 6.3) has been submitted to TDBC. This includes greater detail in relation to the Action Plan and provides greater levels of commitment by the Appellant to the TP process including the setting of a target of a 10% reduction in private car use.

4.2.3 Comments in relation to the TP (Revision A) (CD 6.3) were also made by SCC/their representatives in (CD6.7).

4.2.4 TP (Revision B) (CD6.8) replaces TP (Revision A) (CD6.3) and provides additional commentary on the following:

- Preparation, registration and travel plan fees;
- Site audit;
- Action plan;
- Setting targets and monitoring; and
- Securing the travel plan.

4.3 Technical Note 01 – Improvements to the Site’s Pedestrian Connectivity

4.3.1 Technical Note 01 (TN01) (CD 6.6) addresses the issues regarding proposed improvements to the site’s pedestrian connectivity. Of specific relevance in TN01 are the proposed improvements to the pedestrian infrastructure along North End and the upgrade of PRoW T10/23 to provide a pedestrian/cycle connection between the western part of the site and Hopkin Fields. It should be noted that the details of the improvements to PRoW T10/23 have been provided by Enzygo Environmental Consultants (Enzygo).

4.3.2 The improvements to North End/St. Michaels Road include:

- A continuous footway provision on the western side of North End/St Michael Road (this footway replacing the existing virtual footway that is currently provided on this section of North End);
- The provision of priority controlled chicanes on North End giving priority to southbound vehicles;
- Improvements to the existing footway provision to the south of West Way including cutting back overgrown vegetation and the widening of the footway where possible;
- The provision of additional traffic calming features including additional raised tables at St Michael Road/ Vicarage Lawns/ Hyde Lane crossroads junction, the St Michael Road/ Curvalion Road junction and at the junction with Ryesland Way; and
- The extension of the 20mph speed limit to the south of the centre of Creech St Michael.

4.3.3 The improvements suggested by Enzygo to PRoW T10/23 include:

- The provision of a 3m wide, circa 90m long, footway/cycleway connecting the development site to the existing pedestrian/cycle infrastructure that can be found on Hopkins Field;
- The provision of 2 box culverts to provide bridging structures over 2 separate watercourses that can be found along the line of PRoW T/23, these new structures replacing the existing narrow wooden bridges;

- The use of tarmacadam will provide a suitable surface for the use by both pedestrian and cyclist, this surface being porous so that any surface water can drain naturally through the sub-structure of the scheme and not onto the adjoining land;
- Street lighting will also be provided to ensure the safety of the users of this facility, the design of this lighting will be sympathetic to the surrounding nature of the area including adjacent residential properties.

4.3.4 Whilst it is generally recognised that some of the current connections from the site to the centre of Creech St Michael are not ideal, the proposed improvements to the footways along North End/St. Michael Road combined with the suggested improvements to PRow T10/23 provide a substantial improvement to those pedestrian/cycle connections to the centre of the village.

4.3.5 It should be noted that the improvements to North End/St. Michael Road between the Langaller Lane mini-roundabout and the centre of Creech St. Michael can be delivered within highway boundary. The improvements to PRow T10/23 can be delivered within land under the control of the Appellant.

4.4 Technical Note 02 – Designers Response to Stage 1 Road Safety Audit

4.4.1 The North End/St Michael Road pedestrian improvement scheme detailed in TN01 (CD6.6) together with the proposed site access arrangements (Drawing P16071-002D) (CD6.4) have been the subject of an independent Stage 1 RSA. The points raised in the Stage 1 RSA have been considered and the Designers Responses are provided in TN02 (CD 6.9).

4.4.2 In summary, the following four amendments to the proposed access arrangements and off site mitigation measures have been made, consisting of:

- The introduction of a painted/ overrun area to the southern priority chicane, narrowing the main carriageway width to 3.5m (Drawings P18119-101A, P18119-104A and P18119-105A);
- Confirmation that inter-visibility between pedestrians wishing to cross Langaller Road and vehicles travelling along Langaller Road can be achieved (Drawing P16071-002E) (CD 6.10);
- Dropped crossings with tactile paving added across the proposed Langaller Lane site access junction (Drawing P16071-002E) (CD6.10); and
- Tactile paving added across the side roads at the potential raised tables at the St Michael Road/ Vicarage Lawns/ Hyde Lane crossroads and St Michael Road/ Ryesland Road junction (Drawings P18119-102A and P18119-103A). Further detail to be provided at reserved matters stage.

4.4.3 Section 5 of my Proof of Evidence addresses the comments made by SCC.002.

5 ISSUES RAISED BY SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 As outlined in Section 2 of my Proof, in its consultation response (CD 4.22) SCC Highways referenced a number of issues of concern. The detailed response to these concerns is contained within either the revised TA (CD 6.2), the TP (Revision B) (CD6.8) or TN01 (CD 6.5).
- 5.1.2 The majority of the remainder of this section of my Proof highlights SCC's concerns and summarises my response to those concerns, and again the details of my response can be found within the TA (CD 6.2), TP (Revision B)(CD 6.8) and TN01 (CD 6.6). The matters are dealt with in the order they arise in SCC's consultation response (CD 4.22).
- 5.1.3 The additional points raised by SCC/their representatives in the emailed correspondence of the 10th December 2018 (CD 6.7) regarding the TA are dealt with in Section 5.7 of my proof. The details of my response to the issues regarding the TA can be found in e-mailed correspondence of the 14th December 2018 (CD 6.11). As mentioned above, the comments from SCC/their representatives are contained in TP (Revision B) (CD6.8).

5.2 Road Safety

- 5.2.1 SC suggested that the review of accidents contained within the original TA did not include a review of accident data from 2017.
- 5.2.2 The revised TA (CD 6.2) considers the highway safety issues on the road network adjacent to the proposed development site. In order to complete the review, personal injury accident data has been purchased from SCC to cover a five-year period from 1st April 2013 to 31st March 2018, this being the latest data available at the time of writing the revised TA. The study area is extensive and includes the A38 from its junction with the A3259 to its junction with the A358; the A358 from its junction with the A38 to its junction with Lipe Lane; all of Bridgewater Road; all of Langaller Lane; all of North End and all of St Michael Road.
- 5.2.3 A review of 5-years of recent accident data showed that only three accidents occurred in the vicinity of the village. One of these was unfortunately a fatal accident that occurred to the south of the village centre on the railway bridge when a driver lost control of their vehicle in the hours of darkness, skidded, left the carriageway and collided with a wall. Excessive speed was potentially a factor in this accident. The two other accidents in the village resulted in slight injuries being sustained, one to a cyclist when a large reversing agricultural vehicle collided with them; the other when a driver of a car suffered a medical episode and collided with a wall, again resulting in a slight injury. Both of these accidents occurred to the north of the village centre, one on the southern section of North End, the other on the eastern one. Neither appear to have been related to any issue with road layout.

5.2.4 The remaining accidents were dispersed across the remainder of the wider geographical area with driver/rider error appearing to have been a factor in the majority of these incidents. Given the above it can therefore be concluded that there are no deficiencies in the existing highway network, or existing safety issues within the vicinity of the site, that would be exacerbated by the development proposals.

5.3 Access

5.3.1 SCC suggested that the proposed access drawings should show some additional information/dimensions. The requested information includes:

- The dimensions of the proposed ghost island right turn facility;
- The dimensions of the pedestrian island and the widths of the running lanes;
- Location of emergency/secondary access point;
- Location of the proposed agricultural access; and
- Swept path analysis of a refuse vehicle entering/leaving the site.

5.3.2 The full request for additional information etc is contained in SCC consultation response (CD 4.22).

5.3.3 Drawing No P16071-002D (CD 6.4) shows the revised site access drawing. This drawing highlights the following:

- The location of the proposed priority controlled junction on Langaller Lane;
- A side road width of 5.5m, 2 x 2m footways and 10m junction radii;
- The use of a ghost island right turn facility at this proposed access point, this having been designed in accordance with DMRB TD 42/95 for a design speed of 85kph and includes a 3.5m wide turning lane and a minimum of 3.5m kerb to kerb wide running lanes. All the geometric parameters adopted as part of the design of this site access are now shown on the abovementioned drawing;
- The provision of site specific visibility splays, the 'y' distance of these visibility splays being based on speed surveys specifically commissioned to derive these visibility splays. Whilst this information was not specifically requested by SCC it has been shown for completeness on the abovementioned drawing;
- The provision of 2m wide pedestrian islands, tactile paving and dropped kerbs to both the west and east of the proposed site access, both of these islands to be straddled by 3.5m running lanes on Langaller Lane. These islands are being provided to aid pedestrian crossing movements to/from the proposed site access to the existing footway that can be found in the northern verge of Langaller Lane;
- The re-location of the 30mph speed limit to a point to the west of the proposed site access (exact position to be agreed with SCC), the extension of this speed limit being accompanied by appropriate traffic calming measures;

- A commitment to improve the pedestrian connection between the western pedestrian island of the site access and the junction of the A38 by cutting back overhanging vegetation, this to aid the pedestrian connections between the site and Monkton Heathfield SUE and in particular Heathfield Community School;
- Proposed emergency/pedestrian/cycle connection between the south-east corner of the site and the North End mini-roundabout;
- The proposed agricultural access between the site and the adjoining field; and
- An indication as to the location of the proposed pedestrian/cycle connection via an improved PRow T10/23.

5.3.4 Drawing No P16071-003 of Appendix E of the revised TA (CD 6.2) shows that a 3-axle Dennis Eagle Elite, the most commonly observed refuse collection vehicle in use locally, can safely access and egress the site in forward gear. This swept path analysis had been specifically requested by SCC.

5.4 Travel Plan

5.4.1 As mentioned above, following SCC's comments (CD 4.22 & CD 4.23), a revised TP (Revision A) (CD 6.3) has been submitted to TDBC. This has been further revised following comments from SCC/their representatives (CD 6.7). TP (Revision B) (CD 6.8) now includes greater detail in relation to the registration and travel plan fees, the site audit, additional details with regard to the Action Plan, additional information regarding the setting and monitoring of targets and greater commitment as to how the TP will be secured.

5.5 Sustainability

Connectivity with the Village

5.5.1 Technical Note 01 (TN01) (CD 6.6) addresses the issues regarding proposed improvements to the site's pedestrian connectivity and accessibility to the village. Of specific relevance in TN01 are the proposed improvements to the pedestrian infrastructure along North End between the site and the centre of Creech St. Michael and the upgrade of PRow T10/23 to provide a pedestrian/cycle connection between the western part of the site and Hopkins Field.

5.5.2 The improvements to North End are shown on **Drawing No P18119-100** and include:

- A continuous footway provision on the western side of North End/St Michael Road (this footway replacing the existing virtual footway that is currently provided on this section of North End);
- The provision of priority controlled chicanes on North End giving priority to southbound vehicles;

- Improvements to the existing footway provision to the south of West Way including cutting back overgrown vegetation and the widening of the footway where possible;
- The provision of additional traffic calming features including additional raised tables at St Michael Road/ Vicarage Lawns/ Hyde Lane crossroads junction, the St Michael Road/ Curvalion Road junction and at the junction with Ryesland Way; and
- The extension of the 20mph speed limit to the south of the centre of Creech St Michael.

5.5.3 The improvements to PRoW T10/23 are shown on Drawing SHF.1132.196.HY.D produced by Enzygo and include:

- The provision of a 3m wide, circa 90m long, footway/cycleway connecting the development site to the existing pedestrian/cycle infrastructure that can be found on Hopkins Field;
- The provision of 2 box culverts to provide bridging structures over 2 separate watercourses that can be found along the line of PRoW T10/23, these new structures replacing the existing narrow wooden bridges;
- The use of a tarmacadam will provide a suitable surface for the use by both pedestrian and cyclist, this surface being porous so that any surface water can drain naturally through the sub-structure of the scheme and not onto the adjoining land;
- Street lighting will also be provided to ensure the safety of the users of this facility, the design of this lighting will be sympathetic to the surrounding nature of the area including adjacent residential properties.

5.5.4 Whilst it is generally recognised that some of the current connections from the site to the centre of Creech St Michael are not ideal, the proposed improvements to the footways along North End/St. Michael Road combined with the suggested improvements to PRoW T10/23 provide a substantial improvement to those pedestrian/cycle connections to the centre of the village. The suggested improvements will also benefit the existing residents of Creech St. Michael.

5.5.5 It should be noted that the improvements to North End/St. Michael Road between the Langaller Lane mini-roundabout and the centre of Creech St. Michael can be delivered within highway boundary. The improvements to PRoW T10/23 can be delivered within land under the control of the Appellant.

Walking to Heathfield Community School

5.5.6 SCC had requested improvements to the footway connection between the site and Monkton Heathfield SUE and in particular Heathfield Community School.

5.5.7 The provision of pedestrian crossing facilities incorporated within the proposed site access and the commitment to cut back overgrown vegetation between the site access and the A38 (Drawing No

P16071-002D CD 6.4) will provide a significant improvement to pedestrian access between the site and Monkton Heathfield SUE and in particular Heathfield Community School. These improvements will also benefit the existing residents of Creech St. Michael.

Buses

5.5.8 Given the proximity of existing bus stops and the level of bus service provision that exists within Creech St. Michael, the revised TA concluded that use of the existing bus service to travel to/from a place of work may be a viable option for residents of the proposed development.

5.5.9 The TA went on further to suggest that regardless of the above, the Appellant is willing to provide a level of funding commensurate to the scale of the site to enhance local bus services. Such enhancements could include the extension of one or more of the services that call in Monkton Heathfield and Bathpool such as the 21 and 2A, both of which provide frequent services to Taunton. Any such improvement will also be beneficial to encouraging this sustainable mode of transport for existing residents of Creech St Michael including those in the recently completed residential developments. Gladman and Prime have made clear that they are happy to discuss such enhancements and the associated funding with SCC. I understand that Gladman is also willing to provide funding for a new pair of bus stops on Langaller Lane to help facilitate any such service re-routing. Clearly the quantum of the development with affordable housing element, the other recently completed developments in Creech St Michael and the size of the settlement is likely to provide an attractive customer base for commercial bus operators.

5.5.10 SCC, in its consultation response (CD 4.22) suggested that the Appellant should approach bus operators to discuss such improvements I believe that bus service improvements should be considered from a strategic perspective rather than a piecemeal one and that such procurement decisions should be led by local highway/transport authorities, regardless of whether services are public or private sector run. However, in order to aid in the delivery of this improvement to bus services, a senior member of First Bus (the local operator) has been contacted and I am awaiting his response.

5.6 Traffic Impact

5.6.1 A number of issues were raised in SCC consultation response with regard to the impact of the proposed development on the local highway network. These have been considered under the following headings.

Revised Junction Capacity Assessment

5.6.2 The revised TA (CD 6.2) describes in detail the work undertaken in revising the capacity assessment. The results of this assessment show that the proposed site access and three of the four off-site junctions assessed, apart from the Creech Castle junction (see below), will operate with spare

capacity and will therefore be able to accommodate the traffic likely to be generated by the development, along with six years of traffic growth and traffic from consented developments, with nil detriment.

Creech Castle Junction

- 5.6.1 The results of the assessment of the Creech Castle signal controlled junction contained within the revised TA (CD 6.2) show that the junction is forecast to operate over capacity without the development in place with the proposals causing only a negligible additional impact. The Appellant is however willing to offer funding commensurate to the scale of the impact of the site towards an SCC-led improvement scheme.

Link Capacity Assessment

- 5.6.1 SCC requested an assessment of the capacity of highway links within Creech St. Michael. Four links were identified by Prime with each link containing a narrowing feature including a virtual footway, chicane, uncontrolled crossing or bridge, with these links being:

- North End south of Langaller Lane mini-roundabout facing south to virtual footway;
- St Michael Road south of St Michael Close facing north to priority chicane;
- St Michael Road north of Hyde Lane facing south to uncontrolled crossing outside veterinary surgery; and
- Lipe Lane bridge over River Tone facing north-east over bridge.

- 5.6.2 The location of these links is illustrated on Figure 1 in Appendix B of the revised TA (CD 6.2). The revised TA concluded that the development will have a negligible impact on the link capacity through the village, especially at the locations mentioned above.

Traffic Growth

- 5.6.1 The revised TA (CD 6.2) provides greater detail as to how traffic growth figures were derived. However, to summarise:

- In accordance with GTA the forecast year of assessment is 2024 which represents the traffic survey year (2018) plus six years; (Normally plus five years would be sufficient for a site of this size, but given that this assessment has been prepared in the final quarter of 2018, it is felt that a forecast year of 2024 is more appropriate);
- The 2018 observed traffic flows were factored to the assessment year using the DfT software TEMPro (Trip End Model Presentation Program) version 7.2;
- The latest version of the software provides traffic growth figures at the mid layer super output area (MSOA) level;
- In order to derive local traffic growth factors, the Taunton Deane 005 and 006 MSOAs, were selected, with the former including the site and junctions 1 and 2; the latter

including junctions 3 and 4 with the specific area factors applied to the respective junction groupings;

- Trip end growth factors for car drivers were derived and adjusted by NTM dataset AF15 for 'all' area and road types, in order to reflect the scale and variation of the study area; and
- WebTAG also states that TEMPro planning assumptions can be manually adjusted to take into account the committed developments defined below in order to avoid double counting traffic growth.

Committed Developments

5.6.1 Following scoping discussions and knowledge of local planning applications, the following consented developments have been treated as committed developments and explicitly included in the traffic forecasting:

- 48/16/0025: 320 Dwellings on Land adjacent to the A3259, Monkton Heathfield (Hartnell's Farm); and
- 08/10/0024 – 630 dwellings at land off Nerrols Drive, Taunton.

5.6.2 SCC did originally request that the ALDI discount foodstore off A38 Bridgwater Road and 40 dwellings at Larkfleet Rise (14/12/0043) be included in the assessment, however, both developments were built-out and operating/occupied at the time of the 2018 traffic surveys so any associated flows from these developments will be included within the observed data.

Nexus 25 and A358 Scheme

5.6.3 SCC also requested a sensitivity test to consider the cumulative impact of a local development order (LDO) for a large scale strategic employment-led development adjacent to junction 25 of the M25 known as Nexus 25. Various assumptions were made as to how best to model the traffic flows associated with the scheme, as the development mix was not fixed at the time of the associated assessment. The associated Nexus 25 assessment states that the scheme requires significant highway infrastructure improvements including at M5 junction 25 (A358/M5 junction) and at Creech Castle signals to achieve a full level of development. This sensitivity test has shown that the two junctions applicable, these being the A38 roundabouts, are forecast to operate with spare capacity with both the development and Nexus 25 in place.

5.7 SCC Response dated 10th December 2018

5.7.1 Comments from SCC/their representatives in relation to the revised TA (CD 6.2) were made via e-mail on 10th December 2018 (CD6.7). A detailed response to the points raised by SCC/their representatives was sent on the 14th December 2018 (CD 6.11) and covered the following issues:

-
- Further amendments to the site access arrangements to accommodate additional comments on the provision of additional traffic calming, extension of speed limits, pedestrian visibility splays these amendments being contained within Drawing P17071-002E (CD 6.10);
 - Commentary/updated swept path analysis for commercial and farm vehicles, this amendment being shown on Drawing P17071-003A and 004A,
 - Confirms that the proposed improvements to North End and PRow T10/23 can be delivered either on highway land or land within the control of the Appellant, thus confirming that the proposed development is accessible by the sustainable modes of transport including walking and cycling;
 - Provides additional information relating the secondary site access, this information being contained within Drawing P17071-005;
 - Provides further commitments to improvements to public transport in the area including confirmation that FirstBus (the main bus operator in the area) has been approached regarding the viability of the suggested improvements;
 - Provides additional assessment on the impacts of the proposed development on off-site junctions; and
 - Provides additional commentary on the PIA data used in the assessment of road safety impacts on the surrounding road network.

6 LOCAL OBJECTIONS

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 A number of objections have been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate from interested parties who primarily are local residents. I feel it is pertinent to address the highways and transportation issues raised in the objection correspondence, not only to provide further information for the consideration of the Inspector, but to help explain the development impact further and seek to allay any concerns that local residents may have.

6.1.2 I have attempted to categorise the objections by theme and address them, in turn, below.

6.2 Delivery of the Improvement to PRoW T10/23

6.2.1 As mentioned above Technical Note 01 (TN01) (CD 6.6) addresses the issues regarding the delivery of the proposed improvement to PRoW T10/23 to improve the pedestrian/cycle connections between the south-western corner of the site and Hopkins Field. It can also be confirmed that these improvements can be delivered either within the highway boundary or within land under the control of the Appellant.

6.3 Inadequate Footway Provision in the Village

6.3.1 As mentioned above Technical Note 01 (TN01) (CD 6.6) addresses the issues regarding proposed improvements to the site's pedestrian connectivity and accessibility to the village.

6.4 Traffic Volumes and Speeds in the Village

6.4.1 Multiple traffic surveys have been undertaken by an independent specialist traffic survey company. Section 3.3 of the revised TA (CD 6.2) provides a summary of these surveys with the raw data being included in the same document at Appendix C.

6.4.2 A turning count and queue length survey was undertaken at the Langaller Lane/North End mini-roundabout. Observed two-way peak hour flows at the junction were 824 in the AM peak and 722 in the PM peak, with the longest average queue lengths being 4 vehicles in both peaks. The traffic model of the junction presented in Section 6.11 of the revised TA (CD 6.2) shows that the junction currently operates with a good level of spare capacity which also corresponds with site visit observations. The same model predicts that the junction will continue to operate with a good level of spare capacity in 2024 with the development in place along with traffic from committed developments and traffic growth.

6.4.3 Video cameras were used to undertake link surveys in the village. The closest cameras to the site were mounted in the vicinity of the virtual footway on North End (Link A), on St Michael Road south of St Michael Close (Link B) and on St Michael Road outside the veterinary surgery (Link C). The links

- flows consisted predominantly of cars and other light vehicles with no more than 11 heavy vehicles recorded in any direction in the peak hours, with this figure being roughly equivalent to one heavy vehicle every 6 minutes. Proportionately, heavy vehicles account for between 1.3% and 3.1% of the total motor vehicle flow.
- 6.4.4 There was evidence of pedestrians and cyclists in both locations. The maximum motor vehicle flow recorded in either location was less than 400 one-way trips which is less than the national link capacity standard of 750 vehicles for a road of this nature.
- 6.4.5 An ATC survey was undertaken on North End in the vicinity of the virtual footway for a 14-day period from 14th May 2018 which recorded flows and speeds. Table 3.4 in the revised TA (CD 6.2) shows little deviation in absolute traffic flow terms with the two-way standard deviation being 29 trips in the Monday to Friday AM peak hour and 20 trips in the PM peak, although in percentage terms these are equivalent to 13.4% and 12.9% respectively. The fairly high percentage deviation is perhaps merely indicative of the relatively low traffic flows.
- 6.4.6 Chart 3.1 in the revised TA (CD 6.2) demonstrates the weekday average flow profile. The chart shows two distinct peaks that align with the typical commuting peak hours. The flows between and either side of these peaks are notably lower suggesting that traffic flows on North End are associated with commuting traffic and flows across the day are typically much lower than those of the peak hours.
- 6.4.7 Langaller Lane to the west of the settlement is subject to national speed limit (60mph for cars and motorcycles). Average speeds recorded at this location via a 2-day radar survey were 49.9mph eastbound and 41.4mph westbound, with the equivalent 85th percentile speeds being 54.2mph and 46.0mph as shown in Table 3.7 of the revised TA (CD 6.2). It reduces to 30mph to the east of the proposed access (shown in Drawing P16071-002D CD 6.4) with the speed limit change accompanied by count-up strips, a roundel and welcome signage.
- 6.4.8 The speed limit reduces further to 20mph around 50m north of the Langaller Lane/North End mini-roundabout with the speed limit change demarcated by signage on a yellow highlighting background and roundel on high-friction surface. The 20mph speed limit continues through the settlement to a point immediately south of St Michaels Close where it increases to 30mph. The 20mph speed limit change on this southern approach is demarcated by the same features as on the northern approach.
- 6.4.9 Traffic calming measures are present along North End and St Michael Road. These measures predominantly consist of a number of speed humps and a priority chicane to the north of St Michael Close.
- 6.4.10 The ATC survey undertaken on North End in the vicinity of the virtual footway mentioned above also recorded speeds. As shown in Table 3.6 in the revised TA (CD 6.2), the average speeds were 25.2mph northbound and 24.8-24.9mph southbound with the equivalent 85th percentile speeds

being 27.0mph and 26.2-26.3mph. This evidence shows that the 20mph speed limit is being regularly exceeded in this location. The proposed chicanes and traffic calming improvements detailed in TN01 (CD 6.2) will help to encourage speeds closer to the signed speed limit along this section of North End. Slower speeds will be beneficial to pedestrians, cyclists and indeed vehicular traffic.

- 6.4.11 The Transport Appraisal undertaken for the Nexus 25 site has been reviewed. It does not provide any details of forecast traffic flows through Creech St Michael. I do not expect it to add notable volumes of traffic through the village as it requires numerous improvements to the more strategic highway network including Creech Castle signals and M5 junction 25 so I see no reason why traffic would pass through the village on-route to/from it. The Nexus 25 development may create employment opportunities and be a place of amenity for future and existing residents of the village but this will simply involve a rerouting of traffic from other trip attractors.
- 6.4.12 SCC's Consultation Response (CD 4.22) made reference to rat running study commissioned by TDBC. I have not been provided with the details of this study so I cannot comment on it. I do however believe there are likely to be small levels of rat running traffic passing through Creech, particularly at times of traffic incidents such as broken down vehicles on the A38 and A358. The traffic calming measures proposed by the Appellant and detailed in TN01 (CD 6.6) should help to discourage such rat running traffic by slowing speeds and reducing priority. Also, the improvements proposed to the strategic network as part of Nexus 25, should provide additional capacity on the routes that rat runners are avoiding.

6.5 Bridge Crossings to the South of the Village

- 6.5.1 Link flows via a video survey were also recorded at the Lipe Lane bridge over the River Tone to the south of the village (Link D). Traffic flows in the northbound direction were similar to the other three link counts (334 AM and 339 PM motor vehicles) to the south of the village centre, although the link flows in the southbound direction were lower (250 AM and 277 PM motor vehicles). Again, these flows were notably lower than the national link capacity value of 750 for a road of this nature. Heavy vehicle flows were also low with a maximum of 10 one-way recorded in each peak, equating to 4% in the AM peak and 3.6% in the PM peak.
- 6.5.2 A 14-day ATC was also installed on the St Michael Road railway bridge from 14th May 2018 with the results shown in Table 3.5 in the revised TA (CD 6.2). This shows a slightly greater level of daily variation in traffic flow than at the equivalent ATC mentioned above with a two-way absolute difference of 65 trips in the Monday to Friday AM peak hour and 112 in the PM peak hour, equivalent to respective percentage difference of 9.4% and 17.8%.

- 6.5.3 Chart 3.2 in the revised TA presents the weekday average daily flow profile over the bridge. The profile is similar to the ATC on North End in that the peaks are well-defined during the typical commuting peaks with traffic flow much lower at other times of the day.
- 6.5.4 The above ATC also recorded speeds at this location, as presented in Table 3.6 of the revised TA (CD 6.2) with the average speeds being 20.1-20.3mph northbound and 16.6-16.7mph southbound. The equivalent 85th percentile speeds were 25.8-27.2mph and 21.9-22.0mph. This shows that the 30mph speed limit is largely being adhered to with drivers approaching the bridge with caution.
- 6.5.5 The proposed development is forecast to add 14 two-way trips to North End, St Michaels Road and Lipe Lane, a figure which is equivalent to less than one new trip every four minutes. This forecast increase in trips is notably less than the existing daily peak hour fluctuation in traffic flow, and it is my professional opinion that this level of increase will not be perceptible to road users and have nothing more than a negligible impact on traffic flows, traffic speeds and highway safety.

6.6 Parking at Village Shops

- 6.6.1 Parking beat surveys were undertaken on Thursday 17th May 2018 at 5-minute increments between the hours of 0700-1000 and 1600-1900 outside the local shops (convenience store, butchers, vet) in order to ascertain the level of parking on this section of St Michael Road.
- 6.6.2 The majority of parked vehicles were cars with the small numbers of goods vehicles likely to have primarily been service vehicles for the shops on the western side of the road or associated with the used van dealership on the eastern side of the road. The results show an average of 2.4 parked vehicles and a maximum of 4 during the AM peak hour with the equivalent values for the PM peak being 2.8 and 4. The 6-hour average was 2.7 with the maximum being 7, the latter occurring for a 5-minute period only.
- 6.6.3 The above suggests that the peak demand for parking is outside of the network peaks hours and there is nothing to suggest that this level of parking causes any issues with the operational capacity of St Michael Road. I would therefore suggest that the above level of parking demand can be accommodated within either the existing parking lay-by or on the surrounding road network. It is also suggested that the facilities provided at this location are likely to result in short durations of stay and therefore a high turnover of parking spaces is envisaged.

6.7 Road Safety

- 6.7.1 A review of 5-years of recent accident data showed that only three accidents occurred in the vicinity of the village. One of these was unfortunately a fatal accident that occurred to the south of the village centre on the railway bridge when a driver lost control of their vehicle in the hours of darkness, skidded, left the carriageway and collided with a wall. Excessive speed was potentially a factor in this accident. The two other accidents in the village resulted in slight injuries being

sustained, one to a cyclist when a large reversing agricultural vehicle collided with them; the other when a driver of a car suffered a medical episode and collided with a wall, again resulting in a slight injury. Both of these accidents occurred to the north of the village centre, one on the southern section of North End, the other on the eastern one. Neither appear to have been related to any issue with road layout.

6.7.2 There is certainly nothing to suggest that highway safety is a particular problem within the vicinity of the development site or indeed the settlement.

6.8 Bus Service Provision

6.8.1 As mentioned previously and in the revised TA (CD 6.2), the Appellant is willing to provide a level of funding commensurate to the scale of the site to enhance local bus services in the area. Suggested improvements have been previously been discussed, these improvements benefiting future but also existing residents of Creech St. Michael. Whilst it is believed that the delivery of these improvements can best be secured via discussions between SCC and the bus operators as a comprehensive and coordinated approach to public transport in the area, the Appellant has approached FirstBus (the major bus operator in the area) regarding the viability of the suggested improvements.

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7 COMPLIANCE WITH TRANSPORT POLICY INITIATIVES

7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 The following provides a summary as to how the development proposals conform to National and Local Transport Policy Initiatives.

7.2 Site Access

- 7.2.1 There is no formal national guidance relating to the maximum number of dwellings to be served from a single point of access, although locally some reference is still made to the *Estate Roads in Somerset Design Guidance Note* (1991). A review of this guidance suggests that a 'Type 3 Collector Road' is an appropriate access for the proposed development site, if in a cul-de-sac layout. Given the number of properties being considered on the site, in accordance with the abovementioned guidance it is proposed to provide a 'Type 3 Collector Road' to access the site, which would form a single priority controlled junction with a ghost island right turn onto Langaller Road.
- 7.2.2 This access has been designed in accordance with DMRB TD 42/95m for a design speed of 85kph and includes a 3.5m wide turning lane and a minimum of 3.5m kerb to kerb running lanes. The indicative layout also provides for side road geometries of a 5.5m wide carriageway, 10m kerb radius, 2 x 2.0m wide footways, all in accordance with DMRB/MfS/MfS2. Visibility splays at this site access point are also designed in accordance with the calculations for Stopping Sight Distances contained within MfS2. The proposed site access has also been the subject of an independent Stage 1 RSA. The minor comments raised as part of this process have been incorporated within the proposed access arrangement as shown in Drawing P16071-002E in TN02 (CD 6.9).

7.3 Sustainable Location

- 7.3.1 A key theme of national and local transport planning policy is that development should be located where the need to travel will be limited and the use of sustainable transport modes can be promoted. As detailed in Section 3 of this Proof of Evidence, the NPPF states that the '*transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, giving people a real choice about how they travel*' and developments should provide '*safe and suitable*' access for all.
- 7.3.2 The revised TA (CD 6.2) concluded that the proposed development accords with this NPPF guidance as well as the principles of Paragraph 108, in terms of exploiting opportunities for sustainable travel, as it is located to give priority to pedestrian, cycle and public transport movements. I therefore consider, in relation to Paragraph 108 of the NPPF that, '*appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes*' can be taken up, and that '*safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users*'.

7.3.3 It has also been demonstrated that the site location, which forms a natural extension to the existing boundary of the village, and the illustrative internal design and proposals for pedestrian and cycle accesses would complement the sustainable access and travel choice provision. This ensures compliance with the broad objectives of the Somerset FTP as well as Strategic Objective 6 and Policy CP 6 of the adopted Taunton Deane Core Strategy.

7.4 Travel Plan

7.4.1 In line with best practice at a national and local scale, a TP (Revision B) (CD 6.) has been produced and submitted as part of this planning application.

7.4.2 Provision of Travel Plans is consistent with the requirement set out in SCC's Transport and Development Policy Document that forms part of SCC's FTP, and Policy CP 6 of the Taunton Deane Core Strategy. The TP (Revision B) (CD 6.8) has also been prepared with reference to SCC's Travel Planning Guidance SPD.

8 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

8.1 Summary

8.1.1 The appeal proposals comprise up to 200 residential dwellings on land off Langaller Lane, Creech St. Michael, Somerset. All matters were reserved with the exception of a vehicular access point to be provided from Langaller Lane.

8.1.2 A Transport Assessment (CD 1.7) and Travel Plan (CD 1.8) were submitted to support the scheme through the planning process from a transportation perspective. SCC provided comment relating to the development proposals and recommended refusal (on the basis of insufficient information). A number of issues contributed to this reason for refusal and were grouped into the following headings in SCC's consultation response (CD 4.22):

- Road safety;
- Travel Plan;
- Access;
- Sustainability (including connectivity with the village, walking to Heathfield secondary school and buses);
- Parking; and
- Traffic Impact (including link capacity assessment, traffic growth, committed developments, Creech Castle junction and A358 scheme).

8.1.3 It should be noted that no quantifiable evidence has been provided by SCC to substantiate their Reason for Refusal.

8.1.4 Since refusal of the proposals, a revised TA (CD 6.2) has been submitted separately and addresses the following:

- Road safety;
- Access;
- Some issues of sustainability; and
- Traffic impact.

8.1.5 It should be noted that the issue regarding parking will be dealt with at Reserved Matters Stage, this fact being recognised in SCC's consultation response (CD 4.22).

8.1.6 A TP (Revision B) (CD 6.8) has also been submitted to TDBC. This now includes greater detail in relation to the registration and travel plan fees, the site audit, additional details with regard to the Action Plan, additional information regarding the setting and monitoring of targets and greater commitment as to how the TP will be secured.

8.1.7 Technical Note 1 (TN01) (CD 6.6) provides a response to the following:

- Improved pedestrian connections from the site along North End; and
- Improved pedestrian connections to Hopkin Field from the west of the site via an upgrade to PRow T10/23.

8.1.8 The proposed site access arrangements and the suggested improvements to North End contained within TN01 (CD 6.6) were subject to an independent Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (RSA). The Stage 1 RSA and the Designers Response to the various issues raised are contained within Technical Note 2 (TN02) (CD 6.9).

8.1.9 It has also been demonstrated within the Proof of Evidence that the proposed development complies with numerous National and Local Transport Policy Initiatives.

8.2 Conclusion

8.2.1 In conclusion, based on the evidence provided in the revised TA and TP and TN01, I see no transportation or traffic reasons why the development proposals should not be permitted.