

The information, recommendations and advice contained in this report are correct as at the date of preparation, which is more than two weeks in advance of the Committee meeting. Because of these time constraints some reports may have been prepared in advance of the final date given for consultee responses or neighbour comment. Any changes or necessary updates to the report will be made orally at the Committee meeting.

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Case Officer                 | Chris Jones   |
| Application No.              | 19/00028/FULPP  |
| Date Valid                   | 11th January 2019   |
| Expiry date of consultations | 27th February 2019  |
| Proposal                     | Removal of existing bus stops with shelters and provision of a revised access to car park from Westmead, together with associated alterations to approved site layout |
| Address                      | <b>ASDA Westmead Farnborough Hampshire GU14 7LT</b>   |
| Ward                         | Empress   |
| Applicant                    | Mr Steven Roberts - Asda Stores Ltd   |
| Agent                        | Mr Bradley Wiseman  |
| Recommendation               | <b>GRANT</b>  |

### Description

The application relates to the car park of the Asda store and an adjacent section of the public highway containing bus stops and a bus turning area which was constructed as part of the Princes Mead development, of which the Asda store forms part. The design included an emergency access route from the store car park via the bus turning area to Westmead, with a lockable barrier to prevent general use. No planning conditions were imposed to require this entrance/exit to be used for emergency access only. In response to congestion problems on Solartron Road, at the request of the Council, the applicants have opened up the route to general use, with the Council providing appropriate signage.

The current proposal is to make modifications to the bus stop area to formalise the arrangements and to make the entrance and exit more suitable for general use by increasing its width and introducing a two-way traffic lane in the adjacent part of the car park. The existing bus stops would be removed, but a bus turning area would be retained for buses and minibuses. Low-level landscaping would be provided in the central area. Existing pedestrian routes into the site from Westmead would be maintained. It is also proposed to make a number of changes to the parking layout within the store's car park. These include the creation of 7 staff parking bays in an area used for informal parking adjacent to the south-western corner of the building; the removal of a click-and-collect drive-through facility and the creation of 6 new spaces and the removal of three spaces to allow access to new alternative click-and-collect

lockers which were approved under planning reference 18/00789/FULPP.

## **Consultee Responses**

RBC Regeneration Team            No Objection.

HCC Highways Development    No Objection  
Planning

## **Neighbours notified**

In addition to posting a site notice, individual letters of notification were sent to units in the Horizon Retail Park, Units A-B and C Princes Mead, Farnborough Business Park, and to the owners or managers of Horizon Retail Park and Farnborough Business Park and to Stagecoach South.

## **Neighbour comments**

An employee of Fluor, writing in a personal capacity, raises no objection in principle to the proposed changes, but comments that the Highway Statement by Sanderson Associates grossly understates the beneficial use that the 'redundant' bus stops provide to people working on the Farnborough Business Park (FBP), especially in inclement weather - with direct benefit to the local economy. He requests that FBP be consulted regarding relocating/replacing the bus shelter to retain this useful facility.

## **Policy and determining issues**

The site is located in the Defined Urban Area and the Farnborough Town Centre as defined on the proposals map of the Rushmoor Local Plan. Policies IN2 and DE1 are considered to be relevant. The main determining issues are considered to be the principle of the development, impact upon visual amenity and parking and transport issues.

## **Commentary**

Principle-

The main access to and from the Asda store car park is via the roundabout at the northern end of Solartron Road. This section of road also provides access to the wider highway network for the B & Q store, for the units in Horizon Retail Park and Solartron Retail Park and for the commercial units in Invincible Road and suffers from congestion at peak times. It is for this reason that the Council asked the applicants to open up the emergency entrance/exit for general use. It is considered that this proposal, together with the proposals set out in application 19/00229/FUL (in respect of the creation of a new vehicular route from Invincible Road to Elles Road, item 6 in this Agenda), would go some way towards addressing these issues. It is therefore considered that the proposal is acceptable in principle, provided that it does not adversely affect visual amenity or the character of the area, provided that highway safety will not be adversely affected, and that adequate car parking for staff and customers would be maintained and adequate facilities are retained for public and non car transport.

## Impact upon Visual Amenity and Character of the Area –

It is considered that the proposed alterations to the road layout and the removal of the bus shelters would have little impact upon the general character of the area or visual amenity as these changes would be relatively minor when compared to the size of the car park and adjoining sites.

## Highway Safety Issues –

The existing former emergency entrance may be lawfully used to provide general purpose vehicular access to and from the car park to the main carriageway of Westmead. However, the route through this area is not particularly clear, particularly for those unfamiliar with it. It is considered that a continuation of these arrangements in the longer term would not be ideal. The applicants, at the request of Hampshire Highways have submitted a Stage 1 Highway Safety Audit and a Designers Response to the Highway Safety Audit which has demonstrated that the proposed arrangements would be satisfactory. In response to these documents and an amended plan submitted on 13 May 2019, Hampshire Highways have raised no objection to the proposal on Highway Safety grounds.

## Parking Provision –

The proposal would result in a small increase in parking spaces on site for customers and staff – 4 additional standard parking bays, 1 additional disabled bay and 1 additional parent and child bay in an acceptable layout. The proposal is considered to be satisfactory in this respect.

## Facilities for Alternative Means of Transport –

The existing bus turning area and shelters were previously used by Stagecoach South to provide bus services. The last of these was discontinued in September 2016 and, according to Hampshire County Council's Passenger Transport Team, the company has no plans to reintroduce services in the future. The facility is not currently used by any public bus service provider, but both Farnborough Business Park and Fluor, who occupy a number of units on Farnborough Business Park, provide a private minibus service, which links the Business Park, the Town Centre and the railway stations. These services appear to be well used and it is considered important that the ability to pick up and drop off workers is maintained. In this respect, the proposal as originally submitted showed the complete removal of the bus stop and turning facilities. This was considered to be unacceptable, as it would reduce linkages between Farnborough Business Park and town centre. The applicants were therefore asked to submit an amended layout which retains a bus turning area. This has resulted in the scheme currently under consideration. It is considered that the layout proposed would make satisfactory provision to allow for the continued operation of the private minibus service and would also allow for the reintroduction of a public bus service, should demand arise. Kerbs would be lowered to facilitate this, but no replacement bus shelters are proposed. The suggestion that this should be a requirement of any planning permission is noted, but since there are currently no known proposals to reinstate public bus services in this area, it is considered that it would not be reasonable to make this a condition of any planning permission. Farnborough Business Park was notified of the proposal, but made no representations concerning the removal of the shelters. It should be noted that the Council has powers under the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) to erect passenger shelters on highway land in its administrative area, without the need for planning permission, and so such facilities could be provided at a future date, if deemed appropriate. The proposals would maintain the existing pedestrian routes to and from

Westmead, while the wider and straighter access road would improve access for cyclists to the car park and the cycle route that runs through it.

Conclusion -

The proposal would have no adverse impact upon the character and amenity of the area and would result in a safer and more convenient access to and egress from the car park, whilst maintaining provision for existing minibus services and retaining the opportunity for bus servicing at this point in the future. It is therefore considered that the proposed development accords Policies SS2, SP2, DE1 and IN2 of the Rushmoor Local Plan, 2019.

### **Full Recommendation**

It is recommended that permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason - As required by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2 The permission hereby granted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings - Drawing numbers: LP01 REV E, BP01 REV A and PL01 REV E.

Reason - To ensure the development is implemented in accordance with the permission granted

### **Informatives**

- 1 **INFORMATIVE** – The Local Planning Authority’s commitment to working with the applicants in a positive and proactive way is demonstrated by its offer of pre-application discussion to all, and assistance in the validation and determination of applications through the provision of clear guidance regarding necessary supporting information or amendments both before and after submission, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 2 **INFORMATIVE - REASONS FOR APPROVAL-** The Council has granted permission because it is considered that the proposal would have no adverse impact upon the character and amenity of the area and would result in a safer and more convenient access to and egress from the car park, whilst maintaining provision for existing minibus services and retaining the opportunity for bus servicing at this point in the future. It is therefore considered that the proposed development accords Policies SS2, SP2, DE1 and IN2 of the Rushmoor Local Plan, 2019. It is therefore considered that subject to compliance with the attached conditions, and taking into account all other material planning considerations, including the provisions of the development plan, the proposal would be acceptable. This also includes a consideration of whether the decision to grant permission is compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.
- 3 **INFORMATIVE** - The planning permission hereby granted does not authorise the applicant, or his agents, to construct a new/altered access to, or other work within, the public highway. A separate consent for works within the highway must first be obtained

from the highway authority who may be contacted at the following address:- Hampshire County Council Highways Sub Unit, M3 Motorway Compound, Hook, Hampshire, RG27 9AA.



