



Record of a meeting to discuss Greenham Traffic Issues held at Goldfinch Hollow, Basingstoke Road at 2.00 pm on 7 April 2009

Present:

Mr P Goddard (WBC Highways)

Mr A J Forward (Chairman, Greenham Parish Council)

Mrs S Huxtable (Greenham Parish Council)

Mrs D Smith (Greenham Parish Council)

Mr J Boston (Clerk, Greenham Parish Council)

1. Mr Forward opened the meeting by welcoming Mr Goddard and thanking him for attending. Although the meeting was primarily to discuss traffic issues emanating from the Racecourse development, other topics were likely to arise.

2. Mr Goddard outlined the current position of the application in respect of traffic. He said that he had been unable to progress very far due to the applicant's failure to provide adequate information. He explained that it was accepted practice for applicants to initially produce a traffic analysis based on standard software which was then updated by traffic counts taken on the ground together with historical data to assess the actual impact. He had initially concentrated on the figures submitted for the junctions at A4/Hambridge Road, Robin Hood roundabout and Bear Lane (Sainsbury's) roundabout. These locations had been chosen because they were complex and because they were controlled by traffic lights and traffic counts could therefore be taken of vehicles actually crossing a green light. Unfortunately, the applicant had failed to submit any actual analysis and had only provided data provided from the software package. This had resulted in extended correspondence with the applicant which had reached the point where WBC was considering rejecting the application due to lack of required information.

3. The applicant had recently conducted a 2-week survey at Bear Lane and WBC was awaiting the results. Once received they would be submitted to WBC's own independent consultants for verification and would then inform WBC's assessment of the application and its implications. It was unlikely that WBC would have the final results in less than 3 weeks.

4. The applicant still has to conduct traffic surveys at A4/Hambridge Road and Robin Hood. Both of these locations present serious problems for the applicant. At the A4/Hambridge Road, the model submitted with the application had been accepted.

However the software had been updated since the model was created and the 2 versions did not work together, hence a new model would need to be produced before any survey could be undertaken. At the Robin Hood the major reconstruction means that the data previously used to create the model did not reflect the new lane markings and traffic lights. It was possible that the applicant could make use of data produced for the Parkway development but this was in the ownership of the Parkway developer which may not be willing to release it or only at significant cost. It was possible therefore that the developer would have to start again at these 2 junctions.

5. So far Mr Goddard had only considered the 3 junctions mentioned and had not looked at the other junctions such as St John's, Burger King, Stroud Green etc. Overall he thought it very unlikely that the application could move forward before June and possibly not until September.

6. Other aspects of the Racecourse application were then discussed. Mr Goddard said the developer desired to maintain traffic levels in Stroud Green at the current level. However, there was still disbelief that this could be achieved with Boundary Road closed to northbound traffic and all existing northbound traffic together with that generated by the western end of the development being funnelled into the Burger King roundabout which was not only close to saturation but was already exceeding European environmental limits. Against this, Mr Goddard said that to allow northbound traffic in Boundary Road could cause chaos at the junction with Hambridge Road which would be carrying additional traffic from the development. GPC remained unconvinced and it may be that local roads lack the overall capacity to absorb all the additional traffic. Mr Goddard also said that the proposal for a gyratory route around Hambridge Road/Bone Lane were based on the need to provide safe cycleways along Hambridge Road which was not wide enough in places to accept these plus 2-way traffic. It was pointed out that the effect on emergency services seemed not to have been considered. For example, for the police to reach an incident at Sainsbury's, which was opposite the Police Station, or to access the A339, would require a considerable journey along the one-way system over heavily congested roads. While acknowledging the desire to prevent the development becoming a rat-run GPC is still of the opinion that to artificially split one development into 2 was flawed and divisive. The Clerk suggested that residents be issued with sender units which would allow them to pass through the bus gate while still blocking through traffic. This would also reduce the pressure on Stroud Green/Burger King roundabout.

7. In respect of traffic figures generally, the Clerk noted that traffic was currently depressed by about 15% due to the recession and he asked if this was allowed for, since the developers assumed that by the time the properties were occupied the recession would be over. Mr Goddard said that based on the most recent comprehensive survey, no growth was assumed from 2005 -2008 with a 1% pa growth up to 2015. He also said that WBC was robust in including the effects of all permitted developments but the implications were clearly based on assumptions since no accurate figures could yet be obtained.

8. It was considered that the proposals for the Racecourse Station fell well short of what was possible or desirable. Here was an opportunity to make the Racecourse Station a proper second station for the whole of Newbury but the opportunity was in danger of being missed with long-term consequences. Newbury Station had no available parking at peak periods and seems close to capacity in the rush hour. The Racecourse Station could be a realistic alternative for people living south and east of Newbury but access and car parking

was woefully inadequate. Mr Forward suggested that it would be possible, given the large number of tracks available here, to build a car park over the Station on a section by section basis which would considerably ease the demand at Newbury Station.

9. Turning to wider issues, Mrs Smith suggested that the whole of the A339 in the area should have a 40 mph limit. She considered this would have a number of advantages. A constant speed limit was more likely to be adhered to than one with frequent changes; it would reduce the noise nuisance to the Deadman's Lane residents and it would help traffic flow and reduce queuing at roundabouts (especially the Burger King northbound) since traffic would be arriving at a slower rate. The constant speed limit could be enforced by 'average speed' cameras rather than spot cameras which only encourage slowing down and speeding up. Mrs Smith also suggested that northbound traffic in Hambridge Road which was turning right towards Thatcham at the A4 junction should be able to use both the centre and right hand lanes. At present relatively little traffic used the centre lane to go straight ahead but the large volume wishing to turn right formed a long tailback. As the A4 eastbound at this point was 2 lanes there seems no impediment. Mr Goddard said that this was one of the Racecourse proposals but GPC considered that it could be implemented irrespective of the Racecourse development. Both of these suggestions will be submitted to WBC.

J Boston
Clerk
8 April 2009