

EXAMINATION 30th April 2018

EXAMINERS QUESTION ON POLICY H2 – TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC

SAR Table 6.3 and Technical Site Assessments (TSA).

All sites with the exception of RB are scored RED. Is this objective, robust and evidence based?

RB is excluded from this discussion because of its obvious unsuitability for other reasons.

NORTH END (CP, UF)

Evidence base for RED is that the sites are on a “dangerous fast curve”, and unsubstantiated “frequently voiced concerns by a significant number of residents”.

“Dangerous fast curve” is not supported by accident statistics. See website Crashmap. None since 2003, one slight accident in the last 19 years. Sections of A329 in the centre and south of the village have a very much worse accident record.

“frequently voiced concerns ...” in my opinion is partly as a result of the inaccurate information presented in the first two drafts of the TSAs that “*fast curve which prevented a nearby infill application for a single dwelling because of sight lines vs high speed of traffic*”. In spite of the fact that the Applicant (chartered surveyor who presumably knew his business) who was on the NPC at the very start in his DOI at the first meeting stated “*previous planning application to build house on this land rejected due to Green Belt concerns*” as recorded in the minutes. The NPC were requested to correct the TSA so it would not mislead for the whole period from the first draft in July 2016, through the second draft in October 2016 until it was finally removed in December 2016, but the scoring was not amended despite the evidence being invalid.

Note the “leading” nature of Q11 of the CQ, but, however you interpret the responses “Speeding at north end” in comparison ranks low down the list of sections of road where there are concerns. Had the question been phrased differently and villagers asked to list the three sections of road of most significant concern then it is unlikely the “north end” would have featured prominently, if at all.

Despite no accident statistics to show this is a significant problem, it is recognised that vehicles are slow to reduce speed and quick to speed up as they enter and leave this part of the village. However, if required by the HA, development here would be able to fund traffic calming measures and this would benefit the village as a whole. This is not recognised by the Qualifying Body (QB) in the TSAs.

Overall the RED rating is undeservedly harsh.

CENTRAL AREA (6A, PF)

Justified RED for both 6A and PF in respect of accident statistics (SAR table 6.3).

TSA for 6A appears to downgrade this to AMBER after feedback and GREEN overall in the viability assessment but there is no traffic calming included in the 6A planning application and according to the officers report 6.41 to 6.51 based on LHA requirements no traffic calming is to be provided secured by condition. So many of the comments in the TSA supporting the lower category and the eventual conclusion in the viability assessment (*Consultation evidence submitted gives confidence that the cumulative residual traffic impact of the proposed development is not ‘severe’*) are actually not valid.

Comments in the TSA to the effect *“This will need to be clarified at the detailed stage if the site is suitable in principle”* are no more than an aspiration that won't actually be realised.

It is highly debateable whether the proposed off road school car park will alleviate speeding along this section of road at times of peak traffic congestion. At school times the parked cars there now provide effective traffic calming. The new car park does not provide enough parking so cars will still park on the road except for the stretch where yellow lines are proposed. Instead, the car park increases traffic flow on the new junction. The school Governors' continue to have safety concerns and voiced their objection at the planning meeting 19th March 2018.

Independent transportation and road safety reports commissioned by residents have been made available to the examiner in evidence. These were provided to the QB.

It is my opinion, as a Professional Civil Engineer of 30yrs experience, that traffic and road safety in respect of 6A has not been assessed in an objective manner by the QB, resulting in an unjustifiably favourable assessment.

There is no dispute that the PF site has significant road safety and traffic flow concerns, particularly in respect of the scale of development proposed. It is the inconsistency of approach in the TSAs to which I would bring the examiner's attention, and therefore the question of robustness, an evidence base, objectivity, and fairness overall.

PF appears to be the only site for which the comment *“Await traffic survey and further investigation”* applies, even though at the time the NP was submitted there was a very detailed TA available in the planning application documents.

Also it is the only site that without any consideration of the size of development gives rise to *“moderate to significant traffic flow impact to village lanes with existing significant traffic/on street parking issues”*, and only site for which *“Village-wide traffic calming and management would be required”*, as if this was a bad outcome and no benefit for the village.

The contribution the PF site could make to the school parking appears not to have been explored with the developer, though the suggestion is made that *“If the site were developed without providing any parking solutions for the existing school problems, the impact of development on current parking issues would be detrimental, because of the increased traffic volume”*. The converse view is that dwellings on this site would reduce the numbers of children coming in from outside the village by car.

Contrast with *“This will need to be clarified at the detailed stage if the site is suitable in principle”*!

I believe this note summarises where in respect of Traffic and road safety the allocation of 6A in H2 is not robust nor evidence based.

Michael Robertson
BEng (Hons), AUS, MICE, SCE, OSE