

P/15/0040/VC

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

SARISBURY

AGENT: HAMPSHIRE COUNTY
COUNCIL

RELIEF FROM CONDITION 2 OF P/14/0570/VC ALLOWING PERMANENT OPENING OF
YEW TREE DRIVE TO ALL TRAFFIC EXCLUDING HEAVY GOODS VEHICLES

YEW TREE DRIVE FAREHAM HAMPSHIRE

Report By

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Site Description

The site is located off Botley Road, Swanwick just south of Ashley Close. A connection was opened in 2008 between Botley Road and Yew Tree Drive (leading to the development of Whiteley) with restricted access for emergency vehicles and buses only.

Description of Proposal

The access connection was permitted under planning permission P/05/1533/FP and was subject to the following condition (No.2):

'No development shall take place until details of the bus gate, including bus control measures have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing. The approved bus control measures shall be constructed before the bus link is first brought into use and shall be retained at all times. The link road shall subsequently be used by buses and emergency vehicles only unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority following the submission of a planning application made for that purpose.'

Temporary planning permission was granted under P/13/0547/VC on 23 August 2013 allowing the bus gate to be opened to all traffic for a temporary period of one year during which a three month trial period would be carried out.

A further temporary planning permission was granted (P/14/0570/VC refers) on 4 August 2014 seeking an extension of time to allow the opening of the bus gate for a further six months (and controlled to prevent use by other vehicles as previously agreed pursuant to P/05/1533/FP and P/13/0547/VC).

This application seeks permission to allow the opening of the bus gate to all traffic excluding HGV's on a permanent basis.

Policies

The following policies apply to this application:

Approved Fareham Borough Core Strategy

CS5 - Transport Strategy and Infrastructure

Fareham Borough Local Plan Review

T8 - Improvements to the Distributor Road Network

T9 - Access to Whiteley

Relevant Planning History

The following planning history is relevant:

P/14/0570/VC - Variation of Condition 2 of P/13/0547/VC to extend the trial opening of the bus gate for a further six months - Permission 4 August 2014

P/13/0547/VC - To enable a trial opening of the bus gate for one year from date of decision so the effects of the bus gate opening to all traffic (with the exception of heavy goods vehicles) can be monitored by Hampshire County Council as highway authority (variation of condition 2 P/05/1533/FP) - Permission 23 August 2013

P/05/1533/FP - Construction of Roundabout & Yew Tree Drive Link Road (Bus Only Access) - Permission 23 December 2005

Representations

Immediate neighbours were notified of the application and eight site notices were erected in the area, including three in Swanwick Lane.

Six letters of objection have been received raising the following issues:

The level of noise and pollution has significantly increased since the bus gate opened-this is both day and night

Further noise and pollution monitoring must be carried out and proper mitigation solutions to reduce the noise and pollution levels must be put in place prior to planning permission being granted

Residents were assured that Yew Tree Drive would never be opened on a permanent basis until the completion of Whiteley Way

Speed restrictions on Yew Tree Drive are wholly inadequate- better traffic calming should be put in place

Situation will get worse with additional houses being built and the opening of the cinema in Whiteley' Further traffic surveys should be carried out as a result

A new survey is required now - I have witnessed traffic queued in Botley Road/Yew Tree Drive

Has a survey been carried out to assess any increase in crime as Whiteley is no longer a cul-de-sac?

The Planning Committee should visit the site.

Consultations

Director of Community (Environmental Health - Pollution) -

The Council has begun air quality monitoring in the vicinity of the site. The initial results appear to be well below the annual mean objective for nitrogen dioxide. Monitoring of this issue will continue.

In terms of noise, it appears from the applicant's noise report that current noise levels exceed the recommended standards for daytime garden noise (BS 8233 Sound Insulation and Noise Reduction For Buildings - code of practice) and night time bedroom noise (e.g. World Health Organisation Guidelines for Community Noise). Noise monitoring was not carried out before the opening of the bus gate and therefore evidence is not provided to demonstrate whether or not pre-existing noise levels were also above or below the recommended levels.

The site is located in an area known for above average back ground noise levels. Residential properties built adjacent to Yew Tree Drive generally have the benefit of some separation and mature planting between themselves and the road. Yew Tree Drive has always been a principal highway within this part of Whiteley and it has always been the intention that it was to be opened to through traffic at some stage.

In light of all these factors officers are unable to establish that the living conditions of the neighbouring properties have been materially harmed as a result of the opening of the road and therefore no objection is raised in respect of noise and air quality.

Director of Planning and Development (Highways) -

Following an initial temporary opening of the bus gate to all traffic in 2012 and its subsequent closure, the bus gate has now again been open for almost a year giving interested parties the opportunity to assess the implications of its permanent opening to through traffic. Whilst there may have been some minor negative impacts, it is apparent from the background documentation that the majority of consultees are in favour of the permanent opening of the bus gate and that the various indicators show largely positive results. It is noted that Hampshire County Council propose to carry out the following additional investigations and measures arising -

- Investigate additional traffic management measures on Swanwick Lane to reduce vehicle speeds and discourage rat-running between the A27 and Whiteley.
- Investigate whether capacity improvements are feasible on the Swanwick Lane entry arm to the A27 signalised junction.
- Investigate measures that could be imposed on Botley Road within Park Gate to assist access and control vehicle speeds.

As the 'with opening' traffic flows remain within recognised capacity limits and there is no apparent highway safety implications, no highway objection is raised to this application, subject to the above investigations and any resulting measures being carried out.

Planning Considerations - Key Issues

BACKGROUND

The Yew Tree Drive bus link was originally opened as a bus only link onto Botley Road in May 2008. This aimed to give priority to public transport in the Whiteley area. Since then residents have asked whether traffic congestion around Whiteley could be reduced if the link was open to all vehicles.

The Yew Tree Drive bus gate was opened to all traffic over a three week period in July 2012 as a result of National Grid maintenance works. This provided an initial opportunity to

monitor traffic flows with the bus gate open for a set period of time.

Following the three week opening of the bus gate a public consultation was undertaken in February 2013. This consultation identified that 84% of respondents wanted a trial opening of the bus gate to take place.

A planning application, P/13/0547/VC refers, was submitted to enable a trial opening of the bus gate to all traffic, for one year from 23 August 2013 (with the exception of heavy goods vehicles) allowing monitoring by Hampshire County Council as Highway Authority.

This Council is now being asked to grant planning permission for the link to remain open on a permanent basis. The key planning issues to be considered are those of highway safety and residential amenity.

The following report sets out the following matters:

The planning policy position

A summary of the mitigation measures carried out as part of the trial opening

A summary of the public consultation undertaken in 2014

Effects of the opening of the bus gate upon the highway network

Effects of the opening of the bus gate upon air quality & residential amenity

THE PLANNING POLICY POSITION

Within the Fareham Borough Local Plan Review, saved Policy T9: Access to Whiteley states that:

(A) Road connections from Whiteley to Botley Road for general traffic will not be permitted until Whiteley Way is complete between Junction 9 on the M27 and the A3051 north of Curbridge.

(B) Bus only access from Botley Road to Yew Tree Drive and/or Rookery Avenue will be permitted provided that it can be demonstrated to be safe and that satisfactory arrangements can be made to exclude other vehicular traffic.

Since the drafting of this policy in the late 1990s there have a number of material changes in circumstances which include the considerable local support for opening up the Bus Gate to all traffic.

Members will also be aware that the Council's Local Plan Part 2: Development Sites and Policies, (which will replace the remaining saved policies within the Fareham Borough Local Plan Review), has been subject to Examination and is well advanced. The requirements of Policy T9 are not replicated within the Local Plan Part 2.

In addition, Members will also be aware that Winchester City Council (WCC) has included a strategic housing allocation within their Core Strategy for 3500 new dwellings on land north of Whiteley. The development has been planned for a number of years and a planning application is expected early this year. The development will include the completion of Bluebell Way and Whiteley Way, which will join Botley Road at points north of Burrige and Curbridge respectively.

MITIGATION MEASURES CARRIED OUT AS PART OF THE TRIAL OPENING

As part of the trial opening of the bus gate, a large number of mitigation measures were introduced in the Whiteley area, in Botley Road and Swanwick Lane. These included:

- Speed cushions on the length of Yew Tree Drive from its junction with Botley Road to its junction with Rookery Avenue;
- Toucan crossing - a new signal controlled pedestrian and cycle crossing at an existing crossing place to the south of Gull Coppice, where the School Crossing Patrol currently operates;
- 20 mph speed limit on Yew Tree Drive in the vicinity of Gull Coppice to include the proposed Toucan crossing;
- Experimental Heavy Goods Vehicle ban - creation of a vehicle weight restriction, for all vehicles exceeding 7.5 tonnes on Yew Tree Drive between its junctions with Botley Road and Clydesdale Road (the Yew Tree Drive Bus Gate). The traffic regulation order bans all HGVs movements through the bus gate even for access;
- Experimental Heavy Goods Vehicle ban - creation of a vehicle weight restriction, accept for access, for all vehicles exceeding 7.5 tonnes on Yew Tree Drive between its junctions with Rookery Avenue and Clydesdale Road. The traffic regulation order will allow for HGV's in excess of 7.5 tonnes to access Yew Tree Drive to serve residential areas etc., but will not allow Yew Tree Drive to be used as a through route. Access to Yew Tree Drive will only be allowed however via Rookery Avenue;
- Additional white lining on Swanwick Lane - the introduction of carriageway edge lines and the removal of centre line markings along Swanwick Lane;
- Pedestrian refuge island on the western end of Swanwick Lane at the eastern end of the lay-by near to the playground;

These mitigation measures associated with the trial opening of the bus gate were implemented during the winter of 2013/14. The trial opening commenced on 28 February 2014 with monitoring being carried out for a period of three months.

SUMMARY OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN IN 2014

In June/July 2014, Hampshire County Council undertook a public consultation which sought views of local residents and businesses on the future of the Yew Tree Drive Bus Gate. Local businesses and residents were asked to share their views on the effectiveness of the trial opening and whether they supported a permanent opening of the bus gate.

Surveys were sent to 5,287 properties in Whiteley (4,711 to residents and 576 to businesses). A total of 2,126 responses were received representing a response of 40%.

Area wide, the response to the primary question of "do you support the permanent opening of the bus gate", showed that 86% of respondents (residents and businesses combined) would support the opening. When these responses were broken down further into specific areas there was a majority in support of opening the bus gate permanently from each of BurrIDGE, Swanwick, Park Gate and Whiteley.

A follow up question was also asked regarding whether the temporary opening has had a

positive or negative effect on a number of traffic impacts. For all of the measures apart from the HGV impact the consensus was that the temporary opening had had a positive effect with the situation being better than before; for the impact of HGVs there was a feeling of uncertainty with the majority of 53% being unsure. 68% of respondents felt that the opening and associated works has had a positive effect on the control of vehicle speeds with 76% believing that journey times were better than before.

The impact of the opening on traffic volumes showed a fairly even split with 38% experiencing a positive effect, 33% finding a negative impact and 26% being unsure.

While the consultation results indicate that the majority of residents supported the bus gate opening, the comments that were made also identified that respondents remain concerned about the speed cushions that have been installed in Yew Tree Drive.

Whilst it is recognised that the speed cushions on Yew Tree Drive are not universally popular, the monitoring of vehicle speeds suggests that they have been successful in bringing about a significant reduction in speeds. One of the primary reasons for using speed cushions on Yew Tree Drive was the use of this road by buses and emergency vehicles. Given that the bus gate at the end of Yew Tree Drive was installed to allow buses and emergency vehicles to exit onto Botley Road but to restrict access by private vehicles, the use of speed humps, which are not practical for buses or emergency vehicles, would be counter-intuitive. Discussions with the bus companies have indicated they would have reservations with these measures and the impact they have on their vehicles and their passengers. There is the concern that this may cause the bus companies to re route around this area.

EFFECTS OF THE OPENING OF THE BUS GATE UPON THE HIGHWAY NETWORK

The main effects of the opening of the bus gate are that traffic flows on all roads assessed have increased.

Turning counts were carried out on the Yew Tree Drive / Botley Road; Swanwick Lane / Botley Road; Swanwick Lane / A27; and Botley Road / A334 junctions. All junctions were found to be operating safely and within capacity. A number of vehicles were found to be turning out of Yew Tree Drive and along Swanwick Lane, and vice versa.

HGV movements were observed as part of the turning counts carried out and found a good adherence to the weight limit restriction.

Nine months of accident monitoring was carried out and no accidents were found to be directly attributable to the opening of Yew Tree Drive. Accident records will continue to be monitored.

Vehicle speeds were taken at eight locations before and after opening of the road. All locations apart from Yew Tree Drive at the bus gate, Whiteley Way southbound and Botley Road south of the bus gate southbound showed a reduction in average vehicle speeds with Whiteley Way and Botley Road showing only a slight increase.

The largest reductions in speeds were experienced in Yew Tree Drive and Swanwick Lane.

EFFECTS OF THE OPENING OF THE BUS GATE UPON AIR QUALITY AND RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

AIR QUALITY

Air quality monitoring with respect to traffic is measured through recording the levels of nitrogen dioxide.

An air quality survey was carried out from January to the end of May 2014, to measure the concentration of nitrogen dioxide at locations representative of public exposure.

With the exception of one location on Botley Road, which is being assessed further by Fareham Borough Council (which may be affected by emissions from the M27 motorway), all of the measurements are within the EU and national standards.

IMPACT UPON RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

Six objections have been received to the proposal to permanently open the Bus Gate. Three objections are from residents living in Lipizzaner Fields which back onto Yew Tree Drive. These properties are separated from Yew Tree Drive by a bridleway and green buffer. The properties are also sited at a slightly lower level than the road.

Two objection letters were received from properties in Connemara Crescent, the nearest situated 21 metres from the road.

The sixth letter was received from 151 Botley Road, which is sited to the north west of the roundabout on Botley Road. This property faces Botley Road and has a frontage depth of approximately 10 metres.

Some of these residents have raised concerns relating to an increase in noise levels and as a result have requested noise mitigation measures.

In order to assess the impact of noise upon neighbouring properties, noise surveys were undertaken at four locations where conditions were considered likely to change following the opening of the bus gate. The surveys were undertaken over various periods to capture the changes that occur during the day and during the week.

Whilst there are no limits set for outside noise levels, a daytime level of 55 LAeq, dB is quoted by the World Health Organisation as the level where serious annoyance may start to occur. The night time noise level guidance (NNG) is set at 40dB, but with a 55dB level that is recommended as an interim target where the NNG cannot be achieved in the short term.

Of the four locations identified, three had measured levels which were just above the upper desirable levels for gardens of 50 dB as specified in BS8233.

The Botley Road noise monitoring location (north of Yew Tree Drive) showed that daytime levels exceeded the 55dB limit.

At two of the locations, Botley Road (just south of the bus gate) and Lipizzaner Fields, measurements were also undertaken at night. These measured levels were above the World Health Organisation guidelines of 40dB but below the 55dB that is recommended as an interim target.

There are no readings taken before the Bus Gate was opened against which to compare the level of noise following its opening. An assumption has been made that the increase in

traffic levels along Yew Tree Drive, will have resulted in an increase in noise levels. However based on the information available, it is not possible to say how much these levels might have increased by.

The opening of Yew Tree Drive has been carried out by the lowering of the bus gate bollards only. The works have not resulted in any material alteration to the road in terms of the movement of kerb lines or widening in any way.

In terms of road surfacing, at low traffic speeds (this road is a 30mph speed limit and the addition of traffic calming measures has reduced vehicle speeds further) traffic noise is likely to be mainly attributable to engine, transmission and exhaust noise as opposed to the tyre/road interaction.

Officers are mindful of the concerns raised by local residents in relation to increased traffic noise. Additional information has been requested from Hampshire County Council in relation to this aspect and further comments will be reported in the form of an update at the meeting.

SUMMARY

The opening of the bus gate has led to an increase in the number of vehicles using Yew Tree Drive, Botley Road and Swanwick Lane. Varying calming works have ensured that traffic speeds have largely reduced. The increased use of these roads is considered acceptable in highway terms and junctions have been found to be operating within capacity.

There has been an acknowledged increase in vehicles leaving via Yew Tree Drive then driving down Swanwick Lane to the A27. Vehicles are similarly returning via this route. Hampshire County Council have confirmed that work will be carried out to identify measures on Swanwick Lane that could help to address concerns relating to 'rat running' and crossing issues. The queuing issues at the junction of Swanwick Lane and the A27 due to the short length provided for two lanes of traffic at the signals will also be evaluated.

The most recent post implementation personal injury accident records show five accidents on the Botley Road, although none involved pedestrians. Hampshire County Council have confirmed that this road will also be investigated to identify additional measures to help access and control vehicle speeds.

Although noise and air quality will have been impacted to some degree by the opening of the bus gate, air quality is still within recommended guidelines.

As reported above further information has been requested from Hampshire County Council in relation to the concerns raised by a number of local residents in relation to increased traffic noise.

Notwithstanding the representations received from a small minority of residents (six households), the recent survey undertaken by the County Council has shown an overwhelming level of public support to keep the bus gate open with 86% of respondents in support.

Hampshire County Council has identified a number of potential measures, listed above which will be carried out in order to reduce vehicle speeds, aid pedestrians and prevent rat-

running.

Recommendation

Subject to the receipt and consideration of further information from Hampshire County Council in relation to increased traffic noise;

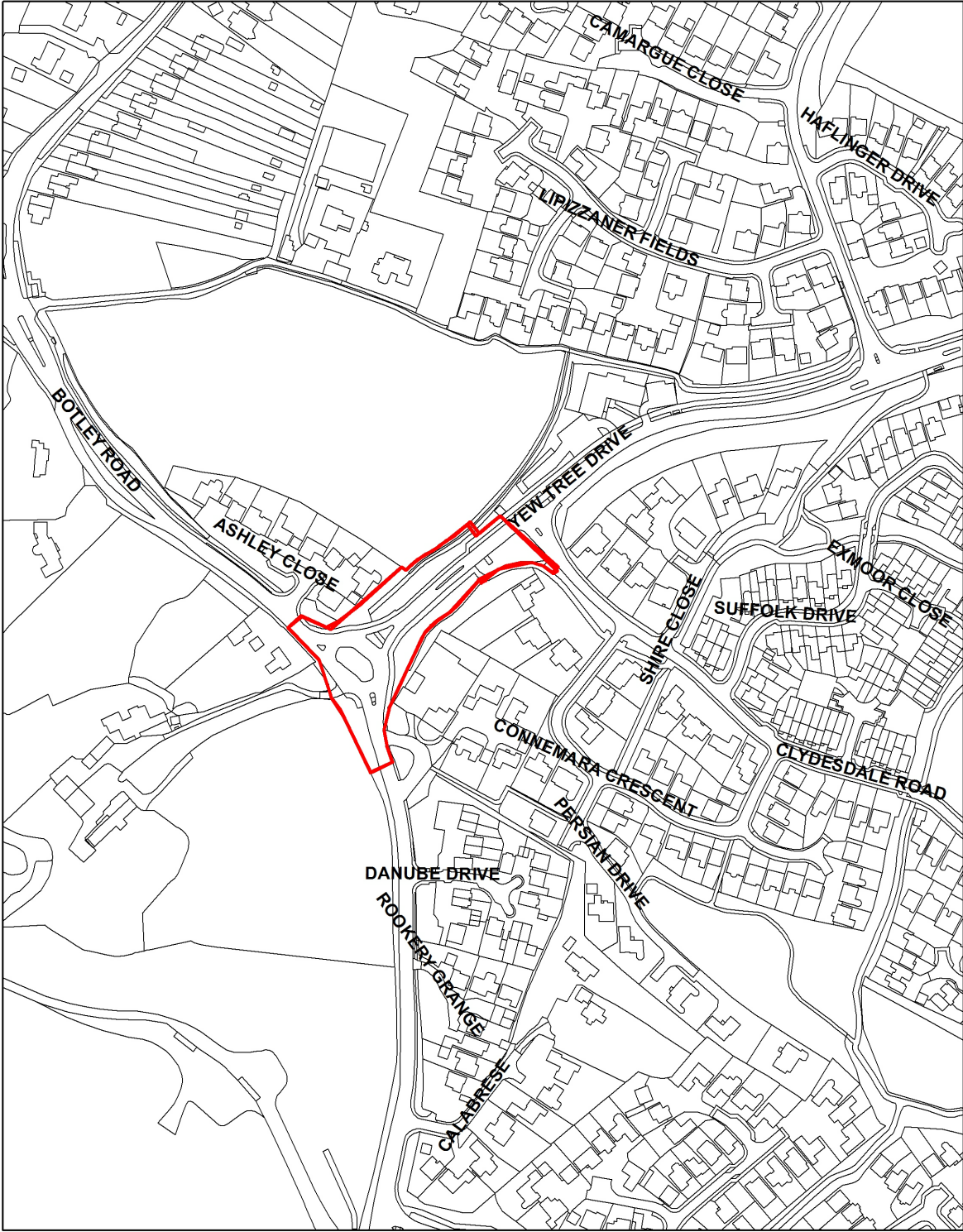
PERMISSION: Link road not to be used by HGVs; approved signage to be retained

Background Papers

See planning history above.

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL



Yew Tree Drive
Scale 1: 1,250



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