Proposed Road at Littleworth Level Crossing, Deeping St Nicholas, Lincolnshire

Design, Access and Planning Statement

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Contents

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Background

3.0 Design

4.0 Policy Context

5.0 Flood Risk

6.0 Conclusions

Introduction

1.1 This Planning Statement is in relation to the submission of an application for Planning Permission for the construction of a new section of access road to replace an existing access road to the west of Littleworth level crossing Deeping St Nicholas.

1.2 Currently access to the agricultural buildings to the north of the level crossing is via a track which runs directly to the north, with access onto the A1175 directly adjacent to the level crossing. As a result of the upgrading of the level crossing this existing access point will no longer be useable. The construction of the new access road will allow the vehicles that currently utilise the farm track to continue to access the farm/agricultural buildings to the north of the level crossing in a safe manner.

1.3 The construction of the new section of road will be to appropriate standards. The proposed road is a carriage way that allows for bi-directional vehicle flows. A new bell mouth will be installed at the southern end of the development to allow safe and controlled access to and from the road.

Background

2.1 The proposed development is as a result of works to upgrade the Littleworth Level Crossing. These works form part of the Great Northern/Great Eastern Joint Line upgrade project (GNGE) which will provide a significantly upgraded line between Peterborough and Doncaster via Spalding and Lincoln that can become the primary route for daytime freight traffic. This will allow a parallel growth in Long Distance High Speed (LDHS) passenger services between London and Yorkshire, the North East and Scotland, and freight traffic, particularly intermodal traffic from Felixstowe, Bathside Bay and London Gateway.

2.2 The main outputs of the GNGE project are:-

- Improved route performance and reliability;
- Reduction in need for heavy maintenance for a 15 year period;

- Improved journey times (for both passenger and freight);
- Increased capacity for freight;
- Increased capacity for passenger traffic on the East Coast Main Line.

2.3 As a result of the GNGE project a number of level crossings on the route are being upgraded. Works to upgrade Littlewaorth Level Crossing will result in the installation of a manually controlled barrier (obstacle detection) system with a consequent realignment of road markings and the installation of new barriers and road traffic lights (RTL).

2.4 The new level crossing will require the provision of barriers and RTL with a new Stop Line: this stop line is provisioned half way across the entrance to the current farm track. The RTL is located in the verge of the access track and further restricts the sighting to the left as well as restricting the turning circle for a left turn when emerging from the track.

2.5 It is illegal to bring an access out over or in the rear of the level crossing Stop Line. This combined with the existing poor sighting from the junction drives the requirement to relocate the access road.

Design

3.1 The attached plans illustrate the proposal in full. The road surface is in part bound material and in part crushed stone. A footway will be constructed to the southern section of the access road.

Policy

4.1 Because of the nature of the development there are few specific policies which can be applied to the proposal. However the key consideration of the development is one of design and access and as such should be judged by the National Planning Policy Framework and local plan policies. The proposed development is situated outside the Deeping St Nicholas settlement limits as defined in the Local Plan and as such the following will also examine the relevant countryside policies.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

4.2 In terms of design, the Framework states

"The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.

It is important to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes…

Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- *will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- *establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;*
- *optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;*
- *respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;*
- *create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and*
- *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.*

Planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.

Although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are very important factors, securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations. Therefore, planning policies and decisions should address the connections between

people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment".

4.3 The proposed road comprises an element of local access infrastructure serving existing activity to the south of the development. In terms of design, the road is typical of an access track of this type.

Local Plan Policy –South Holland District Council

4.4 The South Holland Local Plan contains Policy of relevance. Policy SG4 - Development in the Countryside states that planning permission will only be granted for development in the open countryside which is essential in the proposed location and cannot reasonably be accommodated within defined settlement limits. Development proposals that would result in an unacceptable impact upon the landscape character of an area, either individually or cumulatively, will only be permitted where: 1) the need for the development in that location outweighs its impact; and 2) no other site or solution exists to accommodate the proposed development.

4.5 The development is considered to comply with Local Plan policy. The works are essential in the location to ensure highway and rail safety whilst maintaining a reasonable access to the existing track. The works will replace an existing portion of track and will not have an unacceptable impact on the character of the area which is currently characterised by the development in the vicinity of the railway.

5. **Flood Risk**

5.1 The development lies within Flood Zone 2 as indicated by the relevant Environment Agency mapping. The development is of minor scale and is replacing an existing track. There will be no net gain in hard surfacing in the area. Much of the proposed track will be of permeable material and is not considered to alter the existing situation in relation to flood risk.

6. **Trees**

6.1 Some trees will be removed to facilitate the development and these are identified on the relevant submitted plan. The trees that are to be removed are not protected and do not lie within a conservation area.

Conclusion

7.1 The proposal will have the benefit of increasing public safety by re-routing existing vehicular users of the current access track adjacent to the crossing to a safer access and egress point. The access is of minor scale and will replace an element of an existing access track. There will be limited visual impact as a result of the development.

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