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## Local Highway Authority Comments (03 LHA)

### PLANNING APPLICATION No. 98127/FUL/19

#### Location:

Unit 1, Altrincham Retail  
Park, George Richards Way,  
Altrincham, WA14 5GR

#### Description:

Extension, refurbishment and subdivision of the existing Homebase store to provide a downsized unit for Homebase and a new Class A1 retail unit to be occupied by Lidl. The application also proposes the relocation of the Homebase garden centre, the reconfiguration of the existing car park and associated landscaping, and the creation of a new egress from the site.

#### **A. Highway comments**

It is my understanding that the proposals are to extend the gross internal area (GIA) of the site to create an additional 390 sqm to accommodate a downsized Homebase with warehouse and garden centre (total 4,843 sqm), and a new retail unit for a Lidl food store (total 1,858 sqm). It is proposed to increase the number of disabled and parent-child parking spaces, and reduce the number of standard parking spaces, with an overall loss of 94 spaces (696 no. spaces remaining). Cycle parking provision would be increased by an additional 14 spaces. A new vehicle exit would be provided on to George Richards Way. A new pedestrian access would also be provided.

#### **B. Planning history**

No applications in the last 5 years.

#### **C. Access**

To improve capacity at the existing exit and encourage better use of the parking provision across the whole of the retail site, it is proposed to construct a new exit from the existing car park onto George Richards Way, which will be located approximately half way between the existing two signalised junctions. Drawing no. 2018-3538-001 which is indicated to have been produced using a topographical survey drawing no. 15120/105A, indicates a 1.3m traffic island will be constructed in the central reserve, and a change in kerb alignment will also be provided to prevent vehicles from turning right in to or out of the retail park (all works would be subject to a S278 Agreement).

Consent exists to create a second egress onto George Richards Way from the western side of the retail park.

From the information available it is not known how the exit would be signed to prevent drivers and motorbike/cycle riders wanting to turn right onto George Richards Way from using the new exit. The position of the island would allow a motorbike to turn right from the access. Likewise, it is also considered that a small 'city' sized car would also be able to make the same turning manoeuvre during periods of light traffic flow. In the absence of a nearby roundabout junction to

accommodate U-turn manoeuvres there is a risk of unsafe turning movements taking place at the exit and/or the junction with Viaduct Road. Therefore, it is considered that without suitable traffic management and signing for the exit, the proposal could have an adverse impact on road safety. The Local Highway Authority (LHA) requests a traffic sign and road marking design drawing is provided for the proposed development.

A typical bus/HGV, including wing mirrors, is 3m wide, a typical van or minibus, again including wing mirrors, is 2.4m wide, and for a typical family sized car the measurement is 2m. Therefore, the recommended minimum lane width is 3m where normal traffic conditions include the presence of HGVs and buses. Currently, no physical features are installed in the centre reservation, and the existing (broken white line) hatched road markings provide separation between the east and westbound carriageways. Thus, whilst the existing eastbound carriageway width at this location is slightly below 6m (see paragraph below), drivers can cross the hatched area if more room is required to manoeuvre passed an adjacent vehicle. The traffic island will physically reduce the available unobstructed carriageway width at this location.

Measured off plan at A3 printed size (drawing 2018-3538-001) following construction of the proposed 1.3m wide traffic island, the George Richards Way eastbound carriageway would be subject to two traffic lanes indicated to be 2.5m and 2.3m in width respectively, giving a total carriageway width of 5.8m (excluding the proposed 1.3m wide traffic island). Measured off mapping imagery, excluding the centre hatched road marking the total eastbound carriageway width is indicated to be approximately 5.6m. The centre hatched area at this location is indicated to be approximately 1m wide. There is a risk of conflict occurring between vehicles travelling in lanes one and two in the event of the proposed lane widths being too narrow. The LHA requests a copy of the topographical survey is provided.

Vehicle tracking has been provided for the proposed exit for a large sized car and 3.5t panel van turning left from the retail park, onto the access (drawing number 2019-3538-AT-104 dates 28 August 2019). The information provided indicates the proposed access alignment will accommodate this turning movement for these types of vehicles; however, no vehicle information has been provided for other, goods vehicle types, or vehicles turning right from the retail park on to the proposed access, and the vehicle speed used for tracking is unknown. No information has been seen to indicate that right turn manoeuvres will not be permitted, and/or vehicles larger than a typical van or minibus will be banned from using the proposed access. The LHA requests vehicle tracking is provided for right turn movements from the retail park onto to the proposed access, and for vehicles larger than the 3.5t panel van used in the example provided (all turning movements). The vehicle tracking speed(s) should also be supplied.

Drawing number 14366-105 shows one lane on approach to the A56 Manchester Road signalised junction; however, drawing number 2019-3538-AT-104 dated 28 August 2019 shows a two-lane approach and the proposed location of the traffic island, which will be in the existing carriageway centre hatching. Based on the information provided in the new drawing, the proposed access will be in proximity of the existing left turn lane diverge, and in the weaving length for vehicles changing lane to exit George Richards Way to the left. It is considered that the proposed location of the access could have an adverse impact on road safety if vehicle conflict is increased on approach to the junction with the A56 Manchester Road, and in particularly the left turning lane.

Furthermore, the proposed 'keep clear' marking is not an enforceable road marking, and there is a risk that during periods of peak traffic flows, when traffic is queuing along George Richards Way drivers may not be willing to give way to vehicles waiting to join from the proposed access, which could lead to drivers attempting to exit the retail park via the proposed uncontrolled access when it is unsafe to do so, and/or increased traffic congestion within the retail park. The LHA requests junction modelling in consultation with Transport for Greater Manchester, should be repeated for the proposed access, the existing access, and the George Richards Way junction with the A56 Manchester Road.

Where preliminary design is not undertaken, a stage 1 RSA may be combined with a stage 2 RSA at the detailed design stage, and a combined stage 1/2 Road Safety Audit was undertaken by Road Safety Initiatives on 23 August 2019, in accordance with Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) General Guidance document GG 119 'Road safety Audit' (formerly HD 19/15). It is noted by the RSA team that an Audit Brief was not provided, and several detailed design documents were not seen for the audit, including proposed traffic sign and road marking details, drainage, dimensions and cross sections, and pavement detail.

It is also noted that the RSA report states that the RSA team was instructed to undertake the audit by Trafford Council who is also indicated to be the Overseeing Organisation (OO) and therefore, responsible for initiating the audit. In accordance with GG 119 the OO is also considered responsible for approving the RSA team before the RSA is undertaken and approving the Audit Brief before it is issued. The responsibilities of the OO extend to identifying any misinterpretation of the scheme subject to audit, and in collaboration with the design organisation, preparing the design response to the audit. Any requested changes to the report would be agreed between the OO and the audit team. It is understood that Trafford Council did not initiate the audit and is not deemed to be the OO for the audit.

In addition to the comments above regarding the OO, it is considered that the combined stage 1/2 road safety audit did not fully address the potential road safety implications of the proposed access, and the relevance of the combined RSA stage 1/2 is therefore questioned.

The LHA requests a second independent road safety audit should be completed, to include consideration of potential road safety implications associated with the proposed access and its proximity to the George Richards Way junction with the A56 Manchester Road.

#### **D. Servicing**

The refuse / recycling arrangements as detailed in the Planning and Retail Statement are acceptable.

#### **E. Parking**

SPD3 states that for this location, the maximum parking standard for an A1 (Food Retail) outlet is one space per 14 sqm, and one space per 20 sqm for an A1 (Non-Food Retail). Within the development site it is proposed to reduce the amount of available parking by 94 spaces to 257 spaces (which includes 16 disabled parking bays and 12 parent/child spaces). Across the whole site there would be 696 car parking spaces (52 disabled parking bays (and increase of four) and 27 parent/child spaces (an increase of 8). Information provided in the Planning Application's associated Travel Assessment dated May 2019 states that the car park operates at capacity for most of the week, with the least popular place to park

being located outside Homebase. The maximum average forecast demand for parking within the development is predicted to be no more than 192 spaces. Customers will also have access to parking spaces provided in other areas of the retail park. The proposed parking arrangements as detailed in the Travel Assessment are acceptable.

#### **F. Cycle Parking**

The proposals would increase the number of cycle parking spaces. The cycle parking arrangements as detailed in the Planning and Retail Statement are acceptable.

#### **G. Public Rights of Way**

Not applicable

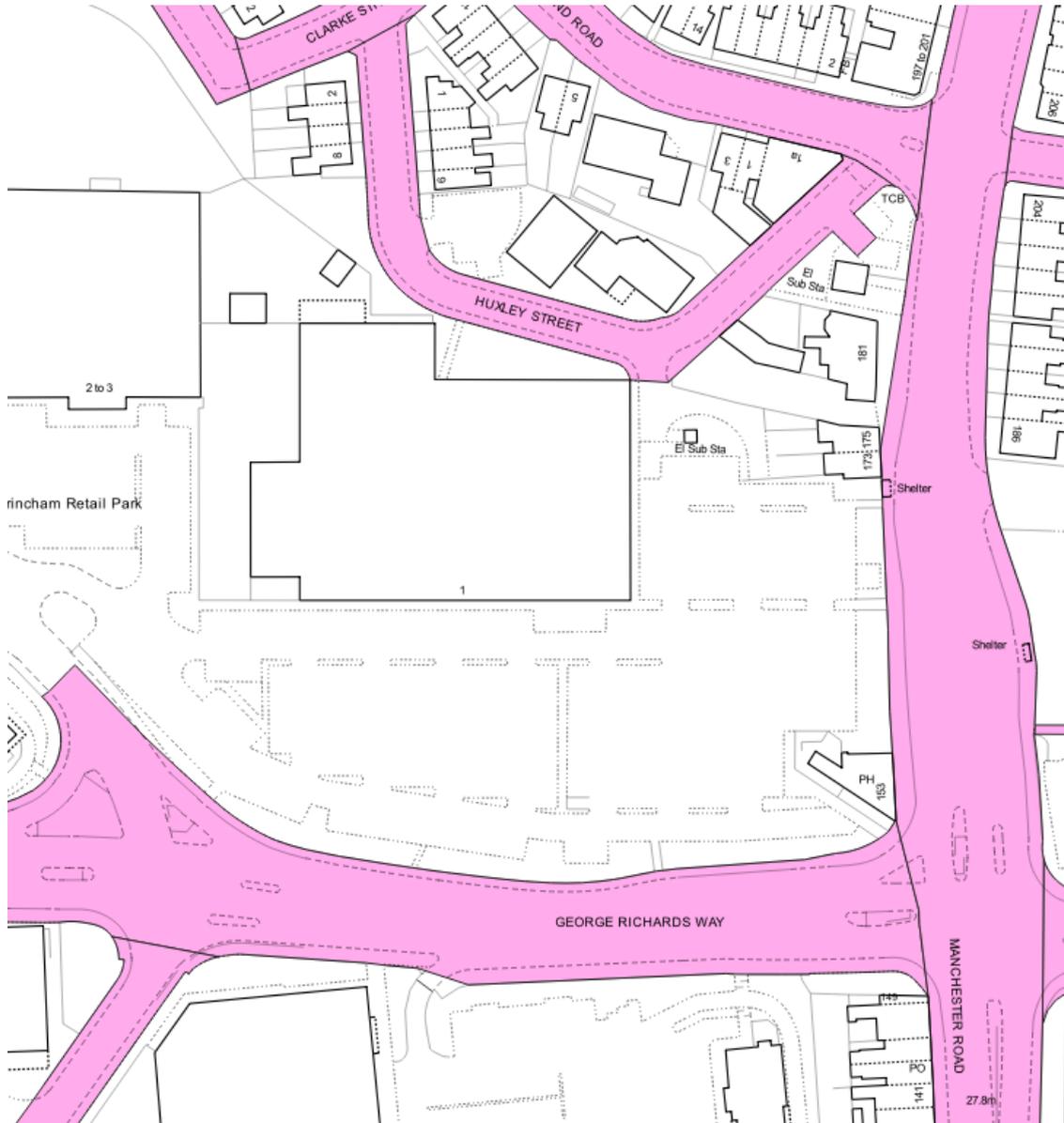
#### **Summary**

Whilst there are no objections in principle to the proposed development on highways grounds, prior to providing a full response further information is required:

1. The LHA requests a copy of the topographical survey is provided. (as noted in Section C 'Access').
2. The LHA requests a traffic sign and road marking design drawing is provided for the proposed development. (as noted in Section C 'Access').
3. The LHA requests further vehicle tracking is provided and vehicle speeds used for tracking are supplied (as noted in Section C 'Access').
4. The LHA requests junction modelling in consultation with Transport for Greater Manchester, should be repeated for the proposed access, the existing access, and the George Richards Way junction with the A56 Manchester Road.
5. The LHA requests a second independent road safety audit should be completed, to include consideration of potential road safety implications associated with the proposed access and its proximity to other junctions, in particular the George Richards Way junction with the A56 Manchester Road.

**Elaine Hendren**

# Extract of Adopted Highway



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