

Local Highway Authority Response to Planning Consultation

Planning Application:	98127/FUL/19	Pre-app?	No
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.		
Planning Officer:	Bethany Brown	Date Received:	02/01/2020
Date of Response:	08/01/2020	Response No.:	04

1 Previous 5-year Planning History:

None

2 The Proposals

It is our 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.

LHA Response 04 only considers TTP Consulting supporting document 'Altrincham Retail Park Unit 1 - Response to Highway Comments in Relation to Planning Application 98127/FUL/19 - Dated 19 December 2019'.

2.1 Background to the Proposals

Reference should be made to previous LHA formal and email correspondence. Three previous formal consultations were received on 7 and 29 August 2019, and 22 October 2019.

3 Proposed Amendments to Previous Design

3.1 Proposed Left-Turn Only Egress

- 3.1.1 LINSIG modelling undertaken for the proposals indicated queues within the car park would be expected to increase as a result of the development. 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. All works proposed to be undertaken on the adopted public highway would be subject to a suitable (Highway Act, 1980) Section 278 Agreement. Section 5 of the supporting document states the proposed egress has been moved closer to the major junction with Manchester Road, where the road widens to three traffic lanes, including a dedicated 'left turn only' lane.
- 3.1.2 It is noted that 790 spaces are currently provided for the retail park which are spread across two parking areas divided by an internal roundabout junction. Of these spaces, 339 are located in the vicinity of the existing Homebase unit located on the eastern side of the site as noted above, the number of spaces would be reduced). Car park occupancy levels obtained from automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) systems currently in operation at the entrance to the retail park show a maximum occupancy of 47% on a Saturday (understood to be the busiest day). The proposals forecast an increase in occupancy levels on a Saturday to 62% (an increased parking demand of 84 spaces). The data does not show the number of vehicles parked in the eastern car park.
- 3.1.3 The ANPR data does not show the number of vehicles parked in the eastern car park. The proposals would result in a downsized Homebase unit, and the erection of a new retail unit to be occupied by Lidl. It is further understood that the proposals would result in a loss of 94 car park spaces, thus reducing the size of the eastern car park and therefore the number of vehicles likely to use the proposed egress.
- 3.1.4 In addition to paragraph 3.1.2 above, it is considered that given the location of the egress, most of the time only those drivers with vehicles parked near it, would use it, and then only if they are turning left onto George Richards Way. Furthermore, the alignment of the proposed egress as shown on drawing number 2019-3538.DWG-204 (Appendix A of the supporting document) appears to indicate that vehicles would not easily be able to turn left onto the egress from the car park. This comment has been raised previously but swept path analysis has not yet been seen for left turn manoeuvres.

- 3.1.5 Notwithstanding paragraphs 3.1.2 and 3.1.3, Table 1: Summary of LINSIG (Site Access Junction) contained in section 8 of the supporting document does not show an existing or forecast capacity issue associated with left turning vehicles (the only vehicle movement relevant to the proposed egress). The Degree of Saturation (DoS) is significantly below 90% for all scenarios. Indeed, Development Scenario 1 (existing layout, development in operation), only forecasts a 54.4% DoS for left turn vehicles at the existing park junction, and a maximum forecast increase in existing queue length of one vehicle. The LINSIG modelling results do not show an existing or forecast capacity issue for left turn vehicle movements for the site access junction. For information, it is noted that for all scenarios and vehicle movements the DoS is not forecast to go above 82.3%.
- 3.1.6 Section 4 of the supporting document states confirms the proposed island has been since been increased in length to stop vehicles turning right from the proposed new access (refer to section 3.2 below). The LHA would refer the developer to our previous comments regarding the proposed location of the access and its proximity to the junction.
- 3.1.7 The proposed egress would be a very short distance away from the existing left turn lane diverge, and in the weaving length for vehicles changing lane to exit George Richards Way to turn left onto Manchester Road. The modelling results do not indicate any significant traffic benefit would be achieved through the provision of the proposed egress. Taking the scenario that the egress was removed from the development proposals, using the existing left turn queue length as a baseline, the maximum forecast increase in queue length would be one vehicle, and the maximum decrease in queue length would be two vehicles (if 15% of vehicles were to utilise the new egress).
- 3.1.8 It is therefore considered that whilst the proposed left turn only egress would have an adverse impact to road safety at this location, its construction would achieve little to no reduction in capacity at the existing junction which, has been demonstrated to be operating below capacity, and is forecast to continue operating below capacity following construction of the proposed new retail unit.
- 3.1.9 Therefore, in light of the above and as per our previous comments, the LHA strongly objects to the proposal to construct a left turn only egress as presented by previously submitted design drawings for planning application 98127/FUL/19 and drawing number 2019-3538.DWG-204 (Appendix A of the supporting document).

3.2 Proposed Traffic Island on George Richards Way

- 3.2.1 The LHA would request that the proposed left turn only egress and the associated central traffic island are removed from the development proposals. However, to address comments made in the supporting document '*Altrincham Retail Park Unit 1 - Response to Highway Comments in Relation to Planning Application 98127/FUL/19 - Dated 19 December 2019*', the LHA would state the following:

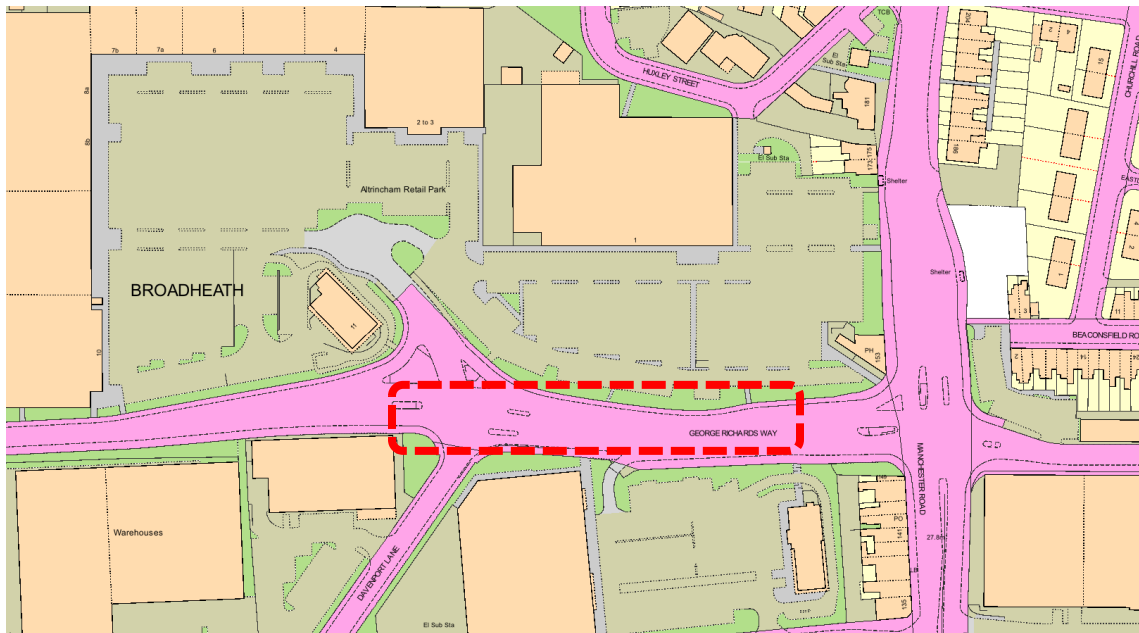
- I. Section 3 of the supporting document states it is proposed to install pedestrian guardrail along the full extent of the proposed traffic island which, has been extended in length to stop vehicles from turning right out of the proposed new access. It is also proposed to reduce the width of the island to 0.950m, with the exception of the ends which would be 1.2m wide (all works would be subject to a S278 Agreement).
- II. The nosing of the island would be 1.2m at each end which, would create a 'dog bone' shaped island. The LHA is concerned that the proposed alignment could potentially lead to a road safety issue as a result of the change in carriageway and kerbline alignment, and therefore requests that the design is amended accordingly. Refer to paragraphs 4.1.3 and 4.1.5 below.
- III. The proposed central island set-back is not clear from the plan provided. For information, for minor road junctions (and subject to the location of the island, including the position of the nosing), the minimum set-back should be 1m from the edge of the running carriageway.
- IV. Further to paragraph 4.1.2 above, physical traffic islands should be clearly visible to approaching drivers. It is accepted that illuminated bollards, and signs, and hazard road markings would be installed; however, drawing number 2019-3538.DWG-204 only shows a partial hatched road marking for the island which could result in vehicle kerb strikes.
- V. Assuming the road markings and other highway features shown on the drawing are representative of what is currently provided on site, it is indicated that the proposed island would impact the existing controlled crossing at the junction with Manchester Road. Therefore, the design team and developer, in consultation with TfGM, should amend the proposals to include the controlled junction, thus providing a single island.
- VI. It is proposed to install pedestrian guard rail along the full length of the island to prevent the central island from being used as a crossing facility. In addition to future maintenance requirements, guard railing can be unsightly, resulting in a cluttered and 'closed' environment. In some instances, cyclists can be pushed across the traffic lane and into the railings. (as noted in research undertaken by Southampton University). Further evidence also suggests people will still walk alongside the railings if they perceive they can shorten their journey by doing so (regardless of the possibility that they may also be putting themselves at greater risk of being struck by a passing vehicle).
- VII. With no physical barrier currently in place vehicles are currently afforded the opportunity to enter the centre hatched area in the event of an incident e.g. to avoid a potential sideswipe collision with another vehicle. Should a traffic incident occur at this location following construction of the island, the proposed guard railing would be another object in the carriageway that could be hit, particularly given the proposed length of railing to be installed. Guard railing should only be introduced where there is a clear, identified need for it.
- VIII. The design team should investigate alternative low maintenance options to encourage pedestrians not to utilise the island as a crossing, that would not denigrate the existing streetscape.

4 S278 Agreement

The LHA presumes the proposed changes to the adopted highway will be by way of a S278 agreement.

5 Road Safety Audit

- 5.1.1 A second combined stage 1 / 2 Road Safety Audit (RSA) has been completed for the scheme, the terms of reference being stated as DMRB GG 119. A combined stage 1 / 2 RSA is completed at the detailed design stage of a scheme; however the RSA report does not show that a detailed design drawing, and its associated road marking and traffic sign schedule were provided for the Audit (the drawing notes refer to the schedules but it is indicated that these were not provided further to which, footnote 1 in chapter 1 of the RSA report states no Audit Brief was provided to the team for the RSA which is not in accordance with GG 119). The LHA does not therefore consider the RSA was completed in accordance with the stated Terms of Reference.
- 5.1.2 For information, the LHA is also concerned that the RSA team did not notice that the proposed central island as shown on the drawing, would run into, and impact the existing pedestrian refuge island for the controlled crossing located at the George Richards Way junction with Manchester Road.
- 5.1.3 The LHA would request a third RSA is completed, for which an Audit Brief should be provided to the RSA team (and copied to the LHA for information). The RSA Audit Brief produced by the developer should request consideration is given to road safety implications for the proposed development for the section of adopted public highway shown inside the dashed red edge box on the plan below, (the adopted public highway is shown shaded pink on the plan):



6 Summary of Comments

Description:	Summary of Comments (refer to sections 3 to 5 above)	LHA Request
Proposed access/ egress arrangements	<p>Information seen does not identify a need for a new 'left turn only' egress from the eastern car parking area. The modelling results provided show the existing retail park access is operating below capacity for all junction turning manoeuvres (and significantly below capacity for left turn only manoeuvres). The forecast increases of 84 vehicle trips associated with the construction of the proposed development shows the existing junction would still continue to operate below capacity.</p> <p>For left turn manoeuvres, if the junction access arrangements remain as existing the forecast increase in queue length would be one vehicle (in comparison to the existing situation). When considering the scenario that the proposed egress is implemented on site, if 10% of traffic used the new egress the queue length would only be reduced by one vehicle. If 15% of traffic used the new egress the queue length would be reduced by two vehicles.</p>	The proposed egress should be removed from the design
Proposed central traffic island	<p>The nosing of the island would be 1.2m at each end which, would create a 'dog bone' shaped island. The LHA is concerned that the proposed alignment could potentially lead to a road safety issue as a result of the change in carriageway and kerblines alignment.</p> <p>Drawing number 2019-3538.DWG-204 only shows a partial hatched road marking for the island which could result in vehicle kerb strikes.</p> <p>It is indicated that the proposed island would impact the existing controlled crossing at the junction with Manchester Road.</p> <p>It is proposed to install guard railing along the full length of the island, Guard railing can be unsightly, resulting in a cluttered and 'closed' environment. Cyclists can be pushed into guard railings. Evidence also suggests people will still walk alongside the railings if they perceive they can shorten their journey by doing so. Guard railing should only be introduced where there is a clear, identified need for it.</p>	<p>The proposed layout of the island is amended, or the island removed from the design (see above for Proposed access / egress arrangements)</p> <p>The hazard markings are extended</p> <p>The design should be amended in consultation with TfGM</p> <p>The design should be amended to include a low maintenance option that would not denigrate the existing streetscape and/or pedestrian access at this location removed</p>

	The LHA request a third RSA is completed, for which an Audit Brief should be provided to the RSA team (and copied to the LHA for information). The Audit Brief should request consideration is given to road safety implications for the proposed development for the section of adopted public highway shown inside the dashed red edge box on the plan in para 5.1.3	A Stage 1 RSA is requested
Proposed parking arrangements	Based on information seen it has been demonstrated that there is a sufficient number of car parking spaces to accommodate the loss of parking, whilst still providing adequate parking for customers of and visitors to, the retail park (including the forecast increase of 84 vehicle trips associated with the proposed development).	N/A

7 Conclusion: 98127/FUL/19

7.1.1 The LHA objects to the proposals on highway grounds.

8 Request for Conditions to Any Subsequent Grant of Planning Permission

8.1.1 Construction Method Statement

No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until such time as a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The Statement shall provide for:

- a) The parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors;
- b) Loading and unloading of plant and materials;
- c) Storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development;
- d) The erection and maintenance of security hoardings including decorative displays and facilities for public viewing, where appropriate;
- e) Wheel washing facilities, including measures for keeping the highway clean measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during construction;
- f) A scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from demolition and construction works;
- g) Days and hours of construction activity on site (in accordance with Trafford Councils recommended hours of operation for construction works), and
- h) Contact details of site manager to be advertised at the site in case of issues arising.

Elaine Hendren

Extract of Adopted Highway

