



Safe roads, reliable journeys, informed travellers

Your ref: AOC/0694/0706

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Dear Louise

**A14 - KETTERING EAST SUSTAINABLE URBAN EXTENSION: CONDITION 73A DISCHARGE (AOC/0694/0706)**

Thank you for consulting the Highways Agency on the application to discharge Condition 73A of outline planning permissions KET/2007/0694 and KET/2008/0274. This letter forms our response to your consultation.

**Summary: Subject to securing Ministerial approval for a departure from the policy in Circular 02/2007 over the additional access onto the A14 resulting from preferred Option C, the Highways Agency is satisfied with the information submitted to allow the local planning authority to discharge Condition 73A of the outline planning permission for Kettering East.**

As you know, the Highways Agency and our Spatial Planning Consultants AECOM have been working closely with the applicant, their consultants Peter Brett Associates (PBA), Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) as highway authority and yourselves to ensure that the necessary work has been undertaken by the applicant to provide a satisfactory comprehensive traffic access and impact assessment to deal with all impacts arising from access to the development from the A14 as required to satisfy Condition 73A.

I am pleased to report that, subject to securing Ministerial policy clearance as set out below, the Agency is content with the technical work undertaken and, based on the information provided, concurs with the conclusions which underpin the preferred option put forward by the applicant for access from the development to the A14. The preferred option is to build a new all move grade separated junction some 1,000m to the east of

the existing Junction 10 (referred to as Junction 10a) and to close the eastern facing slips at Junction 10. This is referred to by the applicant as Option C.

You will note that the preferred option differs from that put forward at the time of the outline application in that the west facing slips are retained at Junction 10. Department for Transport (DfT) Circular 02/2007 (paragraphs 41 and 42) provides a general presumption that there will be no additional accesses to motorways or other routes of strategic national importance. The A14 is seen as the latter due to it being part of the Trans European Network as it provides strategic access to the ports. Therefore the provision of these additional west facing slips comprises a policy departure which has been referred to a Minister for a formal decision.

In the following paragraphs of this letter I have set out the key details behind the decision reached by the Highways Agency in order to provide sufficient comfort to all parties that the decision made has been done so with regard to the necessary standards and policies applicable.

The Highways Agency was a statutory consultee on the outline applications for the Sustainable Urban Extension at Kettering East. Considerable amounts of work were undertaken to underpin the Agency's responses to the applications on 13<sup>th</sup> August and 10<sup>th</sup> September 2008. As part of this work, an indicative option for accessing the SRN was shown within the Transport Assessment that supported the applications. This option showed the complete closure to and from the A14 of the existing Junction 10 and the provision of a new all movement grade separated junction around 1,000m to the east known as Junction 10a (this "consented" option is now known as Option B).

However, notwithstanding this work, access remained a reserved matter and, as such, it was necessary for the Agency to direct a number of conditions requiring further assessment work to be undertaken. In the case of Condition 73A, the further work required was stipulated to be completed before the submission of any reserved matters applications.

The basis for the assessment work undertaken in support of Condition 73A was the Alan Baxter Associates report commissioned by Kettering Borough Council which examined a series of options for accessing the SRN from the Kettering East development. This report concluded that a number of options (A, B, C and E) remained potentially viable and would warrant further investigation.

PBA have utilised these options as the basis of their work and subsequently discounted some of the options (A and E) as they;

- a) Would not be commensurate with the approved Masterplan or,
- b) Would not provide sufficient capacity to accommodate forecast traffic movements.

The remaining options (B and C) were then tested using the Highways Agency's Micro-simulation (VISSIM) model which is maintained by AECOM.

The testing of these options revealed that in relation to the SRN, either option would be acceptable to the Agency. PBA have further determined, in consultation with NCC, yourselves, and as a result of the consultation responses carried out at the time of the production of the Baxter report; that Option C is preferable.

Having reviewed the information submitted to yourselves, we concur with their conclusion and are content with the technical assessment in support Option C as a means to access the proposed development.

I am also aware that questions may be raised as to whether further relaxations from policy can be allowed to enable the retention of all slips at Junction 10.

Unfortunately, the provision of the eastern facing slips would, in addition to requiring a policy departure, also necessitate a departure from standards. This is because TD22/06 (Layout of Grade Separated Junctions) of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges states that the minimum distance between the end of a merge and start of the next diverge for a Rural All-Purpose road (such as the A14) is 1,000m. Based on the current location of the proposed Junction 10a, the distance would be around half that required. Given that this distance is set for safety reasons, the Agency feels that it could not currently support such a departure as it is considered that this would unacceptably reduce safety on the corridor.

I hope that the above summary is useful in setting out the Agency's stance on the discharge of Condition 73A and how we have reached our conclusion that Option C is acceptable. There is, of course, much more work to do, including securing the required Ministerial approval for the policy departure required to discharge Condition 73A. We are progressing this now with the department and the Ministers Office as a matter of urgency. There will also be work required in finalising the design of the new Junction 10/10a complex and this work is secured through other conditions directed by the Agency. The Agency will continue to work closely with the relevant partners to ensure that the work necessary to deliver a solution acceptable to all parties is delivered.

Yours sincerely



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