

Proposed Retirement Village

Holly Tree House, Pepper Street, Snelson

WB/200851/TNHTH01 Rev A - 20 January 2021

Introduction

1. SCP is instructed by Chelford Parish Council, Snelson Parish Council, Ollerton with Marthall Parish Council and Peover Parish Council to provide an independent review and to report upon the anticipated transport and highways impacts associated with the proposals to develop a Retirement Village at Holly Tree House, Pepper Street, Snelson.
2. All of the parishes above have an active interest in the area surrounding the application site and have indicated concerns in respect of the proposals upon highway safety and traffic capacity of the local highway network.
3. The supplied documents have been reviewed and the local highway network used by traffic accessing the site has been inspected with the latest inspection being undertaken on 14th January 2021.

Local Highway Network

4. The local highway network along Stocks Lane, Chelford Lane and Pepper Street has been driven and in general it is a rural route with limited pedestrian facilities within Over Peover where the primary school is located. There was a visible lack of edge restrict for much of the route and limited road drainage. Indeed, there were several sections of the local network where there was flooding on the highway. The worst location was located on Chelford Lane just to the north of the primary school in Over Peover next to the speed limit change as illustrated below at Photo no 1

Photo No 1 – Chelford Lane looking north towards Over Peover



5. The verges to the edge to the carriageway were noted to have been eroded by vehicles at a number of sections to the route which suggests there is insufficient width for larger vehicles to pass side by side.
6. The speed limit varies along the route from the national speed limit down to 30 mph through Over Peover. It was observed that Stocks Lane in the vicinity of Radbroke Hall was subject to 24 hr parking restrictions.
7. In terms of width of carriageway along the route again it was noted that the widths vary but are generally suitable to allow two cars to pass side by side.
8. It should be noted that the full transport impact of local highway network in the vicinity of the primary school in Over Peover could not be viewed during the lockdown period and it was noted that there was some off road parking available near to the primary school which was not fully utilised.
9. There are two areas of concern from a highway safety perspective:
 - 1) The carriageway width and alignment of Pepper Street near to Holly Cottage. At this location the carriageway narrows and there is a crest in the road at the same time as having high sided hedges and walls. During the site inspections I had to stop to allow a refuse vehicle to pass and I also observed the no 88 bus taking up all the carriageway. This section of Pepper Street is of particular concern. I attach four photographs below of this section of Pepper Street to this note

to demonstrate the issues at this section of the road. It can be seen that Holly cottage has a mirror located opposite an access to provide some visibility at this location.



PEPPER STREET LOOKING NORTH



PEPPER STREET LOOKING NORTH



PEPPER STREET LOOKING NORTH WITH CEC REFUSE VEHICLE



PEPPER STREET LOOKING SOUTH – NOTE ROAD NARROWS SIGNAGE

- 2) The priority crossroads of Snelson Lane with Chelford Lane/Pepper Street where the visibility from the minor roads is well below the normally required design standard for a highway subject to the national speed limit.
10. To the north Pepper Street joins the A537 (Chelford Road/Knutsford Road) at a priority crossroads. The Pepper Street junction and route into Chelford is now covered by a mandatory 30 mph speed limit. It was noted that there is a single footway on the northern side of the A537 into Chelford. The footway is of limited width for much of its length. Pedestrians would be required to cross the A537 at the junction of Pepper Street to join the footway. In places the footway width from Pepper Street into Chelford was around 1m which would not allow pedestrians to pass side by side without walking into the road. This is not considered to be an attractive proposition to encourage walking as a mode of travel along the A537.

Accessibility of the site for modes of travel other than the private car

11. Within the TS it is considered that the accessibility of the site has been assessed only in a general manner.

ACCESSIBILITY OF THE SITE FOR MODES OF TRAVEL OTHER THAN THE PRIVATE CAR

12. Within the TS the existing accessibility of the site has not been addressed.

Walking

13. Currently there are no footways along Pepper Street and as such people have to walk in the carriageway to access any facilities by foot. People were observed walking in the carriageway along Pepper Street, Chelford Lane and Stocks Lane.
14. It is noted that the applicant proposes to provide a footway link to the A537 partly within the public highway and partly within private land and this section of footway would not be offered for adoption but would be available during the life of the development. The private part of the route would appear to be located behind hedges and as such the safety of this section of the route is questioned. Equally, as noted previously it will be necessary to cross the A537 to access the narrow footway that runs along the northern edge of Knutsford Road. The width of the footway along the A537 is around 1m in places and is not considered to be an attractive route for pedestrians.

Cycling

15. There are no specific cycle facilities located on the local highway network to assist cyclists.

Public transport - bus

16. The bus service local to the site is the no 88 which runs between Altrincham, Wilmslow, Knutsford and Macclesfield. The bus is run by D& G and provides a 2 hourly service in each direction Monday to Saturday during the working day only. There is no service on Sundays. There would appear to be 5 buses in each direction between Altrincham and Macclesfield and given the timings of the service would be of limited use to residents /employees of the site. It is noted that the applicant is proposing to fund bus stops near the site access on Pepper Street and whilst this is welcomed the provision of bus stops alone will not increase the frequency of buses using the route or actively encourage usage of the buses by residents/employees. It is noted that a private electric bus is proposed to be provided to serve the site and that the service would be funded in perpetuity. It is however noted that only one bus is to be provided and therefore it is questionable quite how the single bus can cater for day trips out by groups of residents as well as deal with the day to day shopping /travel requirements of other residents. It is noted that it is proposed to tailor the timetable for the electric bus however as stated above only one bus is being proposed and it is debatable whether all of the conflicting interests can be catered for by one bus.

Public Transport - Train

17. There are rail stations in Knutsford, Chelford, Macclesfield and Wilmslow however only Chelford is within a 2km distance of the site and this would require the need to cross the A537 and Dixon Drive in order to utilise the single narrow footway into Chelford.

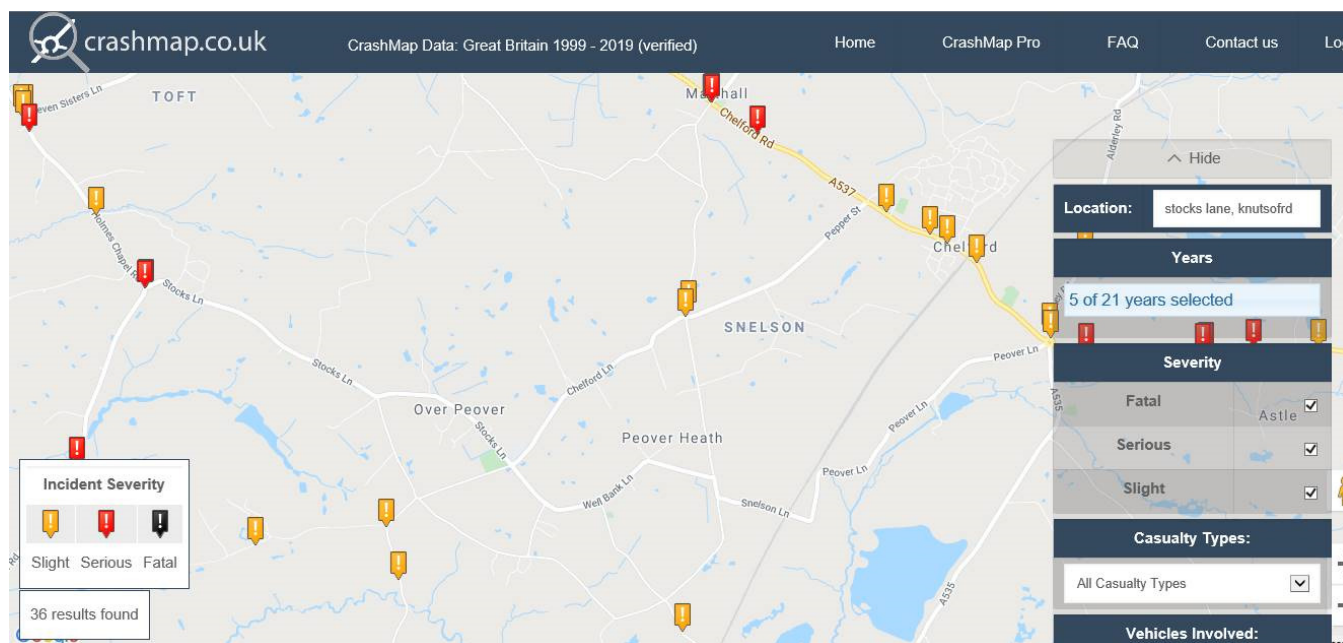
Traffic Data

18. The report fails to present any data concerning baseline traffic flows along Pepper Street, Chelford Lane and Stocks Lane.
19. A speed survey has been conducted near to the proposed site access alone.
20. The survey was conducted on one day only and is not in accordance with the latest guidance issued by the DfT. The survey should have been undertaken to provide two different days and it is noted that the weather conditions were not noted at Appendix 1 of the TS. As such it is disputed that the speed data is suitable for use when assessing the visibility requirements at the proposed site access.

21. For avoidance of doubt it is accepted that whilst Pepper Street is subject to the national speed limit (currently 60 mph) that this does not automatically mean vehicles will be travelling at that speed along Pepper Street however it is important to ensure that a suitable and robust data set of speed reading is provided in order to assess the design speed for the proposed site access.
22. In this case it is also considered that the speed data has not been correctly assessed as the latest guidance in association with visibility requirements requires use of the 85th Percentile dry weather speeds. Equally, as stated above data from different periods of two different days is also required and has not been provided in this case.

Road Safety Records

23. The road safety record for the local highway network has been assessed using the DfT data from Crashmap below covering a full 5 year period up to the end of December 2019 and does not match the data provided within the TS.
24. It can be seen that there have been incidents at the following locations:
 - 1) Radbroke Hall Access onto the A50 – 1 slight incident involving 4 cars on 13/11/2018
 - 2) Stocks Lane/A50 – 2 serious incidents a) 8/4/2015 with 2 cars and b) 30/9/2015 with 1 car
 - 3) Chelford Lane/Snelson Lane – 1 slight incident 21/8/15 with 2 cars
25. There have been no recorded incidents at the junction of Pepper Street with the A537. However, there have number been a of incidents (6 in total – all slight) along Chelford Road between Pepper Street and the roundabout with Peover Lane



26. It should also be noted that the priority crossroads junction of the A537 with Sandlebridge Lane has a poor accident record.

Comments upon the Application Proposals

27. The proposals include for a retirement village with a 60 care home, 72 bed assisted extra care 1, 2 and 3 bed units plus 4 no 2bed and 10 no 1 bed close care units together with ancillary uses. the scheme also proposes to install a footway/footpath from the site to the A537 as well as an electric private mini bus, car parking and electric car sharing. It is proposed to serve the site using a single point of access.
28. It is noted that the scheme proposes to provide 165 parking spaces which the applicant accepts is in excess of the CEC minimum parking requirements for this type of development.

Movements

29. The assessment of the anticipated movements to and from the site has been taken from the Industry Standard TRICs database however the data range is 0700 to 2100 hrs only whereas the operation on this site will be 24hours a day. The daily level of movement, based upon the hours available from TRICS would lead to over 450 two way movements per 14 hour day onto the local highway network. The peak level of movement from the TRICs data would provide a peak between 1300 and 1400 hrs of 51 vph (total two way) which is equivalent to just under 1 vehicle per minute onto Pepper Street.

30. From review of the TRICs data supplied within the TS it is noted that only 2 of the 9 sites utilised within the assessment are considered to be free standing. 3 out of 9 relate to Edge of Town locations, 3 out of 9 are in suburban areas and 1 is located in a neighbourhood centre.
31. As such the trip rate information provided for the application does not reflect the relatively remote location of the site where use of the private car is likely to be higher for staff and residents than for sites located closer to existing residential areas. It is also interesting to note that the latest survey information available within the TRICs database is November 2015 ie 5 years old.
32. It is therefore considered that the trip generation provided by the applicant should be challenged.

Site Access

33. The site access proposed by the applicant is based upon flawed speed data and the assessment using the parameters from Manual for Streets is at best questionable. Pepper Street is a rural road with limited access points and junctions to suggest to drivers that caution should be employed and therefore use of the reduced reaction time (1.5s) is not considered to be reasonable. The limited speed data presented by the applicant indicates a dry weather 85th percentile speed of 69.19 kph (43mph) Eastbound and 67.58 kph (42 mph) westbound with maximums of 53 mph and 55mph respectively.
34. Based upon DMRB the visibility requirements would be 120m in either direction based upon a 70 kph design speed. It is accepted that a minor road distance of 2.4m would be sufficient to provide for safety.
35. It is also noted that allowing the visibility to be viewed 1m into the carriageway in both directions is being suggested however it is not clear what evidence this is based upon. It is acknowledged that within Manual for Streets 2 that drivers quite often do not drive along the carriageway edge and therefore visibility can be taken into the carriageway however in this case the access is located along a straight section of the road where overtaking can take place and given the width of road available the vehicle would be travelling closer than 1m from the edge of the carriageway in order to pass or overtake. As such use of 1 m is not considered to be acceptable in this instance.
36. It is therefore considered that the starting point for the Council in relation to the visibility requirements at the access should be 2.4m x 120m.

37. The main emphasis of the TS indicates that traffic would be likely to travel towards the A537 rather than the A50. However, it should be noted that vehicles travelling to and from the south would be more likely to pass along Chelford Lane and Stocks Lane and through Over Peover to gain access to the A50 and therefore it is considered that an analysis of the route to the west of the site should be undertaken.
38. Travelling towards the A537 from the site would require vehicles to pass through the narrow section of Pepper Street adjacent to Holly Cottage which suffers from poor forward visibility due to horizontal and vertical issues, as can be seen on the photographs at para 9. 1 of this Note. There has been no assessment of the impacts of the site generated traffic upon this section of Pepper Street where it can be seen that there is a mirror located opposite the access to Holly Cottage.

Internal Arrangements

39. It is not proposed to go into great detail regarding the internal designs however it should be noted that there is a conflict between the swept path requirements for larger vehicles and the design of the scheme as highlighted on Plan 4 of the TS. It can be seen that the delivery vehicles assessed would be required to pass over what appears to be a solid island. Additionally, from Plan 5 it would appear that not all of the layout has been assessed in terms of refuse collection.

Accessibility issues

40. The accessibility of the site currently is considered to be poor with no footway provision along Pepper Street, no cycle facilities, limited public bus services and no bus stops near the site. The range of local services listed are relatively remote for the site and those within Chelford do require the need to cross the A537 at the Pepper Street junction and then walk along the narrow footway to the A537
41. The applicant proposes to install a range of measures aimed to improve the current situation.
- 1) introduce a footway/private footpath from the site to the A537. the section of footpath to be open for the duration of the development
 - 2) introduce bus stops on Pepper Street for the public bus service
 - 3) introduce one electric mini bus to provide services for the residents
 - 4) Car share club
42. The footway element of the proposals is considered to be an essential requirement to the proposals. The footway element between the site access and the existing public right of way would introduce an urban element to Pepper Street. The footpath element which would run

from the existing public right of way would be private, as it located within the applicant's land and would run behind a hedgerow in places. It is noted that this element would be available for use by all users providing that the development is still in operation. The safety of usage of the footpath is unclear as the pedestrians would be hidden by a hedgerow for much of the route, ie there is no viewing of the footpath.

43. It would still be necessary for pedestrians to cross the A537 at Pepper Street in order to gain access to the width restricted footway located on the north side of the A537 and then utilise the route into Chelford using the narrow footway. No provision has been offered to assist crossing of the A537
44. It would appear that no consideration has been given to providing additional footway facilities to the west of the site where there are other facilities available.
45. The introduction of bus stops on Pepper Street is considered helpful however given the poor frequency of service of the no 88 bus it is unlikely to provide any meaningful increase in bus patronage from the site.
46. The proposed introduction of an electric mini bus to serve the site is interesting and would tend to detract from the public service. One mini bus is proposed and it is apparently to serve all the needs of the residents including day trips out and allowing for shopping trips and the like. These conflicting needs are unlikely to be successfully served by one bus on site and could well lead to use of the private car by residents.
47. The car share club is considered to be a benefit however this would still lead to use of a car to and from the site. However, the acknowledged over provision of on site parking is unlikely to lead to residents deciding not to have a car certainly in the short term.

APPRAISAL SUMMARY

48. Whilst the suggested improvements are noted it is considered that given the remote location of the site and the overprovision of car parking that the development would be car dependent.
49. In summary it is considered
 - 1) The development is located in a remote location and will be car dependent.
 - 2) The applicant has not demonstrated that safe access can be achieved for all modes of travel.
 - 3) The anticipated trip attraction rates utilised within the TS do not reflect the remoteness of the site and are likely to underestimate the number of vehicles attracted to the local highway network and this would appear to be accepted by the applicant because the site is proposing to provide car parking in excess of the standards required by CEC.

- 4) The TS fails to fully consider the impact of the site attracted traffic on the local highway network and in particular the safety of the narrow section of Pepper Street adjacent to Holly Cottage where forward visibility is restricted.
 - 5) It is considered that the mitigation measures proposed would be unlikely to materially alter the car dominance of the development in this remote location.
50. On the basis of the assessment of the supplied information it is recommended that an objection in respect of transport and highways should be lodged.

