

## FUL/2024/0001 – West Winch Housing Access Road

It is acknowledged that the designation of W Winch Growth Area has formed part of the BCKLWN strategic housing allocations over successive development plans and that the resolution of existing and resultant highway traffic management is necessary in the public interest. It is also recognised that this proposal represents a piecemeal proposal for part of the local network which is already inadequate in capacity and layout to address demand. The implications of this scheme will be felt locally and much further afield.

It is considered that the preferred route across undeveloped countryside between the villages of West Winch and North Runcton is based on perceived lower costs and potential opposition.

Environmentally, the proposal fails to address the fundamental principles of sustainable development for the following reasons:-

- The scheme will result in the loss of higher grade agricultural land and the fragmentation of existing farm holdings;
- The scheme fails to address BNG by its own admission: Off-site provision is not acceptable within this rural location and sufficient land should be provided within the site for appropriate provision to meet statutory requirements. In the absence of such, any subsequent approval is potentially liable to legal challenge;
- Inadequate attention is paid to encouraging use of public transport: The scheme offers the opportunity for improving access to (in this case) bus transport and appropriate modal shift from car-borne transport to buses, particularly for town centre and coastal traffic. As this is a new section of road, footpath/cycleway provision is relatively easily achieved, but arrangements for broader modal shifts is neither recognised nor addressed;
- The argument that there may not be sufficient interest from local bus services in order to accommodate laybys, transport interchanges (albeit small-scale) belies the fact that if provision is not made at this stage, future demand and opportunities will be missed;
- The proposed landscaping shown on the submitted plans is considered wholly inadequate to offset visual intrusion of the new road on the existing landscape. Furthermore, proposed landscaping would assist in reducing traffic noise and airborne emissions from a new highway which will be subject to **very** high levels of both private cars and commercial haulage. This appears to be a significant oversight on the Applicant's part; If the access road has to follow this route (and it is noted that the preliminary business plan for the route has been accepted), the responsibility of the Applicant must be to minimise the demonstrable harm that will result to both existing and future highway users, residents and visitors.
- In summary it is considered that the proposed new road represents a missed opportunity which will significantly impact on the local and wider population, landscape, wildlife and quality of life for nearby residents. It appears to be seeking a short-term solution to local highway congestion rather than addressing longer-term implications and therefore fails to address the principles of sustainable development that all new proposals are required to address.
- Accordingly it is considered that the proposed scheme should be rejected in its present form.