

MEMORANDUM

To: Development Management
Ref: PL/2026/01555

From: Sustainable Transport
Date: 15 July 2026

PL/2025/01555 - Land at Blackmore Farm, Sandridge Common, Melksham, SN12 7QS - A reserved matters application (appearance, layout, scale and landscaping) for 229 dwellings and associated infrastructure – Reserved Matters pursuant to Outline permission PL/2023/11188

This response will review matters relating to highway and transport issues.

I note that this planning application is a reserved matters application. The site access arrangements have been determined as part of application PL/2023/11188.

Submissions Reviewed:

- Transport Update Note – Dated August 2024
- Design and Access Statement
- Illustrative Masterplan
- Drawings: Engineering Layouts, Site Layout and others.

Principle of the location

The principle of this proposal been established as a result of the outline application determined under consent PL/2023/11188.

Please note the S106 highway mitigation measures required and the decision notice planning conditions.

Walking and cycling links

The Transport update Note / Masterplan/ Site Layout outlines walking and cycling options/ links related to the neighbouring sites.

With regard to the decision notice:

- Condition 10 - provision of the puffin crossing (MELKW 27) is required in full with Eastern way prior to 150th dwelling.
- Condition 9 - provision of the toucan crossing (MELKW 41) is require in full with Eastern Way prior to 325th dwelling. At this stage this planning consent and number of occupations does not trigger provision of this crossing.

Eastern Way – Puffin crossing

I note that a puffin crossing and upgrades to MELW 27 is conditioned to enable provision, as a result of the outline consent. There is a contribution to upgrade the MELW 27.

Cycleway connections links MELW 27

Within the application site, on the approximate line of MELW 27. Near the flats adjacent to plot number 8, the 2m footway within the site should be upgraded to 3m SUP cycleway.

Near the flats, from the 2m footway towards the school site, the footway should be upgraded to 3m SUP cycleway. Please amend.

A 3m section should also be included across and in front of the flats to connect to the 3m SUP path across the school boundary in both directions. Please amend drawing accordingly.

I note that remaining section towards the overall site boundary, will come forward as part of the next phase. At this stage a 3m cycleway will need to continue to the boundary, to provide connection towards the puffin crossing.

However I note Condition 10 that the puffin crossing and connection should be provided prior to the 150th dwelling (and details submitted prior to commencement).

I suggest that the application is amended to ensure that the 3m SUP towards the crossing / site boundary is provided as a result of this planning application. Please amend.

Pedestrian and Cycleway links

A secondary pedestrian and cycle access is provided as a dedicated link through greenery connecting Sandridge Common with the internal estate road opposite plot 17/ 18. No document appears to clearly state what the specification material and width this link will be built to, however the colouring on the site layout plan suggests that it is likely to be a hoggin surface. The adoption plan also states that it will be maintained by a site management company. This is not suitable for what will be a main access route for pedestrians and cycles. The path should be provided to an adoptable standard of a 3m wide shared-use path, with hard asphalt surfacing and streetlighting.

I am also unsure what surfacing is proposed for the footways running along the east of the site, from plot 65 past plots 52, 51, 37, 36 & 17, connecting with the secondary pedestrian & cycle access path mentioned above. A consolidated surface would be suitable for this path but reduced width. The same comments apply for the path running from west of the main vehicular access, past plots 125, 66-70 & 182-194, though the centre of the site.

Cycle Parking

All plots are provided with some form of cycle parking - garages, sheds with space for up to three bicycles for plots without garages, and communal stores for flats. The LTP3 Cycling Strategy requires a minimum of 1 space per bedroom for dwellings up to 3 bedrooms, 3 spaces for 4-bedroom dwellings and 4 spaces for 5-bedroom dwellings. The majority of plots meet this requirement.

There is not enough cycle storage space provided for both the flats and the 5-bedroom dwellings to be policy-compliant. Each of the three blocks of flats contain six 1-bed flats and three 2-bed flats, creating a requirement for 12 cycle spaces, whilst only 9 are provided in the communal store for each block. This can be easily rectified through a modest expansion to the external cycle stores. The 5-bedroom dwellings have a requirement for 4 cycle spaces; however, they only contain one garage which when used alongside vehicle parking, would only be suitable for a maximum of three cycles. I would suggest that this is rectified through the provision of sheds in addition to garages for these plots. Please amend.

Issues relating to Phasing and next steps

With regard to the next phases, the following key broad highways and transport issues have been identified:

1. Phase 1 (Residential, infrastructure roads) -
2. Phase 2/ 3 (School, Employment, Residential, roads) - Land to the south
3. Eastern Way Phase - including link road with roundabout – Land to the west

4. Neighbouring phase to east - East of plots 17/ 18 – Land to the east (Subject to future planning applications)

The details provided do not detail how the primary route/ bus route will relate to allocated developments or even potential neighbouring phase. It appears that there are three areas of concern:

1. Link towards roundabout on Eastern Way - With regard to the S106 there is a requirement for a 6.5m wide carriageway road and footways connection. This appears excluded from this planning application (detailing infrastructure). The connecting road should be detailed to connect to site boundaries as a part of this planning application (in vicinity of the school site). Please amend.
2. As there is no through route planned within this application. A loop road must be provided with a 6.5m carriageway width to enable bus use or an efficient turning facility (temporary).
3. I note that two single decker bus tracking drawings have been provided, why has bus tracking been supplied near plots 17/18? This is also indicated as a primary route. If the intention is to link towards a neighbouring phase and primary route, this should be clearly set out with a carriageway width of 6.5m. The turning head is also not satisfactory.
4. Why does a route towards plot 425 include no loop or turning area for bus use?

With all these items to consider and future proof, the road hierarchy and masterplan must come forward clearly addressing and detailing these issues. Please update.

Bus Tracking

The bus tracking plans show that a 12m single deck bus would struggle to get around the roads, even as a theoretical design exercise. In reality, with parked cars near junctions and in roads etc the bus will either have to manoeuvre at very low speeds or may find itself unable to traverse the estate roads. This is a serious concern.

It is also noted that the computer model buses used in the tracking exercise do not seem to represent anything available on the market at the moment. The wheelbase is excessively long, and whilst that makes some turns harder, it also reduces the 'tail-swing' as the rear overhang is reduced which can make some turns look possible, but which won't be. The tracking plans will need to be redrawn with actual vehicle dimensions of relevant models rather than the models used. Please amend the bus tracking details.

Road Hierarchy – Provision for the Bus loop roads 6.5 m width

The Road hierarchy detailed in the Movement strategy needs to take into account and relate to the planned uses (school and employment).

The primary access roads need to be a consistent width, the Primary Route detailed in the Movement strategy measures approximately 5.8 - 6.18m carriageway width as a maximum. In combination these routes will have the likelihood of parking on the road.

With regard to bus movements, the width of the carriageway needs to be increased. The carriageway width for buses will require roads to be a minimum width of 6.5m. Any bus route will need to be 6.5m minimum throughout. Please amend.

The Primary Route in the Movement Strategy also does not include a loop road. A loop road is required or reasonably laid out turning facility. Please amend.

The Secondary route, the carriageway widths are detailed at 5.5m. Subject to no bus use this is satisfactory.

A 6.5m carriageway road width is a standard requirement within Wiltshire to cater for strategic bus routes. A tracking exercise will be required. Excessive turning for a bus route is also not acceptable. Please amend accordingly.

Bus routes and bus service

I note that the outline decision notice and S106 agreement includes a contribution of £750,000 for an hourly bus service. In the future the bus service will need to be self-sustaining in the future.

Due to the edge of town location, it is key that the bus service infrastructure is up to standard and is efficient and will promote public transport. Appropriate supporting infrastructure is required in order to enable a self-sustaining service.

It was clear in the highway observations of the planning application, that the final routing (route timings) and triggers were not finally determined at that stage.

I note that condition 13 of the decision notice, includes a requirement that a phasing and specification plan for 2 bus stops. Condition 14 requires phasing and specification details with regard to the mobility hub also to be included. It does appear that as part of this application this information has been submitted or any indication how these matters will be resolved. Please update.

There is no detail provided relating to bus stop provision within the site or on the A3102. There is no phasing/ bus strategy for bus service separately provided. What is included in the Design and Access Statement - does not provide any clarification of what is planned to ensure bus route, frequency, timings and bus stop information. This detail needs to be provided – so that in the long-term measures can support a self-sustaining service.

A bus service implementation strategy/ road hierarchy is required, taking into account all the issues in order to address condition 13 and 14.

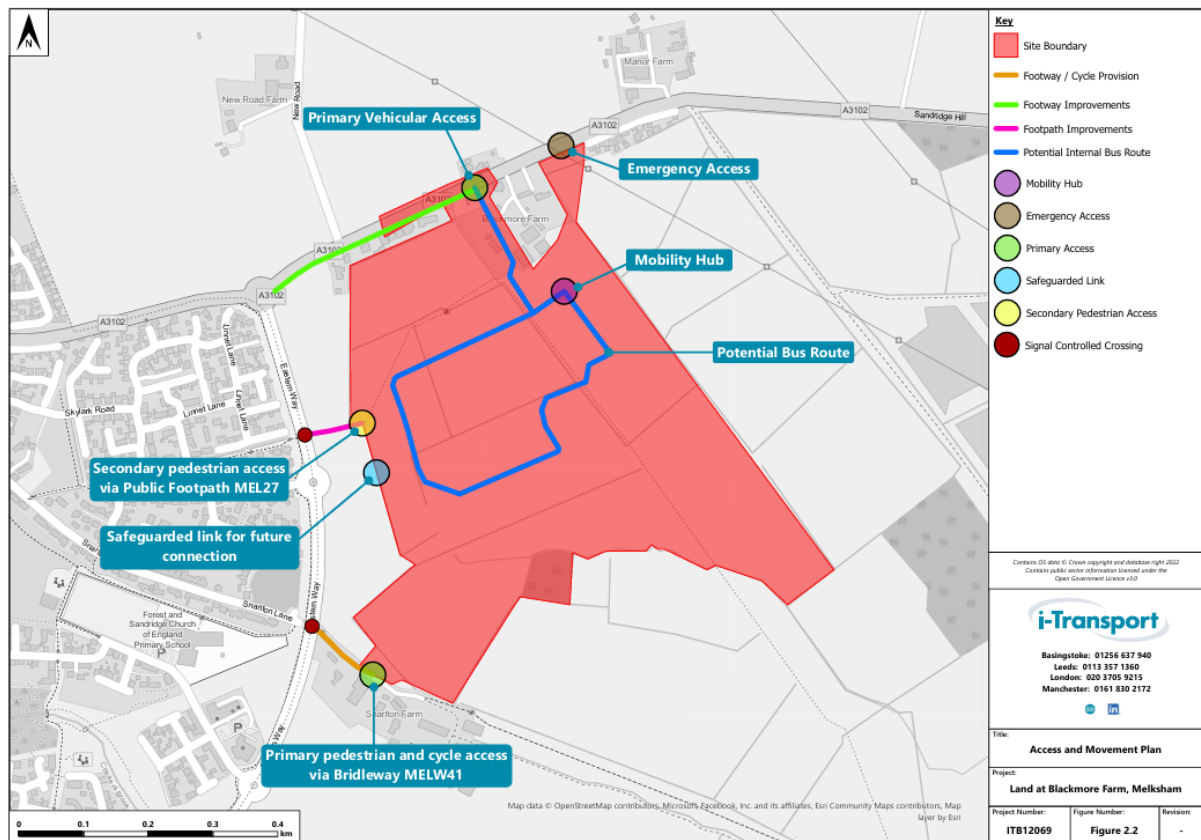
Bus Route loop – Transport Update Note

It is clear from the Transport Update Note detailed below that the intention is to have a bus loop.

I would suggest that 6.5m bus route is provided along this basis. I note that part of this loop is not part of this planning application. Instead of demanding a 6.5m route through a typical 5.5m Mfs residential street to the north, I would suggest, that where this loop can not be provided at this stage, that a temporary route / loop is provided. Or the planning application is amended accordingly to provide this route. Please update.

With regard to Figure 2.2 of the transport update note (detailed below) it would appear a large extent of this bus route is already on the primary route.

Figure 2.2 – Access and Movement Strategy – Potential Internal bus rote, Transport Update Note 8 August 2024



Bus service

As noted in the application, the closest bus service to the site currently is the 14/15 which serves Eastern Way and the Skylark Road. This bus runs to an uneven headway and is poorly situated to serve this development. There is also the X76 bus along the A3102 to the north of the site, which runs once a day, Mondays to Fridays, to Bath returning in the early afternoon.

Bus stops x2 and Mobility Hub

It is noted that a mobility hub, plus two bus stops are to be provided internally within the site as required by condition 13. Bus stops to be installed to our standard design, with pole, flag and timetable case within the development. Each stop would also need to have a raised kerb at the stop and dropped kerb crossing facilities nearby and be designed in such a way that the bus can draw up parallel to the raised kerb and pull away again without being impeded by parked cars.

Additional bus stop A2102

The council would also request that a bus stop be provided on each side of the A3102 to the west of the site entrance to allow the bus which serves the estate to also serve the existing houses on the main road.

Bus stop Eastern Way

It is noted that the developer has included a puffin crossing on Eastern Way. This will allow access to the bus stops on Eastern Way which may, at some point in the future, as development proceeds further along its length be served by an inter-urban bus route. This is related to the provision of the link road detailed in the S106. This is considered good futureproofing.

Emergency access

I note Condition 12, that provision of the emergency vehicle access is required with the A3102 in full prior to 150th dwelling occupation.

Traffic calming – vertical deflection

As detailed on the Site Layout drawings, I note the block paving proposed at the junctions within the site. It is not clear whether vertical deflection is proposed as it is not detailed on the Engineering Drawings. Vertical deflection can be noisy to residents and is also a maintenance liability due to impact to the Local Highway Authority. Vertical deflection will not be acceptable on a bus route.

Please remove/ ensure that vertical deflection does not form part of the proposals.

Traffic calming – straight sections

From the entrance to the site and within the site, I note that there are a large number of streets that are long straight sections. With regard to in Manual for Streets guidance these roads are in excess of 70m and will require a form of traffic calming.

The site layout gives the impression that some of the straight sections could be subject to suffer from excessive speeds. I therefore consider that traffic calming measures/ changes to alignment will be required.

It would appear that road narrowing features and changes in road alignment would seem sensible starting point. Please provide amended details. But please note the designs would also still need to cater for the bus movements.

Car Parking - Schedule

I note the car parking levels detailed in Parking Plan. However, I also require a parking schedule (i.e. spreadsheet) for every property that clearly outlines plot number, type, number of bedrooms and car parking provision. Visitor parking to also be included. This needs to cross referenced against the council car parking standards. Subject to compliance, this car parking schedule and car parking plan can then be conditioned.

Car Parking Layby

I note that parking laybys are detailed on the Engineering Layout, Site Plan and in the Design & Access statement.

The width of car parking bays are indicated as being 2m. In accordance with council standards this needs to be amended to 2.4m. Please amend.

Visitor Parking in close proximity of junctions also need to be re-allocated.

Garage dimensions

I note that all garages will have a minimum dimension of 3m x 6m. This is compliant with Wiltshire Council Standards.

Masterplan and Road Hierarchy

I note the detail contained the Design and Access statement and illustrative masterplan. I note that the road layout is designed on the concept of four street types with walking and cycling routes woven in the road layout. This seems reasonable but there are some adjustments required as set out below (bus provision, walking/ cycle routes).

Refuse vehicle

The refuse vehicle manoeuvres seem generally fine.

However the turning head and road near units 8- 17. This seems very complicated on the drawing and I am struggling to interpretate what is happening. I require a more simplified drawing in order it is easier to understand. I also note that there is some overhang near property 17. Please amend and provide a larger turning head and revised swept path.

Service margins

Throughout the site there are a significant number of shared surfaces (Roads 4, 5, 9, 18, 19, and 20). These measure in the region of 7m in width. This is too narrow and not acceptable to the Local Highway Authority. The minimum carriageway width of shared surface is 8m overall, with 6m, plus 2 x 1m service strips/ buffer areas.

A 6m width, with a 2m service strip to one side is also acceptable. The Highway team preference is to have all service contained in the 2m service strip. However the Highways team are not completely opposed, to two 1m strips.

Therefore it is required that significant revision is required to the shared surfaces. Please confirm how these areas will work in practice, will the services be split? A key issue is that in the event of a maintenance issue, a workable road width for vehicles to pass is maintained. Please confirm the proposals for the services in these areas to cater for these issues

It is also noted in roads, 18, 19, 20 that allocated visitor car parking is included in close proximity of the access. It is very clear from the refuse tracking that these spaces are very tight, to enable passage of refuse vehicle.

I also note that in a number of locations, in the proximity of the site access points that visitor parking is formally detailed. This should be removed. This only leaves over 4.5m width with good numbers of properties served. I consider that alternative visitor spaces should be allocated cars should be re-located to more suitable locations.

Adoption Plan

The application submission also does contain a drawing outlining the areas that will be offered for adoption as Public Highway.

Visibility splays

I note the Engineering and site layout drawings supplied do not outline the visibility splays at all junctions within the site. Visibility splays must be contained within highway and not across third party land or other areas.

A drawing must be provided detailing forward visibility splays and X and Y visibility splays at junctions. Visibility splays are not accepted across private land. Visibility splays must be drawn in accordance with Manual for Streets guidelines.

Visibility splays should also demonstrate that trees are located outside of any visibility splays. Please include the proposals for trees on the drawings.

No Trees within Public Highway

With regard to the Adoption and Site Layout drawings provided I note that there are a high number of trees located within the proposed Public Highway. Please ensure that no trees are located within the Public Highway. All trees must be located in private areas.

If trees do remain in the Public Highway, a significant commuted sum will be required. Within vicinity of the Public Highway all trees will be subject to standard root ball protection systems.

Trees, visibility splays and streetlighting

Please provide confirmation that the streetlighting design has considered the location of trees and impact on streetlighting.

Please provide a drawing that shows all three items (or layers). Please ensure trees and streetlighting columns are located outside visibility splays. Please ensure trees and streetlighting columns are well located to ensure streetlighting levels are suitable. It appears that in many locations trees will be located in/ or very close to visibility splays. These need issues need to be resolved throughout, particularly in close proximity of junctions. Please provide additional drawings and confirmation.

Gradients of 1:100 and drainage

I note a number of roads have a 1:100 gradient, this is contrary to Wiltshire adoptable standards. The flat gradient is not a suitable standard for drainage.

I would like these points noted and addressed as part of S38. If these matters have knock on implications for planning layouts these matters address now. Potential solutions to address 1:100 gradients include introducing gradients, cambers and, channel blocks. This is not an extensive list of solutions.

Travel Plan

A Full Travel Plan has not been submitted alongside this reserved matters application, however it is acknowledged that one was secured as part of the S106 agreement alongside a £300 green travel voucher for each dwelling. Approval of the Full Travel Plan will be done through the S106 obligations process.

Way Forward

Please address the items detailed above in an amended submission.

Kind regards,

PAUL GALPIN

Principal Development Control Engineer

Highways Development Management

