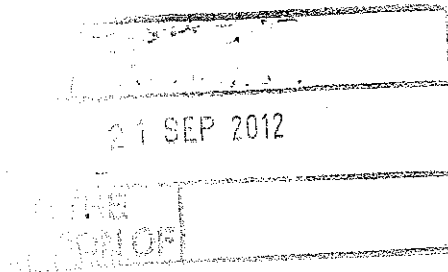


Director of Development Services
Ribble Valley Borough Council
Council Offices
Church Walk
Clitheroe BB7 2RA



Martin Nugent
01254 828060
D3/12/0528

Drafted 21 August 2012

Dear Sir

**Planning Application, Ribble Valley District
3/12/0578 Outdoor Activity Centre, Whalley Road, Read**

I refer to your letter of 12 July 2012 concerning the above application.

I have no objection in principle to this application on highway safety grounds. However, there aspects of the pedestrian and public transport links that would benefit from clarification.

Junction Design

I am confident that the necessary access specifications can be achieved from within the available frontage under the applicant's control.

The calculation for visibility splays contained in the Transport Statement accompanying the application identify a range of 105m to 120m as being acceptable for the measured vehicle speeds on Whalley Road. I am content that this is accurate and a reasonable basis on which to proceed.

Working with the lower figure of 105m by 2.4m, the impact of construction on adjacent planting and established hedgerows is minimised. As I have no objection to the introduction of the splays achieved using this figure on this section of Whalley Road, the retention of the planting is an additional benefit.

The design of the proposed access satisfies the Lancashire County Council Specification for Construction of Estate Roads. An anticipated daily flow of up to 500 vehicle movements (250 journeys x 2), at the proposed access can be safely accommodated from a suitably designed priority junction, as is proposed here.

The proposed access point does not appear to require the removal of any mature trees, but there will be requirements to raise the crown on some specific trees and to alter the line of hedgerows that fall within the visibility splay.

In order to manage the movement of traffic arriving at and manoeuvring through the site, it would be appropriate to have in place a scheme of warning and information signage and road markings. I would welcome further details on these matters.

As indicated on plan, the existing field gate access to the west of the proposed access is to be permanently closed and planting reinstated. This requirement will be supplemented by a formal Highway Condition.

The internal layout also retains access for access that will maintain the existing agricultural activity undertaken on land directly adjoining the site.

The site plans indicate that the main vehicular access from Whalley Road is not to be gated. I have every confidence that the site security has been considered in great detail, but would highlight that this leaves open the opportunity for the site to be accessed by unauthorised groups or individuals.

I would ask that consideration is given to omitting the rumble strip shown on the entrance to site. This will be the focus for all vehicular movements and does not serve a specific speed reduction or other safety function. Given the maintenance required on rumble strips and the proximity of on-site facilities for buses and coaches, I would recommend that this feature is removed at this location.

Off site highway works

The level of vehicular activity initially envisaged would not warrant consideration of further highway engineering works, such as a right turn lane to the site. However, the junction will have to accommodate coach traffic, possible agricultural traffic and potentially large maintenance vehicles.

Public Transport

In the TS the applicant has identified that the intention is to make this development an attractive destination for visitors from across the region. Therefore, the integration of this site into existing bus routes and scheduled services is an important consideration.

The accessibility of the site for public transport is an issue. The nearest bus stops are over 800m from the proposed site entrance. Suitable provisions will be required to serve the site. The prospect of having scheduled bus services stopping on Whalley Road in this vicinity would be another argument in favour of reducing the existing speed limit.

No stop within 800/900metres of site entrance. Do not accept that this is reasonable given the "healthy" nature of the site. To be sustainable and to minimise the number of private car journeys to the site, either new stops need to be established (at approx £10K each) or scheduled services can penetrate the site.

Footway Provision

The provision of linked footway provisions. There is an existing footway to the south side of Whalley Road and provisions should be made for drop kerb links to and across the proposed access. The extent of any new lengths of footway would be a matter for more detailed discussion.

Provide drop kerbs from the south side of Whalley Road to both sides of the main access and across this access. This will allow pedestrians to reach the site from a continuous footway link. New footways must also be provided to both sides of the main entrance.

Street Lighting

Ask SH if any additional lighting provision would be warranted. Although it is proposed that the site should operate from 0900 until dusk, there will be times when the entrance will be operational in darkness and there will still be some movements to/from the site outside of these times.

In order to comply with the current regulations the junction would need to be lit with a minimum of 7 columns. However, this would then leave a gap of about 250m to the next lit section of the road to the north-west, towards the Devil's Elbow. This is problematic as there could be issues with motorists adapting to the change from dark to light to dark etc. For this reason it is best practice to link the illuminated sections of road.

Therefore, in order to secure a suitable level of provision, the necessary column count goes up to approximately 15 Columns, with 500m of trenching and cabling for these columns.

An initial costing assumes 15 columns @ 500 = £7500 plus 500m of cabling @ £60m = £30,000, giving a total of £37,500. This assumes that an electricity supply can be provided at this relatively remote rural location.

Speed Limits

The present Speed Limit is 50mph and I understand that some initial speed counts have been undertaken. There is a case for considering the introduction of a lower, 40mph limit and this should be investigated. Such a change could have an impact on visibility distances and access road construction design.

I can confirm that the assessments carried out on behalf of the applicant are robust and provide verification that the existing 50mph speed limit is appropriate for this section of highway. Also establishes that sightlines of 105/120metres are appropriate and can be achieved within land fronting the site that is directly within the applicant's control.

Signing

Investigate any new signing provision; warning, information or advisory, that may be appropriate along the A671 route to the site.

Provide interactive signing at the "Devil's Elbow" to reinforce the present advisory 30mph signing.

Committed Developments

There are no committed developments in this vicinity

Car Parking

The parking standards contained within The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) – North West of England Plan (2008) remain the County wide standard for parking provision. Until such time as a revised policy is available, the RSS must still remain a material consideration in assessing planning applications.

With consideration for the above, the Local Highway Authority will be guided by the Local Planning Authority on parking standards. The LPA/LHA will set the level of parking as appropriate, based on the local need and on a site specific basis and in doing so have regard for the need to promote sustainable development with sustainable transport outcomes.

Car parking provisions and their location will be the subject of discussions at the formal application stage

50 car parking spaces and 5 coach spaces. Adequate provision based on projected numbers attending and vehicle occupation rates. There is scope within the projected capacity on site to utilise coach parking for additional car parking.

Internal Layout

The design of the on-site facilities must take into account the potential visual impact on passing motorists. In particular, there must be no direct view of "in tree" activity from the "Devil's Elbow"

Martin Nugent

Public Realm, Ribble Valley
LCC Environmental Services East
01254 828060