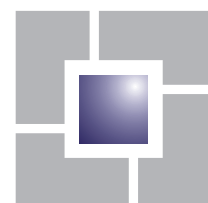


Land East of Coventry Road

Cubbington, Warwickshire

Response to WCC submission



david tucker associates
transport planning consultants

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Following the submission of DTA document 17380-02a, Warwickshire County Council (WCC) as local highway authority (LHA) submitted an email responding to the document, stating:

The simple answer is no as they cannot achieve suitable visibility splays. DTA are applying manual for street standards even though the 85th percentile vehicle speeds are recorded at 47.2 mph and the speed limit is 50 mph.

The Highway Authority applies the visibility standards set out within Design Manual for Roads and Bridges for any 85th percentile speeds over 40mph. The Highway Authority therefore requires a visibility splay of 2.4 metres by 160 metres. From my assessment of the drawings this cannot be achieved and a safe access cannot be secured.

In addition the access would have to be supported by a Road Safety Audit Stage One, which no doubt would raise the concerns regarding the level of visibility which can be achieved.

- 1.2 Whilst these elements were discussed on site, the inspector confirmed he would be willing to accept a formal response to the points raised.

- 1.3 Firstly whilst WCC state they apply DMRB for speeds over 40mph, this is not set out in published policy and does not align with the application of MfS1/ MfS2 which states:

MfS2 builds on the guidance contained in MfS1, exploring in greater detail how and where its key principles can be applied to busier streets and non-trunk roads, thus helping to fill the perceived gap in design guidance between MfS1 and DMRB.

DMRB is the design standard for Trunk Roads and Motorways in England, Scotland Wales and Northern Ireland. The strict application of DMRB to non-trunk roads is rarely appropriate for highway design in built up areas, regardless of traffic volume.

- 1.4 This approach was recently echoed in an appeal decision (APP/J3720/W/15/31330036) for a site on Land north of Evesham Road, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire. The site was served from a 'B' class road with average daily traffic flows of 10,000 vehicles and a recorded 85thile speed of 49.4mph, which is a vastly busier road than the Coventry Road (1,500vpd) with higher speeds. The inspector was clear in his approach as he set out in Para 30:

The Council refers to standards set out in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges. That is directed towards trunk roads, and Evesham Road is not a trunk road. The guidance contained in Manual for Streets 2 (MfS2) is more applicable.

- 1.5 For this reason it is not considered WCC's blanket application of DMRB visibility standards is reasonable. It is important to note the appeal site is also in Warwickshire.
- 1.6 Drawing 17380-02a demonstrates the requested visibility distances of 2.4m x 160m can be delivered on land under the control of the development and existing public highway. It does show that significant clearance of vegetation would be required, which could have an adverse impact on vehicle speeds. By opening up the forward visibility on approach to the village, drivers could maintain higher vehicle speeds. However, depending on the width of the tree trunks, some could be retained as they would only provide a momentary obstruction to visibility.
- 1.7 At the site meeting the WCC officer introduced the potential to extend the village gateway to north of the site, including the 30mph speed limit. However, they also suggested this may not be supported by the local police force due to compliance issues and lack of enforceability. One option therefore, would be to provide a 40mph buffer zone on approach to the village. Circular 01/13 states in Para 30 that mean speeds should be used to determine local speed limits. The recorded approach mean speed was 40.2mph which means a 40mph buffer could be appropriate. This would be a 600m zone measured north from the existing 30mph limit. The circular states:


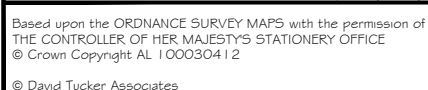
The minimum length of a speed limit should generally be not less than 600 metres to avoid too many changes of speed limit along the route.

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- 1.8 Therefore, in this instance the distance wouldn't introduce additional changes to speed limits, so a shorter buffer may be considered acceptable.
- 1.9 DMRB standards for a 40mph speed limit would require 120m splays. This is directly comparable to the 121m required by the MfS2 desirable minimum splays shown on Drawing 17380-02a and would therefore, provide a splay that would meet the requirements of WCC whilst also minimising the impact on the loss of vegetation and delivering a splay that would meet the 85thile desirable requirements of MfS2.
- 1.10 The final paragraph of the WCC response refers to the need for a road safety audit and suggest the finding would raise concerns about the achievable visibility.
- 1.11 Experience suggests this would be highly unlikely, insofar that auditors are not a design check tool, they audit the safety aspects of the scheme. Should they have concerns about the visibility to and from a junction, a standard response that would be expected would recommend:
- That appropriate visibility splays consistent with known vehicle speeds are provided and that they are kept clear of obstructions or vegetation.*
- 1.12 The required distance are left for agreement between the applicant and local authority.
- 1.13 Therefore, should it be considered that WCC's position regarding the application of DMRB standards on a local road is reasonable, the more onerous splays of 160m can be delivered. This demonstrates the site can be brought forward without requiring a reduction in the speed limit and being dependant on a traffic regulation order. However, there would be clear benefits in terms in providing a shorter splay by minimising the loss of vegetation and maintaining lower vehicle speeds.
- 1.14 It is important to highlight the 94m splays are in accordance with the requirements of MfS2 using the factors derived from DMRB. However, the developer would support the delivery of a 40mph buffer requiring 120m splays because it would reduce the impact on the existing vegetation compared to the 160m.

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- 1.15 It can therefore be concluded that a variety of visibility splays can be provided to and from the site access, all of which meet the requirements of MfS2 and one of which would deliver the 50mph DMRB splay addressing the Council's concerns.

Drawing 17380-02a
Site Access visibility splays

 MfS Absolute minimum 'y' distance - 94m
 MfS Desirable minimum 'y' distance - 121m
 DMRB 50mph 'y' distance - 160m



Forester House, Doctors Lane,
Henley in Arden,
Warwickshire B95 5AW
Tel: +44(0)1564 793598
Fax: +44(0)1564 793983
www.dtatransportation.co.uk

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david tucker associates

Forester House
Doctor's Lane
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Warwickshire B95 5AW
Tel: +44(0)1564 793598
Fax: +44(0)1564 793983
inmail@dtatransportation.co.uk
www.dtatransportation.co.uk