

To:

Jon Holmes – EHDC Principal Planning Officer and Case Officer for Bargate Development
Sabih Halih – EHDC Principal Planning Officer and Case Officer for NK Homes Development
Ben Clifton – HCC Transport Team Leader, Highways Development Planning

By Email

8 November 2018

Dear Sirs and Madam

Bellmouth of Access Road to 2 New developments in Rowlands Castle

Following discussions at its Meeting on 1 October 2018, Rowlands Castle Parish Council (RCPC) wishes to express its grave concerns about the health and safety implications for the bellmouth of the access road of the two new developments in Rowlands Castle being built by Bargate Homes¹ and Nicholas King Homes². The land for the latter was previously owned by Travis Perkins t/a Keyline Builders Merchants (TP), which submitted the original planning application for development of the site.

For those footway users approaching the bellmouth from the south, the visibility up the access road is extremely limited. They will have to cross mid-way before they are able to see if anything is coming down the access road. Such users could include elderly residents, parents pushing buggies, children on scooters, those with disabilities or infirmities and those using wheelchairs or mobility scooters.

It will be difficult for even relatively fit people to get out of the way quick enough if a vehicle is approaching the bellmouth down the access road, let alone those unable to move as fast as those listed above. We understand a 'pinch point' is to be installed a little further up the access road³ to slow traffic but we do not believe such measures will be enough to prevent a collision which could result in serious injury or death.

The visibility issues will also affect users of the bridleway which is linked to The Green by a stretch of the access road involving the bellmouth. These users are likely to include horse-riders and cyclists.

The only dropped kerbs have been installed at the widest part of the bellmouth as a continuation of the pavements either side, meaning that those using wheelchairs or mobility scooters, or pushing buggies, have no option but to cross there and cannot venture further up the access road where the visibility is clearer. RCPC's view is that this is contrary to the Dept for Environment, Transport and the Regions' Guidance on the Use of Tactile Paving Surfaces, which in turn requires compliance with the Dept for Transport's Manual for Streets⁴.

Previously, the access road led to the Keyline Builders Merchants site, now in the process of being demolished. In the past there have been 'near misses' there when pedestrians were unable to see HGVs coming down the access road. There is a total of 80+ dwellings being built

¹ EHDC Planning Ref 55268, permitted March 2015

² EHDC Planning Ref 23856/009, permitted on appeal August 2014, and 23856/010, permitted July 2017

³ See Transport Statement for Application 55268

⁴ See DfT's Manual for Streets, paras 6.1.3, 6.3.12 and 6.3.14

on the two sites. Far more traffic will be using the access road than in the past⁵, over a wider number of hours per day, and such traffic will consist mainly of cars which are not as audible as HGVs.

Some time ago, RCPC drew EHDC's attention to the fact that the 2 development applications included different treatments of the same access road and bellmouth. Despite this, the treatments for both developments were permitted (the TP site on appeal). At one point it was intimated the bellmouth treatment of the TP Application⁶, involving the narrowing of the bellmouth, would go ahead. This treatment would have complied with the national guidance referred to above and afforded greater safety to pedestrians crossing the bellmouth as recognised by EHDC⁷. RCPC was told the reasoning behind the wider bellmouth in the Bargate Application was to accommodate HGV traffic to the builders' merchants whilst still in operation, and the reduced bellmouth in the TP Application would bring the size back down to what is suitable for a normal road into a residential area, noting the considerable amount of pedestrian traffic that would cross the bellmouth. In reality, works to the access road began after the builders' merchants had ceased trading from the site.

RCPC has since been told that because Bargate was the first to sign a S278 Agreement, it was obliged to construct its treatment of the access road and bellmouth. Now we understand that a S278 Agreement was never signed before Nicholas King Homes took ownership of the site and it has since declined to re-construct the bellmouth as detailed in the original TP Application, choosing instead to adopt Bargate's S278 Agreement and the existing bellmouth treatment⁸.

RCPC understands that it is the responsibility of Hampshire Highways to negotiate and sign-off such agreements, however they remain part of the planning process for which EHDC, as local planning authority, is responsible. RCPC would like to know the reasoning behind the signing off of the works to the bellmouth which is widely considered by RCPC, local residents, county and district councilors to be hazardous to life. Likewise, if the bellmouth has not been constructed in accordance with the S278 Agreement, then this is a matter for EHDC to resolve.

We would like to invite officers from both Hampshire Highways and EHDC's Planning Dept to visit the site to aid their understanding of RCPC's grave concerns. We consider it essential that this matter be resolved to ensure pedestrian safety crossing the bellmouth before the start of heavy residential traffic on the access road.

We look forward to receiving your timely response to what RCPC considers to be an urgent matter.

Yours faithfully



Lisa Walker
Clerk to Rowlands Castle Parish Council

CC: C Cllr Marge Harvey – Catherington Division
C Cllr Rob Humby – HCC Executive Member for Environment & Transport
Stuart Jarvis HCC Director of Economy, Transport and Environment (HCC)
D Cllr Malcolm Johnson – Rowlands Castle Ward
D Cllr Angel Glass – EHDC Portfolio Holder, Planning
Julia Mansi – EHDC Planning Development Manager

⁵ See Transport Assessment for Application 23856/009 plus anticipated traffic from Bargate development

⁶ See Transport Assessment for Application 23856/009, paras 3.2 to 3.6 inclusive

⁷ See EHDC Officer's Report for Application 23856/009

⁸ At the request of NK Homes, EHDC discharged Condition 11 of Application 23856/010 which required construction in accordance with "approved plans [presumably those in Application 23856/009]... in the interests of highway safety". RCPC understands this discharge means NK Homes need not sign a S782 nor reconstruct the bellmouth.