

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT

Application Ref: F/25/99361

Site Address: Vehicular Access off Satchell Lane to Esso Fuel Compound - Satchell Lane, Eastleigh

Case Officer: Gary Osmond

Description: Construction of a vehicular access and ancillary works

Particular Site Constraints?	Yes ☒	No ☐
- Outside the urban edge - Adjacent to a Public Right of Way (PROW)		

Planning History?	Yes ☐	No ☒
None directly related to the site.		

Publicity:	Letters ☒	Site Notice ☒	Newspaper ☐
Representations:	One representation received highlighting the use of a nearby former WWII pillbox by bats and the need to protect their flightpaths.		
Hamble Parish Council:	No comments received.		
Hampshire Highways:	No objection provided adequate sightlines are provided and any gates/barriers are set back at least 6.0 metres from the edge of the carriageway. Conditions to this effect are recommended.		
Hampshire PROW Officer:	We raise no objection to the proposal, provided public access to the PROW (both the definitive line and the route walked by the public) remains unobstructed at all times, during and after the proposed works.		
County Archaeologist:	Although the development is of very small scale I note from the photograph supplied that the hedge is associated with a substantial bank. Having looked at the historic landscape character it is my opinion that this bank is a surviving medieval woodbank that defined a wood which, when looking at the historic maps, it would appear that Satchel Lane was required to divert around. I recognise that the development is small scale and only a short section of bank would be lost. Although that would be regrettable I feel that it can be mitigated by an appropriate level of archaeological recording. I recommend that a condition is attached to any planning permission issued to ensure that the bank and any associated ditch is recorded as an earthwork in its present form, that a section of the bank is archaeological recorded, and that the cutting of the access is under sufficient archaeological supervision that a date for the bank's use and or construction can be recorded if dateable materials are present.		
Trees:	The proposals and the information set out in the accompanying tree report as satisfactory. Whilst there will obviously be an impact – the removal of 3 small trees will initially result in a slight change to the existing site – we do not consider it significant in the wider context. Therefore, we raise no arboricultural objection, subject to the inclusion of a tree protection condition.		

Ecology:	Objection. There would be significant habitat loss to facilitate the scheme. The full extent of habitat loss has not yet been fully quantified, therefore further ecological assessment is required to fully determine the impacts. A section of species-rich hedgerow situated on a medieval wood bank with a ground flora displaying ancient woodland indicators is to be removed. The total length of hedgerow to be removed for the visibility splays in addition to the vehicular access, is not clear. The arboricultural report states that three trees are to be removed for the visibility splays (hazel stool T4, ash T3 and oak T2). The access crosses a watercourse and therefore a section of this habitat will be lost. All the habitat to be lost under the footprint of the development and within the visibility splays still needs to be identified and quantified. If the area of habitat impacted exceeds 25 square metres or more than five metres of hedgerow is removed, then there will be a requirement to provide a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain.
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Site Visit:	Yes ☒	No ☐
Details: 30/07/2025		

Policy: National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance Development Plan: The <u>Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036</u> The most relevant policies are Strategic policies S1, S2, S5, S8 and S12; and Development Management policies DM1, DM9, DM11, DM12, DM13 and HA3. Supplementary Planning Documents: Quality Places; Character Area Appraisals; Biodiversity; Trees and Development.

Assessment: Site Context This section of Satchell Lane is situated just to the north of the built-up area of Hamble village and has a very strong undeveloped character. This is principally due to the line of trees and boundary hedging enclosing the lane on both sides, with those along the southern side sitting atop the remnants of what is believed to be a Medieval earth bank. Land to the north whilst appearing green and undeveloped actually contains various infrastructure relating to fuel and gas pipelines. The land to the east is a field used for grazing, with land to the south and west is currently common scrubland which was previously used as an airfield during the Second World War. Not far from the site is a concrete pillbox which would have originally formed part of the airfield defences. Proposals The application seeks consent for the formation of a vehicular access to the southern side of the lane, which would sit approximately one hundred metres west of the entrance into Mercury Marina and just beyond the entrance to a Public Right of Way (PROW) which leads south into Hamble. It would provide access to a secure fenced compound which contains above ground valves and equipment associated with an underground fuel pipeline which runs east to west parallel to the lane.

Presently the compound can only be accessed across the old airfield via a field gate approximately 500 metres away to the north. Any time vehicles are required to bring equipment to the compound, consent from the airfield landowner is required which can delay access to the compound in the event of an emergency. Additionally, there are proposals (currently at appeal) to use the airfield site for the extraction of sand and gravel. If allowed, this could complicate access to the fuel line compound further or remove the ability to access it with vehicles entirely. It is for these reasons that a direct vehicular access from Satchell Lane into the compound is required, in addition to improving the ability to undertake regular inspections of the equipment.

Physically the access would consist of a concrete hardstanding over a culverted shallow ditch and break through a short section of earth bank to the existing compound, which would have new palisade gates installed. This would require the removal of a number of trees and hedge planting, together with cutting back of some verge planting to provide the required sightlines along the lane.

Policy & Principle

The application site lies outside the urban edge where the principle of development is only considered acceptable for particular types of development as set out in Policy S5 of the adopted Local Plan, provided it avoids adverse impacts on the rural, woodland, riparian or coastal character, and the intrinsic character of the landscape, heritage assets and the biodiversity of the area.

Amongst these acceptable developments is the provision of essential public utilities, as set out in Policy DM9. Whilst this policy does not specifically reference the fuel pipelines which run through the borough, it does state that the “improvement of existing utilities infrastructure essential to meet the needs of new and existing communities will be encouraged and permitted subject to the other policies of this plan.” The existing compound provides access to valves and other equipment associated with the main fuel line which runs from the Fawley Oil Refinery to Heathrow Airport. As such, it is an essential piece of infrastructure which is considered to carry considerable weight in the planning balance.

Also of relevance is Policy DM1 which requires all proposed development to take appropriate account of the context of a site and its surroundings, as well being of an appropriate design quality. It also requires proposals minimise or suitably mitigate the impact of the development upon neighbouring uses and occupiers.

The compound site lies just inside the boundary for Policy HA3 which covers the former airfield site and relates to the protection of mineral for extraction. The new access proposal will not impact the possible future extraction of minerals in any way.

In principle therefore, that proposed is acceptable. However, it must also be considered against the other relevant policies of the adopted Local Plan which are referenced where relevant below.

Layout, Scale, Appearance & Area Character

In terms of scale and appearance the proposed access would be very similar to an agricultural field access, rather than a formal engineered bellmouth junction. Finished in rough concrete, it would not look dissimilar to nearby accesses which are made of hoggins/hardcore.

Unfortunately, creation of the access will require breaking through the earth bank and planting growing on it, leaving a clear visual gap within an otherwise continuous green corridor. It will also require the removal of at least two trees, albeit they are not large specimens.

Removal of these trees and other planting, as well as breaking through the bank will have a negative impact upon the appearance and character of the lane. Whilst an initial concern, discussions have been undertaken with the applicant who has agreed to look at

doing their best to minimise how much undergrowth is removed, as well as the possibility of retaining at least one of the trees originally proposed for felling.

Although the site of the access will not look particularly attractive initially, once the remaining undergrown and new planting has had an opportunity to re-establish, it should soften its appearance and make it far less noticeable.

Highways & Access

Following the response from Hampshire Highways amendments to the original scheme were submitted to remove a barrier which was to be placed across the access. This will allow a clear 6+ metre distance between the edge of the carriageway and the compound gates for a vehicle to park off the highway and open the gates without resulting in obstruction to other traffic. A condition requiring this arrangement to be maintained is recommended.

Much of the undergrowth clearance is required in order to provide the necessary sightlines when exiting the access, without which a highway objection would be raised. It will be necessary for an existing road sign to be raised, but this would be covered by the separate consent required from Hampshire Highways.

With the necessary sightlines provided, there would be no issues in terms of highway safety. Equally, the compound is only accessed every couple of weeks, as it is at present, meaning there would be no increase in traffic. As such, that proposed is considered to accord with the requirements of Policy DM13.

Heritage

As mentioned above, it is suspected that the earth bank forms part of a Medieval feature which marked the edge of woodland which has now been removed. Although some of the trees along its length may be remnants of the woodland edge. As stated by the County Archaeologist, whilst the development is small in scale, it will result in the loss of a section of the bank. Although this would be regrettable it can be mitigated by an appropriate level of archaeological recording. As such, a condition requiring a scheme of investigation and recording to be submitted and approved prior to works commencing is recommended. This should ensure that if there is anything of note within this section of the bank, it will be recorded and added to the county records.

Mention has also been made of a nearby WWII pillbox. This will not be impacted by the proposed development.

With the requirement for archaeological recording to be undertaken, it is considered that the application will meet the requirements of Policy DM12 which related to heritage assets.

Trees & Ecology

Although the required removal of a number of trees is unfortunate, no objection has been raised by the Borough's Tree Officer, provided measures are taken during construction to protect those to be retained. A condition requiring this is recommended.

Policy DM11 covers various aspects relating to nature conservation, as well as including a requirement to provide some biodiversity net gain (BNG), which is separate to any net gain requirements set out under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) and Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021.

Whilst no objection has been raised by the Tree Officer, the Council's Ecologist has raised an objection concerning the level of tree, plant and habitat to be removed. In their view it is unclear exactly what habitat is currently present, what would be lost and whether the requirements of Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021 come into effect.

Looking first at BNG, the legislation requires development which would result in the loss of existing habitat of over 25 square metres in area or more than 5.0 metres of linear habitat

to demonstrate that a biodiversity net gain of at least 10% can be achieved as part of the development. In this instance the access, ditch culvert and concrete hardstanding would cover an area of less than 25 square metres. It is correct that if the land within the highway sightlines is included, then the total area would exceed 25 square metres. However, much of the habitat within the sightline splays is to be cut back/down and not physically removed. That being the case, the existing habitat is not being lost. As such, the requirement to demonstrate a 10% net gain does not come into effect.

The development would require the removal of a 4.0 metre section of bank and in turn the hedge planting/undergrowth upon it. Given this is less than the 5.0 metres set out by the BNG legislation, again the requirement to demonstrate a 10% net gain does not come into effect.

Notwithstanding, the applicant has proposed to provide new planting to the west of the compound on land within their control, and to provide new planting to reinforce the existing hedgerow which runs between the compound and PROW to its east. This should be sufficient to help mitigate for that lost, meaning that the application would still meet the requirements of Policy DM11 of the Local Plan. A condition requiring this is recommended.

Climate Change:

In July 2019, the Council declared a Climate Change and Environmental Emergency. In doing so it agreed, among other things, to: (a) put in place measures to ensure the Council's own operations and functions achieve carbon neutrality by 2025; (b) work with partners to aim for all projects and services delivered in the Borough to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030; (c) ensure that the Council's procurement policy recognises carbon neutrality as one of its primary considerations; and (d) recognise the urgency of action to mitigate and adapt to climate change in every decision taken by the Council. This is underpinned by the Climate and Environment Emergency Strategy 2020–2030 and the supporting Climate and Environmental Emergency Action Plan – Update June 2020.

The declaration of the Climate Change and Environmental Emergency demonstrates a strong commitment from the Council to achieve net zero. The NPPF, development plan and adopted local plan policy do not set this as a specific target, but it is a material consideration to be considered alongside all other material considerations. In any case addressing climate change is a core part of the NPPF and local plan policy. The need to support the economy is part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the adopted local plan, as is an assessment of climate impacts.

When considering the impact of climate change, the proposed development is expected to be resilient to the potential effects of climate change and is expected to reduce/limit impacts on climate emissions as a result of the development or its use.

Equalities Implications:

Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 created the public sector equality duty. Section 149 states:

- A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - a. eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b. advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c. foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

When making policy decisions, the Council must take account of the equality duty and in particular any potential impact on protected groups. It is considered that this application does not raise any equality implications.

Conclusion:

Recommendation:

PERMIT ☒**REFUSE** ☐

Although the loss of a section of Medieval earth bank, trees and habitat are regrettable, and some concern as to the visual impact upon the lane remains, the importance of the fuel pipeline as a piece of national infrastructure and the need to ensure it remains in operation is recognised. Provision of the new compound access will ensure this remains the case for the foreseeable future, particularly given the current uncertainty as to the future of the former airfield site which is currently used to access the compound. On balance therefore it is considered that this overrides the main concerns, particularly as these can be mitigated to a reasonable extent through the application of appropriate conditions. As such the application is recommend for approval subject to the conditions set out.