

Ashwell Road, Bygrave

Transport Note - Response to Bygrave Action Group Comments

Client: **Pathfinder Clean Energy Ltd**

17 August 2023

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QUALITY MANAGEMENT

REPORT DETAILS

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The material presented in this report is confidential. This report has been prepared and is intended solely for Pathfinder Clean Energy Ltd for use in relation to the Ashwell Road, Bygrave project.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 This Transport Note (TN) has been produced in relation to a proposed c. 40MW solar farm development on land to the west of Ashwell Road, Bygrave, Hertfordshire (App Ref: 22/00741/FP).
- 1.1.2 This TN considers comments raised by the Bygrave Action Group (BAG) in relation to the application. The key points raised in relation to transport relate to the A507 / Bygrave Road junction, articulated vehicles and generally construction traffic.
- 1.1.3 The proposals have been discussed in detail with the highway authority, to Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) and two Transport Notes have been produced which consider the routes to and from the site in detail and set out mitigation. Considering the information provided, HCC do not object to the proposals.
- 1.1.4 Transport Note TN01 was produced on 9th February 2023 and sets out details of the site access, route appraisal, traffic flows and speeds, turning count surveys, road safety data, and mitigation measures to minimise impacts.
- 1.1.5 Transport Note TN02 was produced on 13th June 2023 and sets out a summary of the follow up correspondence with the planning authority, North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC), and HCC. This include all post-application discussions and agreements, including the additional measures suggested by HCC, as well as further details of construction vehicle movements and the A507 / Bygrave Road junction.
- 1.1.6 These two notes provide full information which covers the points raised by BAG, but where relevant, extracts of these notes have been provided within this TN. For ease, this TN has been grouped by topic listed by BAG.

2. A507 / BYGRAVE ROAD JUNCTION

- 2.1.1 The applicant suggested temporary improvements at this junction including the relocation of the pedestrian refuge island on Bygrave Road to allow HGV movements, as well as minor widening to the northern kerbline. The highway authority responded to state that *"In terms of the widening of the North Road / Bygrave Road junction, our Safety team has not identified significant initial concerns"*.
- 2.1.2 The arrangements would provide a very minor reduction in width of the island from the existing arrangements from 1.6m to 1.5m. The crossing point on the southeast side of the junction would be located 4m to the south of the existing location. In terms of forward visibility from vehicles to the crossing point, there would not be a material change, as visibility across the verge would remain at approximately 24m. Indeed, locating closer to the stopline may assist in this regard as vehicles would be slowing as they approach the junction. Realigning to the west also offers a benefit in terms of visibility to and from the crossing to the north along the A507. The mitigation enables vehicles to turn left and avoid the relocated central island, therefore the arrangement can safely accommodate pedestrian movements without conflict with large vehicles (an improvement over the existing situation).
- 2.1.3 A minor reduction in footway width is proposed over a short length. This could reduce the width to a minimum of 1m over a short length of less than 6m, which is in accordance with the guidance in Section 4.2 of the DfT publication Inclusive Mobility (2021). The final layout will be agreed with HCC as part of the detailed design of the junction, which would also be subject to a Road Safety Audit.

- 2.1.4 In addition, as part of the mitigation, the applicant has committed to locating a banks person at the A507 / Bygrave Road junction to manage all construction movements and ensure pedestrians can be accommodated safely at this location to minimise conflicts.
- 2.1.5 A review of the most recent seven years of accident data within TN01 showed no incidents have occurred at the junction involving pedestrians. Indeed, a review of all public ally available data (dating from 1999) shows no incidents involving pedestrians crossing at this location. As such, the recorded data does not suggest that there is an existing road safety issue at this junction for pedestrians crossing Bygrave Road or that this is dangerous.
- 2.1.6 The highway authority has requested that this amended junction be monitored during the construction period to understand if the proposed widening would benefit users on a more permanent basis or if the layout should be reinstated following construction. The applicant has agreed to this.
- 2.1.7 As such, the proposed arrangements would not have an unacceptable impact on road safety for any users (as agreed by HCC) and after the short term temporary construction period for the renewable energy scheme, the junction can be returned to its original layout (unless deemed beneficial to retain with the revised arrangements). In addition, a Road Safety Audit will be undertaken prior to the final layout being agreed with HCC. Any recommendations by the independent auditor will be considered within the layout.

3. BYGRAVE/ASHWELL ROAD CONSTRUCTION ROUTE

- 3.1.1 Apex and the applicant have held extensive discussions with the highway authority in relation to the proposed temporary construction route along Bygrave Road and Ashwell Road via emails, online meetings and through the submission of TN01 and TN02 (as well as a detailed site visit).
- 3.1.2 TN01 included analysis of the proposed route and additional measures to mitigate the impact of construction movements during the temporary period. The analysis showed it is possible for a large HGV and a car to pass safely along the majority of the route and where the carriageway narrows, forward visibility is appropriate to and from wider sections which enables vehicles to pass safely. There was not a specific road safety issue along this route to suggest an issue with the layout or geometry of the route or indicate that HGVs (which occur already) cause a safety issue when passing cars.
- 3.1.3 As such, based on the site visit, road safety data analysis, width analysis, swept paths and forward visibility, it was considered that subject to deliverable mitigation, the proposed construction route was suitable and safe to accommodate the vehicles generated by the renewable energy proposals over the short-term temporary construction period. There is a minimal level of active travel movements using the carriageway and therefore it is unlikely there would be conflict between the low level of vehicles travelling to and from the site and pedestrians. There are already existing HGV movements along the route and the evidence does not suggest there is a safety issue in relation to these movements.
- 3.1.4 The analysis in TN02 demonstrated that the site would generate a minimal level of articulated vehicles (and other construction vehicles) and these would occur over a short term period as part of a controlled and managed construction period, supported by a range of mitigation measures, as agreed with HCC. It is expected that these measures will be underpinned by suitably worded conditions.
- 3.1.5 Following the discussions and submission of the additional technical information, the applicant has obtained an agreement in principle with the highway authority to use this route during construction and demolition, subject to a number of mitigation measures and on the basis that articulated vehicle movements are limited to four per day. The highway authority has stated the following *“However, with the various mitigations and measures you propose, along with the additional points we raise*

below, we are willing to accept an absolute maximum of 2 articulated lorry visits per day (i.e. a total of 4 two-way movements per day)."

- 3.1.6 The applicant has agreed to this measure as well as the additional measures included in Section 4 of TN02. These were over and above those included within TN01 and the TS / CTMP document which would also be implemented. The applicant has agreed to all these additional measures in the understanding that these can be agreed within a suitability worded condition, and this was acknowledged by HCC in an email dated 22 May 2023.
- 3.1.7 The following provides a summary of the additional mitigation measures proposed by HCC and agreed with the applicant which would form part of a CTMP and can be included within a suitably worded planning condition (as per an email dated 18 June 2023):
- All HGVs, including articulated lorries, must only use this route between 9:30am and 2:30pm, to avoid peak hours and school opening and closing times
 - Additional road safety analysis
 - Provision of additional signage such as 'pedestrians in road' along Ashwell Road
 - HGV holding areas which enable HGVs to stop, call ahead and check all is clear, before proceeding
 - Regular monitoring of the full route, from the junction with North Road up to the site access. Consideration of grass verges being damaged in places, debris being carried out onto the highway, or other damage
 - Road cleaning along the route if necessary
 - Minor road widening / passing places to be considered
- 3.1.8 The weight restriction for HGVs is except for loading, which therefore allows for the delivery of materials to premises within this area, including the site. These types of restrictions are designed to prevent HGVs regularly travelling through an area without stopping for deliveries or access. As such, there is no requirement for enforcing against HGVs legally entering this area if they are loading or unloading materials, including for the construction of the proposed renewable energy scheme.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1.1 As such, based on the further information presented to HCC, as well as further discussions and extensive package of mitigation measures, they have stated that they have no objection to the scheme in principle. The information presented in this TN further demonstrates that the proposals would not have an unacceptable impact on safety or a severe impact on the highway network.
- 4.1.2 As such, there should be no reasons relating to transport to refuse the application for this renewable energy scheme.