



Tophams Solar: Condition and Community Update

To: [redacted] at [redacted]
Cc: [redacted], [redacted], [redacted], [redacted], [redacted], [redacted]

Hello [redacted]

The 2 articulated lorry movements per day limit was a professional judgement call, based on the various constraints of the public highway route on approach to the site, existing traffic levels, and taking into account the range of mitigation measures proposed.

You recently asked for this level to be doubled 'in exceptional circumstances' which we considered carefully and agreed to, subject to clearly defining the events that constitute 'exceptional circumstances'.

You then asked for a further doubling of this figure to 8 articulated lorries per day – 16 movements - (albeit for a shorter period of time), which we again carefully considered, but concluded this not in the interest of public safety and network impact.

Your e-mail of [redacted] below follows up on this and you again seem to be asking for a higher level, although this time a specific number is not mentioned. You ask "what data would best demonstrate that this increase would have minimal material impact upon public safety?". Please take this in the right spirit, but it is not for me to advise what data you should present when we have already made our position clear. The Highway Authority is always happy to consider new evidence/data, and we seek to be pragmatic, knowing that there is a careful balance to be struck between delivering key development and safeguarding the highway network.

Essentially in this case however, the vehicle tracking shows that there are regular opportunities for cars to pass by articulated lorries along the approach route, and this is of course going to be the most common daily scenario during construction. However, if a larger vehicle (e.g. a large van or an HGV) meets an oncoming articulated lorry, there are very few sections of the route which can comfortably accommodate this. Whilst these things tend to generally work themselves out if, as, and when they happen, it often results in notable damage to kerbs, verges, embankments, and sometimes even scraping of vehicles (especially wing mirrors) against one another. There are also matters to consider around the slower deceleration rates of larger vehicles, and the need for possible awkward reversing manoeuvres to find a spot where two larger vehicles can pass by one another. Taken together, all this represents not only a potential safety concern, but also driver frustration and adverse effects to the free flow of traffic.

The 2-artic per day limit is a sensible, pragmatic approach based on all the above, seeking to minimise the chances of such a vehicle meeting another larger vehicle along the route. To quadruple this is not something we are likely to favour, and you made clear during the main application process that the 2 per day limit was feasible. This was also a key part of the overall mitigation measures which the North Herts Planning Committee were presented with, which you will recall voted by only 1 overall vote in favour to grant permission.

North Herts District Council will have the final say on this as they are decision makers – we can only advise and recommend to them. However, if you submit a formal variation seeking 8 articulated lorries per day and NHDC go with our recommendation of refusal, you do of course have the right to appeal.

Regards

Area Manager (East) | Highways Development Management | Growth & Environment | Hertfordshire County Council

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