WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL CONSULTATION

TO:	Horsham District Council FAO: Jason Hawkes
FROM:	Stephen Gee WSCC – Highways Authority
DATE:	24 April 2025
LOCATION:	Thakeham Mushrooms Site Storrington Road Thakeham Pulborough West Sussex RH20 3DY
SUBJECT:	DC/24/0021 Demolition of existing buildings and the phased redevelopment of the site as a residential led development comprising 247 dwellings and flexible non-residential floorspace (Use Class E), with works to public right of way and associated landscaping, open space and infrastructure.
DATE OF SITE VISIT:	Several visits.
RECOMMENDATION:	Objection

The application is currently at appeal at which WSCC have been represented and provided justification to the inspector for its stance in raising an objection to the proposed development.

WSCC have been reconsulted on additional information submitted prior to the appeal hearing beginning, the below seeks to respond to any new information submitted but does not seek to respond to any items addressed within the hearing session.

Aspect Note

The note indicates in (4.12) The design of a scheme could be amended to reduce or eliminate the risk, whilst no formal design has been provided it is unlikely to be acceptable to reduce the width due to the existing narrowness or use short sections have boardwalk due to the gradient in this area and need to accommodate horses and cyclists.

Works have previously been proposed on this stretch by both the Abingworth Meadows developer and more recently the parish council both of which have chosen not to peruse the works due to the added complications.

WSCC PROW team are aware of the various licenses that could be utilised. The works would need authorisation from Natural England which is not guaranteed.
In the PROW teams previous discussions with the Badger Trust they have been extremely resistant to any disturbance of the site.

The additional information does not alter the WSCC conclusion, even if the route can be improved it would not provide a viable alternative to travelling by the private car.

Hearing Statement Addendum

Many of the issues raised in the addendum have been discussed at the Hearing including suitability of access to local facilities by bike, the scale of the application in relation to the WSCC comments provided on other local applications and the applicability of previous appeal decisions.

One area of clarification is to be provided on para 3.28 relating to the figure of £2.2m. This is the funding that is allocated to subsidise bus services countywide from the councils' own budgets. The appellant has highlighted the grant funding secured as part of the Bus Service Improvement Plan[1] (£9,252,990) Whilst the plan does include some revenue funding for Demand Responsive Transport and for new services in area of significant planned growth (Chichester to Littlehampton Corridor approx. 7,000 dwellings). There is no realistic expectation that it could support the developers proposals in the future based on the current BSIP current end date of 26/27, that the scheme would provide comparative value for money or meet the aims of the funding.
Therefore in the absence of any information detailing how the service would become commercially viable in the future the previous concerns raised would remain.

Conclusion
The additional information submitted would not alter WSCC views on the application.

Stephen Gee
West Sussex County Council – Planning Services

[1] https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/media/mcwfbdcg/ws_bus_service_improvement_plan2024.pdf