Local Plan Representation: Preliminary Transport Appraisal

Land North of Callington Road, Tavistock

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1. Executive Summary

1.1 This study has considered the policy context of proposals to develop a site at land north of Callington Road, Tavistock for residential uses, in response to the emerging Local Plan. The report concludes that the site would meet the objectives of national sustainable transport policies, and that there are no significant or abnormal barriers that would preclude the site from coming forward for delivery during the Plan period.

1.2 The study has considered the site’s geographical location in the context of the available transport networks and in particular its proximity to key local amenities. The report concludes that the site is located where it would afford residents of a future development of the site with an opportunity to access a range of jobs, shops and services by a variety of non-car travel modes, including walking, cycling and bus.

1.3 In this respect, a future development of the site would support the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainability, as defined within the NPPF.

1.4 The appraisal of potential access options has indicated the ability to create vehicular access onto the A390-Callington Road by way of a new roundabout junction. This would not only service a future development of the site but would also provide a much-needed gateway to the southern part of Tavistock, helping to emphasise a sense of arrival whilst also supporting a reduction in vehicle speeds.

1.5 The report therefore concludes that the site is both deliverable within the plan period and would be supportive of current planning policy. Its allocation for residential development would therefore be entirely justified.
2. Background

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Calibro has been appointed by Barratt David Wilson Homes (BDWH) to undertake a strategic appraisal of the transport, highways and accessibility credentials of a parcel of land located to the north of Callington Road, Tavistock, with a view to establishing its development potential for residential use.

2.1.2 The appraisal has been undertaken in the context of the emerging Joint Plan (Plymouth, South Hams and West Devon) and to provide the Authority with the requisite evidence that demonstrates, with confidence, that that the site is both compliant with the objectives and principles of current policy, and that there are no fundamental technical issues that would impact on its delivery.

2.2 Site Location

2.2.1 The Proposal Site comprises circa 11.58 hectares of greenfield land located adjacent to the western limits of the built-up area of Tavistock, some 1.3-kilometres west of the Town Centre where a range of local amenities are accessible by foot, cycle or indeed by bus. It lies immediately north of the main south-western mixed-use allocation (Policy SP23a) of the Core Strategy, which includes employment uses and up to 750 new homes.

2.2.2 The southern boundary of the Proposal Site is delineated by the A390-Callington Road, which is the primary route into Tavistock from the west, whilst an existing residential estate (comprising Abbotsfield and Orchard Close) adjoins the site’s eastern boundary. To the north, the site is bound by Crease Lane and to the west by agricultural pasture.

2.2.3 The site is shown in context below.
2.2.4 The site does not currently benefit from a formal means of vehicular access other than an existing gated agricultural access located broadly in the centre of the site’s frontage onto the A390-Callington Road. There is, however, an existing Public Right of Way (PRoW) that runs within the site, adjacent to the A390-Callington Road. Further details are provided at Section 3.3 of this report.

2.3 Structure of the Report

2.3.1 This report has been prepared with the purpose of providing the Planning Authority with an evidence base that considers the site’s suitability for residential development, taking into account existing policy objectives and technical constraints.

2.3.2 The report sets out the various considerations under the following structure:

Section 2. Policy Compliance

This section of the report considers the principle of a future development of the site for residential use in the context of its compliance with current sustainability policy set out within the NPPF. In this regard, the assessment considers the accessibility credentials of the site and reviews the existing safety performance of the adjoining highway network.

Section 3. Means of Access

By way of assessing whether there are any abnormal barriers to delivery of the site, the opportunities and constraints associated with the creation of a technically compliant vehicular and non-car access are considered within this section of the report.
Section 4. Summary & Conclusion

A summary of the salient findings of the report are provided within this section and these are used to evidence an overarching conclusion regarding the suitability of the site for residential development.
3. Policy Compliance

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 This section of the appraisal considers the relevant policy and how the development of the site would comply with the objectives of such policy, taking into account its location from key local amenities and the opportunities to travel by non-car travel modes.

3.2 Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012

3.2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government’s planning policies for England under a framework within which local people and their accountable councils can produce their own distinctive Local Plans that reflect the needs and priorities of their communities.

3.2.2 The NPPF is underpinned by a golden thread of sustainability and places a presumption in favour of sustainable development. In this regard, the NPPF sets out the Government’s view of what sustainable development means in practice for the planning system in England. In overview, the NPPF highlights that sustainable development comprises three dimensions: economic, social and environmental.

- An economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;

- A social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and

- An environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to…use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.
3.2.3 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and paragraph 15 of the Framework states that the policies in Local Plans should follow this approach.

3.2.4 Paragraph 29 of the Framework recognises that “transport policies have an important role to play in facilitating sustainable development” whilst Paragraph 30 states that local planning authorities should support a pattern of development which facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport.

3.2.5 It is therefore evident that the underlying requirement in determining site allocations is to ensure that they are, or can be made to be sustainable in the context of transport. This means that there are viable opportunities to access key amenities by non-car transport modes.

3.3 Policy Compliance

3.3.1 To assess the degree of compliance that the site would afford in respect of transport-related sustainability, the existing opportunities to travel by non-car modes has been considered in the context of the available infrastructure, the distances over which it is reasonable to travel by the respective modes, and the range of amenities located within the defined catchment.

Access by Foot

3.3.2 The application site does not currently benefit from any dedicated pedestrian infrastructure, albeit that a Public Right of Way (PRoW) runs adjacent (and within) the southern boundary of the site that connects onto the A390-Callington Road, as shown below.
3.3.3 Opportunities exist to create connections onto the existing formal pedestrian network at the A390-Callington Road and by way of a connection onto the north-western extents of Orchard Close. Subject to this infrastructure, the application site would become accessible by a well-formed network of pedestrian footpaths that provide connectivity to local bus stops and to the Town Centre, where a number of key amenities are located.

3.3.4 Indeed, the Tavistock Community Primary and Nursery School is located within an acceptable walk distance of around 900-metres from the site, whilst the Abbey Doctor’s Surgery and Tavistock Hospital, which includes family planning and physiotherapy departments, are around 1.4-kilometres from the site.

3.3.5 There are also a number of local dental practices within an acceptable walk of the site, including the Spring Hill Dental Practice (1.2-kilometres from the site) and the Harwood Dental Practice (1.6-kilometres from the site).

3.3.6 Other facilities located within an acceptable walk distance of the site include the local library, swimming pool and a convenience store (Spar) located at the junction of Ford Street / Callington Road.
3.3.7 On the basis that the above amenities are all within the maximum desirable distances, as advocated the Institute of Highways & Transportation (IHT) guidance entitled *Guidelines for Providing for Journeys on Foot* (refer below), it is evident that the application site is located where it would afford future residents with the opportunity to walk to key local facilities.

- Maximum desirable distance to nearest bus stop = 400-metres.
- Maximum desirable distance to Town Centre = 800-metres.
- Maximum desirable distance to food shopping = 1-kilometre.
- Maximum desirable distance to all other uses = 2-kilometres.

3.3.8 The accessible areas within these thresholds have been identified by way of a GIS-based accessibility model which has been constructed with reference to the available travel infrastructure.

3.3.9 The results are provided below and at a larger scale at Appendix 1.

*Figure 3.2 – Modelled Walk Catchment*
3.3.10 Based on the above, it is evident that the application site is in a location that would afford opportunities to travel by foot, in line with the various local and national sustainable transport policies.

**Accessibility by Bike**

3.3.11 The industry-standard distance over which cycling is considered to be feasible for most of the population is 5-kilometres, although it is noted that there will always be a part of the population that have a natural propensity to cycle and will therefore be willing and able to travel further by bike.

3.3.12 Whilst there is no dedicated cycle infrastructure within proximity of the site, the local highway network east of the site is of suitable geometry and with sufficiently low vehicle speeds that informal cycling may occur within the carriageway of the roads alongside vehicular traffic, without detriment to highway safety.

3.3.13 The section of the A390-Callington Road that adjoins the southern boundary of the site is currently subject to the national speed limit and on-site observations indicate that vehicles travel at higher speeds. Forward visibility is also constrained and carriageway width means that vehicles travel close to the edge of the carriageway. However, it would be possible to improve the geometry of this section of the highway as part of any access solution (refer to Section 4.) and to reduce vehicle speeds.

3.3.14 Notwithstanding the absence of dedicate cycle infrastructure, it is noted that the site lies a short distance away from a network of routes that form part of the National Cycle Network, which includes traffic-free sections that link to the Town Centre and beyond.

3.3.15 The National Cycle Network is shown in the below Figure.
3.3.16 On the basis of the potential to utilise the existing road network, the accessibility model has been used to identify the geographical areas that are accessible within 5-kilometres of the application site. The results are illustrated below whilst a larger scale plan is provided at Appendix 1.

Figure 3.4 – Modelled Cycle Catchment
3.3.17 Based on the model results above, residents of the proposed development would be able to access a significant geographical area by bike, including the whole of Tavistock and as far as Lamerton to the north, Gunnislake to the west and Whitchurch to the east.

3.3.18 Consequently, the application site would afford an opportunity for journeys to and from the site to be undertaken by bike, in line with current local and national sustainable transport policy objectives.

**Accessibility by Bus**

3.3.19 It is accepted that public transport accessibility comprises two principal aspects:

1. Access to public transport which is concerned with how far the development is from the public transport network and the level of service on that network; and

2. Access by public transport which takes account of where the services go and the opportunities to access amenities located within the catchment areas served.

3.3.20 In the case of the first criterion, the application site is located within 300-metres of the nearest bus stop which is located on the A390-Callington Road, immediately west of its junction with Uplands. This is served by the 79/79A and 87/87A bus routes which combine to provide a twice-hourly frequency service.

3.3.21 The distance to the nearest serviced bus stops is therefore compliant with the maximum desirable distance of 400-metres identified by the Institute of Highways & Transportation (IHT) document entitled *Planning for Public Transport in Developments*.

3.3.22 In respect of bus frequencies and the areas serviced, the following table demonstrates that the application site would be accessible by a number of frequent bus services throughout the week, whilst the subsequent Figure illustrates the frequency service of each bus stop in the locality.

3.3.23 On the basis of the below, bus travel would represent a viable alternative to car use for residents and visitors associated with a future development of the application site. Furthermore, it is probable that delivery of the nearby Policy SP23a mixed use development would attract an increase bus service and thus the potential to travel by bus would be greater than existing.
Table 3-1  Bus Service Frequencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Weekday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Freq. (mins): 60</td>
<td>Freq. (mins): 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Freq. (mins): 60</td>
<td>Freq. (mins): 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87/87a</td>
<td>Maidstone&gt;Loose&gt;Coxheath</td>
<td>Start: 07:21</td>
<td>End: 18:31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Freq. (mins): 60</td>
<td>Freq. (mins): 60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.5 – Bus Stop Frequencies
3.3.24 Further analysis has been undertaken to ascertain the value of the available bus services and in this way, the accessibility model has been used to identify geographical areas that would be accessible within a bus journey of 38-minutes, which reflects the average bus journey for commuter journeys in the South West\textsuperscript{1}.

3.3.25 The results are provided in the following three Figures which represent the accessible catchments during a weekday morning and evening peak, as well as midday Saturday. Larger scale copies of the plans are available at Appendix 1.

3.3.26 On the basis of the evidence above and below, the location of the application site affords adequate opportunities to travel by bus.

Figure 3.6 – Weekday Morning Peak Bus Catchment

\textsuperscript{1} Table TSGB0111 – Average Time Taken to Travel to Work by Region of Workplace and Usual Method of Travel - Transport Statistics Great Britain
Figure 3.7 – Weekday Evening Peak Bus Catchment

Figure 3.8 – Saturday Midday Bus Catchment
3.4 Access by Rail

3.4.1 The nearest rail station is at Gunnislake which is located some 6.0-kilometres to the southwest of the site and is accessible by the 79/79a bus service. The railway station is located on the Tamar Valley Line from Plymouth. Services stopping at Gunnislake provide onward connectivity to such destinations as Calstock, Bere Alston, Devonport and Plymouth, where access to the national rail network is possible.

3.5 Section Conclusion

3.5.1 The analysis presented above confirms that a potential development of the site would afford future residents with the opportunity to access a range of amenities by a number of non-car travel modes, in line with the objectives of sustainable travel policies.
4. Deliverability

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Paragraph 157 of the NPPF requires that when preparing their Local Plans, Local Authorities should allocate sites to promote development and provide detail on access whilst Paragraph 173 requires that plans be deliverable.

4.1.2 In order to assist in these duties and to demonstrate that there are no undue obstacles that may affect the deliverability of the site within the plan period, this section of the report sets out opportunities to gain vehicular and pedestrian access, together with the existing safety record of the adjoining highway network.

4.2 Means of Vehicular Access

Option 1: Access via Crease Lane

4.2.1 The potential to access the site via Crease Lane to the north has been explored on site and via desktop appraisal. However, it has been quickly excluded as a viable option on the basis of the existing road geometry, which includes a narrow carriageway with limited forward visibility in certain sections, together with the geometric parameters of its junction onto the A390-Callington Road, where the skewed approach and narrow entry widths make it unsuitable for further intensification.

Option 2: Access via Orchard Close

4.2.2 An alternative option might be to secure access via Orchard Close, where the existing terminus of the road appears to provide an option to extend into the site (refer below).

4.2.3 Nevertheless, the ownership of the land between the end of the carriageway and the site boundary is unclear and there are risks that this may not be possible. The carriageway is also subject to on-street car parking along much of its length and the informality of the space adjacent to the Abbotsfield Hall Nursing Home suggest make the road unsuitable to accommodate the kind of intensified traffic use anticipated by a development of the site.
Option 3: Access via the A390-Callington Road

4.2.4 An existing gated access is provided for agricultural access to the site in the middle of the site’s frontage onto the A390-Callington Road, albeit that this would be unsuitable for the purpose of serving a future residential development of the site. A new formal access would thus be required to service the proposed development from this location.

4.2.5 In this regard, it is noted from on-site observations that the approach to Tavistock from the A390-Callington Road lacks any gateway that encourages slower vehicle speeds. In fact, on site observations suggest that vehicle speeds do not decrease until the approach with Orchard Close, despite the change in speed limit to 30mph being some 160-metres previous to the junction.

4.2.6 The creation of a new junction to serve a residential development of the site therefore represents an opportunity to provide a gateway to the town that heightens the sense of arrival which is currently absent.
4.2.7 To achieve this, it is considered that a roundabout could be constructed onto the A390-Callington Road to punctuate arrival to the town and reduce speeds. In this regard, the existing location of the speed limit change (national speed limit to 30mph) would be relocated to a position southwest of the new roundabout.

4.2.8 In order to maintain access to the existing dwellings located on the eastern side of the A390-Callington Road, it would be necessary to realign the carriageway into the site and to provide a 4.1-metre carriageway with access either side of the new roundabout.

4.2.9 Whilst the detail of the design could be altered during the course of normal pre-application consultations, the concept is shown in the below Figure with a scaled drawing contained at Appendix 2.

4.2.10 The above confirms that vehicular access to the site could be achieved without undue technical complexity whilst providing significant improvements to the local environs that would help to reduce vehicle speeds on approach to the built-up areas of the southern part of Tavistock.
4.3 **Means of Pedestrian / Cycle Access**

4.3.1 Options for non-car access to the site are several and include the construction of a contiguous footway adjoining the proposed roundabout and realigned A390-Callington Road, to connect onto the existing footway network. This could be accommodated on land within the demise of the site or land dedicated as public highway.

4.3.2 A secondary access could be provided onto Crease Lane, to the north of the site, where an existing contiguous footway provides connectivity to the residential estate served by Uplands.

4.3.3 Subject to the outcome of further investigations, it may also be possible to achieve additional non-car access onto Orchard Close or directly onto Uplands, which would further improve the permeability of the site.

4.4 **Section Conclusion**

4.4.1 It is evident from the above that the access to the site, by both vehicular and non-motorised means, could be secured with relative ease and in this regard, it is concluded that there are no abnormal risks associated with the on-going promotion of the site for residential development.
5. Summary and Conclusion

5.1 Report Summary

5.1.1 This report has been prepared on behalf of Barratt David Wilson Homes to support the promotion of a site at Callington Road, Tavistock within the emerging Local Plan. The report has been undertaken as an appraisal of the opportunities and constraints related to the development of the site, and the findings of the report may be summarised as follows:

a) The report has considered the site’s location to the existing non-car travel networks and the type of amenities that would be accessible within a reasonable journey of the site. In this regard, the evidence concludes that the site would provide residents of a future residential development of the site with an opportunity to access an array of local amenities, including jobs, jobs and services, by a range of non-car travel modes.

b) The report therefore concludes that a residential development of the site would support the social, economic and environmental strands of sustainability, as defined by the NPPF. In this regard, development of the site for residential uses would be in compliance with the NPPF.

c) Deliverability has been considered in the context of ensuring that options exist to create vehicular and non-car access to the site. In this respect, the report identifies a technically suitable access to the site in the form of a roundabout onto the A390-Callington Road, which would also provide a much-needed gateway to the southern part of Tavistock, helping to create a sense of arrival and support a reduction in vehicle speeds.

d) Non-car access could be secured via a number of potential options, including a contiguous footway adjacent to the proposed roundabout access that would connect onto the existing infrastructure network.

e) The report therefore concludes that there are no abnormal deliverability issues related to the on-going promotion of the site for residential purposes.
5.2  Report Conclusion

5.2.1  The overarching conclusion of this report is that a future residential development of the site would be entirely supportive of the policies within the NPPF and could thus constitute sustainable development. There are no abnormal issues related to the delivery of the site and thus it should be considered for adoption within the emerging Local Plan.
Appendix 1
Accessibility Catchment Plots
Appendix 2

Potential Means of Access
Approximate location 30mph speed limit change, subject to TRO

4.1m access road for residential property's

90m SSD Visibility splay

28m ICD

4m diameter island

11.2m diameter over-run area

90m SSD Visibility splay

4m diameter Island

28m ICD

11.2m diameter over-run area

4.1m access road for residential property's

Approximate location 30mph speed limit change, subject to TRO

LOCATION PLAN