

Comments of Rother District Council relating to the annotated plan produced by Sea Change Sussex in relation to Policy BEX3c

This short note is produced in reference to the Inspector's request for comments in response to the annotated plan produced by Sea Change Sussex and submitted to the Inspector on 16 May 2019. That annotated plan relates to the access to the proposed Gypsy and Traveller site included within Policy BEX3c.

These comments have been discussed and agreed by both East Sussex County Council Highway Authority and the Council's consulting engineer Laurence Stringer of GTA Civils.

Visibility

Due to the proposed site access being at the end of a cul-de-sac, the visibility sightlines can be justifiably reduced for the following reasons:

1. Vehicle speeds approaching the site access would be low as drivers would be approaching a no-through route. A sightline distance of 43m is based on vehicles travelling 30mph which is likely to be excessive for vehicles approaching the end of a cul-de-sac which are either making a turn within the turning head to the west of this part of Watermill Lane or entering the site. Vehicles are likely to be approaching much slower than 30 mph and a relatively shorter sightline distance would not compromise highway safety given the small number of vehicles that would be using this section of road. A sightline distance for 10-15mph would be accepted (up to 18m).
2. Drivers emerging from the proposed access are able to gradually edge out to increase sightline, so measuring the sightline from 2.4m back from the edge of the carriageway is not necessary.
3. The sightline distance can be measured to the centre of the carriageway on the basis that vehicles overtaking in the vicinity of the access is not likely to occur.
4. Access to the site will be by those residing on the site, service vehicles or visitors, and the number of vehicles wishing to reach this site is likely to be low, potentially less than for 5 pitches (25 trips per day or 2 trips in each peak period).
5. It is important to highlight that the access to the Pegasus crossing would be designed into the visibility envelope so that users emerging and approaching the Public Right of Way (PROW) can be seen.

Therefore the Highway Authority are satisfied that the splays indicated on the drawing submitted to the Inspector at the hearing session relating to Matter 7 on 14 May 2019 are appropriate.

Embankment Gradient

In respect of the need for a 1:5 gradient, this would be unlikely to be required in most situations. A 1:3 gradient is normally used as the 'standard' without the need for any reinforcement. Reinforcement or treatment would only be required for anything steeper than this. A 1:5 gradient is only likely to be required if there is a lot of loose material, e.g. large sand content. It would likely not need to be this shallow in this location. However, in these situations, the bank would simply need reinforcing.

The construction of the adjacent cycle path would indicate that the soil conditions are unlikely to be loose enough to the extent where such a shallow gradient would be required on any cutting. A California Bearing Ratio (CBR) test would determine the strength of the subgrade which in turn determine the exact construction method used, but it is highly unlikely that the surface material would not support a 1:3 gradient.

If a steeper gradient was required this is possible. A reinforced soil slope can be created with material and cladding to hold the soil in place. A 1:2 gradient should be able to be constructed using this method. Geogrids can also be used to maintain a steeper than 1:3 gradient.

In conclusion, it should be possible to provide a gradient of at least 1:3 and with treatment and reinforcement a steeper than 1:2 gradient can be provided. A small retaining wall feature may still be required due to the height difference between the existing cycle way and the proposed new access, but this would not have to be more than 0.5m high maximum.

22th May 2019