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<p>Planning Control Committee</p> <p>UPDATE REPORT</p> <p>15 January 2025</p>
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Application No:	CH/24/249
Received:	13 September 2024
Location:	Annex - Civic Centre, Beecroft Road, WS11 1BG
Parish:	
Ward:	Cannock Longford & Bridgtown, Cannock Park & Old Fallow
Description:	Approval of Reserved Matters for the access, layout, landscaping, external appearance and scale of the Northern Gateway comprising cafe, ramps and steps, new toucan crossing to Ringway and landscaping to public realm including infill of the subway.
Application Type:	Full Planning Application Major

Recommendation: Approve subject to Conditions

1.1 Within the main Officer report it was raised that detailed concerns about the validity of the data presented in the LinSig model would not account for uplift in usage of the crossing and concerns about traffic queuing. Officers reported that potential queuing was the number 1 issue that the Highway Authority wished to explore as part of these proposals. It is clear that following their review of the data presented the Highway Authority remain satisfied with the conclusions and modelling methodology. Nevertheless, Officers sought further comment from the Highway Authority in relation to observations made in representations. The following comments from the Highway Authority were received in response to the points stated:

Development would cause further queuing

- The proposed new single movement crossing will be approximately 150 metres from the Queen's Square roundabout and 90 metres from Beecroft roundabout. Although the new crossing will be used by more pedestrians than the existing staggered crossing by the bus station, it is located approximately 30 metres further away from the Beecroft roundabout. Staffordshire County Council undertook its own traffic modelling exercise as

part of outline planning application CH/23/0131 of the new crossing to verify the data supplied by the applicant and the results indicated that at peak times queues were not forecast to cause queuing through the Beecroft Road and/or Queen's Square roundabouts. The modelling results have been verified by SCC's traffic signal team.

Equipment can be fitted to the proposed single movement crossing and can be connected to SCC's Urban Traffic Control system, allowing for an element of control, including potentially limiting the number of times the crossing is called for in a certain length of time during peak vehicle traffic periods, if necessary.

It should be noted that the Highway Code published on Saturday 29 January 2022 introduced a hierarchy of road users. Pedestrians were given a higher priority as vulnerable users than motorists for example. This scheme will provide a more attractive and convenient route for pedestrians between the Beecroft Road car park and the town centre. There are clear guidelines in the latest NPPF published in December 2024 regarding traffic impact. Para 116 states:

116. Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios.

Following the production of the RSA1 audit, amendments were made to the scheme and as a result, Staffordshire County Council as local highway authority do not believe there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety if this scheme were built, or the impact on the highway network would be severe. We do not believe we would win an argument either on highway safety or severity if this application went to appeal.

Insufficient width at the crossing

- The width of the crossing has been designed to SCC standards. With the available space north and south of the proposed crossing it isn't believed there is an issue with overcrowding.

Data does not account for pedestrian uplift

- Projected pedestrian flows are anticipated to be under 600 per hour as an estimate. Cycle time of signals 60 seconds, therefore 60 cycles per hour max. $600 \text{ peds} / 60 \text{ cycles} = 10 \text{ peds waiting per cycle}$, 5 either side of the road or 10 one side or the other combinations. As stated above, we believe there is adequate waiting areas on either side of the new Toucan Crossing to cater for the signals not being called (someone pushing the button) every minute. The data utilised in the Lin Sig modelling is based on a worst case pedestrian to traffic intergreen of 17 seconds. This is consistent with the pedestrian to traffic intergreen expected by the Highway Engineers.

Road Safety Audit 2 – RSA2

- I wish to make the Council aware that SCC undertook another Road Safety Audit (an RSA 2 - Detailed Design) which was published just before Christmas. This was not available till recently and obviously hasn't formed part of the planning submission. The scheme as now amended only has one minor item mentioned (provision of tactile paving) which is a minor design change. No other 'Problems' as termed within the RSA process are highlighted by the RSA process as amended since the RSA1 report. This is an indication that previous design matters are now addressed.

RSA Conducted during school holidays

- Stage 1 Road Safety Audits are required to be undertaken at the completion of a preliminary design. They should include road safety matters which have a bearing upon land take, or easements and published before planning consent is applied for. The RSA guidelines do not stipulate that Audits should not be carried out during school holidays. Staffordshire County Council have no objections to when the RSA1 audit was undertaken.
- For information: There are 4 stages of Road Safety Audit a scheme such as this will go through. For stages 3 (Post Construction) & 4 (Post-opening Monitoring) you would expect those audits to be carried out at peak periods in light and dark conditions, if possible, although in the summer this is not always possible.

- 1.2 Having considered the further explanations offered on the respective matters by the Highway Authority, Officers assess the recommendation to approve subject to conditions is unchanged. The applicant has provided assessment of junction capacities in line with that expected and the methodology behind this assessment is endorsed by the County Council Highways Officers, has been subject to a renewed RSA2 and overall is considered to represent appropriate practice in modelling potential traffic impacts. On this basis, the proposals are judged acceptable subject to the conditions set out in the Officer report.