Consultation Response from Chris Bembridge KC,
Highways Development Management

2022/92097 The Veterinary Hospital, 131, Somerset Road, Almondbury, Huddersfield, HD5 8HN

Erection of two storey extension and alterations

Date Responded: 07/02/23
Responding Officer: CNB
Responding Ref: K6-12NE/1

This application is for the erection of a single-story extension to an existing vets practice with parking and an access on to C997 Somerset Road, a 30mph two way single carriageway local distributor road of approximately 8.7m width with footways on both sides and street lighting present. The site joins C997 at a new mini roundabout and to the north of the roundabout there are parking bays to the front of residential dwellings opposite the site.

The vet hospital was recently constructed as part of application 17/94302.

Highways consultation comments were previously submitted for this application (original response added below) and concern was raised that the original development was causing parking and road safety issues on the surrounding highway network and that this would need addressing before we would be willing to consider an extension to the existing building as we considered that the proposals could increase the severity of the issues noted.

A supplementary document was then submitted by the applicant in the form of a Highways Technical Note from VIA Solutions dated October 2022.

As part of this Technical Note the applicant's highway consultant suggested that the previous highways response was based on "anecdotal information" and that as no details were included that the concerns were not genuine. A brief "spot photographic survey" examination of the immediate area around the site was then carried out by the highways consultant and the conclusion was reached that the proposal site was not responsible for the parking issues recorded.

In response to this, the comments were based not on "anecdotal evidence" but on observed photographic evidence and an investigation into the resident's parking concerns carried out by the Kirklees Highway Safety team as part of the proposals to install TRO restrictions for parking within the area. The Kirklees Highway Safety team would not base a costly TRO parking scheme on "anecdotal evidence".

The 'spot photographic survey' represents a very brief snapshot and in no way can be considered thorough enough evidence as to be considered the basis of a proper parking survey on which to base any meaningful conclusions. We would recommend for the avoidance of doubt that an independent full parking survey should be undertaken in the area with the scope agreed with the highway authority prior to commencement.

The highways analysis for the initial application for the Vet hospital was based on a car parking demand analysis and this showed that the number of spaces proposed would be adequate for the number of staff and clients proposed within the application. The approval contained conditions that the car park would be managed with a client booking system with allocation of a numbered parking space at the time of booking and a named car parking manager to ensure there were no parking issues. Drawing No 3155/50 submitted as part of the discharge for condition 11 shows the car park layout with spaces delineated into staff and client parking, with a total of 14 spaces designated as staff spaces.

It is clear that these conditions, although now discharged, are not working given the evidenced parking issues within the surrounding roads.

This application is for a single-story extension

The current proposals, although not considered as being severe in themselves, are expected to increase trips to the site and, when added to the existing issues and concerns caused by the site, would add a cumulative effect on to the problems experienced in the immediate area.

As indicated earlier the Kirklees Highways Safety team have been investigating the parking complaints generated by the Vets and they have drawn up a permit and restricted parking scheme that should go some way to alleviating the issues, and, due to the proposal site causing the problems, we would expect the applicant to make a contribution towards the TRO investigation and works of approximately £5200, secured by s106 agreement.

We would also request that the applicant submits a staff Travel Plan that will contain details of how, as an organisation, the applicant will promote sustainable travel for staff and support the use of sustainable travel and car share to reduce the number of staff vehicles needing to come to the premises which should, in turn, reduce the requirement for off site parking. As part of the Travel Plan, we would request that the applicant joins the West Yorkshire Combined Authority Travel Plan Network to allow them to take advantage of the sustainable travel offers that the TPN has to offer. This should be conditioned, in this instance and given the scale of the development, the Highway Authority would not seek a Travel Plan monitoring fee.

We consider that these two conditions would reduce the impacts that the proposals will have on the already affected local highway network sufficiently as to make the proposals acceptable to highways.

Conditions
Implementation of Car Park management plan to manage parking
The development shall not commence until a contribution of £5,200 has been made towards a scheme detailing measures to manage parking within the parking bays on Somerset Road between and at the junctions of Somerset Road with Langley Road, Broadgate and Foxglove Road and all associated works as proposed by The Local Planning Authority. Secured by s106 agreement.

Travel Plan
Within the first 3 months of any part of the development being brought into use a Full Travel Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. The travel plan shall include measures to improve and encourage the use of sustainable transport. The measures will include as a minimum:

- the provision of 'live' and other bus/train information
- membership of the YWCA Travel Plan Network
- provision of METRO passes
- car sharing facilities
- the introduction of working practices to reduce travel demand
- the provision of on-site cycle facilities and information and
- the management of the car park to ensure staff parking is provided to a suitable level.

The Travel Plan will include details of when these measures will be introduced.

To support the promotion of the use of sustainable modes the travel plan will also include: how the travel plan will be managed; targets aimed at lowering car use, particularly single occupancy trips, from/to the site, management of staff car parking and how the travel plan and its objective of more sustainable travel will be promoted. The approved travel plan shall thereafter retained throughout the lifetime of the development unless otherwise agreed in writing by the LPA.

Original Consultation response (sent 10/08/22)

This application is for the erection of a single story extension to an existing vets practice with parking and an access on to C997 Somerset Road, a 30mph two way single carriageway local distributor road of approximately 8.7m width with footways on both sides and street lighting present. The site joins C997 at a new mini roundabout and to the north of the roundabout there are parking bays to the front of residential dwellings opposite the site.

The vet hospital was recently constructed as part of application 17/94302.

The current application was accompanied by a Technical Note: Highways dated Sept 2021 from Via Solutions, which provides highways and transport advice to address any highways impacts that the proposals may have.

No trip generation details were submitted with the application. The Technical Note suggested that the proposals will increase the number of treatment rooms from 6 to 10, and these will be used for veterinary nurse triage work to assist the vets and as such there would be no additional staff employed. It would however "increase the client throughput" which would indicate an increase in customer trip generation to the site.

The Technical Note also suggests that the business is expected to use COVID compliant working practices for some years to come and "this requires a strictly controlled appointment system to manage customers visiting the site" although no details of this system was provided within the Technical Note.

The Kirklees highway safety team has a number of records of complaints of dangerous and unsociable parking in the area that have been received since the veterinary hospital opened and are currently investigating these complaints in relation to the implementation of parking controls including the possible introduction of "No Waiting At Any Time" and residents only permit parking schemes along Somerset Road and the local adjoining residential streets. The highway safety investigation has concluded that the current parking problems are being caused by employees at the veterinary hospital parking on the surrounding residential streets rather than in the existing car park. It should be noted that the parking complaints started prior to any Covid compliant working practices being required and so the problems are not based on the pandemic working arrangements.

When the initial application for the erection of the hospital was submitted, the number of parking

spaces proposed was accepted based on a calculation of the parking demand for both staff and customers, with a customer parking management plan put in place to allocate spaces at the time of booking an appointment. This arrangement does not appear to be working. It has been suggested that the issue has been created by management at the site banning staff from parking within the car park, however this has not been officially confirmed as the source of the problems.

The current proposals are to increase the number of practice rooms and subsequently increase the client throughput, which can only increase the parking demand, while at the same time reducing the number of parking spaces within the site. This would be expected to create a higher parking displacement on to the surrounding highway network, and the application does not indicate how this concern will be alleviated.

HDM are unable to support any further development at this site that would increase the amount of on street parking within this area.

Consideration needs to be given to addressing the existing parking issues caused by the development prior to any further parking demand being generated. Measures could include measures to control on street parking, parking management plan or the introduction of a travel plan for staff including membership of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority's Travel Plan Network, in order to access advice and public transport offers to reduce the parking demand at the site.

In summary, HDM are unable to support the proposals until existing parking issues associated with the current development have been satisfactorily addressed.