

Item 3e **15/00728/FUL**
Case Officer **Iain Crossland**
Ward **Chorley East Ward**
Proposal **Creation of vehicular access, installation of entrance gates and extension to customer parking area with associated fencing**
Location **Royal Mail Chorley Delivery Office
Unit 7
East Chorley Business Centre
East Way
Chorley
PR6 0BJ**
Applicant **Royal Mail Group**
Consultation expiry: **27 August 2015**
Decision due by: **18 September 2015**

Delegated		Delegated following Chairs Brief		Committee	X
Date: 13 th October 2105					

	Case Officer	Authorising Officer
	IC	
Date	15 October 2015	

Recommendation

It is recommended that this application is approved subject to conditions

Executive Summary

The main issues to consider are whether the proposal would result in an acceptable impact on highway safety and on the character and appearance of the locality.

Representations

<p>In total 1 representation has been received which relates to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impact on highway safety from heavy vehicles using the highway, difficulties for manoeuvring large vehicles • Impact on a local business through loss of on street parking if double yellow lines are introduced.
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Consultees

Consultee	Summary of Comments received
LCC Highways	Overall, I have no highway objection to the proposal, however, a suitable condition should be attached to the planning permission to ensure that the proposed access is not used until the double yellow lines are in place.

Assessment

The Site

1. The application site is an existing fully operational Royal Mail Delivery Office and Mails Processing Unit and is the main customer collection point in Chorley. The site is located in the core settlement area of Chorley to the east of Chorley Railway Station, in close proximity to the Town Centre but severed from it by Shepherds Way and the railway line.
2. The area is characterised by industrial and commercial units of traditional and more modern functional designs and has a distinctly urban appearance.

The Proposal

3. The proposed development is for the creation of a new vehicular access to Friday Street for business use only, with the installation of entrance gates. There would also be internal rearrangements of the existing parking and loading areas to provide an extension to the existing customer parking area with associated fencing to facilitate this. The existing access from East Way would then be for customers only.

Assessment

The main issues are as follows:-

Issue 1 – Impact on highway safety

Issue 2 – Impact on character and appearance of the locality

Applicants' case

4. All incoming mail is sorted at the application site for onward transmission to other Delivery offices in the local area and to local customer addresses. The site is busy operationally and receives a stream of customers throughout its opening hours. There is only one vehicular access to the site from East Way, which is used by both the public and the Royal Mail operational vehicles despite its two separate functions.
5. The lack of the parking provision on site for customers often results in customers parking on the existing double yellow lines on East Way, reducing junction visibility for vehicles exiting the Royal Mail site and forward visibility for vehicles travelling on East Way and exiting the Friday Street / East Way mini roundabout. The former creates difficulties for Royal Mail vehicles and operational delays. Some customers also park their cars in the operational yard. This causes further disruption to Royal Mail operation. As there is no dedicated pedestrian route within the yard, the uncontrolled access for members of public within an operational site this raises a safety concern; it increases risk of conflicts between pedestrians and moving vehicles to and from and within the service yard. It also creates an issue concerning asset management and protection.
6. Consequently, there is a need to separate the operational activities from the customer service function; this cannot be accommodated satisfactorily with the existing site access arrangement.
7. There is evidence of a former vehicular site access on Friday Street, which is understood to have been closed off prior to the site being occupied by Royal Mail, and is considered the most logical position to create the new access.

Principle of the Development

8. The National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) seeks to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system.
9. Particularly pertinent to this application is paragraph 32 of the Framework which states that decisions should take account of whether improvements can be undertaken within the transport network that cost effectively limit the significant impacts of the development. Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe.

10. Policy 1 of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy focusses growth towards the Key Service Centre of Chorley.
11. The application site is located in the core settlement area of Chorley. The adopted Chorley Local Plan 2012 – 2026 policy V2 states that within the settlement areas excluded from the Green Belt, and identified on the Policies Map, there is a presumption in favour of appropriate sustainable development.

Highway Safety

12. The issues of highway concern are in relation to the lack of visibility to the right - towards the mini round-about when leaving the site and the safety implications for right turn manoeuvres when leaving the site due to the presence of parked vehicles opposite the access on the western side of Friday Street.
13. In order to address this the applicant has agreed to implement a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for introduction of waiting restrictions on the opposite section of Friday Street, currently without restriction, to facilitate right turns from the site. The Highway Authorities requirement of the 'No-waiting-at anytime' restrictions was on the basis that the frequency at which vehicles will access and egress the Royal Mail site will be high, and if stationary vehicles are present on the opposite side of the road, vehicles leaving the site and turning right towards the roundabout would be forced to use the nearside lane meant for south bound vehicles with potential conflicts.
14. These restrictions are essential to ensure the access is used safely, and LCC Highways can only recommend approval of the application on condition that the TRO is implemented prior to the access being used. As such it is recommended that a Grampian style condition is attached to any planning approval of this application requiring that the highways works are implemented prior to the commencement of development.
15. The TRO involves a separate statutory consultation process undertaken by the Highway Authority beyond the planning application process, including consultation with frontagers and the general public who may raise objections to the waiting restrictions. The applicant understands that the restrictions are essential for highway safety reasons and that creation of the access can only be implemented if all legal processes relating to objections raised to the TRO have been satisfactorily completed and the waiting restrictions implemented on site.
16. LCC Highways were also concerned that no internal layout of the car parking with marked bays for ease of identifying parking areas from driving areas has been provided. This would allow an assessment to be made as to the number of vehicles the site will accommodate and its associated impact on the highway and whether there are any inherent safety risks associated with the positioning and layouts of the bays and how turning manoeuvres are to be undertaken on site. A condition is recommended to require this prior to the commencement of development.
17. A revised plan has been received, which provides for a 10m distance from the edge of highway to the proposed gate posts and proposed corner radii of 6m to improve visibility of vehicles leaving the site in line with the comments of the LCC Highways officer.
18. It is noted that concerns have been raised from the owner of a neighbouring business that the level of on-street car parking for customers of the businesses in the area would be reduced as a result of the proposed development. Although it is recognised that customers currently park on the street outside the business unit the availability of on street car parking is a benefit, which cannot be guaranteed and as such cannot be protected in relation to an application for planning permission. Furthermore it is noted that the businesses have their own internal car parking areas and essentially use the highway for overspill parking. As noted above the ability to set out double yellow lines would require a TRO, which involves a separate statutory consultation process beyond the

planning application process, including consultation with frontagers, and must be agreed and the highway works implemented prior to the proposed access being implemented.

Design and appearance/Impact on the character of the area

19. The proposed development would result in the creation of a vehicular access entrance through creating a 6m gap in the existing fence line and boundary planting facing Friday Street. The changes to the fence and gate would reflect the design of the existing fence of 2.5m high railings. This would have functional appearance in keeping with the site and character of the surrounding area.

20. It is acknowledged that works to regenerate this area of Chorley (Steeley Lane area) are being developed by Chorley Council as detailed on the project boards erected in the area. This proposal has been considered in relation to the planned regeneration scheme at Steeley Lane and it is not considered that the proposed development would jeopardise the Steeley Lane regeneration scheme.

Overall Conclusion

21. The proposal will allow for the improved management of traffic associated with the Royal Mail Delivery Office and would facilitate the safe and efficient operation of this business. There would be no severe harm to highway safety on the basis that the attached conditions are fulfilled and there would be no adverse impact on the character of the area. The proposed development is therefore considered to be acceptable and as such is recommended for approval.

Planning Policies

In accordance with s.38 (6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), the application is to be determined in accordance with the development plan (the Central Lancashire Core Strategy, the Adopted Chorley Local Plan 2012-2026 and adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance), unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Consideration of the proposal has had regard to guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and the development plan. The specific policies/ guidance considerations are contained within the body of the report.

Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Date
99/00557/FUL	Erection of two units for retail (A1) industrial (B1 and B2) and/or storage and distribution (B8) uses.	Approved	15 May 2000
88/00688/FUL	Removal of all derelict features followed by filling site with compacted sandstone aggregate up to existing ground level	Approved	27 September 1988

Suggested Conditions

No.	Condition																					
1.	<p>The proposed development must be begun not later than three years from the date of this permission.</p> <p>Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004</p>																					
2.	<p>The development hereby permitted shall not commence unless and until the works to the highway have been implemented in accordance with the approved plan (reference MMD-340300-C-SK-CG-XX-0001 Rev P2 received 21st July 2015).</p> <p>In the event that an alternative highway solution is identified and agreed in writing by the Highway Authority an amended plan detailing the works to the highway shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted. The works thereafter shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans.</p> <p><i>Reason: In the interests of highway safety.</i></p>																					
3.	<p>No development shall commence until full details of the parking, servicing and turning areas have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority. The development shall then be constructed in accordance with the approved details.</p> <p>Reason: In the interest of the highway safety.</p>																					
4.	<p>The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following plans:</p> <table border="0" data-bbox="319 963 1228 1176"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="319 963 590 996">Plan Ref.</th> <th data-bbox="590 963 877 996">Received On:</th> <th data-bbox="877 963 1228 996">Title:</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="319 996 590 1030">13967/12</td> <td data-bbox="590 996 877 1030">21 July 2015</td> <td data-bbox="877 996 1228 1030">Location plan</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="319 1030 590 1064">13967/10</td> <td data-bbox="590 1030 877 1064">21 July 2015</td> <td data-bbox="877 1030 1228 1064">Existing site plan</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="319 1064 590 1097">13967/11 Rev. A</td> <td data-bbox="590 1064 877 1097">13 Oct 2015</td> <td data-bbox="877 1064 1228 1097">Proposed site plan</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="319 1097 590 1131">J1/04029</td> <td data-bbox="590 1097 877 1131">21 July 2015</td> <td data-bbox="877 1097 1228 1131">Proposed gate details</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="319 1131 590 1164">J1/01064</td> <td data-bbox="590 1131 877 1164">21 July 2015</td> <td data-bbox="877 1131 1228 1164">Proposed fencing details</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="319 1164 590 1198">MMD-340300-C-SK-CG-XX-0001</td> <td data-bbox="590 1164 877 1198">21 July 2015</td> <td data-bbox="877 1164 1228 1198">Proposed highway solution</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning</p>	Plan Ref.	Received On:	Title:	13967/12	21 July 2015	Location plan	13967/10	21 July 2015	Existing site plan	13967/11 Rev. A	13 Oct 2015	Proposed site plan	J1/04029	21 July 2015	Proposed gate details	J1/01064	21 July 2015	Proposed fencing details	MMD-340300-C-SK-CG-XX-0001	21 July 2015	Proposed highway solution
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