

Hi Anne

Hope your well.

Further to our conversation on Teams yesterday, and given your request and the urgency, I prioritised this matter and worked on it last night and this morning. As I mentioned during our discussion, the conditions and requirements sought from the development by the Steeple Morden Parish Council are not considered necessary, proportionate, or reasonably related to the development, nor are they feasible or deliverable in highway terms. I have now set out these reasons in detail below. I trust these comments are robust and comprehensive, and that they will assist you at the Planning Control Committee:

Highway Authorities overall view:

Given the scale, location and impact of the proposed development (36 dwellings), the Highway Authority (HA) does not consider it reasonable, proportionate or even CIL-compliant to require the development to fund or trigger:

- Strategic improvements to the A505/Odsey junction (roundabout, signals, or similar), or Parking management schemes at Ashwell & Morden Station.

The site lies over 1.6 miles from the A505 junction, is remote from the station parking area, and the magnitude of development impact is low. A planning condition preventing occupation until such major third-party schemes are delivered fails the statutory tests for conditions and would not be supported by the HA.

1. Scale of Development and Proportionality

The proposed 36-dwelling scheme is categorised within HCC guidance as small to medium-scale residential development. Trip generation is therefore modest: Residential trip rates from TRICS normally show 6-8 two-way trips per dwelling in the peak periods. This equates to approximately 20-25 two-way AM peak trips for a 36-unit scheme.

In planning terms, this sits well below the threshold at which strategic junction alterations on the A505 would be considered necessary, directly related, or proportionate.

Under NPPF 2025, transport mitigation must be:

- Necessary to make the development acceptable,
- Directly related to the development, and
- Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind.

A strategic junction upgrade accommodating thousands of daily movements cannot reasonably be attributed to a development generating a few dozen peak-time trips.

2. Distance and Remoteness From the A505 Junction

The site is located over 1.6 miles from the Odsey A505 junction.

In highway terms:

- The development has no physical connection to the junction.
- Impacts are highly diffused across the network before reaching the A505 corridor.
- Any increase in turning movements at the junction from 36 dwellings is negligible relative to the baseline flows.

Because of this distance:

- The development cannot be reasonably required to deliver or fund a roundabout, signalisation scheme or other major infrastructure.
- Occupation of the development cannot be tied to delivery of unrelated strategic schemes controlled by external bodies.

Such conditions fail the six tests for planning conditions (NPPF 2024), particularly reasonable, necessary and directly related.

3. Roadside Parking Issues at Ashwell & Morden Station

The concern regarding on-street parking at the station is acknowledged. However:

- The station lies well beyond the reasonable sphere of influence of a 36-unit housing scheme.
- The parking issues are historic, cumulative, and relate to wider rail-based travel demand, not this application.
- Any intervention, such as a residents' permit scheme, TRO restrictions, or additional station parking, constitutes a network-wide parking management project led by the District/County Council, not a development-specific mitigation scheme.

The HA's position is therefore:

It is neither reasonable nor proportionate to require the applicant to fund or deliver a parking scheme at the station as there is no direct causal relationship between the development and the existing parking issues.

Such a requirement would again fail the statutory tests for obligations and conditions.

4. Impact at the A505 Junction in Context of Department for Transport Guidance

While a proportion of residents will inevitably pass through the A505 junction, the relative increase in vehicular flow is extremely small.

Baseline weekday peak hour flows at the A505 junction are several thousand vehicles per hour. The development adds around 20-25 vehicles in the AM peak, dispersed among several movements. This represents well under 1% of total flows.

In accordance with DfT and IHT guidance, increases of fewer than 30 two-way peak hour trips on an existing junction rarely warrant a capacity upgrade, and do not trigger the "severe impact" test under NPPF 2024.

Therefore:

The HA does not consider the development to result in any severe residual cumulative impact that would justify refusal or require the delivery of a major off-site junction improvement.

5. Responsibility for Strategic A505 Corridor Improvements

Hertfordshire's Place & Movement Guidance confirms that highway authorities deliver strategic schemes through:

- Capital delivery programmes,
- Local Transport Plan (LTP) strategies,
- A505 corridor studies, and
- Multi-party contributions, not individual small development sites.

It is therefore the responsibility of HCC, working with partners, to deliver road safety, junction, and traffic management improvements on the A505, not a 36-unit scheme over 1.6 miles away.

Conclusion

HCC Highways cannot support any condition preventing occupation until:

- The Odsey A505 junction is signalised, converted to a roundabout, or otherwise improved; or
- A station parking management scheme is implemented.

Such requirements are:

- Disproportionate,
- Not directly related to the development,
- Not necessary,
- Not reasonable,
- Not CIL Reg. 122 compliant, and
- Not aligned with NPPF 2024 tests of severe harm.

If you need any further clarification before finalising your report, please do give me a call on teams

Kind regards
Senober