

Creation of a new link road between south and north car parks. Accessibility improvements, including creation of new pedestrian walkways, amendments to access arrangements, and other associated works including new landscaping and public realm.

This comment is made on behalf of Cycling UK Stevenage.

We would like to thank the developer for the engagement that we have previously had with them as mentioned in the covering letter for this application. We note that some of the issues that we raised, along with invis-Ability CIC have been addressed in this application. However, we remain concerned that access for cycling is still an issue and as the retail offer is becoming more diverse it is essential that this is brought up to current standards. It is for this reason that we are submitting an objection to the planning application in its current form.

Overall, this planning application is not in line with the Stevenage Borough Council Local Plan or Mobility Strategy. SP6 of the Local Plan states, "We will create the conditions for a significant increase in passenger transport, walking and cycling" and Policy IT5 that developers should provide "Safe, direct and convenient routes within the development" for pedestrians and cyclists.

We are very concerned that the Southeast Access (Nando's Entrance) is referred to throughout Section 4 of the Design and Access Statement as for Pedestrian Access. This entrance is currently used by people cycling, as well as walking and wheeling and enables direct access to the cycleway without using a road entrance. This makes this entrance the safest route to and from the edge of the retail park – and has the added convenience of direct links to the wider Stevenage network in all directions via the cycling infrastructure under the main Broadhall Way roundabout.

The visibility improvements to cut back the vegetation and replace the hedges with wildflower planting that have already taken place are very welcome. The improvements to the pedestrian access route across the car park from this entrance all the way to Marks and Spencers should also incorporate a cycling link with the design amended appropriately to accommodate this. Including cycle access in this improvement would be transformational to enable people to access Roaring Meg safely and easily by cycle.

Designation of this access for people cycling essential as the road entrance onto Monkswood Way is very challenging indeed for cyclists to use due to the volume of traffic coming off the dual carriageway. There is no island refuge in the centre of the road and the wide corner radius facilitates high speed turns off the dual carriageway into the retail park. A cyclist leaving by this exit must wait in a vulnerable position in the centre of the road to join the cycleway towards Broadhall Way.

Whilst the provision of racks for Hire Cycles is welcomed, their usefulness is limited without safe cycling links across the car parks between the cycle parking and the wider cycleway network.

Introduction of an additional North-South road described in Section 6 of the Design and Access Statement will be detrimental to people walking or cycling. Currently the entire area is available for pedestrians and is a safe space for children. Just like the Nando's entrance it is also currently used by many people cycling responsibly. The space offers more than enough room according to LTN1/20 guidance to formalise a shared space environment for walking, wheeling and cycling. Provision of the North South link road across the plaza - to be shared with cars - is not necessary to improve access

for people cycling. Introducing the new road will bring additional vehicle movement between the 2 car parks and will add to the flow directions within both the car parks, neither of which have any dedicated cycle routes indicated within them.

Section 7 shows a cycle route facilitated by the new north-south link that goes through the north car park. Sharing this car park road with cars will be a very challenging route for a person cycling as it involves sharing the road not only with cars moving through the car park but also those manoeuvring into and out of car park spaces on both sides.

The plans provided for the Section 7 Traffic Calming Measures on the service road to Elder Way do not show the width of the cycle bypasses. These must be inclusive in line with the LTN1/20 guidance 7.6.4 which states “Cycle bypasses should be provided alongside horizontal measures such as chicanes or narrowings; the gap should be at least 1.5m wide to accommodate all types of cycle and to allow access by sweeping machinery.”

We welcome the approved proposed covered cycle shelter shown with a green dot on the Section 7 plan, but cyclists should be able to access this from all directions without having to dismount and push their cycle. Cycling should be allowed on the path between the units linking the cycle parking to the service road.

The Stevenage Borough Council Local Plan Mobility Strategy states that, "Stevenage Borough Council will place a high priority on active travel". Cycling UK Stevenage acknowledges that the developer has a stated wish to improve connectivity for people cycling and would welcome the opportunity to discuss ways that this could be done without the cost and upheaval of the north-south link road for traffic. Measures to enable more people to cycle to Roaring Meg would indeed alleviate some of the pressure on the carparking.