



**BRBR LAND AT MILL ROAD,
HERTFORD**

**TECHNICAL NOTE 2: TRANSPORT
POLICY AND GUIDANCE OVERVIEW**

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1 INTRODUCTION

a) Introduction

- 1.1 This note provides an overview of the East Herts Local Plan (EHLP; 2007), the Hertford and Ware Urban Transport Plan (HWUTP; November 2010), the Mead Lane Access Masterplan Study (Appendix E of the HWUTP; June 2010) and the draft Mead Lane Urban Design Framework (March 2011) as they relate to the BRBR Land at Mill Road, Hertford and subsequently considers East Hertford Council's pre-application response dated 21st December 2011.

2 EAST HERTS LOCAL PLAN 2007

a) Overview

- 2.1 The Local Plan forms part of the statutory Development Plan for East Herts district and is the document used by East Herts Council to determine planning applications across the district as part of the planning and Development Control process.
- 2.2 The East Herts Local Plan 2007 currently comprises a list of Saved Policies and a Proposals Map showing where the policies can be applied.
- 2.3 The BRBR Land at Mill Road, Hertford is not allocated within the adopted East Herts Local Plan (April 2007) and there is currently no allocation within the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF), which will supersede the Local Plan.

3 HERTFORD AND WARE URBAN TRANSPORT PLAN

a) Overview

- 3.1 The HWUTP constitutes one of East Herts Council's technical studies. The technical studies provide the Council with local contextual evidence to assist the Local Development Framework (LDF) plan-making process and to inform planning decisions. It is noted that the technical studies themselves do not constitute the Council's planning policies.
- 3.2 The HWUTP identifies the key transport and development issues within Hertford and Ware that Hertfordshire County Council and East Herts Council have identified as needing to be addressed over the proceeding five-year period.
- 3.3 The HWUTP identifies that the Mead Lane industrial area is in need of regeneration and confirms that the area is allocated within the Local Plan for redevelopment for residential (to the west of Marshgate Drive) and, if traffic and highway problems along with other issues are surmountable, for a mixed use scheme to the east of Marshgate Drive.
- 3.4 The Mead Lane Master Plan Study (Appendix E) considers the transport issues in detail, with key elements of the study referred to within the HWUTP.
- 3.5 Specifically the HWUTP:
1. identifies that some key employment areas (e.g. County Hall) connectivity with public transport is poor and that the provision of improved interchange facilities in proximity to Hertford East Station may provide opportunities for alleviating these problems. Paragraph 5.2.6 connects these improvements to the 'potential future redevelopment of the western part of the Mead Lane employment area.' It is worth noting that the BRBR Mill Road site falls within the eastern part of the Mead Lane area, opposed to the western part. (Paragraphs 5.2.4 and 5.2.6; Page 36);
 2. identifies the Mead Lane Area as a major development site within Hertford (Paragraph 5.2.22; Page 38), although confirms that the area has '...a number of access issues that restrict its development potential.';
 3. identifies the existing committed developments within the Mead Lane area (Paragraph 5.2.22; Page 38);
 4. provides a summary of key issues within Hertford (Table 5.10; Pages 44 – 47. Problems H1.18, H2.6, H2.7, H2.8, H2.9, SA3.9 all have the potential to effect the development of the BRBR Mill Road land and incorporate issues relating to vehicular access / congestion, speed limits and existing pedestrian provision surrounding the site;
 5. identifies various transport and highway improvement schemes to be packaged within the UTP. Tables 7.1 to 7.3 (Pages 53 to 57) summarise these schemes. Those potentially relevant to the BRBR Mill Road land include: CPM18, CPM3, MDL5, MDL3, PED22, MDL2, PTM8, PTM10, MDL1, MDL4 and PTM2. Of specific importance to the development potential of the site are MDL3 (sustainable development on Mead Lane site); MDL2 (Improved general access via a new circulatory link from Mill Road to Mead Lane); PTM8 (Bus Route Diversion to Hertford East Station (linked to Mead Lane Masterplanning); PTM10 (Additional Bus Layover facilities in Hertford (either at Hertford East or at proposed Park and Ride); MDL1 (Mead Lane Masterplan); MDL4 (Mead Lane car parking review); PTM2 Hertford East Station Improvements / bus interchange (linked to Mead Lane);
 6. confirms that the Mead Lane site has potential for further development on the basis of new development proceeding with sustainable credentials and an appropriate development mix minimising any trip generation during the peak periods (Paragraph 7.9.2; Page 63);

7. confirms there is no requirement for a second point of access into the Mead Lane area, and that a suitable segregated access for emergency services can be provided to negate this requirement (Paragraphs 7.9.2, 7.9.4 and 7.9.5; Pages 63 and 64);
8. identifies at Paragraph 7.9.6 that 'The proposals include the creation of a new loop road utilising the vacant rail sidings land to the north of the station. This reduces the distance along which a second point of emergency access would be required to a relatively short section of carriageway and would not need to cover the full length of Mead Lane in its current format.';
9. provides a summary of the schemes that are '...required to facilitate further development of the Mead Lane area.' (Paragraph 7.9.7 / Table 7.8; Page 64). These schemes are MDL1 to MDL5, of which the key ones are summarised in paragraph 5 above;
10. summarises the UTP delivery programme and anticipated costs of the various measures identified in Tables 8.1 to 8.9 (Pages 73 to 78). The specific Mead Lane measures are outlined within Table 8.9, with a cost associated with the link road of £200,000. This varies significantly from the RPS preliminary calculation of circa £460,000; and
11. summarises measures for delivery post the UTP period in Table 8.10 (Pages 79 and 80). Specifically, PTM2: Hertford East station improvements / bus interchange (linked to Mead Lane) improvements are included as a long term measure.

4 MEAD LANE ACCESS MASTERPLAN STUDY

a) Overview

- 4.1 The Mead Lane Access Masterplan Study forms Appendix E of the HWUTP, and considers the planning and transport issues in the area served by Mead Lane taking account of the opportunities and constraints and identifying measures that could enable further development of the area. Specifically the study:
1. acknowledges there is no limit to the quantum of residential development via a single point of access, although identifies that emergency services must be consulted;
 2. identifies there is no option for provision of a second access to the Mead Lane development area;
 3. confirms there are three committed developments (B1/ B2/ B8, residential and a factory extension) that have S106 funds secured for '*...funding the Mead Lane Access and masterplanning study...and any subsequent implementation works.*' (Paragraph 1.4.3; Page 10);
 4. identifies '*...an emergency access would be needed to the site to support the proposed land use strategy (based on the committed residential developments alone)...*' (Paragraph 1.7.1; Page 14)
 5. identifies the proposed movement strategy for the Mead Lane area (Figure 1.7, Page 15), which identifies a potential new link road across the BRBR Mill Road site. Figure 1.6 (Page 13) illustrates a potential land use strategy for the area, identifying the site for residential, station parking and a bus layover area. This figure identifies the bus layover area within both BRBR and Network Rail land ownerships;
 6. identifies the need to improve sustainable access to the site for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport;
 7. identifies the need for better station car parking and improved public transport interchange facilities;
 8. identifies that Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) Highways require the provision of a separate form of emergency access to serve the Mead Lane Area even if capacity can be achieved through a single point of access;
 9. considers that a suitable emergency access '*...can be achieved through a segregated emergency access arrangement, without the need for a second point of access.*' (Paragraph 2.8.2; Page 26)
 10. summarises the Paramics modelling work undertaken to assess the existing operation of the local highway network and the 'with committed' and 'with proposed development' scenarios. Various junction improvement options have also been tested.
 11. confirms through the modelling work '*...that the local highway network is reaching capacity. A traditional (highway capacity-based approach to development control is therefore unlikely to be acceptable in addressing the need to release further development of the site.*' It is therefore acknowledged that the proposed highway improvements are '*...unlikely to represent good value for money.*' (Paragraph 3.7.1; Page 36)
 12. assessment work assumes that the Mead Lane area undergoes a complete redevelopment, thereby removing all existing trips from the network (Paragraph 4.2.12; Page 38) and has calculated the proposed development quantum's as follows (Paragraph 4.2.9; Page 37):
 - i. one third of the site area for each land use represents gross floor area for trip generation purposes; and
 - ii. residential land is developed at 40 dwellings per hectare.
 13. illustrates the assumed redevelopment option tested at Figure 4.1 (Page 38);
 14. identifies that based on the very sustainable location of the Mead Lane area that '*...a sustainable approach to delivering development could be considered and the mix of land uses could be planned so as to minimise impact during peak periods.*' (Paragraph 5.2.3; Page 41);

15. envisages that the future trip generation of the Mead Lane area could be reduced, thereby enabling better use of the existing capacity of the local highway network and potentially allowing additional development within the Mead Lane area to be accommodated (Paragraph 5.2.4; Page 41);
16. identifies the following development potential for the Mead Lane area *'Based on an assessment of the committed spare capacity...'* (Paragraph 5.2.13; Page 43);
 - i. *'Either 300 residential flats plus 3,000 sqm B1 employment;*
 - ii. *500 residential flats; or*
 - iii. *5000 sqm B1 employment.'*
17. identifies that *'It may additionally be possible to accommodate other elements of off peak trip generating land uses such as a small hotel or leisure and ancillary uses such as A3 cafes or bars.'* (Paragraph 5.2.15; Page 43);
18. envisages that the implementation of a sustainable transport strategy for the additional residential development could enable a greater level of development than already identified (Paragraph 16 of this note) of circa 10%;
19. at paragraph 7.1.9 identifies the sustainable transport improvements that would facilitate the additional development identifying the *'Creation of new highway access connecting Mead Lane to Mill Road, allowing buses to penetrate the Mead Lane site and provide connections to rail services at Hertford East Station'*;
20. considers the benefits of the provision of a new link road across the BRBR Mill Road site within Pro-forma MDL2 at Appendix A. The scheme summary states:

'Providing 250 m of new road connecting Hertford East Station to the east of Mill road and South of Mead Lane, this will increase accessibility to the railway station and bring about other benefits including:

 - *More efficient interchange facility between bus and rail travel allowing buses to park closer to the railway station making the facility more admirable to the public*
 - *The additional access will allow for buses to easily get back to Mill Road creating an efficient route for buses*
 - *More capacity*
 - *Improved vehicular circulation within the Mead Lane Employment area*
 - *Improved Emergency access for the Mead Lane site by shortening the stretch of single access by 100m'*
21. provides a potential link road layout option at Appendix E, which identifies the link road passing through both the BRBR Mill road site and Network Rail land. It should be noted that this layout option is not referred to elsewhere within the HWUTP.

4.2 It should be noted that the study:

- i. does not identify any capacity constraints to development in regard to the internal Mead Lane area highway network;
- ii. does not identify a capacity requirement for the identified link road;
- iii. only identifies the link road as part of the sustainable transport solution within the Conclusions to the report (Paragraph 7.1.9; Page 49) and only identifies the benefits within the pro-forma contained at Appendix A. The need for the link road is not considered in detail within the main report;

- iv.* identifies the need for a bus layover / public interchange facility; however, does not provide any detail as to exactly what the facility would be providing for and does not demonstrate the need for the facility. The only indication as to size of the facility required is provided within the WSP emergency access layout option plans (Appendix B) and link road layout plan (Appendix E). These drawings indicate a turnaround facility suitable for accommodating one bus;
- v.* identifies the need to undertake a car parking review for the Mead Lane area; however does not identify whether this will incorporate an assessment of the need for station car parking. A need for additional station car parking facilities needs to be demonstrated;
- vi.* identifies that the link road would minimise the length of road over which there would be a single point of emergency access to the Mead Lane area; however, does not identify that the requirement for this additional emergency access is essential to the development of the area. The requirement for a secondary emergency access into the area has come from Hertfordshire County Council Highways although no justification has been provided. The proposed improvements to the front of Hertford East Station would provide a secondary emergency access passed the station itself into the Mead Lane area; and
- vii.* does not identify the intentions for extensions to bus services and therefore the need for the link road to facilitate any extensions; however, given the length and alignment of the link road proposals the benefits the link road would have in enabling the extension of a bus route would appear to be limited.
- viii.* identifies that the link road would improve vehicular circulation within the Mead Lane area. On the face of it this is likely to be true as it provides drivers with an additional route option around the area; however, the introduction of new junctions and therefore conflicting movements has not been taken account of neither has peoples' desire lines or the ease of use of the alternative route options. Given the limited length of the link road, it is likely that people will only use this route if it is simpler to do so than the existing route and if it is simpler then it is likely that the introduction of the link road would simply result in a transfer of trips from the existing route, with the existing route only being used by drivers with a destination / origin from this route. The link road would hence result in being an alternative route opposed to an additional route. The report does not consider whether improvements to circulation could be achieved through upgrades to the existing internal highway network.

5 MEAD LANE URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK (DRAFT)

a) Overview

5.1 The draft Mead Lane Urban Design Framework (MLUDF) is informed by the Mead Lane Access Masterplan Study and the HWUTP. This is a draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), providing further guidance and information on specific policies contained within the East Herts Local Plan 2007. Once adopted, this document will form a 'material considerations' in the determination of planning applications.

5.2 In regard to the transport measures associated with the future redevelopment of the Mead Lane area and identifies:

- i. the requirement for new public transport provision, including new bus stops (Paragraph 2.2; Page 2);
- ii. the requirement for provision of a new link road to enable improvements to circulatory movements (Paragraph 2.2; Page 2 and Paragraph 10.8 1a; Page 14);
- iii. that Mead Lane experiences problems with speeding traffic (Paragraph 6.2; Page 8);
- iv. that visibility around the bend from Mill Lane into Mead Road is very restricted (Paragraph 6.2; Page 8);
- v. that noise pollution in the Mead Lane area is a concern '*...due to the volume and types of traffic using this area.*' (Paragraph 6.2; Page 8);
- vi. key highway and access improvement measures including '*...the provision of a passenger transport interchange at the Hertford East end of the development...*' and the provision '*...of a road link as part of the redevelopment within the former Gas Storage site to enable circulatory traffic movements (in particular for buses)...*' (Paragraph 7.1; Page 9);
- vii. the requirement for a second emergency access and the extension of bus services into the Mead Lane area (Paragraphs 10.8 1b and 1h; Page 14 and). Specifically at Paragraph 8.5 (Page 11) the UDF states:

'The UDF will facilitate the provision of a second emergency access by Hertford East Station, a passenger transport interchange, the new link road, extended bus service provision within the area, and the promotion of pedestrian and cycling routes...'

- viii. the potential '*...for a modest expansion of station car parking, subject to evidence of demand...*' (Paragraph 10.8 1i); and
- ix. the requirement for a 3m pedestrian / cycleway to be provided parallel to the south side of Mead Lane (Paragraph 10.14 4a).

5.3 It should be noted that in regard to accessibility the 'Vision for the Mead Lane Area' (Page 19), identifies that:

'Traditionally an area isolated by its poor connections, the Design Framework will ensure that links will be improved in part by new roads, but principally by upgrading and fostering sustainable travel choices of walking, cycling, car sharing and improved access to bus and rail services.'

5.4 It is:

- i. therefore clear that the key to opening up the Mead Lane area to further development is to improving the accessibility of the area to non-car modes of travel;

- ii.* noted that there is a perception that Mead Lane is currently subject to high vehicular speeds, which would need to be carefully addressed with any future development of the Mead Lane area;
- iii.* noted that the need for any additional station car parking has not yet been demonstrated;
- iv.* noted that a requirement for new public transport provision to be provided (including bus stops) has been identified; however, that the need and anticipated demand for such a facility has not been demonstrated;
- v.* noted that the need and for and anticipated demand requirements of a public transport interchange has not been demonstrated; and
- vi.* noted that existing visibility around the Mill Road / Mead Lane bend is sub-standard.

6 OVERVIEW

a) Overview

- 6.1 This note has provided a review of the EHLF, the HWUTP, the Mead Lane sub study and the MLUDF, outlining the key matters in relation to the BRBR Mill Road site.
- 6.2 The key issues in regard to transport for the BRBR Mill Road site are:
1. the proposed link road through the site;
 2. the proposed transport interchange on the site;
 3. the proposed extension to bus services / bus turnaround facility through / on the site;
 4. the proposed secondary emergency access through the site;
 5. the proposed station car parking on the site; and
 6. whether or not the proposed link road would provide a significant improvement to vehicular circulation throughout the Mead Lane area that could not be delivered through an alternative solution.
- 6.3 It is these matters that an Inspector would be likely to consider in detail. In the first instance any Inspector would be likely to side with the views of East Herts Council / Hertfordshire County Council and it would be for us to demonstrate that the redevelopment proposals are a suitable alternative and are able to deliver the main objectives of the HWUTP and the MLUDF policy documents.
- 6.4 It would then be for the Inspector to decide whether the development proposals would deliver a suitable and feasible alternative transport solution to the Council's proposals taking all matters into account such as transport and highways, landscape, environmental etc.

b) Summary of Key Issues

- 6.5 The following provides a summary of the key issues:

i. Link Road Proposals

- 6.6 The perceived benefits of the proposed link road are:
1. the provision of an additional access providing an efficient route for buses;
 2. increased capacity;
 3. improved vehicular circulation through out the Mead Lane area;
 4. improved emergency access;
 5. the BRBR land could be accessed direct from here; and
 6. the potential to transfer HGV trips away from the existing Mill Road / Mead Lane residential dwellings.
- 6.7 The potential disadvantages of the proposed link road are:
1. the impact on BRBR land and the associated developable area;
 2. the ability to achieve a design that meets current highway standards and highway safety requirements;

3. the requirement for third party land to enable the link road to be delivered;
4. the associated costs of constructing the link road;
5. the funding of the link road;
6. the potential for vehicular speeds to be high; and
7. the potential for over-engineering through the provision of an additional road.

ii. Proposed Transport Interchange

- 6.8 The requirement for a public transport interchange is identified within the HWUTP and the MLUDF, although no information is provided as to the anticipated bus demand for or associated size of such a facility. The only indication as to size is provided within indicative emergency access and link road layout plans contained within the HWUTP sub-study, which illustrates a facility able to accommodate one bus.

iii. Bus Service Extension / Turnaround

- 6.9 The Council's position is that the link road would provide for improved circulation for public transport and greater penetration of bus services into the Mead Lane Estate.

iv. Second Emergency Access through the Site

- 6.10 The requirement for a separate emergency access to be provided to the Mead Lane area has come from Hertfordshire County Council, although the rationale for this is not provided within policy documents. A perceived benefit of the link road is that the single point of access to the Mead Lane area would be reduced to circa 30 – 40 metres.

v. Proposed Station Car Parking on the Site

- 6.11 The requirement for new station car parking facilities to be provided on the BRBR Mill road site is not an item that has been identified by East Herts Council in their pre-application response; however, the Mead Lane sub-study identifies the site as a potential location for this.
- 6.12 As acknowledged within the MLUDF, the need for such a facility has yet to be demonstrated.
- 6.13 It would seem that the provision of additional station car parking would contradict the aim to reduce peak hour vehicular trips to free up capacity to enable new development to come forward in the Mead Lane area.