

Ecclesfield Conservation and Local History Group

Initial Comments on the Consultation on a Proposed Motorway Service Area at J35 of the M1

1. **Need:** the need for an MSA has not been made convincingly and the proximity of the proposed site to the existing Woolley Edge and Woodall Services suggests that the need is tentative. In addition there are many existing fuelling and eating facilities within easy reach of the M1, and at the very least between J37 and J33.
2. **Highways Agency:** it is not clear whether the HA supports this proposed MSA and, if so, on what basis.
3. **J35 Roundabout:** there are likely to be significant safety and visibility issues on the J35 roundabout resulting from the additional traffic flows emanating from an MSA here. These will require substantial investigations and capital works to assess and address. Little is said on this or on whether the HA approve the principle of an on-junction access to the proposed MSA.
4. **Traffic from works on Hesley Wood Pit Tip:** if the construction and/or operation of this site runs concurrently with the coal recovery operation on Hesley Wood Pit tip, the issues with increased traffic on the roundabout are likely to become critical, especially with the increase in HGV movements
5. **Alternative sites:** there are likely to be other, less sensitive, sites available for an MSA (locally and elsewhere in the vicinity) but there is no mention of any alternatives having being considered
6. **Green Belt:** the whole of the proposed site is within Green Belt and protected from development in the Unitary Development Plan. What are the very special circumstances that suggest that this development located here could be considered acceptable and supportable within the Green Belt and how would any damage to the Green Belt be outweighed by any benefits resulting from the proposal?
7. **Ancient Woodland:** the whole of the development would be within ancient woodland, an irreplaceable natural resource of considerable and significant historical, archaeological, heritage, landscape and biodiversity value. It is not possible to simply and easily mitigate and/or compensate for any damage to this resource
8. **Local woodlands as an amenity resource:** the retention and enhancement of woodland as an amenity resource has long been a lynchpin principle and policy within Sheffield. It is not clear that this has been properly acknowledged or registered in this proposal. Development within the woodland is not likely to be supported by the Local Authority.
9. **Impact Assessment:** it is not clear that there has been a detailed and adequate assessment of all of the likely impacts of the proposal
10. **EIA:** the proposal should be subject to a full and thorough Environmental Impact Assessment (the scope and standard of which should be agreed with the Local Authority), which should include the detailed consideration of alternative options for any development
11. **Biodiversity:** there is a firm planning principle that any and all developments should minimise any impacts on biodiversity and aim for a net biodiversity gain. However, it is not clear that this is achievable for this development. A comprehensive and expert survey and assessment of the biodiversity interest on this site should be undertaken to a standard and methodology agreed with the Local Authority.
12. **Mitigation of impacts:** the mitigation hierarchy should be followed in considering any development and the rationale for any approach should be explained fully. This does not seem to have been the case for this proposal.

13. **Water management and drainage:** a potential water management area has been identified on the concept plan but it is not yet clear what this will be or the extent of ancient woodland that it will occupy. The likely downstream impacts of the drainage from this facility do not appear to have been considered and these would need to be discussed and agreed with the Environment Agency.
14. **Other Utility Services:** the impacts from the supply of other utility services to the proposed site have not yet been mentioned
15. **Continuing Dialogue:** Ecclesfield Conservation and Local History Group wishes to continue a constructive dialogue with Extra MSA if they pursue this proposed development further, in order to provide comments from the local community perspective and to address issues resulting from the initial comments that the Group has made

Ian Deans

Chairman

Ecclesfield Conservation and Local History Group

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