

**OTHER APPLICATIONS**  
**(Reports by Head of Planning Services and Planning Service Manager**  
**(Development Management)**

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**THE NEW TOWNSHIP OF GREAT HADDON**

Development of an urban extension comprising up to 5350 residential dwellings; a district centre (with up to 9200 square metres (99031 square feet) retail floor space) and two neighbourhood centres (with up to 2300 square metres (24758 square feet) retail floor space) comprising district/neighbourhood retail (A1-A5); community and health (C2, D1); leisure(D2); residential (C3) and commercial (B1) uses. Provision for education facilities (sites for three primary and one secondary school); sports and recreational facilities; site for 5 gypsy and traveller pitches; a range of strategic open spaces including new landscaping , woodland and allotments; and cemetery provision. Associated highway infrastructure (including pedestrian, bridleway and cycle routes), public transport infrastructure and car parking for all uses. Utilities and renewable energy infrastructure; foul and surface water drainage networks (including SuDS and lakes), land to the north of Norman Cross, East of the A1(M) and west of London Road (A15), Peterborough.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 An outline planning application has been made to the Peterborough City Council for the development of a further new township south of Hampton Vale between the A15 and A1 west of the village of Yaxley. Huntingdonshire District Council is a Consultee in this instance. There is a separate related application for employment (totalling 65ha) situated to the west of Hampton Vale and north of the new township.

**2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

**The Application**

- 2.1 The development proposed is for up to 5350 new residential units , a district centre with retail totalling 9200sqm, two neighbourhood centres totalling 2300sqm, three primary schools and a secondary school, space for community uses and open space and recreation including a cemetery for Yaxley.
- 2.2 Between 2007 and 2009 there have been a number of opportunities for statutory bodies, Officers and the public to become involved with the developers and comment on the emerging development concepts of this proposal. During that period this Council has maintained a consistent view that the village of Yaxley should 'retain' its identity and that the obligation of providing a bypass, which was required as part of the Hampton development, should be carried forward.

2.3 The Design and access statement that accompanies the application contains an illustrative master plan that claims to have addressed the initial issues that this Council and others raised during the pre-application engagement process by:

- Relocating the secondary school and outdoor recreation to serve Yaxley as well as Gt Haddon and provision of a cemetery to meet the requirements of Yaxley Parish Council.
- Retaining the physical separation between Gt Haddon and surrounding settlements and softening and greening the western development gateways.
- Minimising the visual impact of built development along the A15 from the south.
- Providing additional formal space around the Scheduled Ancient Monument at Normans Cross to improve its setting.
- Diverting the A15 into and through the east of the site with a bus gate to the north that helps to define the new character of London Road and to reduce through traffic in Yaxley.

### **Planning Policy**

2.4 The area of land to the south of Hampton has been identified as one of the locations for a new township in the recently published Peterborough's Submission Core Strategy. There are still further processes that the City Council has to go through (possibly taking more than a year) before their Core Strategy is adopted as council policy. Even without a firm backing to this proposal, it cannot be argued that this application is premature and the City Council is obliged to determine it. A planning decision for this proposal could be given in advance of the adoption of the Core Strategy. However the City Council must be content that their policy regarding the identification of this land is a sound one otherwise their decision could be challenged.

2.5 There is an opportunity for this Council to make representations to the City Council on the Core Strategy but they must be on the basis that their strategy is unsound. The closing date for representations is the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2010.

### **3. COMMENTS**

3.1 In the opinion of the Council there are a number of issues that still need to be satisfactorily addressed. They are set out below:-

#### **Issue 1: The need to ensure the retention of Yaxley as a village in a rural setting**

The road layout through the proposed development, and the close proximity of new development to the east of the village, together with the alteration of the character of the approach to the village along the A15 from Normans Cross with the inevitable removal of vegetation, could result in Yaxley and its approach being consumed into an urban extension with the loss of the village's identity. This aspect of the proposed master plan needs to be re-evaluated.

## **Issue 2: The urban design process**

It is not considered that the matters described above were evaluated sufficiently thoroughly in arriving at the developer's illustrative master plan. In their site evaluation and in the structural elements that influence the development concept there is no mention of the character of the vegetation along the A15 and the rural nature of the approach to Yaxley. The developer appears to have decided on the road network, justified it by traffic impact and continued the principle of frontage development onto the A15 as in Hampton (a development on brown field land) without having regard to the impact on the character of the surrounding countryside area.

## **Issue 3: Transport/traffic matters**

Whilst measures are needed to discourage through traffic from using the A15 there does not appear to be a convincing argument for the closure of the A15 by a bus gate situated to the north of Yaxley. The bypass that is proposed is not attractive enough to encourage car users to use it (being located through an urban area) and in its current position will result in a likely over engineered junction arrangement to the detriment of the current rural character of the A15. The result will probably be that traffic will be encouraged to travel through Yaxley and Farcet and then on to the Frank Perkins highway to the detriment of two communities.

## **Issue 4: The benefits to Yaxley and Huntingdonshire**

It is recognised that there could be benefits to Yaxley and Huntingdonshire by the closer proximity of services and increased access to facilities situated in Gt Haddon. Yaxley will benefit if children are able to use the new secondary school which is even closer to the village than the Hampton one. The experience of Hampton has been different. The development of a District centre with a 4000sqm convenience store could be seen as a benefit to some but a disadvantage to existing retailers in the village. It should also be recognised that facilities to be provided in the Gt Fen project to the south of Yaxley will benefit this nearby large growth area and better access to the Gt Fen area will be needed to be provided as part of the development.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 This Council will be seeking further meetings with the City Council to discuss these issues as the application is processed. A strong case should be made to Peterborough to rethink the master plan to lessen the physical impact of the development on the village of Yaxley and its approach from the south west. There is also a need to resolve the bypass issue and bus gate as part of the reconsideration of the master plan.
- 4.2 There will be a considerable demand on section 106 monies and whilst this Council may be justified in taking a share particularly for green infrastructure links it may not amount to a significant amount. The secondary school issue is going to be difficult to resolve with two education authorities and recent catchment areas changes in the City.

4.3 This Council has no specific comments to make on the employment application.

**5. RECOMMENDATION**

5.1 That Members:

Endorse continuing engagement with the City in order to address the issues of the master plan, transport matters, and the likely benefits accruing from the development relating to this application as identified in paragraph 3.1 above.

**Background Papers:**

**Peterborough's Submission Core Strategy**

**Planning application for Gt Haddon township and associated documents**

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