

Comments on Routes and Access Points

Firstly some general comments on the information submitted by KMC.

Despite their undoubted resources the company does not seem to have assessed the routes, access points and crossings on anything other than plan and google earth.

This does not show any of the subtle features found on the ground and which takes absolutely no account of the topography of the site and thus the vertical sight lines and stopping sight distances involved.

For a contract of such duration and involving not only employees cars and vans but a considerable number of HGV movements it would not be unreasonable for any new access points and some key junctions to have been the subject of a stage 1 safety audit at the very least which would necessitate site visits.

In respect of the exceptional loads that are being taken to the BESS sites the topography becomes even more important due to the length and potentially low ground clearance of the trailers used for such loads. Merely applying auto-track software to junctions does not take any of this into account.

It should be noted that the opinions offered in this document are personal opinions made with the background of over 45 years' experience working as a highways Engineer mostly in Northamptonshire and as a resident of Earls Barton an intimate knowledge of the layout and history of the roads and junctions discussed. As an individual and as part of the Stop Green Hill group we do not have access to the vast resources of consultancies available to the applicant and we are frankly surprised at the lack of detail in respect of highway matters.

I have looked at a number of the sites in the north of the project and would comment as follows.

Green Hill A

Access A1. This is from the A43 via a roundabout and a modest but two way carriageway and provided the access point itself is properly constructed with visibility should not pose a great problem. This route already takes articulated vehicles to a yard part way along.

Crossing A1 W and E. This crosses a single track rural road and will require good approach visibility.

Green Hill A2

Access is from the A43 via Kettering Road Walgrave and again is a fairly straight two way road thus requiring a suitable visibility splay at the access point. Of more concern is the increase in site traffic at the A43 junction which is a standard minor to A road T junction

with turning protection on the main carriageway. Large vehicles attempting to turn right onto the A43 in any numbers may present a hazard to traffic on the main road and it would be preferable to ban the HGV right turn for the duration of the contract and require all vehicles to go to the adjacent roundabout to make the turn to the south.

Access to Green Hill B

This is from the A43 via a roundabout and is therefore acceptable

Compound CC1

This would appear to require a new access onto the A43. This road is already notorious for the number and severity of road traffic collisions so any new access would need to be properly constructed and subjected to the Road Safety Audit process to the satisfaction of the Highway Authority to be considered safe.

Green Hill C

Access C1. This effectively creates a cross roads at an existing T junction that is very well used as an access to the popular Beckworth Emporium shop and garden centre. It is also a very popular 'rat-run' for commuter traffic wishing to access the A4500 and the A45.

It should be noted that the approach to this junction from the west is on a significant uphill gradient within the national speed limit. The curvature and topography of the road severely reduces forward visibility from that direction and correspondingly the stopping sight distance from 60 mph is unlikely to be available.

I consider that the current speed limit and uncontrolled nature of that junction would lead to an unreasonable increase in the likelihood of a road traffic collision and that suitable measures to regulate this junction will be required.

Access D1, D2, D3, D4, E1

These are all from Highfield Rd that runs from Sywell Road into Mears Ashby village. This road is of insufficient width to accommodate large vehicles in two way movement. It is a strictly rural carriageway that has been 'widened by use' over time and as such has extremely weak edges on both sides with little or no full depth construction.

This carriageway is most certainly not adequate for the proposed use to which it will be put. It is also a main access to the Grange Farm and is widely used by equestrian traffic.

That is the limit of the roads to the northern sites that I have examined in any detail.

I have also looked at the exceptional load route that will come through Brafield and Cogenhoe. On that I would comment as follows.

Having exited Brafield and made the right turn towards Cogenhoe the vehicle will have to cross two sets of low hanging local electricity supply cables that may well be lower than the overall height of the load. Having reached the centre of Cogenhoe at the Station Rd junction the auto-track shows the load passing to the right of the central island. Whilst there is sufficient width to do this there is also the presence of a kerbed section that will need to be overridden to make the turn. It is anticipated the some protection and other civil engineering works will be required to make this possible.

Once onto Station Road/Whiston Road there is a steep and windy downhill section exiting Cogenhoe with a lot of overhanging mature trees. It would not be acceptable to cause any undue damage to these trees

The above has been written in good faith and, as stated, with the benefit of a working lifetime as a Highway and Road Safety Engineer. My opinions are mine alone and also as stated are not supported by any survey work either topographic or statistical which would require resources not available to me.

I remain, however, concerned at the apparent lack of detailed work undertaken by the consultants. Their documentation is heavy on numerical detail but not on how the sites and access to them will be regulated in real terms. It is all well and good to offer scheduled and timed access for deliveries but in reality that doesn't work and there is no detail of where HGV's would wait for their 'turn' to access the sites or where they are intended to go overnight.

Overnight lorry parking in Northamptonshire is at a premium and there are already an excessive number of lorries overnighing illegally on trading estates.

Road condition. I know that many of the roads apart from the Principal and primary network are in poor condition. I do not consider it acceptable to merely state that there will be a before and after condition survey with any damage 'attributed to the works' being repaired afterwards. Many of the rural roads will suffer unacceptable damage during the execution of the contract and will need repair by the Highway Authority at public expense with little or no chance of the costs being reimbursed.

I would propose instead that a commuted sum be lodged with the Highway Authority ring fenced to works on the designated roads which would address this situation.

Prepared by

Nicholas G B Chapman I.Eng F.I.H.E DMS

06/10/2025