

**T & CP Act 1990
Section 78 Appeal
APP/Y2810/A/08/2083322/NWF
APP/M9570/A/08/2083327/NWF**

**Land at Church Fields
Long Buckby Road
Daventry**

**Rebuttal Evidence
Infrastructure Issues**

CHL 15

**In respect of:
Proof of Evidence of Mr Simon Bowers
Daventry District Council**

**On behalf of
Croudace Homes Ltd
The House Trustees Ltd
& Lower Thrupp Ltd
(the Appellants)**

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**Town and Country Planning Act 1990
Appeals by Croudace Homes Ltd, The House Trustees Ltd
& Lower Thrupp Ltd
Land at Church Fields, Long Buckby Road, Daventry**

REBUTTAL EVIDENCE: INFRASTRUCTURE ISSUES

In respect of:

**Proof of Evidence of Mr Simon Bowers
Daventry District Council**

Land at Church Fields, Long Buckby Road, Daventry

1.0 INSTRUCTIONS AND INTRODUCTION

1.1 This rebuttal evidence has been prepared by Stuart Michael Atkinson of Stuart Michael Associates Limited on behalf of Croudace Homes, the House Trustees and Lower Thrupp Limited (the Church Fields Appellants).

1.2 The rebuttal evidence follows the same section and/or paragraph numbers used in Mr Simon Bowers' Proof of Evidence (DDC 22).

2.0 REBUTTAL

2.1 The Appellants and I have considered the Proof of Evidence submitted by Mr Simon Bowers and the comments, in response, are hereafter directed only towards paragraphs 3.8 to 3.19.2 of his evidence. This relates to his submissions on Personal Rapid Transport (PRT).

2.2 In paragraph 3.9 Mr Bowers states that achieving the necessary sustainability in the case of Daventry will be challenging and that a different approach (paragraph 3.11) will be required at Daventry. He states (3.12) his Council's view that Personal Rapid Transport (PRT) has the potential to achieve a highly sustainable form of transport.

2.3 In paragraph 3.13 reference, inter alia, is made to a test track in Cardiff and a PRT system at Heathrow Airport.

2.4 In paragraphs 3.15 to 3.18 Mr Bowers recounts the background to the studies commissioned by DDC and the position it has reached in terms of a procurement process. Despite all of this Mr Bowers states (3.19) that it would not be appropriate to suggest planning obligations to bind developments to the use of PRT. The Appellants and I concur with this last statement.

- 2.5 The Appellants and I consider that a number of comments need to be made in response to the above evidence of Mr Bowers.
- 2.5.1 Firstly, the existing highways infrastructure at Daventry is of a high standard and all of the principal transport assessments referred to at this Inquiry indicate that the network currently has substantial reserve capacity. This has influenced existing travel patterns and there has been little disincentive to use the car (relative cost of travel by bus/rail and reasonably priced parking availability at the town centre). The frequency of the current bus services at Daventry is for the most part only hourly or greater.
- 2.5.2 Notwithstanding the above, data contained in the 2001 Census (as referred to in the TA that was submitted with the Church Fields planning application at paragraphs 3.26, 3.27 and 4.5) demonstrates that the travel to work trends at Daventry compare favourably to Northampton as a whole; higher rates of walking and cycling and circa 60 percent of worktrips captured in Daventry town and 70 percent within the District. In sustainability terms, Daventry can be ranked highly on the basis of the previously recorded journey to work statistics.
- 2.5.3 Personal Rapid Transit has not been proven in the UK in terms of its operation or feasibility in the public domain. The Cardiff authorities have not pursued a scheme. The system at Heathrow Airport is in an enclosed and secure commercial environment. It does not have unrestricted public access.
- 2.5.4 Government policy is directed at looking at alternatives to building new roads but this is primarily in relation to improving road performance through better network management and demand management techniques and by improved public transport. Travel Plans are also a major feature of the demand management approach.
- 2.5.5 Not mentioned in paragraph 3.18 of Mr Bowers' evidence is the fact that DDC is actually pursuing a pilot PRT scheme within the existing built area of Daventry. This would provide the opportunity to prove or otherwise whether such a system can be practicable as a public asset and in terms of its operation, maintenance and viability.

- 2.5.6 Subject to the necessary planning and Transport & Works Act procedures and fundamentally there being funding availability, it is unlikely that a pilot scheme could be up and running within 7 years.
- 2.5.7 Therefore there is, at this time, some considerable doubt as to the programme and to confirmation of any likely funding for a pilot scheme let alone the possibility or feasibility of further extensions of a PRT system being provided to the Appeal Sites.
- 2.5.8 The proposed developments if consented will proceed well in advance of a Pilot PRT Scheme. The Appeal Sites will need to make provisions for public transport in the conventional sense and this is the strategy agreed in principle with NCC. Once provided, the travel patterns with regard to public transport usage will be established and further encouraged through the Travel Plans.
- 2.6 Whilst Mr Bowers does not propose that planning obligations should bind the developments to the use of PRT, he seeks (paragraph 3.19.1) that monies otherwise to be used for bus measures or additional road capacity should instead be directed towards PRT. Secondly, he proposes that any development which is permitted should be required to accommodate PRT routing within it.
- 2.7 The Appellants will commit to a capped contributions towards public transport and off-site highways contributions. These must meet with the tests of Circular 05/2005. It is the Appellants' and my view that the provision of PRT at the Appeal Site is not necessary to enable planning consent to be granted, neither is it a reasonable planning requirement.
- 2.8 The Appeal Site will provide movement corridors for pedestrian, cyclists, buses and other motorised vehicles. Safeguarding further land for what is currently a speculative and unproven transport proposal is not considered to be a practicable proposition. It would represent an unacceptable constraint on site design.

- 2.9 Adjacent to the Appeal Site, the proposed corridor for the B4036 realignment and the link/principal access from it to the proposed District Centre can provide the scope for future public transport enhancements (dedicated lanes for buses or possibly PRT if its feasibility is ever proven). However, within the Appeal Site it is considered that the principles for access and movement (including public transport (buses)) are appropriate and that the Appeals should be determined on this basis.
- 2.10 Consequently it is the Appellants' view that the propositions put forward by Mr Bowers (paragraphs 3.19.1 and 3.19.2) (based upon an unproven transport system that has no planning status, certainty or committed funding) are impractical and therefore should not be treated as material considerations at this Inquiry.

END