

Dalton Development

Response to Transport Assessment Ref 2030831 and Framework Travel Plan Ref 2030825

Tony Bruce has been working closely with Topcliffe Parish Council to try to minimise the effect of the proposed Dalton Development on Topcliffe and Asenby.

This email, sent to Hamish Robertshaw, who prepared the Transport assessment for the developers identifies the clear issues facing our villages should the development go ahead in its current form.

Topcliffe Parish Council fully endorses this report.

Dear Hamish

As you know from my previous correspondence I am keen for this proposed development to go ahead whilst not creating additional negative impacts on the Village, Conservation Area and Highway Weight Restricted Area of Topcliffe where I live.

We already suffer from the adverse impacts of previous developments at the Dalton Industrial Estate, particularly HGVs and large volumes of single occupier employee cars through the village. As a village we do not want these exacerbated by the new development.

I have therefore reviewed in detail the Transport Assessment itself, the Framework Travel Plan; and both in the context of the entire suite of documents submitted. I have both some serious concerns and some suggested solutions which I wish to share with you so that these can be addressed as part of the planning process.

I will start with what I have derived and concluded to be the practical impact on traffic in Topcliffe from your own modelling in the Transport Assessment, and in the context of the wider suite of planning documents.

You will quickly see from the information below that what you are modelling has a major adverse impact on Topcliffe village and Conservation Area and on the road safety and enjoyment of life in the village. The modelling numbers are not consistent with the implicit assumptions stated in the narrative, particularly regarding the principal access and egress routes being directly onto the A168 at the Topcliffe/Dalton junction. The modelling shows 35% of all New Development traffic travelling through Topcliffe village centre. The total volumes of traffic modelled also appear to be significantly understated in the context of the 850-1000 on site jobs to be created. They show only in the region of 125 arrivals in the AM Peak Hour and 120 departures in the PM Peak Hour via Dalton Lane/A167 T junction. It is stated that the modelling is before the impact of the Travel Plan so this does not explain the difference. Having read the Travel Plan it is unconvincing that it will have any real impact on either total traffic volumes; or routing traffic appropriately directly onto the A168 and SRN. Combined with our current experience of previous developments the submitted Travel Plan gives no real confidence that it will have any impact on how 1000 people travelling to work on the new site, will avoid having a major adverse impact on Topcliffe Village and Conservation Area.

What the Modelling Figures Mean for Topcliffe Village Centre/Conservation Area

I have read the narrative in the report and undertaken my own analysis of the Figures included in the Appendixes.

The following narrative statements are most relevant:

“6.4.4 Table 6-2 demonstrates that the development proposals are forecast to generate the following vehicular trips during the highway network peak hours: □ AM Peak – 137 Arrivals and 23 Departures – 160 Two-Way Trips; and □ PM Peak – 25 Arrivals and 131 Departures – 156 Two-Way Trips. NB these are different from the numbers I have quoted above as some of this traffic is modelled to travel through Dalton Village.”

It is stated this is modelled using a similar development elsewhere and what are claimed as worst case assumptions regarding the type of use and peak hours etc.

“6.6.2 It should be noted that the trips calculated to be generated by the site have not taken account of potential reductions in trip generation as a result of the Travel Plan measures to be implemented on site, which will invariably reduce the number of estimated car-based trips.”

“6.5.7The remaining vehicles will continue west towards Topcliffe, totalling 35% of vehicular trips”.

My own analysis of the Modelling on Figures 2, 6 and 7 of the Transport Assessment shows the practical implications for Topcliffe village traffic levels are:

In Topcliffe Village Centre (A167) Heading East towards the new Development:

In the Morning Peak Hour:

- there will be an 48 extra vehicles travelling East through the Village Centre
- Almost 1 extra vehicle per minute
- This is a 53% increase in traffic through Topcliffe Village centre heading to Dalton Industrial Estate on top of the Base figures in Figure 2 of 90 (98-8)
- 48/78 (61%) of the New Development vehicles approaching Dalton Lane from the West will come through Topcliffe Village (with only 30 coming from the A168N sliproad)
- 48/125 (38%) of all the New Development vehicles approaching Dalton Lane (for the New Development) in total from the West or East(North) will come through Topcliffe Village
- The additional total 125 New Development vehicles arriving at Dalton Lane from the A167 looks wholly inconsistent and understated in the context of the stated development of 850-1000 new jobs on site, even when 24/7 working is taken into account.

Additionally:

- If as stated on Figure 6, 35% of all accessing and egressing vehicles will route through Topcliffe Village centre this could amount to an extra 700 vehicle movements a day (based on 1000 return car journeys) ; plus HGVs and service vehicles
- In the PM peak are 9 modelled extra New Development vehicles. This is not consistent with 850-1000 extra jobs being created, including 24/7 operations.
- The figures above are not consistent with the principal access/egress routes stated in the narrative as being the A168 and SRN or with the A167 “providing vehicular travel to nearby

residential areas” . Only the villages of Topcliffe, Asenby, Rainton, Baldersby and Sandhutton would reasonably require access through Topcliffe village.

- In the Peak AM hour the volume of traffic accessing Dalton Lane from the A167 from both directions will increase by 125 vehicles, on top of the Base of 433 vehicles, being a 29% increase.
- The above additional traffic figures are not consistent with the additional 850-1000 on site jobs stated in the application and appear to significantly underestimate additional traffic at all points.

In Topcliffe Village Centre (A167) Heading West from the New Development

In the Afternoon Peak Hour:

- there will be an extra 46 vehicles travelling West through the village Centre
- Almost 1 extra vehicle per minute
- This is a 37% increase in traffic through Topcliffe Village Centre heading from Dalton Industrial Estate on top of the Base figure in Figure 2 of 125 (320-195)
- 46/91 (50%) of the New Development vehicles exiting Dalton Lane and heading West will travel through Topcliffe Village (with only 45 accessing the A168N)
- 46/120 (38%) of all the New Development vehicles exiting Dalton Lane heading in either direction from Dalton Lane/A167 T junction will come through Topcliffe
- The total exiting New Development vehicles of 120 exiting Dalton Lane at the peak PM hour looks wholly inconsistent and understated in the context of 850-1000 new jobs on site, even when 24/7 working is taken into account

Additionally:

- If as stated on Figure 6, 35% of all accessing and egressing vehicles will route through Topcliffe Village centre this could amount to an extra 700 vehicle movements a day (based on 1000 return car journeys) ; plus HGVs and service vehicles
- In the AM peak there will be 8 modelled extra New Development vehicles heading West through Topcliffe from Dalton. This again is not consistent with the 850-1000 extra jobs being created.
- The figures above are not consistent with the principal access/egress routes stated as being the A168 and SRN or with the A167 “providing vehicular travel to nearby residential areas”. Only the villages of Topcliffe, Asenby, Rainton, Baldersby and Sandhutton would reasonably require egress through Topcliffe village.
- In the Peak PM hour the volume of traffic egressing Dalton Lane onto the A167 in both directions will increase by 120 vehicles, on top of a Base of 499 vehicles, being a 24% increase.
- The above additional traffic figures are not consistent with the additional 850-1000 on site jobs stated in the application and appear to significantly underestimate additional traffic at all points.

Conclusions from the Modelling

It is clear from the above that there are serious adverse implications for Topcliffe and the local area of this Development proceeding based on the implications of the modelling done.

Based on the above analysis I do not share the Transport Consultants Conclusions as follows:

7.2.1 The impact of the development generated traffic on the surrounding area has been shown to be minimal and it is therefore concluded that the proposals could be accommodated without resulting in a detrimental or severe impact upon the network.

8.1.6 Given the nature of the site it is considered that whilst there is restricted accessibility by sustainable means, the site is located in an area that has good links to nearby residential areas by cycle as well as direct links to the main roads which run adjacent to the site, including A168 and A1(M). It is therefore considered the proposals accord with current national and local transport policies, including those set out within the Hambleton District Council Core Strategy, the North Yorkshire Local Transport Plan 4 and the NPPF

8.1.7 The development proposals based on 60,000m² B2 units are forecast to generate some 160 and 156 two-way vehicle trips during the AM and PM peak hours respectively.

8.1.9 The impact of the development-generated traffic on the surrounding area has been shown to be of a negligible impact on queuing and delay and it is therefore concluded that the development proposals could be accommodated without resulting in a significant detrimental impact upon the network. This is in line with the severe impact test within NPPF

8.1.10 Overall, it is considered that the site is in a suitable location for the proposed residential development and that there are no overriding highways or transport reasons that should prevent the granting of planning consent for the proposals.

My Proposals to Address the Concerns Raised

I am concerned at the reference in 8.1.10 above to “the proposed residential development”. As I understood this to be an industrial and distribution development. If the modelling has been based on residential then it will not provide correct forecasts on which to plan. There is a need to confirm the accuracy and validity of the modelling in this report and to explain both the reference to residential development but also the inconsistencies in vehicle numbers and jobs proposed and the stated principal use of the A168 but the 35% flow into the residential Topcliffe Conservation Area.

I do believe that with the following changes this application can be made to meet the national and local policy requirements referred to in the document, and can command the support of local people:

- Appropriate measures to address HGVs and light service vehicles
- A more credible, considered, implemented and enforced Travel Plan to address total volumes of traffic accessing and egressing the site; more consistent with Government sustainability policy; and backed by enforceable Planning Conditions
- A more credible, considered, implemented and enforced Travel Plan to ensure that the A168 and SRN is not only available but is actually and consistently used as the dominant and principal route of access and egress, with local routes reserved for genuinely local traffic; backed by enforceable Planning Conditions

There are experts in the field who I am sure can address these concerns. As a local resident my suggestions include:

- The proposals I have made separately in response to the Signage Audit and Strategy document are acted upon prior to any development taking place, including for HGV control and signposting all Northallerton traffic to the A168.

- In the context of the additional Peak volumes of traffic modelled at the Dalton Lane/A167 T junction consideration be given to road layout and traffic control measures to avoid congestion and avoid vehicles using Topcliffe village as a “rat run” to avoid right turn congestion to access the A168 southbound entry slip on egressing the Dalton Lane.
- Consider 20mph speed limit in the Village to slow traffic, given the residential nature of the village and presence of school, nursery and village hall/shop
- There is a need for a far more convincing and creative Travel Plan, learning from success elsewhere, to both minimise total vehicle movements and control the flow of necessary traffic onto the SRN and away from local communities. Measures should include consideration of:
 - collaboration with the bus companies to include the new site on the bus routes, and potentially the whole Dalton Site as this is now a major employment site. I have implemented this with success as an employer.
 - potential for a modern version of the “works bus” from major towns such as Northallerton, Thirsk and Ripon to serve the new development operators or in collaboration with other Dalton employers for the entire site (Alton Towers have such a bus service for employees);
 - direct incentives for car sharing (eg. preferred parking spaces, “free car share parking” schemes, parking charge schemes for single occupancy vehicles.
 - Employer sponsored bicycle schemes, for employee ownership or “Boris bike” type schemes.
- Routes of access and egress assumed in the Transport Assessment (including reliance on the A168/SRN) should be formally agreed and enforced by Planning Condition for all classes of vehicles, including HGVs, light service vehicles and employee cars. This should enshrine the assumption in a Planning Condition. It should prescribe that all access and egress shall be directly via the A168 Topcliffe/Dalton Junction, Dalton Lane and Eldmire lane unless express exemptions are agreed. Such exemptions would include the genuine start/end point and of the employee journey being within a prescribed “nearby residential area” as assumed in 3.2.3 of the report. This should limit employee and other travel through to employees living in a designated zone bounded by Asenby, Rainton, Baldersby, Sandhutton , Topcliffe).
- The Developer should agree by Planning Condition to traction, monitor and account for compliance with these Transport and Travel related Conditions through the FTP. Traction should include through occupier Lease Agreements and subsequent Occupier employment terms and conditions. This is necessary given the additional 1000 jobs, 24/7 working and the high proportions of vehicles modelled by the Developer in this current Transport Assessment as travelling through Topcliffe.
- Hours within which “shift changes “ can occur and are prohibited should be explicitly agreed and be included by Planning Condition in order to avoid employee traffic through the village at unsociable hours, creating risks to pedestrians, sleep disturbance and impacting on enjoyment of village life.

The underlying presumption and emphasis of this proposed Development is that it is sited well and is sustainable because of its direct access and egress to the A168 and the Strategic Road Network at the Topcliffe/Dalton junction. The above suggestions look to give effect to that underlying presumption in a way which is effective and cost effective, sustained and enforceable; hence protecting local communities from its negative impacts.

I remain ready to work with you to share my knowledge and experience of the local situation and to help develop solutions to these concerns which I know are shared by many in the village; and as clearly demonstrated by the Consultation Responses being received by HDC Planning Department.

I will also be sharing this information and suggestions with the Planning and Highways Authorities and with local Councillors so that, together, we can address the issues and see the development proceed with community support.

Regards

Tony Bruce
Topcliffe Resident