

Case ref APP/E0345/Z/24/3341590: Hand Car Wash, 261 London Road, RG1 3NY (LPA ref no 231842) - Inspector Request

Highway Authority Response to the Inspector Request received on 18th September 2024.

The Crashmap data submitted with the Appeal as Appendix G indicates that there have been three incidents recorded over the five year period from 2018 to 2022 involving traffic travelling south-west on the straight stretch of road on the approach to Panel 01 of the Appeal site, and no reported incidents recorded over the same five year period involving traffic travelling north-east on the straight stretch of road on the approach to Panel 02 of the Appeal site.

The appellant contends that the total number of recorded incidents in the vicinity of the Appeal site represents a very low level of incidents, considering the high volumes of traffic on this part of the transport network, and compares favourably with the recorded accident levels further to the south and west at the junction of Kings Road and London Road, where there is a heavy cluster of reported incidents. The Highway Authority agrees with the appellant's summary in regards to the low level of incidents in the vicinity of the Appeal site although it should be noted that there is currently no advertisements or large scale distracting features on this section of the highway network.

The proposed advertisement displays would face towards on-coming traffic travelling each way along A4 London Road, which carries large volumes of traffic, and is one of the main arterial roads into Reading from the east. The appellant states that the highway is commercial in character and well-lit allowing drivers to glance at any advert far in advance without being distracted from the road ahead. However, the Appeal site is located within a mix of commercial and residential properties, some of which have vehicular access directly onto the highway network. The appeal site is also located in close proximity to the London Road/Cholmeley Road signalized junction and pedestrian crossing, where drivers need to take more care given that pedestrians will be crossing at this point. It is considered that the proposed advertisement displays will compete for drivers attention and potentially reduce the effectiveness of the traffic signal.

As stated within the National Planning Policy Guidance (*Paragraph: 067 Reference ID: 18b-067-20140306 Revision date: 06 03 2014*) ***"All advertisements are intended to attract attention but proposed advertisements at points where drivers need to take more care are more likely to affect public safety. For example, at junctions, roundabouts, pedestrian crossings, on the approach to a low bridge or level crossing or other places where local conditions present traffic hazards. There are less likely to be road safety problems if the advertisement is on a site within a commercial or industrial locality, if it is a shop fascia sign, name-board, trade or business sign, or a normal poster panel, and if the advertisement is not on the skyline"***

It is the Highway Authority's view that any additional distraction in the form of elevated large scale illuminated displays are more likely to affect public safety and increase the risk of incidents within the vicinity of the Appeal site. As such, the

proposed advertisements, if allowed, would be a conflict with Reading Borough Local Plan Policies and paragraphs of the NPPG (highlighted above).