Battery Way, Tyseley, Birmingham,

Creation of link road between Battery Way and Reddings Lane and Olton Boulevard West, with formation of signalised junction and landscaping. Demolition of 152 Reddings Lane.

Applicant: Birmingham City Council
Transportation Services, 1 Lancaster Circus, Queensway, Birmingham, B4 7DJ

Agent:

Recommendation
Approve Subject To Conditions

1. Proposal

1.1. Full planning application for the creation of a new link road that would form an extension to the existing Battery Way, which would provide a through link from Warwick Road to Reddings Lane. The road would comprise of a 7.3m single lane carriageway in both directions, which flares out to a maximum road width of 9.5m to accommodate right turn lanes at key access points and the signal junction at Reddings lane, with 1.8m wide footways and 1.5m wide segregate cycle lanes. To the east the road would tie into a new traffic signal controlled junction, incorporating pedestrian facilities, with Reddings Lane and Olton Boulevard West, replacing the existing mini-roundabout arrangement. To the west the road would tie back into Battery Way. Both sides of the link road would include a 3m landscaping strip consisting of hedges, shrubs and trees.

1.2. The link road would run from the existing Battery Way broadly parallel with Weston Lane, through the former industrial land to Reddings Lane to the immediate north of Al Furqan School where the gated entrance to the former Yuasa Battery Site is positioned. The proposal also requires the demolition of 152 Reddings Lane, to the immediate north of this gated entrance and a new gable end and garden boundary works to 150 Reddings Lane are included in the works.

1.3. The proposed link road is a long standing proposal and has been subject to a historic Highway Improvement Line dating back to the 1920s. The current proposal, for the majority of its route, follows this Highway Improvement Line with a minor alteration onto adjoining land owned by A&J Mucklows Plc. This has been agreed with the landowners and the new road would provide access to the proposed Mucklow Business Park (previously known as Signal Point) with two junctions to the south. An indicative layout of Mucklow Business Park is included on the submitted landscape strategy proposals but will be subject to a separate planning application.
for approximately 340,000 sq. ft. of industrial floor space and is anticipated to be submitted in the near future.

1.4. The new link road would be funded by the Government as part of the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Growth Deal. The funding would be provided through the Local Growth Fund programme administered by the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership.

1.5. The application site is largely within the ownership of the City Council, though there are small areas of land outside their ownership. The City Council and Mucklow have agreed the principle of a land swap of the land required for their respective proposals. There is a triangle of land owner by the Weston Works Company and discussions are on-going with the owner. The City Council has also given approval to progress a compulsory purchase order if these negotiations do not reach a satisfactory conclusion.


1.7. The proposals have been screened under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 and there is no requirement for an Environmental Assessment.

1.8. Link to Documents

2. Site & Surroundings

2.1. The application site cuts across the wider former Yuasa Battery site, which has been cleared. To the northwest is the existing Battery Way as well as vehicular access to Weston Lane, which runs to the northeast and consists of a mixture of traditional terrace housing as well as long established small and medium sized industrial premises. At the junction of Battery Way and Weston Way is an area of Public Open Space with a small play area. To the east is Reddings Lane and its junction with Olton Boulevard West, surrounded by a mixture of housing and Eatons industrial site. To the south is the majority of the cleared Yuasa Battery Site, as well as Al Furquan Primary School and a currently vacant industrial building (205 Formans Road). To the west are modern industrial buildings and the Cole Valley Park.

Site location

3. Planning History

3.1. Application site and wider former Yuasa Battery Site:

3.2. 09/08/2007 - 2007/02828/PA. Outline planning application for industrial development with use classes B1(c) Light Industry, B2 general Industrial and B8 Storage and Distribution – Approved with conditions and unilateral agreement

3.3. 20/12/2007 - 2007/05636/PA. Reserved matters submission for the layout, scale and appearance for Phase 1 – Erection of 2 units for uses B1c, B2 and B8, a
gatehouse and internal access road in accordance with outline consent – Approved with conditions.

3.4. 22/01/2008 - 2007/07006/PA. Reserved matters submission for the approval of landscaping details for Phase 1 – Approve subject to conditions.

3.5. 12/08/2010 - 2010/03120/PA. Application to replace extant outline consent 2007/02828/PA – approved with conditions and unilateral agreement.

3.6. 08/10/2013 - 2013/04953/PA. Application for a new planning permission to replace extant planning permission 2010/03120/PA [Outline planning application for industrial development with use classes B1(c) - Light Industry, B2 - General Industrial and B8 Storage & Distribution] in order to extend the time limit for implementation – approved with conditions and unilateral agreement.

3.7. Application site, wider former Yuasa Battery Site and Eaton Electric:

3.8. 05/09/2012 - 2011/08182/PA. Outline consent (all matters reserved except access) for a mixed use development, including demolition of all buildings and erection of class A1 food store (up to 6350 sq m), small, medium and large class A1 non-bulky retail units (up to 6500 sq m), class A3 restaurant (up to 500 sq m), PFS, class B1/B2/B8 industrial, distribution – approved with conditions and Section 106 Agreement.

4. Consultation/PP Responses

4.1. Transportation Development – No objection subject to Construction Management Plan. Advise that detail design, including required road safety audits, delivery process / agreements / programme are still to be confirmed. The proposal will also require a formal (Highways Act) extinguishment of some 60 metres of the existing adopted Battery Way.

4.2. Regulatory Services – No objection.

4.3. Leisure Services – No objection to loss of public open space due to strategic importance of the proposal and financial compensation of £71,320 required.

4.4. Severn Trent Water – No objection subject to drainage condition.

4.5. Environment Agency – No response received.

4.6. West Midlands Police – No objection.

4.7. Local houses and commercial premises, residents associations, Councillors and MPs consulted with site and press notices posted.

4.8. 2 representations received from local residents objecting on the following grounds:

- Harder to cross the road for children going to nearby schools.
- Increase in noise.
- Increase in rubbish.
- Unclear why the application has been made due to existing traffic levels and parking problems.
5. **Policy Context**


6. **Planning Considerations**

6.1. **Principle**

6.2. The link road is a long established City Council proposal to provide access and assist in the industrial redevelopment of the extensive former Yuasa Battery Site (over 7.5ha) to create new job opportunities. This is in accordance with the NPPF as well as the UDP and Draft BDP to contribute towards a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure. The proposal also seeks to improve traffic distribution through the area and remove through traffic from Weston Lane as well as improve traffic flow at the currently congested junction of Reddings Lane and Olton Boulevard West. Furthermore, the provision of segregated cycle lanes would promote and encourage cycling, which is also consistent with the Birmingham Cycle Revolution initiative.

6.3. In the past there have been a number of proposals and applications relating to the link road as well as the industrial redevelopment of the former Yuasa Battery Site. The most recent scheme formed part of wider development including the redevelopment of the nearby Eaton Electric site on Reddings Lane to provide, amongst others, an ASDA supermarket (2011/08182/PA). This approval is now not to be built-out and the link road is now to be funded via the LEP and Mucklow are to submit a separate application for their proposed Mucklow Business Park.

6.4. **Traffic:**

6.5. A traffic impact assessment has been undertaken to consider the implications of the proposed link road on the surrounding local highway network. This also includes the traffic flows associated with the industrial redevelopment of the adjoining former Yuasa Battery Site. It concludes that the local highway network and proposed access road would be able to accommodate the additional traffic expected during weekday peak hour periods, even under a worst case scenario when all red pedestrian stage is called at each cycle. In reality, not all red pedestrian phase would be called and this would increase operational capacity. The Transport Assessment has demonstrated that the new link road would have no adverse impact on highway safety.

6.6. The proposal has taken into account a zebra crossing to the north of the junction of Weston Road and Reddings Lane, which has recently been installed.

6.7. **Visual Amenity:**

6.8. The appearance of a new road would be appropriate within this commercial context and the application includes a landscape strategy that includes the planting of 36 civic avenue trees (lime) and 51 indigenous fruiting trees (maple, elder, cherry and hawthorn) as well as formal and wild hedgerows. This landscape strategy is
appropriate for this new strategic link road and would provide a high quality appearance for the locality and the adjoining development site.

6.9. The proposal includes the demolition of 152 Reddings Lane and the proposed new end gable to 150 Redding Lane would be rendered to match the front elevation of the property would have no adverse impact on visual amenity.

6.10. **Neighbour Amenity:**

6.11. A noise assessment report has been submitted in support of the application, which considered existing and predicted future traffic flow and speed data. It identifies that residents of the northern side of Weston Lane would experience a noticeable reduction in noise whilst those on the southern side would see a similar improvement to the front of their properties at the expense of a small increase to the rear facades. The occupants of the properties on Redding Lane north of the new junction with Battery Way would see no significant change at the front of their properties, but those closest to the junction would see up to a 6dB change to the rear, which is significant. The report identifies that the provision of a barrier along a stretch of the north side of the new link road close to its junction with Reddings Lane would partially mitigate against this as well as improve the noise impact on the rear facades of nearby properties on Weston Lane. The barrier would be 2m high and, for example, if an acoustic fence it could be located behind the landscaping with no adverse impact on visual amenity. Regulatory Services concur with the report’s findings and raise no objection.

6.12. **Loss of Public Open Space:**

6.13. The proposal would result in the loss of some 0.17ha of public open space to the southern tip of the Weston Lane Public Open Space. The UDP advises that proposals which would result in the loss of open space will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances, taking into account the availability of public open space nearby, its quality and how well it meets local needs. The standard of 2 hectares of public open space per 1000 population will be used to assess the adequacy of existing public open space provision across the City. Springfield Ward currently has 1.76 hectares of public open space per 1000 population. It is argued that the area of POS affected is both small and incidental to the main area of public open space that contains the play area. Other material considerations that hold significant weight is the historical highway improvement line, which outdates the creation of this area of Public Open Space and the strategic importance of the proposal to the Council. In light of the above, it is felt that the proposed link road represent exceptional circumstances with far reaching benefits to the immediate area as well as the wider locality and the City.

6.14. Leisure Services recognise the strategic importance of the proposals in assisting regeneration and job creation and raise no objection. Financial compensation of £71,320 is sought for the loss of the Public Open Space but in light of the funding source of the project, this is not feasible.

6.15. **Other Matters:**

6.16. The submitted Flood Risk Assessment highlights that the site falls within Flood Zone 1 and is at low probability of flooding. Furthermore, there are no historic reports of flooding from any source within the development site. Surface water management is crucial and the surface water would be collected in gullies connected to a highway drain and attenuation tanks with an appropriate control discharge into the existing
surface water sewer. Subject to the provision of the proposed sustainable drainage system there should be no flood related risks.

6.17. An air quality assessment has been submitted in support of the application and this has illustrated that residents in the local area would not be exposed to air pollution concentrations above the UK air quality objectives. Regulatory Services agree with these findings.

6.18. The application includes an Ecological Report as well as a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, the latter of which also included the adjoining Mucklows Business Park site. These note that the derelict nature of the site has enable areas of ecological interest to develop (e.g. piles of rubble). The development of the new road would result in the loss of these, though they are not of high quality. Suitable ecological enhancements have been suggested in the form of neutral hay meadow on the highway verge as well as, amongst others, native flowering shrubs. Your Ecologist recommends that the proposed landscape strategy is amended to incorporate these suggested ecological enhancements. Whilst the needs to mitigate for the loss of these low quality habitats is a material consideration, it is considered that the need to create an appropriate landscaped appearance to the new link road that will assist in the wider area’s regeneration holds greater weight. The proposed ecological enhancements would have the real potential to appear somewhat barren within this context. However, there should be scope to incorporate such low-key ecological enhancements in less prominent locations on the adjoining Mucklows Business Park.

7. Conclusion

7.1. The proposal would provide a new road link to assist in the bringing forward of strategic industrial redevelopment opportunities, as well as improve traffic distribution and highway safety on the surrounding highway network, improve neighbour amenity and provide an appropriate public realm to this new road. Whilst the scheme would result in the loss of part of an existing area of Public Open Space, the strategic importance of the link road represents exceptional circumstances for its loss. Therefore, the application is in accordance with relevant policy and guidance and planning permission should be granted.

8. Recommendation

8.1. Approve subject to conditions.

1 Requires the prior submission of landscape details based on the landscape strategy
2 Requires the prior submission of acoustic barrier details
3 Requires the prior submission of a construction method statement/management plan
4 Requires the implementation of the Flood Risk Assessment
5 Requires the scheme to be in accordance with the listed approved plans
6 Limits the approval to 3 years (Full)
Figure 1 – Existing road closure on Battery Way

Figure 2 – Location of new junction between the Battery Way link road, Reddings Lane and Olton Boulevard West