

Note / Memo

**HaskoningDHV UK Ltd.
Mobility & Infrastructure**

To: Chichester District Council
From: Sarah Simpson
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Subject: Bus Feasibility Note

1 Introduction

This note is associated with the emerging proposals known as Rickman's Green Village, comprising the development of 600 homes, a two form entry primary school and community facilities close to Crouchland's Farm, 1km south of Plaistow in West Sussex.

At present, the anticipated timescales for the development are:

- Phase 1 – 125 dwellings (commencement on site June 2025, with full occupation by 2028)
- Phase 2 – 475 dwellings (commencement on site May 2027, with full occupation by 2036)
- Primary school (open September 2030 with 60 pupils and reaching full capacity by September 2037)

Also of relevance is the complementary Whole Farm Plan development proposals (which would form the village hub) that have recently been submitted and which comprise farm diversification offering a rural food and retail centre, rural enterprise centre, equestrian centre and glamping site. These activities are expected to generate employment for some 142 full time equivalent staff.

2 Existing Public Transport Provision

The existing bus service on Rickman's Lane offers only off-peak travel opportunities for shopping, personal business or leisure. Two services operate as follows:

- 64 Loxwood – Ifold – Plaistow – Kirdford – Billingshurst – Horsham
(Monday and Thursday; one journey each way, giving 2 hours in Horsham; operated by Compass Travel)
- 69 Alford – Loxwood – Ifold – Plaistow – Billingshurst – Pulborough – Arundel – Worthing
(Tuesday and Friday; one journey each way, giving 2.5 hours in Worthing; Plaistow to Worthing takes 85 minutes; operated by Compass Travel)

Additionally, service 42 Cranleigh – Dunsfold – Godalming – Guildford provides several journeys each way per day (Monday – Saturday), but with just one journey each way running via Plaistow village on Monday – Friday, allowing 2 hours 10 minutes in Guildford or 3 hours in Godalming. Again, this is operated by Compass Travel.

On schooldays, bus service 500 (Compass Travel) conveys pupils to/from The Weald School in Billingshurst. The service is available to the public, arriving Billingshurst at 08:30 and departing at 15:15. The nearest main bus services are accessed from larger places located several miles away, namely:

- Billingshurst – for service 100 to Broadbridge Heath and Horsham or Pulborough, Storrington and Burgess Hill, which operates hourly during the daytime period (Monday – Saturday). Operated by Compass Travel.
- Cranleigh – for services 53/63 to Broadbridge Heath and Horsham (hourly) or Guildford (half-hourly), and hourly on Sunday and evenings. Operated by Stagecoach.

The nearest rail services are as follows:

- Billingshurst – trains (operated by Southern) towards London Victoria and Bognor Regis. Run every 30 minutes; journey time to London 72 or 74 minutes.
- Haslemere – trains (operated by South Western Railway) towards London Waterloo and Portsmouth. 3 times per hour to London and 1 per hour to each of Godalming, Portsmouth and Southsea and Portsmouth Harbour; journey time to London varies between 52 minutes and 1 hour 4 minutes.

Travel to and from Chichester is possible from Billingshurst station, with two trains per hour throughout the day. A change of train is needed at Barnham and overall journey time is about 40 minutes.

3 Travel Demand Considerations

At this stage, the residential development is anticipated to result in some 506 two-way total people trips in the morning peak and 569 two-way people trips in the evening peak. The proposed primary school is estimated to result in approximately 632 and 228 such trips respectively. With the mix of land uses envisaged, these figures are considered to be upper limits, as a proportion of trips will be satisfied through availability of facilities within the overall development (including retail, employment and education).

Work has been carried out, in discussion with West Sussex County Council highways officers, to ascertain the potential distribution and assignment of these trips on the local road network. As a result Billingshurst has been identified as a key destination that could be included on bus services from Rickman's Green Village.

4 Proposed Public Transport Provision

To meet the sustainable travel objectives of the development, any public transport provision will need to be convenient, frequent, responsive to needs, direct and comfortable.

The overall aim in the long term will be to offer a service that is suitably attractive, offering a real alternative to car travel. This will require it to cater for different journey purposes, including employment, shopping, personal business, education and extra-curricular activities, and leisure and recreational activities. The challenges for providing public transport include the distances to desired destinations and the ability to provide comprehensive provision every day of the week and throughout each day.

There is a need for public transport to be able to meet the majority of needs, to avoid people defaulting to car use. However, it will be important to have a detailed public transport plan from the outset, in order that potential residents can see what is on offer and how this will enable them to live more sustainably. Further, there are downstream benefits from providing an improved bus service, as it offers the potential

to reduce impacts by diverting existing road users remote from Rickman’s Green Village, from car to public transport.

The proposals for public transport provision are based on providing as attractive a service as possible, relative to the size and scope of the development. Service design is based around the principles of:

- Efficient deployment of resources
- Offering a range of destinations, but with a focus on the largest potential flows and demands
- Building on and around existing public transport services

It is recognised across the bus industry that to be attractive bus services need to be sufficiently frequent, operate at regular headways (i.e. at the same time past each hour) and comprehensive (i.e. operate throughout the day and evening and at weekends). West Sussex County Council’s Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)¹ demonstrates these points.

4.1 Bus Service Proposal

Billingshurst offers a mix of different facilities and services, including employment, secondary education, shopping, personal business, leisure and recreation. There is also the ability to connect with bus or rail services to other destinations including the 100 to Horsham. As well as serving Rickman’s Green Village, in being operated as registered local bus services the route would also be attractive to other people living along them.

With the above considerations in mind, the feasibility of a shuttle service between Rickman’s Green Village and Billingshurst has been considered in more detail. This would offer a good level of service directly to the nearest key destination, with the potential to connect with trains to various other destinations (including London) and/or bus service 100 to and from Horsham.

By concentrating demand on one destination the shuttle service might improve the chance of being viable in the longer term. Furthermore, by offering connections with service 100 to/from Horsham, the viability of that service might also be improved. An hourly shuttle bus could be provided with one bus, with a more attractive half hourly service requiring two buses. In order to offer connections with existing bus service 100 to/from Horsham, it would be appropriate for a half-hourly shuttle bus to run at the timings shown in the timetable below.

Monday to Saturday											
Rickman’s Green Village	0610	0640	0710	0740	Then at same times past each hour	1840	1910	1940	2010	2110	2210
Billingshurst	0630	0700	0730	0800		1900	1930	2000	2030	2130	2230
Billingshurst	0715	0745	0815	0845		1945	2015	2045	2145	2245	2345
Rickman’s Green Village	0735	0805	0835	0905		2005	2035	2105	2205	2305	0005
Sunday											
Rickman’s Green Village	0710	0810	Then at same times	1710	1810	1910	2010				
Billingshurst	0730	0830		1730	1830	1930	2030				

¹ [West Sussex Bus Service Improvement Plan](#)

Billingshurst	0845	0945	past each hour	1845	1945	2045	2145				
Rickman's Green Village	0905	1005		1905	2005	2105	2205				

This indicative timetable would provide some spare time in Billingshurst for different routeing options to try and achieve:

- Convenient access to the different facilities in the town.
- Optimal interchange location with service 100.
- Access to/from the railway station for rail connections in both directions (towards London and Bognor Regis).

5 Supporting infrastructure

In order for the proposed bus service to be as convenient as possible, it is recommended that it runs into the development itself. As such, a turning place will be provided within the master plan. A turning circle will allow buses to turn without reversing manoeuvres. A well lit bus stop and shelter with seating and adjacent cycle parking will be provided for waiting passengers.

5.1 Fares

It is recommended that the bus service is registered as a local bus service, so it can be used by the public and fares charged, in order to create a revenue stream to help off-set costs. Equally, the operator will be eligible to claim Bus Service Operator Grant (BSOG), a rebate on fuel duty paid. [Note that BSOG is currently under review by the Department for Transport]. English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) passes will also be valid for free travel, and reimbursement for these journeys claimable from each of the local authorities through whose areas the services pass.

In order that bus services are attractive to use, residents of Rickman's Green Village will be provided with free travel, based on showing some proof of eligibility. Equally, the same could be provided to employees at businesses at Crouchland's Farm (the Whole Farm Plan), which would aid recruitment and support that development's Travel Plan ambitions also. In view of the coordination envisaged with existing bus service 100, it will be necessary to negotiate free travel arrangements with the operator and some payment agreed for this, which could be based on records of actual usage.

It is recommended that fares be charged to all other passengers, to help offset some of the costs. Where the new services parallel existing ones, fares should be aligned in order to avoid abstraction from one to another.

The new services will transform levels of public transport available to a number of villages close to Rickman's Green Village, such as Ifold and special low fares could be offered to residents of these places to incentivise usage, thereby supporting the 15 minute community concept for Ifold – Loxwood – Plaistow – Rickman's Green Village - Kirdford.

5.2 Potential complementary measures under consideration

Regardless of how good the provision of bus services is for Rickman's Green Village, it will be challenging to persuade people to use it rather than cars, unless accompanying measures are in place to encourage (or enforce) sustainable travel behaviours. Travel Plans are being developed for the emerging

proposals, to further reinforce the Decide and Provide approach being taken. Measures under consideration to enable and direct people towards bus use include:

- Marketing of houses aimed specifically at attracting people who wish to live a more sustainable lifestyle.
- Charging an annual management fee that helps to fund the bus services.
- Imposing charges for car parking across the site, and the phased removal of on-street car parking over time, as car ownership reduces at Rickman's Green Village.

All of the above measures will be considered and, if viable, provided for within the site's Travel Plan, which is currently under development.

6 Conclusion

This paper has set out the proposal for an enhanced public transport service to connect the proposed Rickman's Green Village with Billingshurst. The size of the development will create modest levels of demand, which may be insufficient to warrant the provision of a more extensive network of bus services.

A service between Rickman's Green Village and Billingshurst would offer most benefits in terms of a link to the nearest town, offering a range of facilities including a rail station, and the opportunity to connect with an existing bus service for onward travel to Broadbridge Heath and Horsham. To be suitably attractive, this would be a half hourly service, which would require two buses, at a cost of approximately £400k p.a. less any fares revenue taken or concessionary travel reimbursement received.