

Bessemer Drive Access to West Stevenage

Further Representations as Invited by the First Secretary of State

Report of Llewelyn Davies Yeang
on behalf of Gabriel Securities Ltd.

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1 About the authors

- 1.1 Llewelyn Davies Yeang is a multidisciplinary company, with significant strengths in planning and urban design. The company has been recognised nationally for the quality of its planning work and in 2003 was named 'Best Private Sector Planning Organisation' at the inaugural London Planning Award sponsored by the Mayor of London, London First and the RTPi. The award was in recognition of Llewelyn Davies Yeang's innovative policy work and track record of delivery of major schemes in central London.
- 1.2 Llewelyn Davies Yeang's reputation as leading thinkers in the development of the Government's new planning and design agendas is widely recognised. In particular, our pioneering studies on housing density, mixed use development, the integration of land use and transport development and urban design best practice are now at the heart of the Government's vision of an Urban Renaissance. Key documents include "Better Places to Live" for ODPM, "Going to Town" for DTLR, the "Urban Design Compendium" for English Partnerships, and "Safer Places: the Planning System and Crime Prevention" for ODPM and the Home Office (see below).
- 1.3 In February 2005 Llewelyn Davies Yeang was awarded a commendation for Planning Consultant of The Year at the RTPi awards. The judges said "The consultancy has continued to extend its ground-breaking conceptual thinking on design quality, density, mixed use, urban capacity and planning out crime into practical applications" and that "there is a depth and solidity to the consultancy's projects and everything it does is well researched. The company has advanced planning thought in a number of areas and demonstrates that it can pull the threads of previously disparate thinking together". This sums up what we deliver: integrated strategic planning drawing on specialist teams of strategic planners, economists, landscape planners, urban designers, statutory planners, transport planners, environmental planners and graphic designers



Guides produced by Llewelyn Davies Yeang

- 1.4 In preparing this report we have examined issues that were raised by the public inquiry inspector (D Lavender, 1st December 20041), and the decision by the First Secretary of State (20th October 20052) in relation to the development of an urban extension west of the A1(M) in Stevenage. Other documents are referenced in the text.

¹ File refs: APP/X1925/V/02/1103811 E1/K1935/2/3/16

² Letter dated 20th October 2005, Ref: APP/X1925/V/02/1103811

2 Introduction and Summary

2.1 This report concerns the use and configuration of Bessemer Drive as one of the two main access roads to the proposed urban extension west of the A1(M) in Stevenage.

2.2 The First Secretary of State, while “*mindful to allow*” proposals for 3,600 dwellings and other development at West Stevenage, said the following:

“53...[T]he Secretary of State agrees with the Inspector’s concern regarding safety, security and crime prevention in relation to the proposed pedestrian and cycle routes beyond the application site to the town centre and in the vicinity of the proposed underpasses at Meadway and Bessemer Drive...[M]easures that would improve the pedestrian and cycle route network from the application site to the town centre would increase the likelihood of journeys being undertaken by means other than the car and would improve personal security. The Secretary of State is therefore seeking further representations from the parties as to whether or not further improvements can be made in order to assist him in consideration of this matter.

...

69...For the reasons given at paragraph 53 above the Secretary of State also invites the applicant and all other parties to make representations on what measures can be taken to improve the current arrangements for pedestrian and cycle route access between the applications site and the town centre and to put forward such proposals as they consider appropriate for his consideration”.³

2.3 Particular regard has been given in this report to issues of safety, security and crime avoidance as advocated in the First Secretary of State’s best practice guidance document “Safer Places”⁴, as well as the aim (in line with sustainable development policy) of achieving a much higher use of non-car modes than is presently the case for Stevenage as a whole. As the invitation from the First Secretary of State makes clear, these matters are inextricably linked.

2.4 The proposal described in this paper, which is illustrated in Appendix 1, is considered to meet the concerns which have been expressed by the Inspector and the Secretary of State in that:

1. it would bring about an enhancement of personal safety and security for pedestrians, cyclists and bus users compared to the schemes considered at the inquiry;
2. it will not preclude or compromise future further improvements to the Bessemer Drive route (for example see Section 6 and Appendix 2);

³ Letter dated 20th October 2005, Ref: APP/X1925/V/02/1103811 paragraphs 68-69.

⁴ Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2004) “Safer Places: The planning system and crime prevention”.

2.5 In preparing this report we have taken full account of the practicalities of the situation and focussed on what is achievable. We consider that the significant improvements proposed are necessary, realistic, can be delivered in parallel with development at Stevenage West, and will not delay the implementation of the planning permission which the First Secretary of State is minded to grant.

3 The Current inadequacies at Bessemer Drive

3.1 This section considers the current situation in Bessemer Drive from the point of view of the Secretary of State's twin concerns in respect of (1) safety and security, and (2) pedestrian and cycle route access, using the relevant government guidance.

'Safer places' – Safety and security

3.2 The best practice guidance relating specifically to the issue of safety and security is 'Safer Places', published by ODPM in 2004.¹ This sets out the attributes of places and spaces that ensure safety and security for users and it can be seen that Bessemer Drive currently lacks many of these as set out below.

(a) Access and movement

Safer places says (page 13) that places should have "well-defined routes, spaces and entrances that provide for convenient movement without compromising security".² However, the route via Bessemer Drive is not well defined, involving a double "dogleg" via a tunnel under Gunnels Wood Road. It is not possible for pedestrians or cyclists to see their "way ahead" across Gunnels Wood Road. This is partly because Bessemer Drive is not aligned with Argyle Way, and partly because of the visual obstruction caused by the traffic barrier in the centre of Gunnels Wood Road.

(b) Structured to avoid conflict between users

The cycle paths available in much of Stevenage do not extend along Bessemer Drive, as a consequence of which cyclists must share the carriageway with general motor traffic, including the current high proportion of heavy goods vehicles. The ways into and out of the tunnel are of generous width but cycles and pedestrians are in conflict especially at turning points.

(c) Surveillance

Whilst 'Safer Places' advises that all publicly accessible spaces are overlooked, this is true of only very little of Bessemer Drive. Activities along the route are commercial or industrial in character with some blank elevations adjacent to the street, offering limited surveillance and during hours of operation only.

(d) Activity

The paths on both sides of Bessemer Drive are currently very sparsely used. Safety reliant on human activity in Bessemer Drive will therefore need to be generated by new development (i.e. West Stevenage, and/or development along Bessemer Drive itself). It is acknowledged that inadequacy in terms of lack of human activity would in part be rectified by the additional traffic generated by West Stevenage, however this is accommodated. However, the problems of indirect

¹ Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2004) "Safer Places: The planning system and crime prevention".

² "Encouraging Walking" (DETR, 2000) states: *"Planners designing for pedestrian use should always consider people's concerns about crime. For instance, connecting alleyways between roads should be convenient walking routes. If they are too narrow, dark and winding people may avoid them out of fear of criminals 'lurking in wait around a dark corner'. A wider, straighter path with clear line of sight is much more likely to be used."*

alignment for pedestrians and cyclists, and the lack of surveillance from frontage buildings would, in the absence of improvement measures, remain and would constitute a significant deterrent to use.

(e) Lighting

Good lighting is required for safety and a sense of security. It may be assumed that good lighting can and will be provided whatever arrangements are made in Bessemer Drive and connecting routes. However, at present there is practically no lighting that is geared to the requirements of pedestrians and cyclists. Lighting on Gunnels Wood Road is high level in the centre of the road and is designed entirely from the viewpoint of vehicle safety. There is no lighting for pedestrians and cyclists on the approaches to the tunnel under Gunnels Wood Road. Similarly there is no lighting of the footway on the south side of Bessemer Drive. Lighting on the north side is high-level designed for lighting the carriageway, although even this is of poor quality due to the illumination area being restricted by trees.

(f) CCTV

There is currently no CCTV coverage of the foot and cycle facilities in Bessemer Drive or under Gunnels Wood Road. While it may be assumed that such coverage could and will be provided to a good standard in any improvement scheme, it provides no substitute for the quality of overall design. We understand that there is a body of research that CCTV is of more value in collecting evidence of crime and disorder than in deterring crime and disorder.³

“Safer Places” states (page 20) that “CCTV should not be considered as an alternative to getting the design right in the first place but retrospectively can be used to compensate for poor design”.

(g) Vegetation

There are grass verges on either side of each of the footways (on the north and south sides) of Bessemer Drive. There are trees on the north side of Bessemer Drive (mostly within the verge closest to the carriageway) and a mature hedgerow on or close to the highway boundary on the south side between Gunnels Wood Road and Caxton Way. In terms of safety and security and general attractiveness of the route, this vegetation has mixed effects. The trees and hedge contribute positively to the general amenity of the footways on both sides of Bessemer Drive, especially during daylight hours. However, the hedge contributes some negative aspects with respect to safety and security: it gives a sense of enclosure and narrowing that could detract from a feeling of security especially in hours of darkness; it hastens the onset of darkness within the street; and it also offers opportunities for concealment, thus potentially contributing to a perception of lack of safety. These judgments are supported by “Safer Places”, from which the following quotes are taken:

“...removal of perimeter hedges has improved natural surveillance...”

“selective tree felling has created unobstructed views and few opportunities for concealment” (pages 80-81, in relation to Mowbray Park, Sunderland)

“...barriers must be visually permeable so as not to hinder natural or other forms of surveillance or provide places for offenders to hide” page 30

³ See for example: (1) Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate, February 2005; (2) Parliament of Australia, Parliamentary Library, Research Note no.14 2005-06 (“An overview of the effectiveness of closed circuit television (CCTV) surveillance”, Nigel Brew, Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Section, 28 October 2005); (3) “The Legal Regulation of CCTV in Europe”, Marianne L. Gras (Surveillance and Society, 2(2/3) 216-229).

“Landscaping can be used to make places safer as well as more attractive, provided that it does not restrict natural surveillance.” Page 32

(h) Quality of paths or pavements

The surface quality of the footways and cycle ways is of a reasonably good standard. The widths within Bessemer Drive itself are adequate for the current low levels of use by pedestrians. The lack of continuity of the cycleway system has already been noted, and the existing footways on Bessemer Drive would in our opinion be inadequate for safe and comfortable shared use between pedestrians and cyclists. Conflicts and inadequacies would of course be multiplied in the absence of any improvement when the West Stevenage development is built.

At the Caxton Way junction there are “missing” dropped kerbs, and large radius corners that encourage fast vehicle turning movements that are unsafe for pedestrians wishing to cross.

‘Going to Town’ – increasing non-car journeys

- 3.3 Measures are also sought by the First Secretary of State to improve pedestrian and cycle access, and thereby encourage more non-car journeys. With this in mind we have used the “5Cs” criteria advocated in separate Government guidance: ‘Going to Town’ and ‘Encouraging Walking’⁴ to appraise existing, proposed and potential network quality. The results of this are presented in Appendix 3.

⁴ DETR (2004) “Encouraging Walking”; DTLR (2002) “Going to Town: a companion guide to PPG6”.

4 Proposals so far considered

Consortium Scheme

- 4.1 The scheme prepared for the Consortium by Buchanan Consulting Engineers in essence is designed to widen the carriageway of Bessemer Drive to allow the inclusion of an eastbound bus-only lane¹. By widening the carriageway without widening the overall highway the scheme would result in the loss of space for the accommodation of verges, footway and cycleways. For this reason the scheme may be described as a “traffic priority” scheme. As such it represents a sub-optimal way of catering for movement on foot and by cycle.
- 4.2 Aspects in which the design favours vehicles over pedestrians and cyclists were addressed in GSL submissions and cross-examination at the inquiry. Examples include:
- The widening of the carriageway in Bessemer drive at the expense of width available for trees, verge and footway;
 - The reduction of the footway/verge combination on the north side at the junction with Gunnels Wood Road from the current 5.5 metres to 2.5 metres (both dimensions scaled from 1:1250 plans)
 - The reduction of the width of verges on the south side of Bessemer Drive, thus bringing users closer to passing motor vehicles;
 - The pedestrian crossing of Bessemer Drive which not only is off-set from Caxton Way but is also divided and staggered requiring two-stage crossing with push button permission required. Both these features are designed to assist traffic movement rather than convenience or comfort for pedestrians or cyclists;
 - The foot/cycle way crossing of Caxton Way involves a “Toucan” crossing that is located 25 metres into Caxton Way, involving a deviation from the main pedestrian/cycle desire line of 50 metres, plus the requirement for push-button permission to cross. This is a clear disincentive for pedestrians to remain on the designated route.²
- 4.3 The foot and cycle way provision is regarded as sub-optimal, and the total width of 3 metres provided for both on the south side appears to be driven wholly by the intent to stay within the existing highway limit (IC85) rather than by a consideration of what will be demanded of a major link between West Stevenage and the town centre and station.³

¹ West Stevenage Consortium Drawing 7.0/25S (B) dated January 2004 and revision Drawing 7.0/25S (C) dated April 2004.

² This was addressed in the JAC scheme (Drawing 3248/SK015 rev B) by pulling back the entire foot and cycle way further from Bessemer Drive, though this smoothed the deviation rather than removing it altogether.

³ Some additional verge of approximately 0.5 metres (but variable) is shown between the footway and the centreline of the boundary hedge. This would be necessary to accommodate the width of the hedge itself, and the adequacy of this would be dependent on the trimming on the hedge.

- 4.4 This may be compared with the situation at Meadway where a 5-metre path is proposed. In our reading of the evidence the Bessemer Drive link is of at least equal importance to that at Meadway in terms of pedestrian and cycle movement, and as such should be deserving of facilities of at least equal dimension and quality. In addition, we regard narrow paths close to a busy carriageway as being unsatisfactory from a safety as well as a personal security point of view, in addition to general unpleasantness.
- 4.5 The draft planning obligation for West Stevenage refers to the need for “widening, upgrading and extending Bessemer Drive...in general accordance with Drawing 7.0/25S(C)”. Given the points raised above, this description can be seen as misleading in two respects. First, it is not Bessemer Drive that is proposed to be widened, but only the carriageway and the southern pavement *within the existing limits* of Bessemer Drive. Second, the works proposed can be regarded as upgrading only from a traffic point of view. The introduction of indirect crossings for pedestrians and cyclists, and the new requirement for pedestrians to share a narrow path with cyclists on the south side cannot reasonably be described as an upgrading for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 4.6 Although not considered at the Inquiry, there would be the possibility of a variation of the Consortium’s “on-line” option to remove the northern verge (and the trees within the verge) for the purpose of shifting the whole carriageway to the north. This would facilitate the beneficial introduction of a 5 metre foot/cycle way on the south side as well as verges on either side of this. However, the loss of trees would lead to a considerable loss of amenity, while the continued presence of the hedge on the south side would do nothing to enhance casual surveillance from new development on that side. We therefore judge this possibility as being counterproductive in terms of enhancing Bessemer Drive to meet the agreed objectives. In addition, this solution would perpetuate the current problem of the misalignment of Bessemer Drive with Argyle Way, and would preclude any future resolution of this problem.
- 4.7 Insofar as the Consortium scheme has failed to satisfy the First Secretary of State in respect of providing sufficient safety and security for users, it may be regarded as having been rejected.

Gabriel Securities Ltd’s proposals submitted to the Inspector

- 4.8 Schemes prepared by John Allen Consulting (JAC) on behalf of Gabriel Securities Limited were submitted to the Inquiry,⁴ but these did not result in the Inspector or the First Secretary of State being reassured in regarding matters of safety and security, and are superseded by the present proposals. There are nevertheless three points arising from those schemes that are relevant to the present submission. The Llewelyn Davies Yeang Scheme

⁴ John Allen Consulting, Drawings 3248/SK015 revision B and enlargements (3248/SK016 and 3248/SK017, both revision B)

- (1) The Inspector's conclusions and the consequent s106 and clause 278 provisions with regard to highway capacities and works to accommodate traffic flow are not at issue. The role of Bessemer Drive vis a vis the Meadway link in terms of motor vehicle traffic is also not at issue. The westbound bus lane shown in the JAC proposal is therefore now accepted as unnecessary.
- (2) The basis for the provision of foot and cycle ways of at least 5 metres (together) continues in our view to be necessary in order to establish a margin of quality (to attract users who might otherwise choose to use a car for their journey), as well as to avoid conflict between pedestrians and cyclists, and to provide a greater sense of security. This particular aspect of Bessemer Drive improvement (foot and cycle way width) continues to be relevant and is an important aspect of our justification for the proposals contained in this submission.
- (3) The JAC schemes, unlike the Buchanan (Consortium) scheme, addressed the issue and importance of making pedestrian and cycle ways as direct and convenient to use as possible. The deviation at Caxton Way was therefore avoided by providing for direct movement across the mouth of Caxton Way along the travel desire line. However, the JAC schemes addressed only directness *within* Bessemer Drive itself. The present submission is based on a further appraisal of the "Safer Places" consequences of the whole route between West Stevenage and the town centre, not just the Bessemer Drive component.

4.9 This further appraisal is prompted in part by the Inspector's conclusion that safety and security must apply to the entirety of a route, and that if a part of a route is perceived as unsafe this will deter pedestrian and cycle movement not only on that portion but on the whole route (IC.140). The proposals in this submission in this sense improve upon the JAC schemes considered at the inquiry.

5 The Llewelyn Davies Yeang Scheme

5.1 Having considered all the possible approaches above, Llewelyn Davies Yeang are now proposing a scheme which they feel properly addresses the First Secretary of State's concerns regarding the safety and security of pedestrians and cyclists and increases the likelihood of journeys being undertaken by non-car modes. The scheme (shown on Drawings at Appendices 1 and 2) provides for a realignment of the southern boundary of Bessemer Drive in order to allow:

- (1) higher quality (wider and more direct) paths for pedestrians and cyclists;
- (2) better landscaping for amenity without compromising security;
- (3) a broad boulevard with motor traffic separated from pedestrian and cycle ways by a landscaped area.

5.2 The realignment of the route for pedestrians and cyclists is regarded as a key aspect of improving safety and security for non-car users of Bessemer Drive, in that it provides for generous foot and cycle way dimensions, and it makes the route to and from the town centre more visible and legible.

5.3 The re-alignment of the foot/cycle way in Bessemer Drive allows for an improvement in lines of sight and directness of the route for pedestrians and cyclists, and crucially it allows for the eventual implementation of future improvements (see below). Development on the south side of the realigned Bessemer Drive can be undertaken to provide better overlooking and surveillance also without prejudice to the future.

5.4 The re-alignment results in the creation of a linear area between the carriageway and the foot and cycle paths. We recognise this might appear to be unnecessarily wide or even a wasteful use of land, but this would be to overlook the important improvements it would provide and which Bessemer Drive needs:

- Separation of pedestrians and cyclists from the noise and pollution of vehicle traffic on Bessemer Drive;
- Flexibility in providing for adequate widths for the bus and general traffic lanes in Bessemer Drive;
- Separation of potential of any new development on the south side of Bessemer Drive from the industrial uses on the north side;
- Space for trees and other landscaping to create a distinctive "gateway" to West Stevenage.

5.5 The scheme for Bessemer Drive in detail consists of the following elements:

- (a) A 3 metre footway on the north side, separated from the carriageway by a planted verge: This width provides for quality pedestrian movement and can be accommodated without disturbance of the existing mature trees in the verge

(b) A 5 metre wide (two-way) cycleway and a 3 metre footway on the south side: If walking and cycling are to be more prominent for West Stevenage than in the existing town, then the foot and cycleways should be of at least the same width to provide network continuity. (Of the total 8 metres allocated for foot and cycle ways, the detailed design could differ from that shown without undermining the design principles for safety and security.)¹

(c) Landscaped areas with trees on both sides of the carriageway: The presence of trees (rather than hedges) can add amenity value without reducing visibility and perceptions of safety. The proposal will provide for an attractive landscaped boulevard in which pedestrians and cyclists are visible by people in vehicles, but in which a degree of physical separation creates a less noisy and polluted environment in which to walk and cycle.

(d) A carriageway of 3 lanes, each 3 - 3.5 metres: This includes a single lane in each direction for general traffic with left-only turns at Gunnels Wood Road and a bus lane (as with the Consortium scheme (drawing 7.0/25S (C))). Since the appropriate capacity for motor traffic in Bessemer Drive is not in dispute, the present proposals provide for the same quantity of movement as the Consortium proposals.

(e) An eastbound-only bus lane separated from the westbound lane by a 1.5 metre median: As with the Consortium scheme there would be a left turn into Gunnels Wood Road, and a right turn facility for buses into Bessemer Drive. The 3.5 metre width bus lane will ensure no interference with other vehicles. The lanes for general traffic are shown as 3 metre width.² The median would add to safety by separating opposing vehicle flows and allowing for pedestrian crossing movements.

5.6 The need for improved personal safety and security is important both in its own right and as a means of encouraging walking and cycling to and from West Stevenage. Section 3 highlighted ways in which existing arrangements fall short of what is required. Using the same headings from “Safer Places” as used in that section, we set out below the ways in which the proposed scheme will address these.

(a) Access and movement

The alignment of the foot and cycle paths with Argyle Way will provide a more direct route to and from the town centre. This will create significantly improved lines of sight towards the centre and into West Stevenage and hence will contribute to safety and perceived safety and better security. This in turn will encourage use so further contributing to safety.

The only location where pedestrians and cyclists will be “off-line” is at the junction with Gunnels Wood Road, and this too can be resolved at

¹ For example, a 4 metre cycleway and a 4 metre footway, or a reduction of either by 1 metre to provide a separation strip of 1 metre.

² In the detailing of the proposal there would be scope for increasing the lane widths without compromising the principles or overall quality of the scheme.

a later stage by the provision of a new surface crossing (see Section 6);

(b) Structured to avoid conflict between users

The continuation of generously proportioned foot and cycle paths in the existing town network along Bessemer Drive to link with West Stevenage will provide comfort and safety in use. This will avoid conflict between users that would arise with high levels of use on a narrow shared path.

The straight alignment between the new A1(M) underbridge and Argyle Way provides pedestrians and cyclists with good forward visibility thus reducing conflict between them. The more direct route obtained, including provision of a “desire line” crossing location for Caxton Way will also encourage higher levels of use.

The direct alignment of the foot and cycle paths with the new A1(M) tunnel (and potentially paths beyond) significantly improves visibility and conviviality, thus enhancing security;

(c) Surveillance

The wide and straight foot and cycle ways in Bessemer Drive improve the visibility of people using them, and hence improve perception of safety. Surveillance will also occur from people in vehicles on Bessemer Drive.

The scheme will allow enhanced overlooking and casual surveillance from new development to the south of Bessemer Drive (as potentially with other schemes), and in addition may provide stimulus to further overlooking development alongside other parts of the Bessemer Drive route³;

(d) Activity

The improvements to the route as described will encourage higher levels of pedestrian and cycle activity, and also potentially to development interest. This will increase the amount of activity in Bessemer Drive thus contributing to higher levels of safety and security.

(e) Lighting

Good lighting can be provided as part of this scheme as with any scheme and it is assumed that this will be done. Lighting of the pedestrian tunnels and approach ramps at Gunnels Wood Road will be crucial to safety until such time as they can be replaced with surface crossings.

(f) CCTV

As previously stated, it is assumed that this will be provided and whilst its effectiveness should not be overestimated, it should add to perceived security, especially on those parts of the route where

³ Active frontage providing casual surveillance is promoted by Stevenage Borough Council for Bessemer Drive and other parts of Gunnels Wood, see “Gunnels Wood Employment Area Supplementary Planning Document”, adopted by Stevenage Borough Council, January 25th 2006. E.g. “*New development proposals should include active frontages along main thoroughfares. This facilitates a sense of security, place and character throughout the area. It also helps to enlarge the public realm and provide public space with passive surveillance promoting community safety.*” Page 17.

surveillance is poor, such as the pedestrian cycle tunnels at the A1(M) and at Gunnels Wood Road.

(g) Vegetation

The landscape changes would improve the visibility of pedestrians and cyclists by people in vehicles, thus maintaining causal surveillance from this source. Removal of the existing hedge on the present southern boundary of Bessemer Drive would be a particular benefit in this regard. New planting would consist of elements that do not obstruct visibility at eye level, namely low shrubs and/or grass together with trees whose canopy is confined to above 2 metres.⁴

(h) Quality of paths or pavements

Removal of the constraint presented by the current width of Bessemer Drive means that adequate space for pedestrians can be provided. Paths of generous widths consistent with existing town networks can be provided. The provision of separate foot and cycle paths will improve the safety, comfort and convenience of travel by both modes, thus additionally encouraging their use and contributing to higher levels of security. At the junction of Bessemer drive and Gunnels Wood Road the scheme will allow for turning movements without compromising pedestrian safety.

The route beyond Bessemer Drive

- 5.7 Improvement of conditions to encourage walking and cycling is important not only for Bessemer Drive but the route beyond. As the drawings at Appendix 1 show, the proposed scheme fits in with the existing network serving the town centre to bring about better connectivity of the route overall. Drawing 3 (Appendix 2) shows the whole route between West Stevenage and the town centre and how the more direct alignment of paths in Bessemer Drive helps pedestrians and cyclists to access the station and the town centre via Argyle Way.
- 5.8 The drawing shows the route within West Stevenage as taking the line indicated on the outline masterplan. However, the indirect route at the southern end of West Stevenage would be a considerable deterrent to the choice of walking and cycling and the possibility for a more direct path (at least for non-motorised users) should be considered in the preparation of the detailed layout. This is indicated by a broken line on Drawing 3.

⁴ The Gunnels Wood SPD states (page 20) *"All development within Gunnels Wood will incorporate high quality landscaped areas that contribute positively to the area in terms of visual amenity, biodiversity and other environmental benefits."*

6 Future Potential

- 6.1 The proposed scheme will enable further enhancements of the Bessemer Drive route to be achieved. While such enhancements may not be anyone's immediate concern, it is nevertheless important that upgrades of the route are not precluded by the changes which are made to Bessemer Drive at this stage.
- 6.2 This section highlights ways in which the Bessemer Drive route is capable of offering an even higher degree of quality and security, encouraging and enhancing even further travel by non-car modes. The Llewelyn Davies Yeang scheme detailed in Section 5 allows the enhancements detailed below to be made as and when the need or opportunity arises.
- 6.3 Details of these future improvements are shown on the drawings at Appendix 2. The key possibilities are:
- (a) provision of a surface crossing of Gunnels Wood Road for pedestrians and cyclists to create a direct route and to make the route more safe and secure;
 - (b) removal of the existing pedestrian and cycle tunnels under Gunnels Wood Road and Argyle Way to improve safety and security;
 - (c) potential for frontage (overlooking) development along Bessemer Drive and other parts of the route to enhance casual surveillance and to increase activity;
 - (d) a bus (only) route via Bessemer Drive, Argyle Way, Stevenage Leisure Park and the Railway Station western portal, and thence to the town centre. (The additional eastbound lane for general traffic created by the relocation of the bus lane is capable of being removed if required, and this can be incorporated in the detailed design.)
- 6.4 A surface crossing at Gunnels Wood Road would make a substantial improvement to personal safety and security as it would remove the current corners, changes of level, and interruptions to lines of sight that may deter use. Consideration could also be given to a foot and cycle bridge or tunnel across the railway from Argyle Way to link directly to the north end of the pedestrianised town centre.
- 6.5 This in turn would open up the possibility of an adjacent crossing place for buses (using the same control traffic lights) allowing a more direct bus route to be provided with a more convenient interchange at the station, as well as serving the leisure centre. An indicative

route is shown on Drawing 3 at Appendix 2. It is acknowledged that there would be land ownership, right-of-way and other issues to be resolved but the benefits in terms of passenger convenience, enhancement of safety and security through the presence of buses and bus stops, and the generation of extra bus patronage make this worthy of consideration.

Appendix 1
Llewelyn Davies Yeang Scheme (Drawing 1 and
accompanying section)

Appendix 2

Llewelyn Davies Yeang Scheme showing future potential for further enhancement of the Bessemer Drive route (Drawing 2 and accompanying section, and Drawing 3 Context map)

Appendix 3

Audit of Pedestrian and Cycle Route Quality of the Bessemer Drive access route to West Stevenage, applying the “5 Cs” in Government guidance¹

<i>The “5 Cs” of pedestrian and cycle route quality</i>	Current position	Improved with?		
		Consortium scheme	LDY scheme (section 5/ appendix 1)	Further potential (section 6/ appendix 2)
<i>Connected</i>	The route is connected: there are continuous paths	No	No	No
<i>Convenient</i>	The route is convenient in that it serves employment and leisure activities and the station <i>en route</i> . The misalignment of Bessemer Drive and Argyle Way is inconvenient. The crossing at Gunnels Wood Road is inconvenient: deviation from the desire line is forced via a tunnel under Gunnels Wood Road and steps (or further deviation to use a ramp) at Argyle Way.	No	Yes (plus potential for further improvement)	Yes (major improvement in directness and crossing of Gunnels Wood Road)
<i>Comfortable</i>	Comfort includes micro climate, visual appearance and surface quality. The route is uncomfortable due to unprotected junctions and access ways that allow fast turning vehicles. Industrial premises mean heavy goods vehicles, introducing noise and air pollution and potential danger.	Cyclists removed from carriageway, but worse quality for pedestrians sharing path with cyclists	Yes (Wider paths, further from traffic)	Yes (Wider paths, further from traffic)

continued

¹ DTLR (2002) “Going to Town: a companion Guide to PPG6”, and DETR (2000) “Encouraging Walking”.

Appendix 3 (continued)

		Improved with?		
		Consortium scheme	LDY scheme (section 5/ appendix 1)	Further potential (section 6/ appendix 2)
<i>The "5 Cs"</i>	Current position			
<i>Conspicuous</i>	The route is not conspicuous, since Bessemer Drive is not aligned with Argyle Way, as a result of which the route through cannot be seen. Moreover, the forced use of the pedestrian and cycle tunnel under Gunnels Wood Road prevents any intuitive knowledge of the route. This is particularly so as the tunnel is angled away from the desired direction of travel.	No	Yes	Yes
<i>Convivial</i>	Conviviality includes personal security . The route is not at all convivial for most of its length: no frontage offering "casual surveillance". Crossings of Gunnels Wood Road and A1(M) are threatening and unpleasant to use. Argyle Way has virtually no frontage activity, nor does the footpath alongside the railway leading to and from the station. Trees and vegetation are positive in daytime but make the route more enclosed and threatening to use at other times.	No	Yes	Yes (greater benefit from further improvements at Gunnels Wood Road crossings)