



Romsley Parish Council
167 Bromsgrove Road
Worcestershire,
B62 0JU

romsleyparish@btinternet.com

29th June 2019

Planning application 19/00305/FUL – Yew Tree Farm, Romsley

Dear member of the Bromsgrove Planning Committee,

I am writing to you in regard to the planning application **19/00305/FUL, Yew Tree Farm, Romsley** which will come before you at the July committee meeting.

I would like to take this opportunity to clearly state that the Parish Council is not opposed to using the Yew Tree farm site for housing as long as the development is safe, sustainable, and adhere to the principles set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

However, at this time, the Parish Council must object to this application because of the severe pedestrian and highway safety issues this development will cause and deepen.

Primarily, these involve vehicles mounting and then driving along the pedestrian footway to avoid the prevalent local congestion. This development will increase the frequency and severity of this, as the new access roads and associated drop curves will further encourage vehicles to mount and drive along the pedestrian footway at speed. This hazard will particularly impact the new residents of the development itself who will be repeatedly exposed to this risk whenever they leave their homes on foot to access village services.

In December 2018 a similar application for Yew Tree Farm, 18/00282/FUL, was rejected for this very reason. However, despite some changes being made to the access arrangements and site layout within the latest application, the pedestrian highway safety issues have still not been adequately examined or mitigated.

To demonstrate the scale and frequency of the safety hazards to all the relevant parties, the Parish Council and Community used cameras to capture large volumes of visual evidence; which has been made available to all. It is of massive concern to ourselves and our community that this demonstrative evidence appears to have been ignored by Worcestershire County Council Highways Dept and the developer. I urge you to scrutinise these images for yourself at <https://romsleyparishcouncil.gov.uk/council-news/romsley-parish-council-response-to-yew-tree-farm-proposal/>

Both Worcestershire County Council Highways Dept and the applicant have, as part of the planning process supplied information about highway matters which include commentary on traffic volumes, traffic speeds, visibility splays etc. They have also stated that following robust assessment; the development will not impact the safety of highway users. However, it is highly concerning that these commentaries make no meaningful reference towards the pedestrian safety issues despite the high volumes of demonstrative evidence provided. This is a critical omission which brings real questions over the adequacy, robustness and appropriateness of the commentary submitted around highway matters that you are being asked to assess.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is clear in regard to these matters. Section 9 - Promoting Sustainable Transport, paragraph 110A states “**development should; give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and within neighbouring areas**” and perhaps even more importantly in paragraph 110C “**create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles....**” Yet despite these precise requirements, the application misses numerous opportunities to solve the highway safety problems from a pedestrian's perspective, For example;

- Why is the proposed verge not positioned between the road and the footway to improve demarcation?
- Why are no bollards included to prevent pavement mounting?
- Why is the road not being widened by around a metre to facilitate passing and prevent vehicles needing to mount and drive the footway in the first place?

In closing, we would ask that before making any decision the Planning Committee requests additional information in the form of a full, comprehensive and independent assessment of the highway safety issues with a particular focus on pedestrian safety and a clear brief to identify and recommend sustainable highway improvements that reduce the incidents of footway driving and decrease the highway safety risks for new and existing residents.

As a Parish Council, we also remain fully open to participating in a constructive dialogue with the applicant and Highway Department even though neither party contacted us prior to the submission of this new application although they are fully aware of the concerns in our community.

On behalf of the residents of Romsley, thank you for your time and support with this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Arrowsmith*
Romsley Parish Council Chairperson

**The author is a Technical Director for Road Asset Management with a leading Civil Engineering Consultancy and has over 15 years' experience in this profession.*