

July 2019 – Romsley PC verbal statement for Bromsgrove Planning Committee (3mins)

Yew Tree Farm, Romsley 19/00305/FUL,

In principle, Romsley Parish Council is not opposed to building housing at this location as long as any development is safe and sustainable. However, we **must object** to this application because of severe concerns on pedestrian safety. We are also deeply troubled that these safety issues remain unresolved despite this Planning Committee rejecting the previous application for the same reasons in December 2018.

This area is the busy heart of our Parish, full of community shops that attract many residents by car and foot. The location suffers from regular traffic congestion; vehicles meet in opposition and with no other means of passing they frequently mount and then drive along the Pedestrian footway.

Once built, the developments new residents will be exposed to this safety hazard whenever they access parish services by foot, whilst the risk posed to existing residents will be significantly increased as the developments new access roads, and associated drop curves will encourage more cars to use the footway to pass.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is clear on these matters. Section 9 - Promoting Sustainable Transport, states development must “create places that are safe and minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles....” “they should give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and within neighbouring areas.”

As part of our written response, you received extensive visual evidence, showing dozens of footway driving incidents that equate to over 750 incidents of this type per year. This evidence was sent to Worcestershire County Council.

Both the Highways Department and the applicant have provided information on traffic volumes, traffic speeds and visibility splays. Both have also stated that following robust assessment; there will be no impact on the safety of highway users.

However, neither party has provided a meaningful response to the pavement driving issues. How can this be given the volume of evidence sent and the feedback from this committee towards the previous application? This is a dangerous omission which raises significant questions over the accuracy and validity of the highway assessments submitted in support of this application.

In closing, please ask yourself

- Why is the proposed verge not positioned between the road and the footway to improve separation and safety?
- Why is the road not being widened by around a metre to facilitate passing and remove the cause of vehicles driving along the footway in the first place?
- Will this footway be safe in the future? would you be happy for your daughter or son to get off the school bus and then walk along here?

We, therefore, ask that before making a decision, the Planning Committee requests a full and independent assessment of the pedestrian safety issues with a clear remit to identify highway improvements that reduce the frequency and causes of the footway driving.

The Parish Council would be willing to jointly fund this independent safety assessment and going forward; we would expect the application to absorb these recommendations in order to receive our support.