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To: Jon Fellingham <jon.fellingham@somerset.gov.uk>; Amelia Elve <amelia.elve@somerset.gov.uk>; Emma Meecham <emma.meecham@somerset.gov.uk>; Dawn deVries <dawn.devries@somerset.gov.uk>; Cllr Richard Wilkins <richard.wilkins@somerset.gov.uk>; 'Ros Wyke' <roswyke@yahoo.co.uk>

Subject: Proposed Development on Land at Roughmoor Lane, Westbury-sub-Mendip: Highway and Pedestrian safety - Local Plan Policy WM1

Dear Jon,

Following the meeting that we had with you on Friday 28th Feb please find below notes representing our understanding of the discussions held.

As a follow up, please may we have detailed responses to the following questions:

1. Why has a widening of the pavement width between Court House farm entrance and existing crossing not been fully tested?
2. Why is pedestrian safety on this stretch of pavement not a priority over vehicular experience? What documents used for planning purposes support this position?
3. There is agreement that the existing crossing does not present sufficient sight lines for 30 or 20mph and is therefore an un-safe crossing. Given that the proposed development will result in more pedestrian traffic using this unsafe crossing, on what basis can this be acceptable?

We have already submitted comments which are critical of a less than satisfactory approach being applied by Highways and the applicant through their Transport Statement. As consultees the parish council await your responses to the questions raised in this letter prior to any determination of the application.

Safe Crossing Options

There is agreement that the existing crossing of the A371 at School Hill does not present sufficient sight lines and is therefore an un-safe crossing.

We have seen no evidence that other options and sites for a pedestrian crossing serving the village core have been tested. For example, a crossing to the area of footway presently occupied by the bus shelter at the School Hill junction as discussed below.

As discussed at our meeting of 28th Feb it may be possible for land to be made available to allow sufficient sight lines and pavement widths to permit installation of a safer crossing. To explore this option we are consulting with the stakeholders and this may need to include rights of way officers with reference to the options for diversion of footpath WS 13/1, and with conservation officers with reference to curtilage changes to a listed building (Court House Farm). We will need time to make initial enquiries and would ask for adequate time for this to take place. Had the applicant engaged with us more meaningfully prior to the application, then these options could have been considered earlier.

In order fully to inform options for a safe crossing please respond to the following:-

1. We are told that the existing pavement adjacent to the existing crossing would need widening to take crossing furniture. We would need the applicant to provide the analysis/plans to show how this has been fully tested and what would be the required footway width to meet standards.
2. An option is available to change the crossing point from a wider part of the pavement to cross in front of the existing bus stop (north side). We would expect to see the results showing that this option has been tested.

Clearly the existing crossing does not meet standards. Indeed there is a real possibility of danger to pedestrians by the provision of an inadequate crossing. This would meet the test in NPPF paragraph 116 as severe and should result in a reason for refusal. Please explain why your pre-app opinion seemed to raise no objection or challenge the applicants in any way?

Existing Footways

We discussed the adequacy of the footway on the south side of the A371 between the Mortar Pits and the existing pedestrian crossing of the A371 adjacent to the School Hill junction. It is our understanding that the Highway Authority are content with the existing width of the footway to serve the existing and proposed developments.

It will be expected that the proposed development would very probably double pedestrian flows along this footway.

At paragraph 3.5.24 the Transport Assessment accompanying the planning application states that this footway varies between 1.2-1.6 metres. At our meeting the Highway Authority stated that they were content with this footway width, expressing no objection for the scheme. Manual for Streets states that a carriageway width of 5.5 metres is adequate for two goods vehicles to pass at free flow speeds. This must be the starting point for the analysis. Why are you not requesting analysis to solve this issue from the applicant?

With existing sub-standard pavement width there is a real possibility of danger to pedestrians from the provision of an inadequate footway. We are advised that this would meet the test in NPPF paragraph 116 of being a severe failure and on its own justify refusal. Why is the Highway Authority apparently ignoring this assessment. Please explain.

A revision of Highway Authority pre-app position is required

It appears from our discussions held on 28th Feb and from your pre-app comments that the Highway Authority, in not recommending refusal of the planning application and are content to see a scheme which falls woefully below standards. The visibility splay standards are not met at the revised Roughmoor Lane junction, the footway widths are not met between Mortar Pits and the existing crossing, the existing crossing is retained despite officers confirming that it fails to meet standards.

We believe that there are a number of reasons why this application does not meet standards nor the requirements of WM1 and should be refused as currently applied for. If this is not your reviewed position please explain on what basis and what policies or standards support a “no objection” stance.

We will progress options on provision of a safe crossing with the timetable outlined but in the meantime we would be grateful if you would supply us with answers to the questions raised.

Yours sincerely

Sue Isherwood

Chair- Westbury Sub Mendip Parish Council