

**Re: Planning application W/12/01412/FUL Land South of Four Winds, 81 Yarnbrook Road, West Ashton. Change of use for one Romany family.**

**I want to make four points:**

1. Concerns about Wiltshire Council Highways
  2. How the applicant has conducted himself
  3. Core Strategy – Policy 47
  4. What the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government has stated
1. West Ashton Parish Council submitted its comments, reasons and subsequent objection to this planning application for the predominant reason of Highway Safety..... A copy of the complete letter has been sent to committee members, which has **NOT** been included in its entirety in the Officer's Committee Report.

The key and most surprising aspect of Wiltshire Council's Highways Department submission is that they have raised no objections to this development on any issue of road safety despite it being situated on the busiest part of the A350 in Wiltshire, namely between West Ashton and Yarnbrook. They suggest there is a bus stop and footpath, true there is a bus stop BUT buses have not stopped there for many years and there is no likelihood of them doing so in the foreseeable future. As for the footpath, it is quite narrow and ['two feet wide' (600mm)] adjacent to this busy 50mph road where articulated lorries create daunting air disturbance and throw up grit and dust that makes it an unsafe and unpleasant walking experience.

The site was at one time used for Quad-Bike riding but this was stopped by 'enforcement' because of its access point and Highway safety. Indeed whenever a request has been made by the Parish Council for the 'Parish Steward' to trim/cut the hedges along this stretch of the A350, we have been informed that it cannot be done because temporary traffic lights would be necessary for the safety of the Parish Steward.

If we look further afield, Highways objected to a number planning applications on the basis of road conditions and speed limit, for example in the case of Trowbridge Rugby Club wanting to relocate, the A361 being described as a busy road with a 50mph - YET no such concern for the A350 has been highlighted for this application or indeed a plausible explanation given.

**I attached other examples:**

- W\_12\_00832\_FUL-HIGHWAYS\_131346 **Dilton Marsh**
- W\_12\_00860\_FUL-HIGHWAYS\_129377 **C49 Holiday Let to Nursery**
- W\_12\_01169\_FUL-HIGHWAYS\_136873 **RUGBY CLUB**
- W\_12\_01412\_FUL-HIGHWAYS\_139891 **West Ashton**
- W\_12\_01412\_FUL-HIGHWAYS\_140153 **West Ashton**

The site in question has been the subject of previous attempted planning development, all of which have been objected to by Highways before they reached the formal planning application stage - one such proposed development was to build a bungalow on the site. The other was to build a 'granny annex' on land opposite the site, as an annex to the existing house. The Ashford Homes housing development (Planning ref. 01/01085/FUL) is now accessed through Orchard Close in West Ashton, and was refused direct access onto the A350.

West Ashton Parish Council has questioned the Planning Officer(s) whether Wiltshire Police Road Traffic Unit has been asked for their views on the planning application given there have been 9 fatalities and numerous minor accidents on this part of the A350 in the past 10 years. We were informed that the Police were not a statutory consultee, but that further enquiries would be made with the Highways department raising our concerns. We understand that at the time the agenda went to print a response had not yet been received. The Parish Council consider that without the backing of the Police supporting this application, the safety of the family moving onto the site could be seriously at risk.

2. The applicant submitted an email to the planning department in which he made a number of accusations. This email, whilst not removed from the website was amended at the direction of the planning officer. This was as a result of our letter to Ms J Scott. Procedures have been changed and therefore it would/should not have been posted in the first place without vetting.

It is worth noting that the original email (referring to the applicant) "*I consider myself an outstanding pillar of the community*". A perfectly reasonable claim, but why has the applicant then gone onto clear some of the site, import gravel and now move a mobile home on to it. The planning department has been making confusing statements on this application vis-a- vis the two attached emails that were sent to the committee. It would also appear the police were not informed or present when the low-loader(s) arrived and blocked the busy A350 for some time. So it does seem rather implausible that the applicant won't occupy the mobile home at a time of his choosing.

Despite the applicant stating that he does not intend to occupy the mobile home although is the situation not already a breach of planning rules.

3. The Core Strategy, whilst not approved by an Inspector, is the intended outcome that Wiltshire Council wishes to achieve. Therefore Policy 47, which deals with Gypsy/Traveller sites, is relevant to this application and the fact that the targets for sites up to 2016 have already been exceeded by 6 makes permission for this site totally unnecessary if Policy 47 has any meaningful resonance with the 'Strategy'.
4. At this point it is perhaps worth reminding the committee members of the announcements made by Mr Pickles, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government regarding 'illegal gypsy/traveller encampments'. The paper – 'Dealing with illegal and unauthorised encampments' published on 28th August 2012 gives clear guidance and summarises the powers available to local authorities to remove illegal and unauthorised encampments on both public and private land.

**I suggest the behaviour of the applicant as already mentioned in moving a mobile home on to site already falls into this category.**

**And the 10<sup>th</sup> October a further statement made indicates that *Councils would be given greater freedom to stop unauthorised traveller sites being set up and prevent long, drawn-out stalemates like Dale Farm, under proposals announced by Communities Secretary Eric Pickles.***

Before a final decision on the planning application is taken by the Committee, West Ashton Parish Council would urge you to make a site visit. This would demonstrate just how busy this stretch of the A350 is, and how inconsistent Wiltshire Council's Highways Department are being when considering this application - the only realistic conclusion is that the site is unsuitable for the proposed development. **Thank you**