



Wem Rural Parish Council

Application 14/03428/OUT

Proposed Residential Land Between Aston Road and Church Lane Wem

Outline application for the erection of 75(No.) dwellings (to include access).

At the meeting of Wem Rural Parish Council held on 4 September a request to comment on the application was made following concerns raised by Parish residents. The Parish Council acknowledged that although the main development is within Wem Town Council's boundary, the entrance from Church Lane of one of the two access roads sits within the Rural Parish. On this basis it was agreed to review and comment on the application.

A review of the Design and Access Statement and the Highways & Drainage Report confirms that there is an assumption that all traffic travelling to and from the site, via Church Lane and Aston Road access points, will use roads through Wem Town and Soulton Road. No consideration has been given to the option of entering or leaving the site from the access points and travelling through the designated Quiet Lanes of Aston and Barkers Green. Quiet Lanes are a Countryside Agency initiative, which has the support of the Department for Transport. Quiet Lanes are minor rural roads which are appropriate for shared use by walkers, cyclists, horse riders and motorised users. They should have low traffic flows travelling at low speeds.

The Council noted the following:

1. The supporting documents acknowledge that Church Lane south of the Engineering Park to the site access narrows, to the extent that a priority arrangement is being proposed. The supporting documentation is quiet to the fact that Church Lane extends south of the proposed access towards Aston and is a narrow, winding lane with very limited passing places. Traffic turning right from the site towards Aston will bring congestion, safety issues for all users and irreversible damage to Church Lane's natural environment.
2. The lanes through Aston and Barkers Green already accommodate a range of vehicles, in size and purpose. The recent re-building of Aston Bridge, main water pipes breaking and highway surfaces moving under the pressure of modern agricultural machinery and diverse delivery and collection vehicles for Jewson building supplies in Barkers Green are evidence that the current lane infrastructure cannot accommodate any additional traffic.
3. The designation of Quiet Lanes for a number of years in Aston and Barkers Green has ensured the local residents enjoy the lanes for a variety of uses including walking, cycling and horse riding. Any additional traffic will bring with it road safety issues and impact the current enjoyment of residents.

4. To access routes through Wem Town vehicles will need to cross the railway line at the level crossing. Although traffic flows relatively smoothly over the crossing when open, when it is closed queues occur. It is therefore expected that over time residents will be aware of the train timetable and use Aston and Bakers Green as the preferred route to and from home to avoid congestion at the level crossing.

Taking the above points into account, it is considered:

1. The highways analysis and traffic impact is incomplete by not addressing all options of routes to the site.
2. The assessment of the sustainability requirement under the NPPF is incomplete as it does not address the negative economic, social and environmental impacts of the use of the Parish lanes.

In conclusion, the current access arrangements will bring an overriding detrimental impact on the wellbeing of residents and local infrastructure.

The Parish Council resolved to object to the application.

Carole Warner
Clerk to the Parish Council
8 September 2014