

Byfield Parish Council

Revised OUTLINE Planning Application DA/2017/0826 for 78 (now 80) houses and a Medical Centre

Response to additional submissions of Technical Notes 06 and 07 by CREATE Consulting Engineers Limited

Byfield Parish Council has concluded to **object** to amendments to the traffic management plan and in particular the proposed changes to the Fiveways junction comprising of the A361 north and south bound, Boddington Road, Woodford Road and Church Street in Byfield. We believe that they do not address basic issues of road safety and ignore the quality of life for everyone in the community. The lights will create queuing traffic resulting in noise and atmospheric pollution as well and creating an urbanised site in the middle of a rural village. Further details are given below.

As a statutory consultee, Byfield Parish Council (BPC or PC) considered this application at a meeting on Thursday 21st January 2021 via ZOOM. As well as the Parish Council, there were approximately 11 members of the public present, during the meeting everyone who wished to comment on the amendments were given the opportunity to do so.

The Parish Council has stated before that few would deny that the retention and improvement of medical services in our area is an important issue, which is why the Parish Council has not directly objected to the notion of a new building but instead focussed on getting the best possible result for the entire village from what would be, a major expansion of Byfield. We remain committed to that aim and to working with all parties but are becoming increasingly concerned that this project is becoming unviable.

The PC has recorded its admiration for the work undertaken at the Medical Centre where the January 2019 CQC report stated that the standard of care is 'good' in every area. We are also pleased to note that NHS Nene CCG have advised, as recently as 21 January 2021, that they have no plans to close this practice and are working closely with the practice and the local authority to progress any opportunity to develop a new surgery.

This remains a contentious application with no clear path to resolving a number of issues, we wonder if the scheme is actually deliverable in its current format and whether the time has come to try and find an alternative site / development opportunity for the medical centre business.

We draw you attention to our submission from January 2020 and our additional comments below.

During our most recent meeting we had input from members of the public which is summarised below in addition to comment received by email.

Main comments / Concerns from Parishioners :

- Create consultancy had themselves described the proposals as "Radical"
- Surely Northamptonshire highways can't believe this is a good idea as it will make things worse than they are now?
- What are the current vehicle numbers queuing at each junction with the current arrangement?

- Concerns over back roads such as The Twistle being used as a rat run by motorists trying to avoid Fiveways traffic lights
- Hazards crossing road with stationary traffic backed up beyond the pedestrian crossing on High Street
- This is not a solution
- Crash map data in the RSA suggests only one accident at Fiveways but a parishioner present was involved in another
- Real concern over air pollution levels from stationary traffic for pedestrians and residents living along the roads
- Should monitor pollution levels now
- This a flawed case and again using mountains of data to hide fact developer is not going to do anything.
- The transport consultants are saying that traffic levels are going to remain low after the pandemic due to home working. If that is the case is a larger medical centre actually needed as they have managed to continue throughout with existing facilities.
- Still feel that this a housing development with a medical centre tacked onto it in order to justify the development.
- The RSA was only a Desktop Survey as due to Covid no one attended the site to look at the impacts of vehicles turning onto the various arms of the junction with the new layout and traffic lights.
- They have underestimated Increased impact on traffic using Fiveways from the new medical centre and development.
- The existing road system is dangerous at the bottom of Dolls hill for residents and parents with children going to school without the added impact of traffic generated by 78 extra properties, an enlarged medical centre and those extra patients accessing a range of different services.

The Parish Council is also concerned that consultation was limited to those who had expressed an opinion in the past. All those affected by the signalisation proposal should have had the opportunity to comment i.e. the residents of all the roads that will see queuing traffic, the petrol station in Byfield which risks seeing its business impacted by vehicles struggling to enter and exit.

Byfield Parish Council would like to remind DDC and NCC Highways of the still outstanding issues of a Waste Transfer Station on the Boddington Road (a projected 16,000 HGV movements pa) and the still unresolved question of a right hand turn lane into a proposed Farm Machinery Centre on the Daventry Road just on the northern edge of Byfield both of which will bring other factors to bear on the junction and wider road network.

The CREATE reports are lengthy and carry significant amounts of data, BPC was able to prepare a precis for illustration at our meeting. Here is our analysis of the proposals.

Overview

Northamptonshire Highways advised in their December 2019 response that the mini roundabouts were already over capacity. CREATE said in their report that the roundabouts are only forecast to reach capacity in 4 years' time and that the houses and expanded medical centre will produce only the most minimal increase in usage. BPC would dispute the 'most minimal increase' and it is hardly surprising since CREATE were commissioned to prove this in the first place.

CREATE Consulting have submitted 2 technical notes TN06 and TN07. Below is a summary of their content.

TN06

TN06 provides responses to Northamptonshire Highways comments relating to the previous application and provides further data, albeit incomplete.

TN06 1.2 states that the residential units, formally 78 have now increased to 80 on land South of Woodford Road This is because the applicants now also want to include the conversion of the existing medical centre into 2 properties as part of the scheme. No drawings or details are available for this proposal and a revised site layout have not been provided for the whole scheme. (BPC has lodged a separate objection to this extension of the scheme)

Trip generation data has been provided by the Medical centre but the data for 2020 is considerably lower than 2019 and 2017 and PM peak hour data does not appear to be realistic. We have previously pointed out that CREATES 2017 transport assessment survey, base line traffic data and volumes appeared to be flawed. This is because the survey was done before the development of 237 houses off Grants Hill Way and Byfield Road in Woodford Halse and the expansion of Grants Hill way Industrial estate.

Summary

TN06 is largely irrelevant in respect of this latest application as it deals with queries raised by NH which related to the previous application , not the signalisation of Fiveways.

TN07

TN07 deals with the latest proposal to make amendments and to signalise the Fiveways junction.

TN07 1.13 – Advises that “the Applicant” has agreed to fund the signal controlled junction, as presented herein, as a final “backstop”, on the basis that a monitor and manage arrangement is considered. Rather than the delivery of a signal controlled junction from the outset as a pre-commencement Highways condition.

The latest scheme proposes to make changes to existing road layout as follows;

- Removal of the 2 mini roundabouts
- Extended right turn lane to service Woodford Halse and Church street
- New right turn lane to service Boddington Road
- Installation of central pedestrian refuge on Church Street
- Widening the mouth of Woodford Road junction and moving back the pavement
- New larger pedestrian refuge on High street
- New pedestrian refuge on A361 Daventry arm
- Installation of traffic lights to all arms of the junction

Appendix B (option 1) and Appendix D (option 2) show 2 sets of proposed layout drawings which differ slightly. Appendix B doesn't have a pedestrian crossing at the bottom of Dolls Hill but Appendix D does.

There are several issues which we have identified with the proposed layout

- The swept path analysis drawings in Appendix B and Appendix D do not show any swept path analysis for HGV movements on the Church Street arm of Fiveways even though a new central pedestrian refuge is proposed. This junction is used by HGV coming from Taylor plant & construction, numerous agricultural vehicles towing large trailers and Refuse lorries, all of which also have to turn right.
- Looking at the Woodford Road arm of the junction, even with the amendments to the kerb line it can be seen that if a HGV is waiting at the traffic lights then another HGV would not be able to pass going up the hill towards Woodford Halse.

- The Boddington road arm shows the half road junction width of 2.5m however this reduces to 2.2m as you move further up the road. As can be seen from the swept path analysis not only HGV's but ANY large vehicles will not be able to turn into Boddington road whilst vehicles are queuing at the traffic lights.
- TNo6 drawing 03/023 shows the road widths taken from a topographical survey carried out on behalf of the applicant and it identifies that the width of the Boddington road reduces to 2.2m *NB This road is the approved access and exit route for the 16,000 HGV vehicle movements pa to and from the Waste Transfer Station*

CREATE have produced 2 options for phasing of the traffic lights.

Option 1 prioritises the traffic on A361 where the north and southbound lights change simultaneously, this was subject to a Road Safety Audit which raised concerns over collisions on the right turn to Woodford and Church Street. It also raised concerns over safety of pedestrians crossing the road at the bottom of Dolls Hill.

Option 2 addresses the points raised by the RSA by phasing each set of traffic lights individually and implementing a push button crossing phase (phase F) at the bottom of Dolls Hill. Option 2 is therefore **the option they intend to proceed** with as this satisfies the concerns raised in the Road Safety Audit.

However Option 2 will result in reduced capacity on the junction and increased queuing traffic on each of the arms. It is proposed that the cycling time of the traffic light sequences (A-E) will take 120 seconds. (2 minutes waiting at each set of lights before they turn green) This does not take into account the impact of the push button (phase F), for pedestrians using the crossing, CREATE dismiss this as negligible but they have not taken into account the amount of pedestrians crossing here, especially as part of the school run and the many extra pedestrian journeys to and from the new housing and enlarged medical centre.

2020 baseline data used for calculating traffic volumes was collected by a traffic survey carried out in February 2020. This data is not true and accurate as it was carried out during a heavy construction phase of the HS2 Mitigation works at Chipping Warden. Numerous sets of traffic lights and road closures were operating at this time. The Parish Council previously raised concerns about this data.

TN07 Table 3.2 provides suggested Mean Max peak traffic queues using data obtained from their traffic survey, in brief this shows the number of vehicles they propose will queue:

	Before Development	After Development
Option1		
Woodford Road arm (AM)	16	18
A361 South arm (PM)	18	21
A361 North arm (AM)	14	16
Option2		
Woodford Road arm (AM)	18	22
A361 South arm (PM)	25	29
A361 North arm (AM)	19	21

Remember these figures for queuing traffic at the lights are based on current traffic levels (Before Development).After Development are supposed to take account of increased volumes to and from the new houses and enlarged medical centre.

CREATES forecast shows that A361 southern arm will be impacted most. *They predict that between 18-29 vehicles will queue on the southern arm in peak periods, this will extend from the new lights to as far as the Co-op!*

Looking at the surveyed Traffic Peak data contained within TN06 Appendix D which is taken at 15 minute intervals, and the 2031 Baseline data contained within TN07 Appendix E. It would appear that the proposed queuing volumes detailed above are significantly under estimated and would be nearer to 40 vehicles queuing at peak periods, which would take vehicles queuing on the southern arm past The Cross Tree which would totally gridlock the village preventing access to the Co-op, Brightwell Recreation Ground and Village Hall. This then results in traffic using inadequate side roads such as Banbury Lane and Potters End becoming rat runs as drivers try and jump the queue.

We have all recently witnessed the impact of traffic lights on A361 at Chipping Warden. At peak periods traffic queues have been in excess of 40 vehicles. This was the impact caused by a single set of traffic lights with a cycling time of less than 60 seconds. The proposed signalisation of Fiveways has 5 sets of lights with a proposed cycling time of 120 seconds which is clearly going to produce even bigger tail backs.

Phasing and sequencing data for the proposed traffic lights is largely irrelevant as regardless of the sequence used they will cause significant delays and queues on the various approach roads. The principle of traffic lights in general in Byfield is unacceptable. It will cause urbanisation of our village, result in traffic queues and block residents access to their properties, the Co-op and petrol station.

In February 2020 Daventry District Council declared a Climate Emergency and published its Action Plan which, amongst other steps, aims to drastically reduce emissions.

Northamptonshire County Councils Climate Change Strategy 2020-2023 has three key objectives:

- Raising awareness of the issues of climate change and its impact on Northamptonshire
- Reducing emissions of greenhouse gases across the County
- Planning for and adapting to the impacts of climate change.

Encouraging standing traffic would seem to be in direct contradiction of all of these stated aims since it will cause unprecedented amounts of pollution and do nothing to enhance the quality of life for the people of Byfield.

TN07 1.13 – Advises that “the Applicant” has agreed to fund the signal controlled junction, as presented herein, as a final “backstop”, on the basis that a monitor and manage arrangement is considered. Rather than the delivery of a signal controlled junction from the outset rather than a pre-commencement Highways condition.

TN07 4.7 and 4.8 attempts to justify this approach “levels of commuter traffic are set to reduce due to a marked increase in home working as a result of the pandemic which is set to continue”

Question

-Should this same approach not be taken when looking at the business case provided by the applicant for needing larger facilities. The pandemic has resulted in a change in the way in which you consult a doctor which is also not likely to change going forward. Currently you first have to speak to a receptionist to tell them what the problem is, then if they feel it is appropriate you have a telephone consultation with a Doctor, only then if the Doctor believes it is necessary, is a face to face appointment raised. If telephone and on line consultations are forecast to become the norm could not the existing building be adapted and improved?

Consultation

we do not believe that the consultation process has been satisfactory in this instance. Letters were written to residents directly adjacent to the proposed development on Woodford Road and Knightly Close. However this latest amendment relates to changes to the Fiveways junction and approach roads so we believe the residents who are being impacted most by these changes who live next to the roundabouts or on the approach roads should also have been consulted.

In Summary - The signalisation of the Fiveways junction has been hidden behind the planning application for "The Medical Centre" and residents have not actually been aware of what these latest proposals actually are.

Redeveloping or converting the existing surgery into 2 properties, this should have been dealt with under a separate application, not hidden in DA/2017/0826 . The Parish Council, residents of Church Street as well as Knightly Close must be consulted separately on these proposals. As is a minimum requirement for outline planning applications a site layout drawings should have been provided which should also show how this will impact on the proposed pedestrian access from Church Street to the new development. None of which has happened so this does not comply with planning policy.

Byfield Parish Council is therefore **objecting** to the proposed signalisation of Fiveways since it does not provide a viable, environmentally sensitive solution to the problems at this junction and firmly believes that an alternative answer must be found. If OPP is granted and this or any other scheme is approved by Northamptonshire Highways then it should not be a "Back Stop" it should be a pre commencement condition.

Byfield Parish Council
24th January 2021