

I'm going to start with Highways Issues

In April 2022 Bradford Highways issued their written report on this application, saying that the lack of a second vehicle link road into the development from Hawber Cote Lane was quote

not acceptable and cannot be supported by Highways

So, the applicant incorporated that one way vehicle access into the plan.

Silsden Primary School raised objections regarding the impact on road safety, at its entrance, by the creation of this vehicle link and the applicant has now changed the scheme to remove it.

This changed scheme was only submitted last Thursday evening - after members of this committee had already been sent their documents pack (including the case officer's report based on the previous layout).

So the design in front of committee today reverts back to what was previously declared **unacceptable** and there is nothing in the public domain which explains **if, or why** Highways are now supporting this change, nor is there anything in the papers to address any knock-on issues for trees, footpaths, traffic movements etc.

There are also other highways issues with this application

Firstly, the road network in Silsden is cramped, causing gridlock and pollution in the town. There is one classified road, the A6034 – Bolton Road/Kirkgate/Keighley Road - which passes through the middle of Silsden. This road is a traffic 'sewer' carrying HGVs, buses and commuter traffic heading from Lancashire towards Leeds, from the South Pennines to Harrogate, local traffic connecting with Skipton, Ilkley and Keighley **plus** nearly all the local traffic movements within Silsden. Compensating S106 money for traffic calming will do nothing to stop the exponential increase in congestion in Silsden arising from new housing.

Secondly, the Council's own highways assessment is that this site '**is not considered to be in a particularly sustainable location**', and the council's Core Strategy policy P1 requires a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The developer's traffic impact assessment concludes that 85% of journeys, from the 138 houses proposed, will be made by car. It is difficult to see how increasing the number of vehicles on Bolton Road meets the aims of 'limiting traffic growth' and 'reducing congestion' required by policy 'TR1 of the council's adopted Core Strategy.

Thirdly, council officers' advice to Committee is reliant on the information provided by the previously referred to applicant's Transport Assessment. However, this assessment is based on information from November 2021 and therefore can't actually have measured the **significant** increases to traffic in this part of the town since that date from the adjacent 600 pupil / 80 staff Primary School which opened in January 2022, and the Bolton Gardens development which, along with 3 other ongoing housing developments at Riverside Works, The Willows and Saxon Dene have and will add 400 homes.

This application should therefore be refused for reason of Paragraph 111 of the NPPF ie 'the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.'

Next SCHOOL PROVISION

The officer's report points out that Silsden's new primary school cannot guarantee to accommodate all new pupils from our rapidly expanding community.

Quoting the Council's Education consultation: 'Parents usually have an expectation that their children will be able to secure a school place at their local school and minimise the distance they need to travel; **it is unlikely that this will be possible for all families moving here.**' And we have already seen that children living in the town were not allocated a place at the school, this September

It's then suggested, in the education report, that children could be accommodated at Steeton Primary School. However, since the report was written, it has been decided that admission numbers there will be reduced next September from 45 to 30 places.

This development will lead to more unsustainable travel across the district and is contrary to NPPF paragraph 95 which states 'It is important that sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities.'

I turn now to the Case Officer's report. We appreciate that staff are under considerable time pressure but there are two troubling parts of this report.

There are now **831** objections to this application from members of the public. Unlike usual practice, where objections are properly summarised for Members, here they are merely summarised in only 45 words.

The report states that consultees, the West Yorkshire Archaeology Service, have requested that a programme of archaeological evaluation is carried out **in advance of determining the planning application** - but this has not been done and consequently **site archaeology has not been protected.**

To conclude

- The committee is considering a scheme which has been altered only a week ago and without all the appropriate updated documentation.
- This is a complex green field site with lots of issues and adverse consequences would result from it being developed.
- As was the practice before the pandemic, we would urge that the committee visits the site before making its final decision.