

19/504910

Further Parish Council Representations

Nettlestead Parish Council objects and make the following (summarised) points:

- Primary concern is highway use within our Parish.
- Committee must consider whether Hampstead Lane provides an adequate and safe access route.
- Hampstead Lane is subject to frequent flooding and closure and between October 2019 and January 2021 it was recorded closed for no fewer than 30 days. The Climate Change Risk and Impact Assessment for Kent and Medway estimate that winter rainfall will increase by up to 30% by 2080 which will lead to more frequent flooding.
- The only alternative route is Station Road, which is not suitable for HGVs.
- The S bend to the west of the junction with Station Road is too narrow to allow two HGVs to pass one another.
- The junction between Hampstead Lane and the B2015 is unsuitable for the increased traffic flows. We do not believe the proposed improvements will go far enough to ensure road safety.
- Hampstead Lane and Station Road are too narrow to allow pedestrians to walk safely to the nearest bus route (which runs along the B2015 Maidstone Road). Neither road has a footpath, and they are both too narrow to allow one to be constructed.

Teston Parish Council objects and make the following (summarised) points:

- Recent visual improvements to Watringbury Crossroads would be adversely affected by the proposed works and in our view, they would do little to improve congestion.
- Key problem is the amount of development on Hermitage Lane.
- Lack of consultation about possible re-design of crossroads.
- If Planning Committee approve the application, it should not be dependent on a re-design of the crossroads.
- Conditions should control routes traffic to and from the site are required to follow.

Watringbury Parish Council (Tonbridge & Malling) objects and make the following (summarised) points:

- Concern that MBC is considering granting permission on the basis of requiring highway changes in the centre of the village.
- Proposals to alter the crossroads in 2018 and 2019 were subject of consultation and we hope that the Highway Authorities did not deliberately withhold the current proposals from discussions with the Parish at the time. It was by no means a foregone conclusion that the 'improvements' would be welcomed or approved by our residents.

- This seems to force the changes on the village for the benefit of a development with residents being able to consider their cost and benefits.
- The wish of an LPA to grant consent for a development which, without payment by the applicant for a contentious consequence affecting the lives of people some considerable distance from the Borough in which the decision was made, would not be capable of approval, is very concerning indeed.
- We ask that this application is refused.
- There should be involvement and consultation with the Parish Council as to alternatives and improvement before further potential harm to the lives, health and amenity of our residents, without them being able to contribute to any debate.

East Malling and Larkfield Parish Council make the following (summarised) points:

- We would be concerned about any alterations to Watringbury crossroads that would encourage traffic to use the unsuitable route linking A26 to the A20 through East Malling.
- Concerned about changes to this junction such as the old black and white finger post being removed or "lost" when any works are carried out.
- It seems wrong that this should be contemplated without any consultation as I understand it with Watringbury Parish Council or indeed this council just because we happen to be outside Maidstone.

Yalding Parish Council make the following (summarised) points in response to Watringbury and Teston Parish Council:

- Surprised to read the comments regarding the association between planning application 19/504910/OUT and proposed improvements to the A26 Watringbury junction.
- The proposed improvements to the junction were the subject of a consultation in December 2018 and these improvements have nothing whatsoever to do with the planning application which was submitted to MBC towards the end of 2019.
- In it's final responses to MBC, KCC suggested that there may be an increase in traffic movements through the junction as a result of the development in Yalding and asked for a monetary contribution from the applicant towards the cost of the scheme.
- However, the scheme was not drawn up to support the planning application and, should the planning application be refused, the proposed improvements to the junction will remain on the table but with less funding available.

Further Local Resident's Representations

2 representations received raising the following (summarised) points:

- We object most strongly to the planning clause in this application relating to work to Watringbury Crossroads.
- Contrary to the KCC statement this scheme does not have the backing of the Watringbury Parish Council or our T & M Borough Councillor.
- The KCC suggested scheme, which was rejected in 2019, has very little resident support.

- Since Bow Road has a weight restriction to prevent heavy vehicles using it traffic from this development should be directed to use Seven Mile Lane.
- The scheme will totally destroy the historic and recently upgraded (partly with a Lottery Grant) green centre of our village.
- The filter lanes are very short and therefore entry is likely to be blocked by traffic waiting to go straight ahead.
- There will be very little gain from the proposals and very little effect on traffic flow.
- Information has been uploaded without opportunity to comment.

Officer Comment

Additional information is regularly uploaded to the Council's website during the consideration of a planning application and in this case the information referred to was clarification from the applicant. Discretionary formal consultation/notification is only carried out on amended/additional information of a nature or scale that warrants it. The information referred to did not warrant formal notification.

In terms of the Wateringbury Crossroads, the recommendation would simply secure money towards the improvement scheme currently being developed by KCC. This is all the Council or the applicant can do and the responsibility for securing full funding, public consultation, and implementation lies with KCC as the Highways Authority. If KCC could not fully fund or decided not to implement the scheme, the applicant would receive their money back.

As outlined in the committee report, officers do consider a contribution is appropriate but as the improvement scheme is mainly to mitigate the existing situation at the junction (it has been in development prior to this planning application being submitted), and the impact of the development without the scheme would not be unsafe or 'severe', if the scheme was not implemented by KCC, this would not render the development as being unacceptable. Paragraphs 6.28 to 6.31 explain this in more detail.

KCC have clarified that,

"The scheme is drawn up and costed and it was previously reported to the TMBC JTB for information only. The officer recommendation within the report was to not pursue the improvements further as they would cost significantly more than the available funding. Consequently, the available funding was reallocated and has not progressed any further since this point.

Should KCC be in a position that all the funding is secured then further consultation would be required before any improvement scheme could be physically implemented. This consultation would include public and Member consultation. Any feedback received from the consultation would be considered and then the final option/options presented to the Tonbridge & Malling Joint Transport Board for a decision on the final form of the junction improvement that is to be implemented. The improvement scheme referenced in our consultation responses could conceivably form one of a number of different options at the junction."

All other issues relate to matters that have already been raised and are fully considered in the committee report.