

Aspia Jannat

From: Gerald Lawrence [REDACTED]
Sent: 13 January 2019 12:14
To: Planning Policy
Subject: Land East of Kenilworth

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am very concerned about the traffic arrangements for the new Thickthorn development East of Kenilworth.

I live in Jordan Close, I am retired and so not normally directly affected by the first part of the morning rush hour. However, from time to time we take our grandson from our house to St John's School so we are aware of the current traffic situation from 8.30 am onwards. Traffic regularly queues back from past our road to as far as we can see, which is to the bend just before Windy Arbour. This causes us to have to wait for a kind person to let us out and join the queue. We in our turn become part of those letting people out from Farmer Ward Road, where a queue also forms.

All of this traffic is going to join the St John's gyratory where there is a further wait to be able to find a gap in the traffic heading South from the Kenilworth Town Centre. On the occasions when I have to head towards the A46 at this time in the morning, there is another queue to get onto the roundabout above the A46 because of the traffic approaching it from the right heading either from the A46 to Leamington, or from Leamington to the A46 Northbound.

From what I understand of the proposals, 1400 new houses are to be built in this development. I have attended a couple of the consultations and I have been told that the average car owning ratio in this area is 2.4 cars per household. So an additional 3,360 cars have to be taken into account. If only half of them wish to leave the new site during the morning rush hour, that is an additional 1,680 cars must be given access to the surrounding roads.

It appears from the plans that a major exit will be onto or very near the bend in Glasshouse Lane where a new roundabout is being proposed, and further exits are planned through the current Rugby Club and adjacent to Wardens Cricket ground access. It is clear from the current situation that bringing more traffic onto Birches Lane will not be successful. It will add to the congestion at St John's gyratory, where it is planned to fit traffic lights. This will simply back up the Southbound traffic from town along the Warwick Road, and will also release cars from Birches Lane in large groups as opposed to in small numbers Southbound towards the A46. Getting across all this traffic to simply get to St John's school will be a nightmare. The traffic lights will also add to the congestion of the vehicles trying to access the gyratory from Leek Wootton.

A second major exit from the new development is planned to be approximately where the current Horse Fair enters and exits the field. You only have to see the congestion caused by this event to realise that putting a new road there with traffic lights will not work. For the Thursday and Friday before a horse fair the traffic backs up to St John's gyratory and beyond in all directions in spite of the good services provided at peak times by the local police.

There is also a plan to put traffic lights on the roundabout above the A46. The distance between the new spine road exit and the first lights will not permit many cars to be able to wait there, which will also add to the congestion North of this new junction. The traffic lights on the roundabout will cause congestion to occur for the first time for cars approaching the roundabout from the Northbound slip road off the A46, and from Leamington trying to get onto the Northbound slip onto the A46.

A further plan is to add another junction to the A46 roundabout from the business part of the new development. I cannot see how you could restrict cars which leave the new houses from using this access if they wish to go to Coventry or Leamington for business. With the increased traffic on the existing access to the roundabout, this will simply cause further problems. This appears to me to be a congestion disaster waiting to happen.

I have made all my comments in relation to the roads around where I live – I have not considered problems at other areas, such as at the bottom of Knowle Hill.

A further general concern is that the average speed of traffic outside peak rush hours on Birches Lane is already far higher than the legal 30 mph. The current “advisory” signs are not adequate to control the majority of drivers using the lane. Any additional cars using Birches Lane as an access road, both from the new development and for those using it as an access to the new Kenilworth School location, will only add to the difficulty of trying to cross the road as a pedestrian. I cannot speak on behalf of cyclists, but I would imagine their problems are similar. Birches Lane will become such an important urban highway that speed bumps would not be the answer either. Proper speed cameras in several places are I am afraid the only real answer to this problem.

I am not a highways expert, and so it does not fall to me to offer an alternative suggestion, but it is obvious to me that putting extra traffic onto Birches Lane, St John’s Gyratory and Warwick Road to the A46 roundabout, together with traffic lights in places where there are currently none, is not going to be acceptable either to current residents, or the new town residents who come to the new development. A development of enough houses to give homes to something around 3,000 people is a large village/small town of its own, and tacking it onto the existing infrastructure of a town the size of Kenilworth is going to cause huge problems if it is not properly planned for. In my opinion, an additional access to the A46 is going to be the only real solution. The one proposed already for the business area is a small step but I cannot see how it will solve the problem on the roundabout. I think a major highway junction is needed to be able to get the traffic in and out of the new development, and someone needs to bite the bullet and think more seriously about this. When, long before I moved to Kenilworth, a new junction for Birches Lane and Warwick Road was found to be needed, someone had the excellent idea of building a completely new second bridge over the railway and turning the whole area into a one-way gyratory system. This has proved its worth, and we need someone with that kind of thinking to apply it to the new development East of Kenilworth before it is too late.

Yours sincerely,

Gerald Lawrence

