

In addition to the regular flow of applications for dropped kerbs, dormer windows, conservatories and extension, the Planning and Highways Committee have had a number of other issues to consider since the last Annual Meeting.

In no particular order, these are:

Swindon's Local Plan – we continued to voice our objections to the proposed sites in Wroughton which could result in a further 600+ homes being built in Wroughton, with nothing in the way of improved infrastructure to benefit new and existing residents. The local plan was considered by SBC at Full Council in January, and the decision was made to remove a site from Highworth which could accommodate 350 homes. We do not understand the grounds for this decision, and are concerned that these 350 homes will have to be accommodated elsewhere in Swindon. Following this change, the local plan will be going back out to public consultation, and we will have the opportunity to comment once again, before it goes to SBC for consideration later in the year.

Earthline we objected to Earthline's retrospective planning application for their site on the perimeter of the airfield. The constant stream of trucks, early morning and afternoon is having a significant negative impact on residents who live adjacent to their routes to and from the depot. The application was refused by Swindon Borough Council, and there has very recently been a Public Inquiry to consider the appeal to this decision. There was strong representation from WPC, Ward Councillors for Wroughton and Chiseldon, along with residents and councillors from Uffcott and Chiseldon. We await the inspector's decision which will take a couple of months.

Data Centre – whilst we welcomed the application for the data centre and the decision that the construction traffic would not travel through Wroughton, we have been disappointed by the level of disruption that Wroughton residents have experienced with road closures to allow the laying of power and fibre cabling to the site. This was not made clear at the time of application, and was made worse by the lack of notice given to residents just before Christmas, for works starting at the beginning of January. It is good to note that roads are now re-opened – Moorhead road being completed a week ahead of schedule, however we understand

Bellway – the Bellway development, Ridgeway Park, East of Marlborough Road was approved, and construction is now well under way. Section 278 works have been completed on Marlborough Road, and the eastern end of The Pitches, to provide some widening of pavements, a priority width restriction and crossing point. S278 works now move to the western end of The Pitches, and Barrett Way.

Hills site North Wroughton – we await further news of the Hills site in North Wroughton, which will accommodate some 100+homes, along with a new home for the Cricket Club.

We have received and reviewed a number of applications for the building taking place in Wichelstowe near Waitrose, and the progress is now clearly visible, with building picking up pace, and a number of houses and flats now occupied.

The major project to complete the tunnel under the M4 to link Wichelstowe to Wharf Road and to Jct 16 was also completed during this time.

We have also received an application from the Swindon Hindu Temple Trust to use the old Co-Op building on the high street as a place of worship. We noted residents concerns around parking, and the mitigations being put in place by the trustees to ensure the impact on the neighbourhood is minimised. It is pleasing to see the building being put to good use and not just lying empty. We await the decision of SBC Planning on this application. The Trustees have secured a short lease of 2 years on the building, and there is a separate planning application to convert the site into flats, with the retention of two retail units.

I must also add my thanks to Emma and Oli in the office for supporting the committee to hold virtual meetings during the times we were not able to meet face to face due to Covid restrictions. There was a steep learning curve for all of us, but this did allow us to continue our business of reviewing applications and responding without undue delay.